

2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



SARNIA
ONTARIO

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Introduction

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan provides an overview of election initiatives aimed at improving accessibility for electors and candidates with disabilities during an election cycle.

In the conduct of the 2026 Municipal Election, the City of Sarnia is committed to having regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan is a living document that will be updated as new opportunities are identified for improving accessibility for electors and candidates with disabilities.

Accessible Customer Service

The City is providing accessible customer service through the following means:

Accessible Customer Service Training

All Election Officials will be provided with accessible customer service training.

All those participating in election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs.

Issue Identification and Support

A dedicated contact person has been assigned for anyone who encounters an accessibility issue:

Morgan Dysktra, Deputy City Clerk

Phone: 519-332-0330 x3305

Email: morgan.dykstra@sarnia.ca

Voting Method Options and Accommodations

The methods of voting for the 2026 Municipal Election have been established as:

- a. Paper Ballots with optical scan Vote Tabulators on Voting Day at in-person voting places; and
- b. Internet Voting during the defined Internet Voting Period.

In-Person Voting

With respect to the use of Paper Ballots on Voting Day at in-person Voting Places, the City of Sarnia is making voting accessible to electors with disabilities through the following means:

AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals (Ballot Marking Devices)

AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals will be available at select Voting Places which can be used by an elector to mark their ballot selections. The City's Website and Voter Information Letters will be used to communicate the Voting Places where AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals will be available.

The AutoMARK is equipped with the following accessibility features:

Audio Function

- The Elector hears the list of Candidates through headphones.
- Synthesized voice enables voter control of speech speed and volume.
- Choices may be repeated easily.
- Selections are read back to the voter at the end of the session, ensuring desired selection(s) was made.

Zoom Feature

- Electors can increase font size displayed on the viewing touch screen.
- Adjustable brightness contrast.

Sip-and-Puff Tube

- Electors who are unable to use the touch screen or touch pad can vote autonomously using a sip-and-puff tube supplied by the Elector.

Rocker Paddle or Foot-Switch Devices

- Electors can use a rocker paddle device on the floor or on their laps, allowing them to navigate and select contests and candidates.

Support Persons and Animals

Support persons and service animals are welcome in Voting Places. Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the Voter Help Centre or any Voting Place with their support person or service animal.

Curbside Voting

Curbside Voting will be available at select Voting Places, upon request, to accommodate the needs of electors with disabilities. The City's Website and Voter Information Letters will be used to communicate the Voting Places where Curbside Voting is available.

Special Voting Places in Retirement Homes and Institutions

Special Voting Places will be established at retirement homes that are occupied by 50 or more persons, and at institutions that have beds that are occupied by 20 or more persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm. The City of Sarnia will consult with administrators of retirement homes and institutions to determine how to best to administer the voting process at the respective Special Voting Places.

Voter Assistance and Supplies

When requested, an election official in a Voting Place can assist a voter with the voting process, including the marking of their ballot.

Supplies will be available at Voting Places that can assist voters with disabilities, including:

- Magnifying sheets to assist voters with visual impairments.
- Note pads and pens to assist with communication with voters who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Internet Voting

With respect to Internet Voting, the City of Sarnia is making voting accessible to voters with disabilities through the following means:

Accessible Voting Technology

Simply Voting, the supplier of the Internet Voting technology, is committed to supporting electors with disabilities and making sure the ballot works with assistive technologies. The interface of the voting website is regularly audited against Section 508 and WCAG 2.2 accessibility requirements by AccessiBe, which provides a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) and Accessibility Conformance Report. This ensures voting websites are compatible with screen-reading technology such as JAWS.

Voter Help Centre

A Voter Help Centre will be available during regular business hours during the Internet Voting Period. Voting kiosks will be available to voters who do not have

access to a computer to vote online. When requested, an Election Official in the Voter Help Centre will assist a voter with the voting process at a voting kiosk. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

Voting Places

The City is ensuring all Voting Places are accessible to electors with disabilities through the following means:

Voting Place Accessibility Audits

Each voting place selected for 2026 Municipal Election goes through a thorough review process to identify potential barriers for electors with disabilities, and a plan is created to remove potential barriers.

Greeters

Greeters will be hired to assist in enhancing voting place accessibility by assisting in the removal of potential barriers at voting places, through duties such as:

- opening doors without automated power door openers;
- helping maintain an accessible, barrier-free entrance by monitoring for obstacles;
- assisting with curbside voting procedures by notifying election officials when an elector cannot enter the voting place.

Candidate Resources

The City has published on its website the Candidates' Guide to Accessible Elections produced by The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO). This information can be used by Candidates to support accessible campaigning.

Information and Communication Standards

Accessible Formats and Communications Supports

Election information prepared by the City will be in an accessible format.

Alternative formats can be made available, upon request,

Notices will be posted in an accessible format on the City's website.

Feedback Process:

Feedback, comments and suggestions regarding the accessibility of the election is encouraged and invited. This information can be submitted on the City's website, by email, phone, mail or in person as listed below:

Website: www.sarnia.ca/election

Email: election2026@sarnia.ca

Phone: 519-332-0330 extension 3320

Mail or in Person:

City of Sarnia
Office of the City Clerk
255 Christina Street North
Sarnia, Ontario, N7T 7N2

The feedback process provides an opportunity for the City to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. Corrective measures can then be taken to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery, and offer alternative methods of providing election services.