The Corporation of the Township of Ryerson

Election Accessibility Plan

MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2026

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request

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Introduction

This plan is for use in the 2026 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Municipality's current Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, guidelines, training and customer service feedback standards, By-law 34-25 Adopting the Municipal Accessibility Plan.

In an effort to ensure that the 2026 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported publicly following the election.

Objectives

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

- 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.
- 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 accessible measures available via sources such as the local newspaper, radio ads and the Township's website.
- That the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place and Ballot Counting Centre are accessible.

Municipal Elections Act Requirements

In addition to our existing Accessibility Plan, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 S.O. 1996, Chapter 32, Section 12 States:

12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

12.1 (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.

12.1 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates.

41.(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 assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1).

45. (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that the voting place and drop off locations are accessible to electors with disabilities.

Development of the Plan

This Plan is a 'living document' which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified, and new opportunities of improvement arise.

The Clerk, who is responsible for conducting the election, shall act on any accessible matter which may arise during the election as deemed necessary.

The election procedures planned for 2026 have been reviewed, in addition, the report to Council from the 2022 election on accessibility was reviewed. In 2022 no requests for assistance were received.

Voting Method/Location

The Township of Ryerson is conducting the 2026 Municipal Election using the Vote-By-Mail system.

Voters Kits will be delivered to eligible voters via Canada Post and the voter's kits may be returned by mail or dropped off at the municipal office.

Vote by Mail 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. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently. By providing the opportunity to vote from home, persons with disabilities have the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters.

If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place and at the Ballot Counting Centre.

The municipal office is located at 28 Midlothian Road. The municipal office building and the parking lot have been declared the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place. The municipal building is accessible, however if someone needs further assistance in the parking lot, this will be accommodated by municipal staff.

The Ballot Counting Centre will be set up at the Arena in Burks Falls on Voting Day, Monday October 26, 2026. The Arena is accessible.

No physical barriers have been previously identified.

Voting Assistance

- Election Officials are available at the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their vote using the Vote-By-Mail Voter's kit. All Election Officials have been appointed and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

- Support person/Friend of the Voter: people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place. The designated support person or friend of the voter will be administered an oath of secrecy by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

- Support Animals: Individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Ballot Return Station/Voting Place or at the Ballot Counting Centre.

- Election Materials: The Township 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. The Township and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

- Visual Impairment: Persons with visual impairment requiring assistance to vote may be provided with a ballot in larger font or the use of a magnifier sheet. If needed, a trained appointed election official, under oath of secrecy, would be available to assist with the voting process.

Communication

The Township of Ryerson participated in a series of newspaper and radio advertisements requesting that anyone requiring assistance with the municipal election process should contact their municipal office to make arrangements to suit their needs.

To date no requests for assistance have been received.

Disruption of Service

It is possible from time to time that there will be disruptions in service, such as an automatic door under repair. If a disruption in service is planned, and/or expected, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternate services are provided where feasible. Reasonable notice will be provided in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Feedback

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

Feedback can be submitted to the municipal office in any one of the following ways:

- E-mail: clerk@ryersontownship.ca
- Fax: 705 382-3286
- In person or by mail: 28 Midlothian Road, Burks Falls, Ontario P0A 1C0
- Telephone: 705 382-3232

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 alternate methods of providing election information and services.