



2026 Municipal & School Board Elections Accessibility Plan

The Corporation of the City of Oshawa
Legislative Services – Office of the City Clerk

Alternative formats of this document are available on request.

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1. Overview

The City of Oshawa's 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections Accessibility Plan outlines the measures the City will take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities throughout the election process.

This plan has been developed in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (M.E.A.), and reflects the principles and requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (A.O.D.A), the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (I.A.S.R.), and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The City Clerk responsible for an election must:

- Have regard for the needs of electors, candidates and Election Officers with disabilities;
- Ensure that Voter Assistance Centres are accessible to people with disabilities;
- Prepare accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers that could affect electors and candidates with disabilities, and make the plan available to the public prior to voting day; and
- Publish a report about the identification, removal and prevention of election barriers that affect people with disabilities within 90 days of Voting Day.

The City of Oshawa is committed to administering an accessible election and will implement this plan, along with take additional measures where possible, to address accessibility needs.

The City Clerk may revise this plan as required to ensure ongoing compliance with applicable legislation and to support accessible and inclusive municipal elections.

2. Objectives

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the City will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all Voter Assistance Centre locations are accessible;
- That people with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection, with assistance is available, if desired;
- That people with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- That people with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Elections as an elector, candidate, Election Officer, or registered third-party advertiser; and,

- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as election communications, the City's website, and social media.

3. Development of the plan

This Plan is a living document which will be updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. To develop the plan below, several steps have been taken to ensure that the statutory requirements are met, and a feasible implementation plan is in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies, and other supporting materials from Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (A.M.C.T.O.), neighbouring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and other various stakeholder groups; and
- Establishment of staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities can vote in an inclusive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officers recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated wherever possible.

3.1. Consultation

Consultation will provide a breadth of knowledge, experiences, and understanding of election accessibility considerations to ensure the Election is accessible and inclusive to all. The City shall:

- Review 2022 post-election accessibility considerations with the 2026 Elections Team and Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee (O.A.A.C);
- Consult on election accessibility considerations with people with lived experience to ensure election planning meets the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Community Development branch, etc.); and
- Attend City community events to raise awareness of the accessibility of the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections.

4. Review and Identify Barriers to Accessibility

4.1. Conduct post-election accessibility survey

A post-election survey will be prepared asking voters for feedback on the accessibility of the City's elections. This will provide valuable feedback to City staff on the accessibility

accomplishments in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections and further assist in planning future elections in the City.

5. Communications

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections Accessibility Plan will be made available at City Hall and by way of the City's election website www.voteoshawa.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request. Information regarding the accessibility measures provided for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections shall be included in general election advertising as well as in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections Nomination Package.

5.1. Election Materials

The City is required, as per the provincial Accessible Customer Service Standards, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that considers 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 City 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 City or is supplied by a third party, the City will make reasonable efforts 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 City will be provided in a sans serif font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – The elections website (voteoshawa.ca) will be an updated landing page and act as a one-stop shop for all election matters. Like all of Oshawa's web pages, it will be in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA. Oshawa shall ensure all information posted is accessible and available in alternate accessible formats upon request. The website will allow visitors to request alternative formats and subscribe to website changes.

Continuously updating election information on the City's website to reflect the most recent developments and information.

An opportunity to provide feedback or to seek assistance on the website will be provided.

Video – Promotional and educational (how-to) videos created for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections shall incorporate audio and captioning.

Efforts will be made to explore options for Voter Information Letter formatting, so they are easily identifiable and visually different from regular mail.

5.2. Issue notice of changes and emergencies

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the City's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary service disruption, Election Officials will make 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 City shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption.

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, Legislative Services shall provide public notice on the City's main website and the election website, at the physical site of the disruption and when possible, in the local media. The notice shall include 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 but are not limited to Voter Assistance Centres, 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 voting period or on Voting Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time:

- on the City's website [Oshawa.ca](https://oshawa.ca)
- on the City's election website voteoshawa.ca
- on Facebook: [@oshawacity](https://www.facebook.com/oshawacity)
- on LinkedIn: [@cityofoshawa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cityofoshawa)
- at the site of the disruption
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued

5.3. Deliver training, documents and information in alternative formats

The Candidate Nomination Package, Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario's (A.M.C.T.O.) Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections, and other associated information will be provided in various formats.

Accessibility training for Election Officials will be provided in various formats, such as a link to Accessibility Ontario/Access Forward resources and training.

Other information regarding candidates, Voter Assistance Centres, voter registration etc. will be posted on the website, and paper copies will be provided if necessary.

5.4. Supply accessible information to stakeholders

Assistive groups will be approached to help distribute information to members/voters about the voting options available to them.

5.5. Enable accessible feedback

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to Legislative Services through a variety of methods as outlined in Section 10 of this plan.

6. Voting Methods

6.1. Accessible Voting Locations

An accessibility site audit of each physical Voter Assistance Centre location will be conducted. Audits shall ensure that voting locations are supportive of the needs of Election Officials and voters and shall take into account the following considerations:

6.2. Accessible Transit

Proximity of the Voter Assistance Centre to accessible public transit routes shall be a consideration when selecting Voter Assistance Centres; however, the Voter Assistance Centre may not necessarily be located on the same street as the transit stop. Identification of the Voter Assistance Centre shall be clearly visible from the street. If the distance of the Voter Assistance Centre to a transit stop is too far for a voter, they may choose to attend a different location, as per the sections on flexible Voter Assistance Centres below.

6.3. Parking

Free accessible parking shall be provided at all Voter Assistance Centre locations. The designated barrier-free 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.

6.4. Ingress and Egress

The route to the entrance of the Voter Assistance Centre shall be accessible, unobstructed and wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, mobility scooter, other assistive device, and/or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the Voter Assistance Centre and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the Voter Assistance Centre's hours.

Lineups and the flow of voters into and out of Voter Assistance Centres shall remain unobstructed as much as possible, and clear barrier-free pathways of travel shall be maintained. Additional seating shall be provided for those individuals who may not have the ability to wait in line. Access to emergency exits shall be unobstructed and fully accessible if evacuation is required. Routine checks of entrance and egress routes will be made throughout Voting Day.

6.5. Provide flexible Voter Assistance Centres - Advance Voting

During advance voting, voters can vote in person by internet on City provided devices at any Voter Assistance Centre location across the City, which will provide more flexibility for all voters. Advance voting will occur October 13-23, 2026.

6.6. Provide flexible Voter Assistance Centres – Voting Day

On Voting Day, voters can vote by paper ballot at any location within their ward or vote by internet using City provided devices. Offering both options provides greater flexibility for all voters.

6.7. Accessible signage

Legislative Services will ensure that signage is placed in the appropriate areas to guide voters to the Voter Assistance Centre. Signage will have large print with an acceptable contrast to the background and will be easy to read and understand. Where possible, accessible signage will indicate that the accessible entrance is the same as the main entrance.

6.8. Provide accessible voting equipment at City Hall

On Voting Day, City Hall will be equipped with vote tabulators and ballot marking devices, which permit the independent casting of ballots by individuals with accessibility needs or those who cannot mark a paper ballot with a ballot marking pen. Voters with disabilities are eligible to attend City Hall to vote regardless of their ward or poll.

7. Voting Methods

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections will be conducted with Voatz to provide eligible voters with secure internet voting in addition to paper ballot voting using vote tabulators. This includes offering eligible voters with the option to vote independently and conveniently from anywhere within Canada via internet between October 13 – 26, 2026. On Voting Day, October 26, 2026, voters can attend any of the Voter Assistance Centre's within their Ward to cast a paper ballot or vote by internet using City provided devices

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other personal devices can present enhanced accessible opportunities for people with disabilities, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

The Voatz system provides voters with the capability and convenience to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates a voting process for people with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation to access a physical Voter Assistance Centre. Additionally, people who have personal assistive devices can use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

Allowing voting online eliminates the need for voters to attend a specific voting location, and using a variety of methods, there is an increased ability for the voter to cast their ballot without any assistance. This provides people with disabilities with the same independence, privacy, and convenience in participating in the election as other voters. If individuals require assistance with the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at in-person Voter Assistance Centres during the Voting Period, as well as over the phone via the Election Help Line, 905-436-5639

7.1. Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, or computer, and any accompanying assistive devices or software. Access to the registration website is provided in the Voter Information Letter, including the Registration PIN and qualifying information. Eligible voters must verify their personal information using an email address or cell phone number in order to receive their Voting PIN to cast their ballot.

The Voatz system has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), so that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the online voting system. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

7.2. In-person Voting at Voter Assistance Centres

Eligible voters participating in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections are strongly encouraged to vote from the convenience of their home via online voting during the Voting Period for the best possible voting experience. However, for those individuals without means to access voting via internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, Voter Assistance Centres will be open to provide in-person internet voting opportunities via a public-use computer, also referred to as a voting kiosk.

Access to the interior of the Voter Assistance Centre and voting area shall be firm, 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 and paths of travel shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or mobility device.

A minimum of one accessible voting kiosk will be available at each Voter Assistance Centre. These areas shall be low enough in height and have a wide, unobstructed floor area to allow individuals who use a mobility device to vote independently and privately. Such kiosks will be identified with the International Symbol of Accessibility. Voters may attend any Voter Assistance Centre location throughout the voting period, regardless of their ward of residence within Oshawa.

On Voting Day (October 26) ballots will be available at all Voter Assistance Centres. Voters can vote at any location in their ward, which will be indicated on their Voter Information Letter (V.I.L.). To use accessible voting equipment, any voter requiring the use of such equipment can attend the Voter Assistance Centre at City Hall (50 Centre Street South).

Additionally, magnifying sheets will be available at all Voter Assistance Centres to assist voters with low vision. Note pads and pens will be made available to assist communication with voters who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

The City will be operating the following Voter Assistance Centres during the 2026 Voting Period:

- **Oshawa City Hall – Committee Room** (50 Centre Street South)
 - Tuesday, October 13, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Wednesday, October 14, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Thursday, October 15, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Friday, October 16, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Saturday, October 17, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Monday, October 19, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Tuesday, October 20, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Wednesday, October 21, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Thursday, October 22, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Friday, October 23, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Free **30 minute** parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Please use main entrance.
- **South Oshawa Community Centre – Meeting Rooms 1 & 2** (1455 Cedar Street)
 - Wednesday, October 14, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Please use main entrance.
- **Northview Community Centre – Gymnasium** (150 Beatrice Street East)
 - Thursday, October 15, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Please use main entrance.
- **Civic Recreation Complex – Bobby Orr Lounge** (99 Thornton Road South)
 - Friday, October 16, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Please use main entrance.
- **Donevan Recreation Complex – Fitness Room** (171 Harmony Road South)
 - Saturday, October 17, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Please use main entrance.
- **Delpark Homes – Gymnasium** (1661 Harmony Road North)
 - Monday, October 19, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via Durham Transit. Either the main entrance (south side of building) or arena entrance (north side of building) can be used.

7.3. Special Voter Assistance Centres

Voting opportunities will be provided to residents of Special Voter Assistance Centres which are:

- Retirement homes where 50 or more beds are occupied;
- Institutions (Hospital, Long Term Care Homes etc.) where 20 or more beds are occupied by persons with disabilities or chronic illness.

7.4. Allow voting by proxy

If a voter is unable to vote in person and does not wish to vote by internet, they may choose to appoint another qualified voter to vote with a paper ballot on Voting Day on their behalf. The appointment must be completed using the prescribed appointment of voting proxy form.

8. Voter Assistance

8.1. Designated Accessible Technology Voting Location

The Voting location held at City Hall on Voting Day will be equipped with an accessible voting system that will permit the independent casting of ballots by individuals with accessibility needs or those who cannot mark a paper ballot with a ballot marking Pen.

The system consists of the following components:

1. A vote capture and marking device which captures a voter's contest choices by marking a verified voting card in a readable format;
2. A Voting Handheld Controller and a set of headphones that a Voter uses to interact with the system that can make selections using an audio-tactile keypad or with Braille legends;
3. Other input interfaces as necessary to accommodate a Voter's individual needs, including:
 - a) Rocker switch device or a Sip and Puff Input Interface; or,
 - b) Paddle Button Input Interface

- c) Zoomed and high-contrast display modes to make on-screen text more readable.

The voter will hear an audio presentation of the ballot through the available headphones and use the handheld controller or other assistive devices, as necessary, to adjust the volume, speed of the audio presentation, move between contests, and select votes. The audio presentation will confirm votes selected for Voter verification. When the Voter has made and confirmed all their selections, they will use the handheld controller or optional interface devices to direct the ballot marking device to print a paper ballot. The ballot marking device will automatically process a standard paper ballot, printing markings beside the name(s) of the candidate(s) chosen by the voter.

The printed ballot is indistinguishable from a ballot marked by hand. The ballot marking device contains a library of random hand-made marking images that it uses to print the ballot so the printed markings in the defined area look just like marks made by hand with a ballot marking pen.

Instructions on how to use assistive devices will be available on the City of Oshawa's webpage and in print at the City Hall Voter Assistance Centre. An Election Official will also be trained and available to assist any voter with using the device upon request.

8.2. Election Officials

At in person Voter Assistance Centres, upon request, any Designated Election Official who has taken an oath or affirmation of secrecy from the Clerk may assist a Voter in any manner if they are unable to attend to a voting booth independently; including: assisting a voter to mark their ballot behind a voting booth or in the voter's apartment/room at any Special Voter Assistance Centre.

8.3. Support person/ Friend of the Voter

A voter may receive assistance from a friend to mark their ballot properly, provided the friend takes an oath or affirmation of secrecy from the Election Official providing the voter's ballot.

8.4. Service Animals

Any person with a disability accompanied by a service animal may enter Legislative Services or any Voter Assistance Centre with their service animal.

8.5. Supply tools/supplies to facilitate voting for persons with disabilities

Magnification screens, note pads, and pens will be available at all Voter Assistance Centres.

8.6. Enable online access to the voters' list

Elections Ontario will allow residents to check if they are on the voters' list, and add their name if they are not, on registertovoteon.ca until August 12. The City of Oshawa website will provide a link to this website. After September 1st, residents can check if they are on the voters' list and add themselves to it by using the Voter Registration Module that will be available online.

This could improve waiting times for voting on Voting Day and allows residents to update their information online without visiting Legislative Services.

9. Deliver Accessibility Training

9.1. Provide candidates with information on accessibility

The A.M.C.T.O. Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections will be provided the City's website as a Candidate Resource.

9.2. Deliver accessibility training to election officials

All Election Officials will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs. Training attendance will be tracked, and any Election Official that does not complete the accessibility training will be ineligible to work on Voting Day. Training will meet the requirements of the A.O.D.A. and the I.A.S.R. and cover the *Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training will include:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election assistance to voters; services; and
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

The City will develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to effectively serve voters with disabilities and shall make reasonable efforts to provide individual accommodations available upon request to staff during training and election period deployment.

Pursuant to provincial accessibility standards requirements, a record of all Election Officer training shall be maintained.

10. Feedback Process

Legislative Services staff are available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election. Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to Legislative Services through a variety of methods including:

1. Telephone: 905-436-3311
2. In Person: 50 Centre Street South, Oshawa
3. Fax: 905-436-5697
4. Email: vote@oshawa.ca
5. Mail: Legislative Services, 5th Floor – Rundle Tower
50 Centre Street South, Oshawa, L1H 3Z7

The [Service Oshawa general service request page](#) can also be used to file complaints, provide compliments or request accessible formats.

The feedback process provides Legislative Services with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

Additionally, individual members of our election team can be contacted directly for assistance:

Krystal Christopher, Supervisor of Elections and Special Projects

E-mail: KChristopher@oshawa.ca

Phone: 905-436-3311, Ext. 2476

Ashley MacDougall, Supervisor of Legislative and Accessibility

E-mail: Ashley.Macdougall@oshawa.ca

Phone: 905-436-3311, Ext. 2310

Laura Davis, Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy City Clerk

E-mail: LDavis@oshawa.ca

Phone: 905-436-3311, Ext. 2475

Mary Medeiros, Director, Legislative Services/City Clerk

E-mail: MMedeiros@oshawa.ca

Phone: 905-436-3311, Ext. 2239

11. Reporting

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the City Clerk shall prepare and publish a report on how Oshawa identified, removed and prevented barriers for electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will be made public and available on the City's website.

12. Candidates

Candidates should also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials, and canvassing should all be reviewed in order ensure that they are fully accessible. Several resources are available to provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible:

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)
- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation – Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Constituency, Riding Association, Central Party and Campaign Offices](#)
- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation – Quick Reference Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings](#)
- [AMCTO Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections](#)

12.1. Exclude campaign expenses related to a disability

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

13. Additional Information and Resources

13.1. City of Oshawa – Election Website

[The City of Oshawa's election website](#) is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year:

13.2. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election Website

[The ministry's municipal elections website](#) contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2026 Municipal Elections Guides for Candidates and Third Party Advertisers and the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities.

13.3. Service Ontario – e-Laws

[The e-laws website](#) contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.