



2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

This document is available in an accessible alternate format by request.

Reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee
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1 Introduction and Purpose

The Elections Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) supports and strengthens the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury’s (the “Town”) commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. The Municipal Clerk is responsible for meeting legislative requirements under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (the MEA)* and for overseeing the administration of the municipal election.

Some of the legislative requirements under the *MEA* include:

- Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Accessible Customer Service Standards must be followed when conducting a municipal election;
- Section 12.1 (2) requires that the Clerk prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election;
- Section 12.1 (3) requires that 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 41 (3) states that 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 assistance; and
- Section 45 (2) states that in establishing the locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

The Town is committed to ensuring the 2026 Municipal Election is accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities, and providing services that respect the dignity and independence of electors with disabilities.

The mission of this Plan is to ensure that the municipal election is conducted in a manner that provides candidates and electors with disabilities full and equal access to all election information and services, including at Voter Help Centres.

This Plan will be presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for feedback and comments and provides an overview of the following items:

- developing and delivering accessibility training to all Election Officials;
- providing election information to the public in accessible formats;
- offering accessible voting methods and accessible election communications;
- ensuring all voting locations are accessible to electors with disabilities;
- providing assistance to candidates and electors with disabilities; and

- continuing consultation with individuals and groups knowledgeable about the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this document is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience. The Town will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice.

2 Accessibility Training for Election Staff

All staff carrying out election duties, also known as Election Officials, will complete Accessible Customer Service Training, as outlined in Appendix A of this Plan and specific election training to comply with the municipal Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The training will ensure Election Officials recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Accessibility training will include:

- communicating with persons with various types of disabilities including invisible;
- interacting with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, a support person or a guide dog or service animal;
- explaining internet and telephone voting;
- creating a barrier-free voting location;
- explaining the availability of accessibility supports, including large-print candidate lists, magnification devices, and other assistive tools;
- assisting a person having difficulty accessing election information or services; and
- providing voter assistance, if requested.

To support accessible service delivery, the Town will also develop and provide “how-to” guides and reference materials in easy-to-understand, accessible formats. These guides will use plain language, clear layouts, and accessible document standards so that Election Officials have practical tools to assist voters effectively and consistently.

3 Provision of Election Information

Election information will be provided in accessible or alternative formats to electors and candidates with disabilities upon request. The Clerk will work with the requester to determine the most appropriate format based on their individual needs.

Requests for accessible formats may be made by contacting the Clerk’s Office by phone at 905-775-5366 or by email at accessibility@townofbwg.com.

The Town will respond to requests as quickly as possible and will make every reasonable effort to provide information in a format that is timely and usable for the requester.

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, public notice will be posted on the Town's website and shared through local media. The notice will explain the reason for the disruption, the expected duration, and any alternative methods available to access the information or service. Every effort will be made to continue providing accessible options during the disruption. A sample Notice of Temporary Service Disruption is included as Appendix B.

4 Accessible Voting Methods and Communication

The 2026 Municipal Election will be conducted using internet and telephone voting through the Simply Voting system. These voting options are designed to support independence, dignity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for all electors. Voters may cast their ballot from any telephone equipped with assistive technology or from any computer or personal device with an internet connection.

Internet and telephone voting include built-in accessibility features. Internet voting provides clear and easy-to-follow menus, adjustable font sizes, and compatibility with screen readers. Telephone voting offers clear audio prompts, adjustable volume, and TTY (teletypewriter) compatibility.

The Simply Voting system meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) so that persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the online voting platform. The system supports recognized accessibility principles, including compatibility with assistive technologies.

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Town will provide election information to candidates and electors with disabilities in accessible or alternative formats upon request. The Clerk will work with the requester to determine a format that best meets their individual needs.

Printed materials produced by the Town will follow established accessibility best practices, including the use of accessible fonts, high colour contrast, and appropriate text sizes consistent with the [Canadian National Institute for the Blind Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines](#). Communication and promotional initiatives will be designed to raise awareness of accessible voting options and to ensure voters have the information they need to participate fully in the election.

All election information posted on the Town's website will comply with IASR accessibility requirements. Website content will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that candidates and electors have clear, accurate, and accessible information.

The Town will share election information and related accessibility tools using a variety of accessible methods, including online content, advertising, printed materials, and outreach at Town events.

5 Accessible Voter Help Centres and Mobile Voting Locations

Although most electors will be able to vote from their own devices, in-person assistance will also be available at designated Voter Help Centres. These centres are intended to support voters who require help using the voting system or who need access to technology.

Voter Help Centres will be located at:

- The Town Administration Office – Units 7 and 8, 100 Dissette Street, and
- The Zima Room at the BWG Library and Cultural Centre – 425 Holland Street West

Centres will operate during scheduled dates and hours between October 16 and October 26.

Designated accessible parking spaces are available at both locations and are clearly marked and located close to building entrances. High-contrast directional signage will be posted to guide voters from parking areas and entrances to the voting area. Signage will use plain language, large print, and accessible wayfinding principles.

Each Voter Help Centre will have level, step-free access. Entrances will be wide enough for mobility devices. Automatic door openers will be used where available, and staff will provide assistance to ensure accessible entry when needed.

Carpets and floor mats will be secured and kept flush with the floor to prevent tripping hazards, and seating will be available for voters who need it.

Voting kiosks will be accessible in height and layout to ensure voters using mobility aids can vote comfortably, independently, and privately. Additional supports, including magnifying sheets, pen and notepads, and large-print candidate lists, will be available to assist voters as needed.

Voters with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting kiosk area or may request assistance from Election Officials. Staff will work with the voter to

determine the type and level of assistance needed. Under the Municipal Elections Act, when voting assistance is requested, the required *Request for Voting Assistance Oath* must be completed and signed in accordance with legislated procedures.

In accordance with By-law 2017-38, proxy voting is not permitted for the 2026 Municipal Election, as voting will be conducted exclusively through internet and telephone methods.

Before the Voting Period begins, all Voter Help Centre layouts and processes will be reviewed using an accessibility checklist to identify and remove potential barriers. Election Officials will complete a Voting Place Site Evaluation Form for each location and will continue to monitor sites throughout the Voting Period to ensure barrier-free paths of travel, adequate lighting, clear signage, and proper operation of accessible features.

To support equitable access, Mobile Voter Help Centres will be established at qualifying facilities. These centres will provide eligible residents with the opportunity to vote on site during designated hours and will offer accessible equipment, alternative formats where required, and assistance from trained election staff. Mobile Voter Help Centres will be established at:

- institutions where 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill, or infirm; and
- retirement homes where 50 or more beds are occupied.

6 Accessing Election Support and Resources

Detailed information about each voting method is available in the BWG 2026 Municipal Election Procedures on the Town's website or from the Clerk's Office. Step-by-step voter experience videos will also be posted on the Town's election website and social media channels to help guide electors through the voting process and available accessibility features.

Residents can use the Town's website to check whether they are on the voters' list, add their name if they are not listed, or update and correct their information as needed.

Election-related documents, including the 2026 Municipal Election Procedures, are available in accessible or alternative formats upon request. Requests can be made by contacting the Clerk's Office at 905-775-5366.

Voters may obtain assistance through the following options:

- Dedicated election hotline: 905-775-5366 ext VOTE (8683)
- Email: vote@townofbwg.com
- Election chatbot on the Town's election webpage
- In person at any Voter Help Centre during scheduled hours

Voting kiosks at Voter Help Centres include touch-screen computers for internet voting. These kiosks are designed to support voters with disabilities in casting their ballots independently and privately. Trained Election Officials will be available on site to provide assistance upon request, and support persons and service animals will be accommodated.

In the event of a disruption that affects the accessibility of a Voter Help Centre, a Notice of Temporary Service Disruption (Appendix B) will be posted on the Town's website, social media channels, and at the location of the disruption. Voting will continue to be available through personal devices and internet connections.

Candidates may be accompanied by a service animal and/or a support person at all designated election locations. Upon filing their nomination forms, candidates will receive the [AMCTO Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections](#) and a copy of this Elections Accessibility Plan.

The Clerk will work with candidates and registered third parties who require election documents, forms, or materials in accessible or alternative formats.

Expenses incurred by a candidate with a disability or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and that would not have been incurred but for the election, will be excluded from the candidate's permitted spending limit

7 Ongoing Improvement and Feedback

This Plan has been developed in consultation with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee, whose members provide valuable knowledge and expertise on accessibility matters.

Staff in the Clerk's Department are available throughout the election to assist with any questions or concerns related to accessibility. Residents may contact the Clerk's Office at 905-775-5366 for information, assistance, or to provide feedback.

To support ongoing improvement, feedback forms will be available online and at all Voter Help Centres. A copy of the Accessible Elections Feedback Form is included as Appendix C.

Following the election, the Clerk will prepare a Post-Election Accessibility Report outlining actions taken to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. This report will be posted on the Town's website in an accessible format and shared with disability organizations and other stakeholders upon request.

Feedback helps the Town improve services, address training needs, and enhance accessibility for future elections. All comments received will be reviewed and considered as part of ongoing accessibility planning.

The Town welcomes feedback on this Plan and on election accessibility at any time. This Plan is a living document and may be updated as improvements are identified.

Feedback may be submitted using any of the following methods:

- Telephone: 905-775-5366
- Email: clerk@townofbwg.com
- In person: Clerk's Office, 100 Dissette Street, Units 7 and 8, Bradford, Ontario
- By mail: Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, PO Box 100, Bradford, Ontario L3Z 2A7

8 Helpful Resources

[Please visit our website for more information on the 2026 Municipal Election](#)

[Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Report](#)

Link to the BWG 2026 Municipal Election Procedures

Appendix A – Accessible Customer Service Training

Assisting a Person with a Disability

- Greet the voter by identifying yourself and ask, “How may I help you?”
- Let the person guide you as to what kind of assistance they need. Advise electors that assistance is available (in varying forms) if required by periodically addressing any line-ups that may occur.
- Speak directly to the person with the disability, not to the person who may accompany them.
- Do not assume that a person with a disability has a developmental disability.
- Focus on abilities not disabilities.
- Regularly monitor the electors and their concerns to ensure that their needs are met. For example, if an individual with a walker is in a long line, staff should observe and if the elector is having difficulties offer a chair and ensure their place is saved in the voting line up.
- Conduct routine checks of the Voter Help Centre to ensure accessible features are maintained (i.e. check access doors, make sure mats haven’t shifted).
- Offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building.
- Observe electors during discussions with them, and if it appears that the voter is having difficulty understanding, ensure that the voter is able to clearly see the speaker.
- Allow individuals to participate at their own pace.
- Be patient, do not try to rush individuals.
- Listen carefully, if you do not fully understand what is required, respectfully ask for directions to be repeated.
- Do not raise your voice unless requested to do so.
- Be familiar with your location and know the most accessible routes. Remember, one small step can be a huge barrier to someone who has a physical disability or is using mobility aids.
- A person with a disability will have the same needs as everyone else. Respect the individual as a human being. Be yourself. It is okay not to know how to assist

someone. Consider interaction with a person with a disability as an opportunity to learn about living with a disability.

Serving a Person with a Disability who is Utilizing an Mobility Aid or Assistive Device

- Permit voters using mobility aids and assistive devices (e.g. crutches, canes, wheelchairs, scooters) to keep them within their reach.
- Permit voters to sit down rather than having them stand for more than a few minutes.
- Ensure those who are providing service or answering enquiries are at eye level with the voter.
- Do not lean onto or touch a person's mobility aid or assistive device, including wheelchairs and do not move a person's wheelchair without the owner's prior permission/instruction.
- Remove obstacles to ensure clear passage.

Serving a Person with a Vision Disability

- When offering the voter a seat, place their hand on the back or arm of the seat, verbal cues may be helpful as well.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Let the voter know if you move or need to end the conversation.
- Inform the voter that a magnifier sheet is available at each voting booth location.
- Inform the voter of the voting technologies that are available. If requested, the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) may assist the elector with voting by reading out loud the list of candidates, and their affiliations. Persons with a vision disability can identify the candidate of their choice and the DRO may cast the vote appropriately.

Serving a Person with a Speech Disability

- Do not finish the person's sentences.
- If clarification is needed, reword what you think the person is saying then wait for them to confirm that you have understood them correctly.

- Do not assume that you must speak more loudly or more slowly to the person with a speech disability. Be patient and allow the person to express themselves.
- Never pretend to understand what the person has said. Ask them to repeat their question or answer as often as is required for you to understand.

Serving a Person who is Hard of Hearing or Deaf

- If a sign language interpreter is available, seat the interpreter beside staff, across from the person who is hard of hearing or deaf.
- Remember, the interpreter facilitates communication and should not be consulted as an active participant in the conversation.
- Maintain eye contact with the person who is hard of hearing or deaf when asking and responding to questions and when that person is asking and responding to questions.
- If the voter can lip read, then look directly at the person, speak clearly and at a normal pace. Do not exaggerate lip movement or shout. Only raise your voice if requested to do so. Place yourself facing the light source. Keep your hands, food or cups away from your mouth while speaking.
- Remember, if you need to get the attention of the voter touch them lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand discreetly.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.
- If you are still having difficulty communicating, you may want to try written communication – have a pad and pen nearby. Note, however, that many of the Deaf consider American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language and English as their second language. Thus, they may not be fluent in spoken or written English.

Serving a Person with an Invisible Disability

Many disabilities are not immediately visible. These may include learning disabilities, autism, mental health conditions, chronic pain, brain injuries, epilepsy, anxiety disorders, or other conditions that affect how a person processes information, communicates, or interacts with their environment.

- Do not assume that a person does not need assistance simply because a disability is not visible.
- Be patient and respectful if a voter appears confused, anxious, or overwhelmed.
- Provide clear, simple, step-by-step explanations and repeat information when needed.

- Avoid using complex language or speaking too quickly.
- Offer to provide information in a different way, such as in writing, if the voter is having difficulty understanding verbal instructions.
- Be prepared to allow extra time for the voter to process information and complete tasks.
- If a voter requests accommodation or assistance, accept the request without requiring the person to explain or justify their disability.
- Remain calm and supportive if a voter becomes stressed or frustrated and offer a quiet space if available.
- Always respect the voter's privacy and dignity.

Remember that invisible disabilities are real and can affect people in different ways. The best approach is to listen, ask how you can help, and follow the voter's lead.

Appendix B – Notice of Temporary Service Disruption



Notice of Temporary Service Disruption



Type of disruption:

Duration of disruption:

Reason for disruption:

The following alternative service/facility is located at:

Posted on:

For additional information please contact:

Tara Reynolds, Clerk
100 Dissette Street, Unit 7 and 8
Bradford, ON L3Z 2A7
Telephone: 905-775-5366
Fax: 905-775-0153
Email: treyolds@townofbwg.com



**We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.
Thank you for your patience and cooperation in this matter!**

Appendix C – Accessible Elections Feedback Form



Accessible Elections Feedback Form

Personal Information

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	

Were you able to receive the information you wanted and cast your vote?

Yes No Why? _____

Was your voting experience made more accessible because of staff or equipment?

What would make voting more accessible for you in the future? Building accessibility, customer service, etc.

If you were unable to vote, what prevented you from casting your vote?

Any additional comments, concerns, or questions?

Personal Information collected is pursuant to the Municipal Act, and will be used for the purpose of processing your request. It will be used in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.56. Should you have any questions regarding the collection or use of the personal information, please contact the Municipal Clerk, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, 100 Dissette St. Unit 7 & 8, P.O. Box 100, Bradford, ON L3Z 2A7, Telephone: (905) 775-5366, Fax: (905) 775-0153