

2026 City of Kingston Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Introduction and Background

The City of Kingston is committed to making the 2026 municipal election and any subsequent by-elections in the 2026 – 2030 term of Council accessible to all candidates, voters and voting place workers. The City of Kingston understands the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities and will work to identify, remove and prevent barriers to participation in the election.

The core principles contained in the City of Kingston Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the City of Kingston's Accessibility Standards Policy have guided the information contained in the 2026 City of Kingston Municipal Election Accessibility Plan (the Plan).

This Plan has been prepared in advance of the 2026 municipal election in compliance with Sections 12.1 and 45 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) and to identify the accessibility measures to be implemented for the 2026 municipal election and any subsequent by-elections in the 2026 – 2030 term of Council. As required by the MEA, within 90 days following the election information will be presented to Council and be made available to the public reporting on the success of the measures that were implemented to identify, remove and prevent barriers for voters and candidates with disabilities.

Mandate

To provide every candidate, voter and voting place worker with an equal opportunity for positive involvement in the 2026 municipal election and any subsequent by-elections in the 2026 – 2030 term of Council.

Goal

To establish objectives and actions for the 2026 municipal election and any subsequent by-elections in the 2026 – 2030 term of Council to identify, remove and prevent barriers to participation in municipal elections.

Objectives

The objectives of the 2026 City of Kingston Municipal Election Accessibility Plan include:

- that all voting places meet the accessibility requirements established by the City, (see Appendix A);
- that all voters can independently cast a ballot and verify their choices while maintaining the privacy of their vote;
- that all voters have full and equal access to information on where and when to vote and the candidates for each office;
- that all eligible people can fully participate in the municipal election as a voter, candidate, or voting place worker; and
- that voters and candidates are aware of the accessibility measures available for the municipal election through a variety of media.

Corporate Accessibility Policy

As required by Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards (the Regulation), the City has an [Accessibility Standards Policy](#) (the Policy). The Policy and its related procedures apply to all City employees, volunteers and any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City. The Policy provides an overarching framework for the City's standards, procedures, by-laws and guidelines that are required to comply with the Regulation developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. This Policy establishes accessibility standards, procedures and guidelines in the areas of information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service for the City of Kingston.

As detailed in the Policy, the City is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. The foundational principles to achieve this work include:

- Ensuring the creation of no new barriers to accessibility;
- Striving to achieve the highest level of inclusion in all work, where possible, above and beyond meeting the requirements of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its regulations;
- Providing goods, services and facilities that:
 - Respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

- Are integrated into the provision of services for all, unless an alternative measure is necessary;
- Are of an equal opportunity for persons with disabilities; and
- Account for the nature of a person's disability.

Communications

Candidate Information

In May and June 2026 staff held two candidate information sessions where attendees received information about the requirements to run for Mayor, District Councillor or school board trustee. One session was held in a hybrid in-person/virtual participation format at Kingston City Hall, with another held in-person at the Calvin Park Library. Representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, the City of Kingston, Kingston's four area school boards and a former District Councillor provided presentations to attendees, which were followed by a question-and-answer session. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the sessions.

A dedicated information page for candidates and those interested in becoming a candidate was created on [Get Involved Kingston](#). Frequent updates are posted on the page, which includes resources such as a recording of the previously mentioned candidate information sessions. A bi-weekly newsletter is available, sharing timely information through the campaign period. Candidates and voters may ask questions regarding the election via Get Involved Kingston, for public response from Elections Office staff.

Staff will continue to explore through the nomination and campaign period different methods for informing residents, such as a Reddit Ask Me Anything and partnering with community organizations to share election information during existing events.

Website

The [Elections](#) page on the City's website is another tool used to communicate relevant information to voters and candidates with respect to the municipal election. The City's website is WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant which allows for the use of assistive software such as a screen reader. The font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information. All material posted to the website in PDF format is remediated to ensure the document can be viewed by those using a screen reader.

Candidates will also have access to election information via a dedicated Candidate Access Portal (CAP). The portal will contain relevant information for candidates, including the portion of the voters' list that candidates are entitled to receive. The use of the CAP allows candidates to access real-time voters' list data without needing to visit the Elections Office to acquire hard copies.

Print Materials

All print materials produced for the 2026 municipal election will follow best practices for accessibility, including appropriate font size and type, colour contrast and spacing. As per the City's Accessibility Standards Policy, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, documents will be provided in alternate format suitable to the needs of the individual.

If information related to an election is not generated by the City or is supplied by a third party, the City will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or attempt to assist the individual by providing assistive equipment. Alternatively, if a third-party document is not accessible, a link to the document on the third party's website will be provided.

Videos

All videos used for promotion of the election will incorporate the use of closed captioning.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the City's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. Section 14 of the City's Accessibility Standards Policy provides that where the service disruption is planned the City will provide as much advance notice of the disruption as possible and provide notice directly to affected users as well as the public in general. Notice will include why the service is unavailable, the length of time the service will be unavailable, the anticipated time of service restoration and alternate methods for obtaining service. Notice will be posted in the physical location of the disruption (if applicable) and shared through general media sources such as social media, website updates, email, etc. In the case where the disruption is unplanned, the City will provide notice as soon as possible.

Voting Places

Advance voting takes place on Friday October 16 and Saturday October 17 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Voting day takes place on Monday October 26 between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

An in-person voting location will be available in each electoral district on both advance voting days and voting day. On voting day there will be two voting places in Countryside District. Voters will be required to vote at the voting place in their electoral district.

There will also be 20 dedicated voting places located in various institutions and retirement/long-term care homes for the residents of those buildings only. Voting in these locations takes place on voting day.

Accessibility Audits

Subsection 45(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, requires that “in establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.” The City of Kingston is committed to providing voting places that are accessible to candidates, voters and voting place workers.

Elections Office staff partnered with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) to conduct accessibility audits of potential voting places in Kingston. A member of MAAC accompanied staff in the evaluation of approximately 20 potential voting places. Each location was evaluated for criteria established in the 2026 municipal election voting place accessibility checklist. Below are the areas in which specific accessibility requirements were reviewed; the full checklist can be found in Appendix A:

- Proximity to public transit stop (within 400 metres);
- Parking;
- Building exterior;
- Building entrance; and
- Building interior.

If a site did not meet the criteria of the checklist, but modification was possible to ensure accessibility requirements were met (i.e., an interior door did not have an automatic door opening device but could be propped open), the required modification was noted and will be passed along to voting place workers at the location. If a modification was

not possible, the location was rejected and an alternate location that met the accessibility criteria was found.

Voting Place Layout and Set Up

Voting places will be set up in a manner that allows sufficient room for movement by voters who may be using mobility devices. Periodic inspections of the voting place, and the paths leading to the voting room will be conducted by staff to ensure there are no obstructions; any obstructions found will be removed.

Signage will be placed throughout the interior and exterior of the voting place to help guide voters to the voting room.

Chairs will be made available through the voting place for people to rest, in particular in areas where longer queues may be expected.

Magnifiers and individual lamps will be provided in voting compartments to allow voters to better view their ballot. Voting compartments will be situated in the voting place to allow for privacy and provide optimal lighting conditions.

Transportation to Voting Places

Kingston Access Bus Services (KABS) will provide free transportation for registered clients to and from voting places on advanced voting days and voting day. Clients are requested to advise KABS staff when booking their trip that they will be voting in the municipal election and to identify the location of their voting place.

Kingston Transit will also be providing free transportation to voters who show their voter information letter during the hours of operation for voting places on advanced voting days and voting day.

Accessible Voting Options

Accessible Voting Equipment

All voting places will have accessible voting equipment available for voters. This equipment allows a voter to independently mark their ballot while maintaining the secrecy of their ballot in a manner like the standard ballot marking process. The equipment will be set up and operated by the election staff operating the optical scan voting tabulator (the machine operator). The machine operator as well as the site supervisor will receive hands-on training on the set up and operation of the accessible voting equipment.

Accessible voting equipment includes the following options for marking a voter's ballot:

- A touch screen that allows the voter to view a digital version of the ballot and navigate contests via on-screen buttons. The text size and contrast can be modified by the voter.
- A tactile keypad and headset that allows the voter to maneuver through the ballot and make selections based on voice prompts. The volume and tempo of the voice prompts can be modified by the voter.
- A rocker paddle device with 'yes' and 'no' buttons can be plugged into the accessible voting equipment. Paired with a headset, voice prompts allow the voter to navigate and mark their ballot by pressing the 'yes' or 'no' buttons on the paddle.
- A sip-n-puff device can be plugged into the accessible voting equipment. Paired with a headset, voice prompts allow the voter to independently navigate and mark their ballot by sipping on the straw or blowing air into the straw.

Upon completing a voting session using any of the above devices, the accessible voting equipment will mark the ballot as indicated by the voter. The ballot will then be counted by the optical scan voting equipment.

Online Voting

For the 2026 municipal election, online voting will be available beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday October 14 until 8 p.m. on voting day, Monday October 24. Voters must be registered by 5:00 p.m. on voting day to access the online voting system.

Instructions on how to access and complete registration for online voting will be available on the City website and contained in the voter information letter that will be mailed to all registered voters. City staff will be available via telephone to assist voters accessing the online voting system.

Voters may vote from any internet-enabled device, such as tablet, smartphone, laptop, or desktop computer. The online voting system is WCAG 2.2 AA compliant.

Voting from home facilitates the voting process for voters who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation. Allowing voters to vote from any location increases the capability for a voter to vote without any assistance. This provides all voters with the same independence and privacy in participating in the election.

Voting by Proxy

A voter that is unable to go to a voting place may appoint another person to act as their voting proxy and go to a voting place to cast a ballot on their behalf. The appointment must be made on the [Appointment for Voting Proxy form](#) which is available from the Elections Office.

The appointment of a voting proxy may take place during Elections Office hours after 2 p.m. on August 21, 2026, and before 5 p.m. on voting day, Monday October 26, 2026. A person acting as a proxy must be an eligible voter in Kingston and may only act as a proxy for one qualified voter who is not a relative. A person may be appointed a proxy for multiple voters if those voters are a relative, meaning a parent, grandparent, child, sibling or spouse.

To vote as a proxy at a voting place, a proxy voter must present the original, signed copy of the Appointment for Voting Proxy and proof of identity.

Curbside Voting

If a voter is on the voting place premises but is not able to physically access the room inside the building where voting is taking place, a designated election official will be permitted to make external accommodations. Once advised that there is a voter in the parking lot or at curbside who cannot physically access the voting place, a ballot can be brought out and marked at their vehicle. If the voter does not have their voter information letter or an acceptable form of identification, the designated election official will assist the voter in completing an Application to Amend the Voters' List and/or completing the Declaration of Identity.

The individual who brought the voter to the voting place may assist the voter in marking the ballot. However, that individual will first be required to take the Oral Oath of Friend of Elector before marking the ballot.

Once the voter has voted, the ballot will be placed in a privacy sleeve. The individual who brought the voter to the voting place will then accompany the designated election official back into the voting place to witness the ballot being inserted into the tabulator and to receive confirmation that the votes were successfully recorded.

Ballot Marking Assistance

A voter that requires assistance to mark their ballot may have a person join them in the voting compartment to assist them in marking their ballot. The person accompanying

the voter first needs to take the Oral Oath of Friend. Similarly, the site supervisor at voting places may also assist a voter in marking their ballot.

Assistive Devices

Section 14 of the Accessibility Standards Policy allows a person with a disability to use their own assistive device to obtain, use and benefit from the City's goods and services. Assistive devices include mobility aids, hearing aids, cognitive aids and tools or devices. A voter using an assistive device is permitted to enter any voting place and voting compartment and, if required, use the assistive device in marking their ballot.

Service Animals

Subsection 8 e)(i) and Section 14 of the Accessibility Standards Policy allows a person with a disability to enter premises owned or operated by the City accompanied by a service animal, and to keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their service animal is always kept in control.

Service animals are not required to wear any sort of identification, such as a vest. As a result, it can be difficult to differentiate between a service animal and non-service animal. Behaviour is the best indicator as to whether or not an animal is a service animal. Voting places workers will be instructed that if an animal is behaving properly, regardless of status, the service animal and their handler (the person with the disability) will be permitted access to the voting place. If an animal is not behaving properly, or poses a safety risk to staff, the handler, or others in the voting place, the service animal and their handler can be asked to leave the voting place. A handler is responsible for always maintaining care and control of their service animal.

Accessibility Training for Voting Place Workers

All voting place workers are required to complete the City's Accessible Customer Service training which includes:

- The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how the two work together;
- City of Kingston policy with respect to accessibility, including the Accessibility Standards Policy; and
- How to provide accessible customer service to with persons with disabilities.

Elements of the accessible customer service training include:

- Being aware of the accessibility features available at the voting place;
- Monitoring voters' concerns and ensuring that their needs are met. This may include adapting the physical layout of the voting place if there are line ups to receive a ballot.
- Observing voters during discussions with them, and if it appears the voter is having difficulty understanding, working with the voter in any manner they are comfortable with to ensure their needs are met;
- Approaching a voter if it appears they need assistance navigating the voting place;
- Ensuring that voters are aware that assistance (in varying forms) is available, if required;
- Ensuring voters are aware that accessible voting equipment is available and where it is located; and
- Providing customer service in a way that respects the independence and dignity of all people.

All voting place workers will be provided with hard copy material and in-person training to assist them in delivering accessible customer service. After the review is complete, each voting place worker must submit a signed compliance form verifying that they have read and understand the requirements and responsibilities for providing accessible customer service during the 2026 municipal election. The signed compliance forms will be retained by the Elections Office as a record that the required accessibility training was provided.

Consultation & Reporting

In preparing this report, election staff consulted with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee via a [report](#) at the June 25, 2026, meeting of the committee. Staff have incorporated the feedback received at that meeting into this report. This plan will be made available on the City website before voting day as required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*. Further, within 90 days after voting day a report will be submitted to Council with respect to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. This report must also be made available to the public.

Feedback on Accessibility Concerns

In accordance with Section 14 of the Accessibility Standards Policy, the City has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods, services and facilities to persons with disabilities. General accessibility concerns and service requests can be submitted online via the City's [Contact Us](#) platform or via telephone at 613-546-0000.

This plan will be updated as best practices and opportunities for improvement are identified. Elections staff welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes can enhance the delivery of a fully accessible election for voters, candidates and voting place workers. Staff will review all feedback received and will revise this plan as deemed appropriate for any future by-elections and/or the 2030 municipal election.

Please provide your feedback on suggested changes to the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan:

E-Mail: elections@cityofkingston.ca

Phone: 613-546-4291, extension 1430 (Elections Office)

By Mail: City of Kingston,
Clerk's Department,
216 Ontario Street,
Kingston, Ontario, K7L 2Z3

Appendix A – 2026 municipal election voting place accessibility criteria

Public transit

- Public transit stop near the polling place? (Yes/No)

Parking

- Adequate parking available? (Yes/No)
- Number of accessible parking spaces:
- Surface of parking firm and level? (Yes/No)
- Parking lit? (Yes/No)
- Pathway from parking lot to the entrance? (Yes/No)

Building exterior

- Curb cuts between parking lot and sidewalks/pathways? (Yes/No)
- Surface of the pathway is firm and obstacle-free? (Yes/No)
- Pathway is free of a long slope? (Yes/No)
- Pathway is free of a steep incline? (Yes/No)
- Building provides a level access to the entrance? (i.e. no steps) (Yes/No)
- Exterior building lighting? (Yes/No)

Building entrance

- Exterior door has a clear opening width of 810 mm (32")? (Yes/No)
- Door handles are easy to grip? (Yes/No)
- An automatic door opening device is provided (Yes/No)

Building interior

- Interior door(s) has a clear opening width of 810 mm (32")? (Yes/No)
- Door handles are easy to grip? (Yes/No)
- Automatic door opening devices are provided for interior doors? (Yes/No)
- Voting room is on the same level as the entrance? (Yes/No)
- Interior lighting works? (Yes/No)
- Wheelchair accessible washroom (Yes/No)
- Are there any grab bars? (Yes/No)

Overall evaluation

- Does this site meet all the mandatory accessibility criteria? (Yes/No)
- If not, is it possible to modify the site so that it will meet all the mandatory criteria? (Yes/No)

Other comments