



City of Owen Sound  
Election Accessibility Plan  
2026 Municipal Election

This Plan is for use in the 2026 Municipal Election  
in conjunction with the City's current Accessibility Plans and the  
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

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## **1. Introduction**

The City Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal elections in the City of Owen Sound.

The Municipal Elections Act ("MEA"), subsection 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities.

Subsection 12.1 (2) of the MEA 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.

Owen Sound municipal elections will be conducted in a manner that ensures candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services, including Election Centres. The election will be conducted in a manner that ensures that persons with disabilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.

Subsection 12.1 (3) of the MEA requires that within (90) days of voting day the clerk who is responsible for conducting the election shall submit a report to Council regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## **2. Staff Training**

All staff carrying out election duties will complete the Owen Sound Accessible Customer Service Training and specific Election Training to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are serviced in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training will include:

- how to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, or require the assistance of a support person or a service animal;
- how to clearly explain internet and telephone voting;
- what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services; and
- how to provide voter assistance if requested.

### **3. Provision of Election Information**

Election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format, agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Notice of the provision of information in an alternative format will be provided on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), and included in the election notices in the local media.

### **4. Notice of Temporary Service Disruption**

The City Clerk will provide public notice on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), and in the local media if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration, and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort will be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

### **5. Staff Assistance**

The Election team is available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Contact information for assistance:

Telephone: 519-370-7350                      Email: [elections@owensound.ca](mailto:elections@owensound.ca)

In Person:	City Hall Service Counter 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue East Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4	Mail:	City Clerk City of Owen Sound 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue East Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4
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### **6. Assistance to Electors**

The 2026 Owen Sound municipal election will be conducted with internet and telephone voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2026 Internet/Telephone Voting Procedure, available on the City's election website,

[www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), or from the Election team and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Please contact us at 519-370-7350 or [elections@owensound.ca](mailto:elections@owensound.ca) if you require your Voter Information Letter in an accessible format.

The Election team is available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

## **7. Election Centres**

Election Centres located in the municipality will be available to voters throughout the voting period and on voting day until 8:00 p.m. The locations, accessible parking and entrance information will be posted on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca).

### **Parking**

Election Centres will be located in buildings that have private or municipal designated parking for individuals with disabilities.

### **Entrance**

The entrances to Election Centres will be level or have steps and ramps with handrails leading to the entrance doors. Doors will have automatic door opening devices or will be propped open in a safe manner. The doors will be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

### **Interior**

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth will be level. Carpeting and doormats will be level with the floor. The voting area will be well lit, and seating shall be made available.

### **Accessible Voting Booth**

The voting booth will have a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretly. In the voting booth there will be a touchscreen tablet on a stand. The tilt of the touchscreen is adjustable. At Brightshores Health System – Owen Sound, retirement homes, and long-term care facilities, a mobile tablet will also be available.

### **Elevator Access**

At any location where an Election Centre is not located on the main floor, an accessible elevator will be available.

### **Voting Assistance**

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting booth or the Election Centre staff can assist a voter

in casting their vote. The Election Centre staff will, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide the assistance.

If public health guidelines and the facilities allow access, election staff will be on-site at Brightshores Health System – Owen Sound, retirement homes, and long-term care homes at various times in the voting period to increase accessibility. All election officials are sworn to an oath of secrecy.

## **8. Internet Voting and Telephone Voting**

Both internet voting and telephone voting offer persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy.

Internet voting allows voters to vote from their home through secured internet services. Voters have the option to use the assistive tools they have on their own computer such as paddles, a hand-held touchpad, a thumb switch or sip and puff technology.

Telephone voting allows voters to vote from their home through secured telephone services. Landlines or cell phones can be used to vote and the method is compatible with assistive devices.

Both methods are designed to encourage voter participation as voters don't have to attend a physical location to cast their ballot and accessibility and privacy for persons with disabilities is maximized.

## **9. Assistance to Candidates**

The 2026 Owen Sound municipal election will be conducted with internet and telephone voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2026 Internet/Telephone Voting Procedure, available on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), or from the Election team and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

The Election team is available throughout the election to assist candidates with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Accessibility measures for candidates to consider in regard to their campaign messaging are included in the candidate package.

**10. Feedback**

The City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes when necessary. Feedback on this plan can be submitted through the following:

Telephone: 519-370-7350                      Email: [elections@owensound.ca](mailto:elections@owensound.ca)

In Person:                      City Hall                      Mail:                      City Clerk  
   Service Counter                      City of Owen Sound  
   808 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East                      808 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East  
   Owen Sound, ON                      Owen Sound, ON  
   N4K 2H4                                      N4K 2H4

**11. Additional Information**

Owen Sound Accessibility Webpage:  
[www.owensound.ca/accessibility/](http://www.owensound.ca/accessibility/)

Owen Sound Election Website:  
[www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca)