

Town of Spanish

Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Accessible Election Mandate

“The Town of Spanish endeavours to provide a Municipal Election that encourages participation of persons with a disability and inspires confidence.”

The Election Accessibility Plan reaffirms the Town’s commitment to ensure full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities. This Plan identifies and addresses accessibility barriers for the municipal election.

This Plan will be monitored and improved or updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise to respond to feedback from the community.

Legislative Requirements – Municipal Elections Act, 1996

Beyond individual Town’s accessibility policies, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 provides:

“Electors and candidates with disabilities

12.1(1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

Plan re barriers

(2) 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.

Report

(3) 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.

Voting Place Accessibility

45(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.”

Definitions

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines “**disability**” as,

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits are claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines “**barrier**” as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Input and Feedback

The Clerk encourages input and feedback to further enhance election accessibility. If you feel you have identified a barrier, have a recommendation to improve accessibility for the upcoming election or any other election feedback, please contact us:

Phone: 705-844-2300

Email: info@townofspanish.com

Mail: P.O. Box 70, Spanish, ON POP 2A0

Election Accessibility Plan

1. Consultation Initiatives

- Review comments from electors, candidates, and election workers regarding the 2014 election.
- Encourage the public to provide input and comment to increase understanding of providing an accessible election and encourage feedback on this plan.

2. Communication Initiatives

- Provide election information in an accessible format and provide alternative formats upon request and free of charge
- Provide election information that is informative, clear and easy to understand
- Endeavor to ensure that the Town’s website is accessibility compliant and will receive continuous updates before and throughout the election.

3. Candidate Initiatives

- Provide candidates with election information on how to make their campaign accessible and election information that is accessible.
- Candidate information session(s) will be held in an accessible location
- Provide candidates with accessible election information upon request

4. Voting Process Initiatives

- The Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities
- Election officials shall permit an elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the Election official considers necessary
- Notepads will be provided to increase communication to assist electors who are hard of hearing or deafened, if required
- Chairs or stools will be available for electors waiting in line who cannot stand for a prolonged period

5. Training of Election Officials Initiatives

- Election staff will be trained on the accessible voting options and processes
- Election staff will be trained on assisting electors with a disability upon request
- Election staff will be trained not to restrict service persons, or animals who are assisting a person with a disability

6. Post-Election Accessibility Report

- After the election, the Town will release a post-election report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.