



The Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores

2026 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

This Plan is for use in the 2026 Municipal Elections in conjunction with the Municipality of Huron Shores Multi-Year Accessibility Policy.

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Introduction

It is the goal of the Municipality of Huron Shores to ensure that electors in the Municipality who have a disability or require accommodation are provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2026 Municipal Elections. The Municipality is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. The Municipality strives to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that election services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience. The Municipality continues to learn, develop and adjust its approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This plan is a “living” document and will be updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement are recognized.

Legislative Requirements

(Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended)
Section 12.1(2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, states the following: The Clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2026 Municipal Elections.

Accordingly, the 2026 Municipal Elections will be conducted in such a manner as to ensure that:

1. Candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services.
2. Persons with disabilities have full access to voting locations; and
3. Persons with disabilities are able to independently and privately mark their ballot and have access to alternative methods of voting assistance.

Voting Method and Voting Location

The Municipality of Huron Shores will be utilizing Internet Voting for the 2026 Municipal Elections. The selected internet voting platform complies with recognized accessibility standards and is designed to support assistive technologies such as screen readers, alternative input devices, and other accessibility features. The Municipality will work with

its service provider to ensure the system remains accessible to electors with disabilities throughout the voting period.

The voting assistance station on Election Day will be at the Municipal Office, 7 Bridge Street, Iron Bridge. Early Voting will commence October 14 at 9:00 a.m. The Municipal Office is accessible and staff are available to aid those who request assistance. The building features an accessible entrance.

Service Animals

Anyone requiring the use of a service animal is permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Municipal Office. Service animals may be any animal assisting a person with a disability. Service animals include, but are not limited to: guide dogs, hearing alert dogs, seizure alert animals, special skills animals and animals that provide emotional support to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal at the voting location (Municipal Office, Iron Bridge, ON).

Support Person

A support person may accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communications, mobility, personal care or medical needs. The support person, upon the completion of the prescribed oath, may accompany the elector into the secure area to assist the elector in the voting process. The support person shall act strictly in accordance with the direction of the elector and shall not influence the elector's vote.

A support person may be a family member, friend or a trained professional. A support person is permitted to accompany the voter throughout the voting location, including the voting booth. The Municipality will not prevent the person with a disability from having access to their support person while at the voting location. The support person is able to mark the voter's ballot for the person with a disability if required, however the support person must complete an oath to maintain the secrecy of the vote.

Delegated Election Officials may also assist the voter in marking the ballot if required. The Delegated Election Official shall mark the ballot as directed by the voter.

Provision of Election Information and Communications

The Municipality will, in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, provide candidates and electors with disabilities with information in a format that takes into account their disability. Once a request has been made, the requester and the Clerk and/or designate will agree upon a format that meets the needs of the individual.

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs in accordance with the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Policy.

See Appendix 'A' – Understanding the Needs of People with Disabilities and How to Interact Appropriately.

Assisting Candidates and Electors with Disabilities

Candidates or electors with disabilities may require assistance to help them access election information and services. Serving our customers with disabilities is about providing service in a manner that reflects the Municipality's guiding principles of customer service.

The Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve and in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, and inclusion of persons with disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment, and transportation.

Accommodation may involve various forms of assistance such as the use of the individual's own mobility aids and assistive devices (i.e. wheelchair, cane, scooter, crutches, etc.) and assistive devices that the Municipality may make available to them (i.e. magnifying glass).

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Clerk shall provide public notice on the Municipality's website, at the physical site of the disruption and, when possible, in the local media.

The notice shall include:

- the reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration, and
- description of alternative methods of delivering the information or service.

Feedback Process

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with

disabilities may be submitted to the Clerk in accordance with the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Policy.

Feedback may be provided in the following manner:

1. Completing the appropriate form available at the Municipality Office [See Appendix 'B' - Customer Feedback Form (Extract of the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Policy)].
2. In person or by mail at the Municipal Office, 7 Bridge Street, PO Box 460, Iron Bridge, ON P0R 1H0
3. By telephone: 705-843-2033
4. By email: email@huronshores.ca

Post-Election Report

Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, states the following: "Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the Clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public."

The post-election report will be posted to the Municipality's website and available in an accessible format upon request.

APPENDIX 'A'

The Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores 2026 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

Understanding the Needs of People with Disabilities and How to Interact Appropriately

Types of Disabilities:

Vision

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Impaired vision can restrict a person's ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it's an emergency.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Do not touch or address service animals.
- Do not leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Do not walk away without saying good-bye.
- Be patient.

Hearing

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. People who are hearing impaired may require assistive devices when communicating. Some people may use sign language, notes or hearing aids when communicating. They may also use email, pagers, or TTY telephone service.

- Always ask how you can help. Do not shout.
- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.

- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where your customer can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not the interpreter.
- If necessary ask if another method of communicating would be easier, i.e. a pen and paper.
- Do not put your hands in front of your face when speaking.
- Do not touch or address service animals.
- Any personal matters (i.e. financial) should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- Be patient.

Deaf-Blind

A person who is deaf-blind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener.

Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach your customer who is deaf-blind.
- Do not touch or address service animals.
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission, unless it's an emergency.
- Be patient.

Physical

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. For example, people who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or amputations may also have difficulty moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Do not touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unnecessarily unless it's an emergency.
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (i.e. automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passages.
- Be patient.

Intellectual or Developmental

People with intellectual or development disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way a person acts, asks questions or uses body language.

- Do not assume a person can or cannot do something.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure your customer understands what you have said.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, do not pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.
- Be patient and supportive.

Learning

Learning disabilities can result in a host of different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with a person's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has a learning disability unless you are told, or you notice the way a person acts, ask questions or uses body language.

- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally, clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Take some time; people with certain learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- If you are dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.
- Be courteous and patient and your customer will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.
- Patience and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

Mental Health

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You will not know that a person has a mental health disability unless you have been told.

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.
- Be patient.

Speech or Language Impairments

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe disabilities may use communicator

boards or other assistive devices.

- Just because a person has one disability does not mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking, do not assume that they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- If you do not understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.”
- Be patient and polite and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Do not interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

This information was obtained from the website of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services – Accessibility Standards.

APPENDIX 'B'

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK FORM

(Appendix 'C' of the Municipality of Huron Shores Multi-Year Accessibility Policy)

Thank you for visiting the Municipality of Huron Shores. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs. Your feedback is important to us.

To help us better serve you by providing fully Accessible Customer Service, please complete our feedback form using this form or asking us for the form in alternative formats.

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? YES NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES SOMEWHAT NO (please explain below)

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES (please explain below) SOMEWHAT (please explain below) NO

Please add other comments you may have:

Contact information (Optional).

Thank you.

Municipality of Huron Shores
P.O. Box 460, Iron Bridge, ON P0R 1H0
Phone: 705-843-2033 * Fax: 705-843-2035
Email: email@huronshores.ca