



Town of Aurora Accessibility Plan for the 2026 Municipal Election

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TOWN OF AURORA

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Introduction

The Town of Aurora is committed to providing equitable treatment to all people by identifying and removing barriers to accessibility. The Town of Aurora Municipal Election Accessibility Plan (hereafter referred to as the “Plan”) addresses the specific accessibility requirements in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), as amended.

The Plan is built to strengthen the Town’s commitment to improving accessibility for all, and ensures that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates.

The Town of Aurora is dedicated to the continuous improvement and development of our approach to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This Plan will be updated and improved as new opportunities are identified or become available. The review of accessibility issues, initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice.

Municipal Elections Act, 1996

The Town Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal election in the Town of Aurora. The legislative requirements under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, 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 shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.
- Section 12.1 (3) requires that within ninety (90) days after Voting Day, 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.

- 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.

Objectives

The 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 persons with disabilities can 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; and,
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Town's website and social media.

Development of the Plan

The Plan was developed by the Town's Accessibility Advisor and in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

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

Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election will be 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 an elector's 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 and shall make the report available to the public.

Definition of Disability

Defining disability is a complex, evolving matter. The term “disability” covers a broad range and degree of conditions. A disability may have been present at birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. Section 10 of the Human Rights Code defines “disability” as

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Disabilities can take many forms, both visible and invisible. The following criteria were considered in the development of this Plan:

- Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Access to electoral services must be integrated and equitable;
- Initiatives should address and accommodate a wide range of abilities; and,
- The Town of Aurora customer service policy for providing services to people with disabilities must be followed throughout the election process.

Election Officials

The Town is committed to ensuring that reasonable accommodations are made available to persons with disabilities during the recruitment, assessment and selection processes and, in consultation with applicants, provides reasonable accommodations upon request.

In particular, the Town of Aurora will

- notify applicants about the availability of accommodations during the recruitment, assessment and selection processes;
- consult with applicants to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided, taking into account individual accessibility needs; and
- notify successful job applicants about its policies for supporting employees with disabilities (including policies for accommodating employees with disabilities).

The Town of Aurora will hold mandatory training sessions for all election officials carrying out election duties. Election officials will complete Accessible Customer Service Training, Working Together: The Code and AODA training and specific Election Training to help serve people with disabilities and educate themselves on the special services available to assist electors.

Training will include:

- How to interact and 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 service animal or support person;
- Explaining the voting method;
- How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services;
- How to provide accessible customer services and what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services; • Creating a barrier free voting location; and,
- Providing voter assistance, if required.

The Town will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

Candidates

Receipt of candidate nomination will occur in an accessible location. Additional accommodations will be available upon request.

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible.

Candidates can use the Appendix A - Guide to Accessible Campaign as a guide.

Expenses which are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and which would not have been incurred except for the purpose of running for an office in the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

Third Party Advertisers

Any third-party advertiser registration will occur in an accessible location. Additional accommodations will be available upon request.

Third-party advertisers must have regard to the needs of the electors with disabilities. Advertisements, signs and other materials should be reviewed in order to ensure they are in compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005*.

Third party advertisers can use the Appendix A - Guide to Accessible Campaign as a guide.

Communications and Information

This Plan is available on the [2026 Municipal Election](#) webpage or at Aurora Town Hall, Corporate Services 100 John West Way. Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

As per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the Town of Aurora will provide electors information in a format that takes into account a persons disability. Information and forms will notify candidates and electors that the information is available in an alternative format upon request. Once a request has been made formats may be agreed upon between the person and the Clerk.

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.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the Town's control, the Clerk shall provide public notice on the municipal website and in the local media should a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services occur. The notice shall

include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of Voting Locations during the Advance Voting Period or on Voting Day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

- On the Town's website and election website;
- On Facebook;
- On Instagram;
- Posted at the site of disruption

Accessible Voting Locations

To ensure that voting locations are accessible to electors, an Accessibility Site Inspection Checklist was created for voting locations. The Checklist is attached as Appendix A and will be used to evaluate each voting location.

The Accessibility Site Inspection includes the assessment of the following:

- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Accessible entrances
- Interior paths of travel
- Elevators (if applicable)
- Barrier free washrooms
- Facility signage and information systems

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each voting location will be conducted to ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with disabilities. Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee participated in the audits and provided feedback .

Designated parking for persons with disabilities

Designated parking for persons with disabilities will 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 by a designated Election Official.

Accessible Routes

Each location will have a route 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.

Entrances and Exits

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 wheel chair, 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 by a designated Election Official.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential hazards. All voting areas shall be well lit and seating will be made available at various stages of the voting process.

Accessible Voting Booths

Accessible voting booths will be available at each Voting Location. Voting booths will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use mobility or assistive devices to vote independently and privately. There will be sufficient room between voting booths to ensure wheel chairs and walkers are able to move through. A large print "Notice of Ballot" poster shall be displayed in close proximity to the voting booth. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with visual impairments, upon request.

Accessible Voting Technologies (online)

In this system, voters are able to vote from the comfort of their homes through secured internet services. This method provides for easy voting for voters with any disabilities. Internet voting will be available from October 16, 2026 until October 25, 2026.

Voting Assistance

Persons with differing abilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting location. In addition, an Election Official in each voting location can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall

consult with the person with the varying ability to determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. Wherever possible the Election Official will explain the accessible technologies available and confirm the elector's preferred method to vote. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the varying ability.

Service Animals

Anyone requiring the use of service animals is permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all designated voting locations.

Support Person

A support person may accompany a person with a disability in order to help with communications, mobility, personal care or medical needs. The support person, upon the completion of an "Oath of Secrecy", may accompany the elector behind the voting screen to assist the elector in the voting process.

Emergency Information and Procedure

Election Officials will be aware of the emergency evacuation procedure and plans at their designated voting location. They will be informed on how to assist electors, staff or candidates/scrutineers with disabilities in the event of an emergency.

Voting Methods

Electors in the Town of Aurora will have two options:

Internet Voting - Eligible voters may vote online, using their personal smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their qualifying information, to access the internet address provided on their Voter Notification Letters.

Internet voting provides convenience and independence of voting from anywhere using their own personal devices. Internet voting provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation.

Internet voting will be available from October 16 at 10 a.m. to October 25 at 12 p.m. Please note that internet voting will not be available on Voting Day.

In person paper ballot - The Town of Aurora will be offering the traditional method of voting using a paper ballot that's counted by tabulators. Paper ballot voting will be available on the following dates, times, and locations.

Saturday, October 17, 2026 – 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Aurora Senior's Centre

Sunday, October 18, 2026 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Aurora Senior's Centre

Monday, October 19, 2026 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. – Aurora Senior's Centre

Tuesday, October 20, 2026 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. – Aurora Senior's Centre

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. – Aurora Senior's Centre

Monday, October 26, 2026 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. – various polling stations to be established by the Clerk.

Voting Locations at Institutions, Retirement Homes, and Multi-Residential Buildings

Section 45 (7) of the Municipal Elections Act requires that on Voting Day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

1. An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces.
2. An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.
3. A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied.

The hours of voting at the above locations shall be held at the discretion of the Clerk in consultation with building administrators. Notices of the date and time for voting will be posted in the residence, and sufficient notice will be provided so that voting information can be added to calendars that may be maintained by the home for residents.

If a voter is unable to physically attend the voting location, a Deputy Returning Officer may attend to voters in their specific living areas or at least bedside to assist them to vote. All Election Officials will take an Oath of Secrecy for this purpose.

In addition to the legislated requirements, additional multi-residential buildings or complexes will be identified as during the advance vote period to provide additional opportunities to vote.

Feedback

The Town of Aurora welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. Please

provide us with your feedback so we know how to best provide an accessible election. Feedback on this Plan can be submitted through the following channels:

Telephone: 365-500-3172

Email: accessibility@aurora.ca

In person or Mail: Aurora Town Hall, Corporate Services
100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1

Additional Resources

Please visit the Town's website for more information on the [2026 Municipal Election](#) and the [Town of Aurora Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#).

Appendix A - Guide to Running an Accessible Campaign

Running an accessible campaign ensures that all residents can engage, understand your platform, and participate in the democratic process. Accessibility is not just compliance, it's good leadership.

Why Accessibility Matters

An accessible campaign:

- Reaches a broader and more diverse audience
- Builds trust and credibility with the community
- Reduces barriers to civic participation
- Aligns with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (A.O.D.A.) and [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (I.A.S.R.)

Understanding Disability

Disabilities can be visible or invisible, temporary or permanent. They may include:

- Physical disabilities
- Sensory disabilities
- Deaf-blind disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Cognitive or developmental disabilities
- Speech or language disabilities
- Neurological disabilities
- Mental illness

Common Barriers in Campaigns

Be mindful of barriers that may unintentionally exclude people:

- **Attitudinal:** Stereotypes or assumptions
- **Communication:** Information not available in multiple formats
- **Technology:** Websites or tools that aren't accessible
- **Physical:** Inaccessible buildings or routes
- **Organizational:** Policies or practices that limit participation

Accessible Campaign Events

When planning events, choose locations that are:

- Barrier-free with **accessible entrances** and **routes**
- Close to **public transit** and include **accessible parking**
- Equipped with **automatic doors, ramps, or elevators**
- Inclusive of **accessible washrooms**
- Accessible **furniture or seating areas**

- Designed with **adequate space for mobility devices**
- Set up with **clear signage and good lighting**
- Supported by **microphones or amplification systems**

Tip: Whenever possible, offer both in-person and virtual participation options.

Inclusive Communication

Make your campaign materials accessible to all:

- Use **plain language** and clear formatting
- Provide **large print** and **high-contrast** materials
- Add **captions** to videos and **alt text** to images
- Ensure your website meets **WCAG 2.0 Level AA** standards
- Be prepared to provide materials in **alternative formats upon request**

Engaging the Community

- Connect with **local disability organizations** and **advisory groups**
- Schedule visits to **retirement homes, group homes, and care facilities**
- Ask: *“What barriers can we remove?”*
- Be open, flexible, and responsive

Quick Checklist

- ✓ Is my event location accessible?
- ✓ Are my materials easy to read and available in multiple formats?
- ✓ Can people engage with my campaign online and in person?
- ✓ Have I considered different types of disabilities?
- ✓ Am I actively removing barriers? Not just meeting minimum standards.

Final Thought

Accessibility is an ongoing commitment. Small, thoughtful changes can make a significant difference in ensuring every resident of Aurora has an equal opportunity to participate in local democracy.