

Caledon Votes  
**X**2010

# MUNICIPAL ELECTION

## Accessibility Plan

*“Working Towards a Fully Accessible Town of Caledon”*



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## **1.0 Mission Statement:**

To provide all candidates and electors with equal access to all election information and services aimed to ensure positive involvement in the electoral process.

## **2.0 Goal:**

To create clear and effective objectives and actions to ensure the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities have been addressed.

## **3.0 Summary:**

The Town Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal election in the Town of Caledon. In accordance with the *Municipal Act, 1996*, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* the Town Clerk shall establish policies, practices and procedures that provide appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2010 Municipal Election. Additionally, objectives and actions shall be established to ensure the 2010 Municipal Election is conducted to include respect, dignity and equal opportunity for all electors.

## **4.0 Related References:**

### **4a. Corporate Policy**

The Corporation of the Town of Caledon (hereinafter referred to as the Town) is dedicated to improving accessibility and removing barriers for people with disabilities.

The Town, through the development of policies, practices and procedures will endorse accessibility and ensure the needs of those with disabilities are met. Consideration will be given to ensure all policies, procedures and practices support independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. All services shall be delivered in a timely manner with respect to the nature of the service and if special accommodations need to be made.

### **4b. Municipal Elections Act, 1996**

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* outlines specific criteria related to electors with visual impairments as well as accessibility at all voting locations.

Section 41(3) of the *Act* states as follows:

### **Variations for electors with visual impairments**

“The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 51(1).”

Section 45(2) of the *Act* states as follows:

### **Location – accessibility**

“The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors.”

### **4c. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* lays out a road map to assist in moving Ontario forward in its thinking on accessibility measures throughout the Province. The purpose of the *Act* states as follows,

- “(a) is to benefit all Ontarians by, developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- (b) providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of

various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards.”

## **5.0 Objectives & Actions:**

### **1. Overall Review**

Review election process to ensure accountability and accessibility initiatives are implemented.

#### **Action:**

Throughout the election preparation process all accessibility initiatives will be brought to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their review and recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### **2. Voting Locations**

Ensure all voting locations used in the 2010 municipal election are fully accessible.

**Action:**

Create an accessibility audit checklist with the assistance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to use when conducting site visits to all possible voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conduct site visits at all voting locations with a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure full accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide an information report to council regarding the chosen voting locations addressing the need for the use of only those facilities that successfully passed the accessibility audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where possible, merge voting subdivisions to ensure voting locations are in close proximity to electors for ease and comfort on Election Day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure appropriate signage is posted at all voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permit the use of service animals and support persons at all voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure all last minute information and/or changes are made available on the town's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm all designated accessible parking spaces at all voting locations are in compliance with the Parking/Traffic By-law.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Communication & Information

Ensure all communication measures and information for candidates and electors are available in alternate formats, upon request.

**Action:**

Advertise all election related information on the Town's website in an easy to find accessible location.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure all accessible election documents and external websites are also available on the Town's website – preferably on the election page.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a link on the Town's website to the Feedback form dedicated to accessible initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide candidates and staff with information related to accessible customer service and ensure they know where to locate documents in large print or any other alternate format that is requested.	<input type="checkbox"/>
When possible, provide candidates and staff with additional or supplementary information on accessibility measures to aid in their campaign.	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. Staff Training

Ensure election staff training incorporates accessible customer service training.

**Action:**

The accessibility component of the Election staff training will include the following:

Brief background information on the <i>AODA</i> and the Customer Service Standard;	<input type="checkbox"/>
‘Tips and Examples’ on how to interact and communicate with person’s with disabilities and what to look for to identify if a customer requires assistance;	<input type="checkbox"/>
the Election Policy, Practices and Procedures on Accessibility;	<input type="checkbox"/>
the availability and know how of assistive devices that will be made available at all voting locations;	<input type="checkbox"/>
how to identify and interact with service animals and to follow the Town’s Accessible Customer Service Policy, Practices and Procedures;	<input type="checkbox"/>
how to recognize and assist a person that may be having difficulty accessing or using election material or devices;	<input type="checkbox"/>
how to use the audio tabulator provided at voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Voting

Ensure and maintain equal opportunity to all electors to vote as independently as possible.

### **Action:**

When deciding on voting equipment assess the accessibility accommodations to ensure they are suitable for the needs of electors with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide fully accessible voting equipment at all advance voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure all elected officials are trained on how to use accessible voting equipment and ensure instruction manuals are available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote advance voting opportunities for electors with disabilities and advertise on the town website and in the local newspapers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide additional assistive aids at all voting locations to assist voters where necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide voting opportunities at institutions in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm; and also at retirement homes that occupy 50 or more beds – as outlined in the <i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **6.0 Post Election Evaluation**

A key aspect of the Town's goal to achieve full accessibility in all the services provided is to evaluate current procedures and methods of service delivery. The 2010 Municipal Election is a key opportunity to determine, through election staff, candidate and elector feedback, what worked well and what needs improvement in the election process.

After the completion of the election, staff will compile all feedback received and prepare a report outlining areas of success and what needs improvement. This report will be used for the positive development of all future municipal elections within the Town and will help ensure the Town continues to ensure accessibility and accountability in its service delivery.

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“We choose our next world through what we learn in this one. Learn nothing, and the next world is the same as this one, all the same limitations and lead weights to overcome.” - Richard Bach



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