Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman

2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan



Introduction

The Accessibility plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election in the Township of Nairn and Hyman.

The Township of Nairn and Hyman has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken during the Election process and to be reported to Council following the Election.

Objectives

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township of Nairn and Hyman will implement to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection.
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates.
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official.
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels the Township's website and social media.

Development of the Plan

This plan is a "living" document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. In order to develop the plan below, several steps were taken to ensure that statutory requirements were met, and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from AMCTO, AMO, neighbouring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups.
- Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.

Voting Methods - In-Person Voting with Paper Ballots

The Township will be using a composite paper ballot where on which electors choose their preferred candidate(s) by placing a mark, with a pen or pencil in the circle next to the name of the chosen candidate(s).

An elector with a disability may choose to have a person assist them behind the voting privacy screen. If an elector does not have a support person, trained Election Officials will be present at the voting location to provide assistance. Magnifying sheets will be provided behind each privacy voting screen for use by electors in reading the ballot.

The voting areas at each location will be set up taking into consideration the table heights and to ensure proper spacing between each area, allowing for wider aisle widths for use of a wheelchair or any other mobility device. Having accessible voting areas will allow electors, if they wish, to vote independently without the assistance of a support person.

Voting Location(s)

An accessibility assessment of the physical voting location will be conducted. For the purpose of this plan, the voting location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location. The voting location will be advertised on the Township of Nairn and Hyman website and social media accounts.

Accessible Route to Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, mobile equipment, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Doors into the Voter Location shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the International Accessibility Symbol and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the voting location. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior Voting Area will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating will be made available.

Voting Assistance

Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to the Township of Nairn and Hyman Accessibility Plan, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

Service Animals

Pursuant to the Township of Nairn and Hyman Accessibility Plan, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

Election Officials

At voting locations, upon request, Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their traditional paper ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector, determine the extent to which he/she needs assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may actually be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability.

Assistive Personal Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping at the voting location.

Vision Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with electors with hearing impairments, if required.

Candidate and Registered Third Party Assistance

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations and other designated election locations.

The Township will also work with candidates and/or registered third parties who require mandatory election documents, forms and materials in an alternate format.

In accordance with section 88.20 (8) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, expenses directly related to an individual's disability which would not have been incurred if not for the election, are not subject to the spending limit if they are incurred by a candidate or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability.

Election Official Training

The Township of Nairn and Hyman will make every effort to utilize Township resources, including staff, to be Election Officials. As a requirement under the AODA, all staff members have taken accessibility training, including accessible customer service.

Communication

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipal Office, 64 McIntyre Street, Nairn Centre, and by way of the Township's website www.nairncentre.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request. The Plan will also be provided to all registered Candidates to assist with communicating supports to electors.

Election Materials

The Township of Nairn and Hyman is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user.

The Township of Nairn and Hyman and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

General Election Materials

Large Print: Printed material generated by the Township of Nairn and Hyman can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website: Information generated by the Township of Nairn and Hyman on the website in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township of Nairn and Hyman's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Township of Nairn and Hyman shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the Township of Nairn and Hyman website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the voting place.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on Election Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Township's website.

Candidates

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario has released several quick reference documents to assist candidates with accessible elections considerations:

Reporting

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within ninety (90) days after voting day, the Township of Nairn and Hyman's Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.