



Centre Wellington

2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan
Township of Centre Wellington

Date: May 7, 2026

If you require this document in an alternate format, please contact the Returning Officer/Municipal Clerk.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Municipal Election in the Township of Centre Wellington.

The Township has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. In an effort to ensure the 2026 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, this planning document was developed in advance of the election, having regard for the lessons learned from 2022, in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election.

This plan is for the use of the 2026 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028), *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

1.1 Legislation

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended.

Section 12.1

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

Section 45 (2):

In establishing the locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

1.2 Definition of Disability

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

- (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 were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997.

1.3 Feedback

The Municipal Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. If you feel you have identified a barrier or have a recommendation to improve accessibility for the upcoming election, please provide us with your feedback on how we can make changes. You can contact our Election Officials at:

Email: elections@centrewellington.ca

Phone (Local): (226) 370-2366 **Phone (Toll-free):** 1(888) 831-7736

In-Person: Centre Wellington Municipal Office, 1 MacDonald Square, Elora, ON

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

If you require this information in a different format, please let us know.

2. OBJECTIVES

This plan is intended to highlight measures the Township will be implementing 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 electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Township's website and social media.
- That the Township accommodates accessibility needs at Voter Help Centres and communicates well in advance of accessible locations.

3. 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. To develop the plan below, several steps were taken to ensure the 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, 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 people with disabilities are provided an opportunity to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure all Election Officials recognize a Voter’s needs shall be accommodated.

4. VOTING METHODS

The Township will be working with Sequent Tech Inc. to provide Internet and Telephone Voting services to eligible voters for the 2026 Municipal Election. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via the Internet or Telephone, or in-person using technology at a Voter Help Centre during the October 13 – 26, 2026 voting period.

Tools like computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

4.1 Telephone Voting

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, date of birth, and PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may

be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options.

Sequent's telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch-tone phones and wireless devices, with the exception of rotary phones.
- Clear, plain language.
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

4.2 Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter (VIL).

Sequent's platform is fully compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and conforms to WCAG 2.2 AA standards. All interfaces are designed to support screen readers, high-contrast display modes, scalable fonts, and complete keyboard-only navigation. Accessibility compliance is validated through both automated testing tools and independent third-party audits to ensure a barrier-free voting experience for all users.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters. If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at a Voter Help Centre.

4.3 In-person Voting at Voter Help Centres

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, advance Voter Help Centres and Election Day Voter Help Centres will

be open to provide in-person internet voting opportunities via a laptop or touch-screen device.

Access to the Voter Help Centres' interior and voting area shall be level and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter. For detailed information regarding removal of barriers, refer to Schedule A on page 14.

An accessible voting area will be available at each Voter Help Centre. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

Voters may attend any Voter Help Centre throughout the voting period. The Township will be operating the following fully accessible Voter Help Centres during the Voting Period as follows:

1) Municipal Office: 1 MacDonald Square, Elora ON

Date	Time
October 19-23	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
October 26 (Election Day)	9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

2) St. John's United Church, 28 Queen Street, Belwood, ON

Date	Time
October 17	11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

3) Victoria Park Seniors Centre: 150 Albert Street W, Fergus, ON

Date	Time
October 19 & 21	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

4) Centre Wellington Sportsplex: 550 Belsyde Ave, Fergus, ON

Date	Time
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October 22 & 23	8:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
October 24 & 25	10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
October 26 (Election Day)	9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

4.4 Special Voting Provisions

Election staff shall visit sites including long-term care facilities and retirement homes, to set-up on-site voting kiosks, or bedside voting opportunities for residents, if requested. The staff will be at the following locations:

Wellington Terrace – October 14th 1pm – 4pm

474 Wellington Road 18, Fergus, Ontario N1M 0A1

Highland Manor Retirement Lodge – October 16th 1pm – 4pm

110 Belsyde Avenue, East, Fergus, Ontario N1M 1Z5

Caressant Care – October 14th 10am – 12pm

450 Queen Street, East, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2Y7

Heritage River – October 16th 9:30am – 12 pm

25 Wellington Drive, Elora, Ontario N0B 1S0

5. VOTING LOCATION(S)

An accessibility assessment of each physical polling location will be conducted. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which location(s) will be used:

5.1 Accessible Route

The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage. Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

5.2 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, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the voting location and voting area 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.

5.3 Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the voting location. Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will monitor and enforce parking at voting locations throughout the day.

6. VOTING ASSISTANCE

6.1 Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to Centre Wellington's *Telephone/Internet Voting Election Policies and Procedures for the 2026 Ontario Municipal Elections*, 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.

6.2 Service Animals

Pursuant to Centre Wellington's *Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures*, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

6.3 Election Officials

At in-person Voter Help Centres, upon request, Election Officials are available to assist any Voter who requires assistance in casting their online vote. 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.

7. COMMUNICATION

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at:

Township of Centre Wellington Municipal Office: 1 MacDonald Square,
Elora, ON, N0B 1S0

It is also available on the Township's website at:

<https://www.centrewellington.ca/election>

Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Information regarding the accessibility measures provided for the 2022 Municipal Election shall be included in general election advertising as well on the Township's website.

7.1 Election Materials

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

In the event the information is not generated by the Township or is supplied by a third party, the Township will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the Elector by providing assistive equipment.

General Election Materials

Large Print – Printed material generated by the Township will be provided in Arial font, minimum 11 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – Information generated by the Township on the website in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.1 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.

7.2 Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township'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 services are reinstated as quickly as possible and alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Township shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services 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 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.

8. STAFF TRAINING

Training will be provided to all Election Officials, Voter Help Centre staff, call centre and telephone voting support staff, and any volunteers

assigned to accessibility support roles, including those conducting Special Voting Provisions at long-term care and retirement facilities. This training will ensure that every elector is assisted in a manner that accommodates their needs while preserving their independence and dignity.

Training will be grounded in the requirements of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), and the Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2028), and will address the following areas:

- **Accessibility Awareness** - the AODA definition of disability, the four core principles of accessible service (independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity), respectful communication, and appropriate interaction with electors who use assistive devices, service animals, or support persons.
- **eVoting Platform** - navigating Sequent's internet voting system, its WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliant accessible features (screen reader support, keyboard navigation, high-contrast display, scalable fonts), and assisting electors voting via kiosk or personal device at a Voter Help Centre.
- **Telephone Voting** - the end-to-end telephone voting process, presenting ballot options clearly and neutrally, confirming selections, and supporting electors who require additional time or accommodations.
- **Voter Help Centre Operations** - physical accessibility requirements, routine checks of accessible routes and entrances, accessible voting area setup, and administration of the oath of secrecy to support persons and Friends of the Voter.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality** - all Election Officials are formally appointed and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day. Staff will be trained on ballot secrecy obligations, personal information handling, and the elector's right to receive materials in alternate formats.

Electors who wish to provide feedback on accessibility may contact the Township's Election Officials at elections@centrewellington.ca, by phone at (226) 370-2366, or toll-free at 1 (888) 831-7736.

9. CANDIDATES

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed to ensure they are fully accessible. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario has reference articles that may be of interest.

<https://www.aoda.ca/?s=election>

10. REPORTING

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

Schedule A: Checklist for Accessibility Standards

Name of Voter Help Centre: _____

Address: _____

Evaluation Completed By: _____

Assessment Criteria		Details
Signage		
1.1	Location, name and address	☐ Good sign, clearly visible with contrasting colours
Accessible Parking		
2.1	Number of accessible parking spots	☐ Minimum requirement of 1
2.2	Size of accessible parking spots	☐ Parking spot has a width of 370cm (146") ☐ Modify existing parking spots
2.3	Surface of parking spots	☐ Firm and Level
2.4	Lighting of parking lot	☐ Working lights, well lit
Exterior Pathway to Building Entrance		
3.1	Width of Pathway	☐ Route is at least 92cm (36") or wider
3.2	Level of Pathway	☐ Routh is smooth, continuous and free of obstructions
3.3	Slope of Pathway	Choose 1: ☐ No slope in hallway leading to voting locations ☐ Sloped pathway is proper slope up to 2.8° ☐ Temporary ramp can be installed
3.4	Ramp of Pathway	Choose 1: ☐ Ramp not applicable ☐ Ramp has slope > (2.9°) and < (4.8°), width of ramp > 90cm (35"), handrails height from ground between 86cm (34") and 96cm (38") ☐ Ramp with improper sized handrails ☐ Ramp with no handrails and slope less than 1:12 (4.8°) ☐ Temporary ramp can be installed

Entrance to Building		
4.1	Lighting	☐ Working lights, well lit
4.2	Door Width	Choose 1: ☐ Entry door width 89cm (35") or greater ☐ Entry door width at least 85cm (33") ☐ Entrance can be fixed (Center post removed)
4.3	Door Threshold	Choose 1: ☐ Entry threshold has no level changes over 1.2cm (1/2") ☐ Entrance can be fixed/threshold installed
4.4	Door Power Assist	Choose 1: ☐ Main entrance has a working power assist ☐ Staff to assist/doors propped open
4.5	Door Hardware	Choose 1: ☐ Door or Power Assist opener pass closed fist test ☐ Staff to assist/doors propped open
Interior Path to Voting Room		
5.1	Lighting and Surface	Choose 1: ☐ Well lit, stable, firm, slip resistant, glare-free and mats do not present slip hazards ☐ Staff present to assist
5.2	Overhanging/protruding objects	Choose 1: ☐ Head space - 210cm (83"), no protrusions ☐ Head space - 198cm (78"), no protrusions ☐ Protruding objects marked/staff to assist
5.3	Slope of Hallway (if any)	Choose 1: ☐ No slope in hallway leading to voting location ☐ Sloped hallway to voting location is proper slope up to 2.8° ☐ Temporary ramp can be installed
5.4	Ramp in Hallway (if any)	Choose 1: ☐ No ramp in hallway leading to voting location

		☐ Ramp has slope of > (2.9°) and < (4.8°), width of ramp > 90cm(35"), handrails height from ground between 86cm (34") and 96cm (38") ☐ Ramp with improper sized handrails ☐ Temporary ramp can be installed
5.5	Width of Corridor and Interior Doors	Choose 1: ☐ Corridor width 106cm (42") or greater & door width 89cm (35") = ☐ Corridor width at least 104cm (41") & door width at least 85cm (33") or Entrance can be fixed (Centre post removed)
5.6	Threshold	Choose 1: ☐ Interior threshold not over 1.2cm (1/2") ☐ Interior threshold can be modified/temporary threshold installed
Voting Room is on Ground Floor or Elevator Available		
6.1	Ground floor or elevator	Choose 1: ☐ Location is on ground floor and elevator not applicable ☐ Location not on ground floor, elevator meets criteria (signage, door width 91.5cm (36"), door closes 8 seconds, button-raised or braille, emergency alarm) and within a distance of 2500cm (27 yards) to main accessible entrance ☐ Staff required to operate elevator/key access
Accessible Washroom for Staff		
7.1	Accessible washroom available	☐ Accessible washroom available and meets requirements as below
7.2	Door Width	☐ Entry door width at least 81cm (32")
7.3	Stall Size	☐ Washroom stall size has a minimum clear turning radius of 150 cm
7.4	Accessories	☐ Washrooms meets minimal seat height 40cm (15") to 46cm (18") ☐ Grab Bar ☐ Coat Hooks ☐ Flush Controls ☐ Wash Basins ☐ Toilet Paper Dispenser ☐ Automatic hand-dryers or paper towel

*Doors propped open cannot be fire doors