



# **2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan**

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Objectives .....	2
Development of the Plan .....	2
Voting Location .....	2
Assistance to Candidates .....	5
Service Animals .....	5
Campaign Expenses .....	5
Voting Methods .....	5
Internet Voting .....	5
In-person Voting (Tabulators) .....	6
Communications .....	6
Alternate Formats .....	6
General Election Material .....	6
Service Disruptions .....	7
Feedback .....	7

## Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

The Town of East Gwillimbury has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. Commitment has been made in the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities. To ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with 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 and reported following the election.

In addition to the Town's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, the following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

### **Number and location of voting places**

**45** (1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (1).

### **Accessibility**

(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).

### **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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

### **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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

### **Variations for electors with visual impairments**

**43** (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

## Objectives

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

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- That the two voting methods are accessible;
- 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 such as the Voter Information Letter, newspaper, media launches, the Town's website and social media (Facebook, Twitter)

## Development of the Plan

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

During the development process of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were implemented:

1. The purposed Election Accessibility Plan was reviewed by the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee to confirm needs are being met;
2. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voters needs are to be accommodated whenever possible.

Following the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## Voting Location

For the purpose of this plan, Voting Location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

To ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a voting location.

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each voting location has been conducted to ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with disabilities. The site location accessibility audit checklist is included as Appendix "A" to this document.

### **Accessible Route**

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.

### **Parking**

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided in close proximity to the entrance of the Voting Location where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

### **Entrance/Exit to the Voting Location**

All entrances to the Voting Location will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior Voting Area is wide enough for a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and easily. Should doors into the interior Voting Area not be accessible, the doors shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout 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.

### **Support Persons**

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability.

### **Assistive Personal Equipment**

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including but not limited to wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

## **Service Animals**

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in voting places.

## **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 the hearing impaired if required.

## **Voting Location Institutions**

The Municipal Elections Act requires that on voting day, a voting location shall be provided on the premises of the following:

### **Voting places in institutions, retirement homes**

**45 (7)** On voting day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;

An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm;

A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3)

### **Attendance on resident**

(8) The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (8)

### **Attendance on electors with disabilities**

(9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).

For the 2022 Municipal Election, the following institution locations have been identified:

- Shyan Byrne Residential Home For Special Care 379 Queensville Sideroad East
- Valley View Rest Home 1345 Ravenshoe Road

- The Newmarket Residence Inc 3248 Davis Drive
- Gordon's Residential Home 105 Sand Road
- Country Living Retirement Home 5091 Mount Albert Road
- Queenview Residential Home 2729 Doane Road
- Jay-Kare Lodge 908 Mount Albert Road
- Cedar Lane Residential Home 19704 Holland Landing Road

## Assistance to Candidates

### Service Animals

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

### Campaign Expenses

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.

## Voting Methods

### Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using the internet on a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet device. Any accompanying assistive devices or software voters normally use when browsing the internet can also be used when casting a ballot online.

Potential Barriers with Internet Voting:

- Voters may not be comfortable with using the internet.
- Voters' information may be incorrect on their Voter Information Letter, or they did not receive a letter.

Prevention and Removal of Barriers with Internet Voting:

- The online voting system has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons 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.

- Voters that want to use the internet can call the Voter Help Line, or can attend a Voting Location to get in-person assistance.
- Voters are strongly encouraged to ensure they are on the Municipal Voters' List, or update their information by visiting [www.egvotes.ca](http://www.egvotes.ca)

### In-person Voting (Tabulators)

Visually-impaired voters have the opportunity to mark their ballot using voting equipment equipped with an audio ballot. Eligible voters will be able to mark and cast their ballots in total privacy, without the help of an Election Official or friend. The eligible voter will listen to a "voice" explaining the voting process, the list of certified candidates, and how to cast the vote, and rocker paddles and sip/puff tubes will be available which will assist those eligible voters with limited mobility to mark their ballot independently. An elector with a disability can also choose to have a person assist them behind the voting screen.

### Communications

The Town 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 Town 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 Town or is supplied by a third party, the Town 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 Material

Large Print – printed material generated by the Town will be provided in an Arial font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – information generated by the Town on the website regarding the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA standard, 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 Town'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 Town will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

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

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of Voting Locations during the advance vote or on the final voting day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

- on the Town's website and election website;
- on Facebook;
- on Twitter;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

## Feedback

The Town welcomes customer feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

In addition, staff working in Town facilities can complete the feedback form for submission on behalf of a person with a disability. The form may be submitted at the Polling Location or to the Clerks Department by any one of the following methods:

- In Person or Mail: Town of East Gwillimbury  
Elections Services  
19000 Leslie Street,  
Sharon, ON, L0G 1V0
- E-mail: [elections@eastgwillimbury.ca](mailto:elections@eastgwillimbury.ca)

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

Appendix A - Site Location Accessibility Audit Checklist

Voting Location Accessibility Checklist
Voting Location:
Ward Number:
Facility Type:
Date of Review:

Poll Information
No. of Polls: N/A
Eligible Voters:
Tables Available:
Chairs Available:

**1. Exterior Access:**

**Comments**

Is there Exterior Signage?	Yes	No	
Is the identifier clearly visible from the street and sidewalk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Is there accessible parking?	Yes	No	
What is the total number of parking spaces on site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
What is the total number of accessible parking spaces on site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the accessible parking spaces at least 2400 mm (95:) in width?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the accessible parking spaces located on a firm, level surface?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the accessible parking spaces designated by a vertical sign?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the accessible parking spaces designated by markings on the pavement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the parking area well lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Is there an unobstructed path from parking to main entrance?	Yes	No	
Is the maximum runing slope of the walkway not steeper than 1:20?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are curb cuts provided to the barrier-free path of travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the approach to the voting area easy to travel (no broken pavement or potholes)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a ramp located in the barrier-free path of travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the ramp have a maximum slope of 1:12 or less?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the width of the ramp between handrails 910 mm (36") or greater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If the ramp is longer than 9 m (29.5") is there a landing with minimum dimensions of 1500 mm x 1500 mm (5'x5')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are all landings, including the top and bottom 1500 mm x 1500 mm (5' x 5')?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the path well lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix A - Site Location Accessibility Audit Checklist

**2. Interior Access**

<b>Is there an accessible entrance into the building?</b>		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the entrance well lit?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the threshold at the entrance 13mm (1/2") or less?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Does the main accessible entrance have an automatic door opener?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the entrance clearly marked with signage?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Are interior corridors and doorways accessible?</b>		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the elevator clearly visible or is there adequate signage?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the area free of obstacles? (no uneven surfaces, tripping hazards)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is there level access from the entrance of the voting location to the voting area?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the flooring non-slip, even and level?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**3. Voting Location**

	Is the voting location well lit?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is there enough space inside the voting area for a wheelchair to move easily?					

<b>Does the building have an accessible washroom for staff?</b>		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is the washroom clearly identified by signage?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**4. Internet & Infrastructure**

	Is there an internet connection available? (fibre optic, DSL, etc.)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	How fast is the connection?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	How reliable is the connection?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	What is the range of the wireless connection in the building?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	How many E-pollbooks/Laptops/Devices will be utilized at the voting location?					
	How many electrical outlets are located in the room/facility space?					