



2026 Municipal and School Board Election

Monday, October 26, 2026

2026 Election Accessibility Plan

The policies, procedures and forms described in this document are subject to change at the discretion of the Clerk. Any amendments shall be underlined and state the date of the amendment.

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Contents

1. Overview	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Municipal Elections Act	2
1.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act	3
1.4 Election Accessibility Plan (the “plan”)	3
2. Training	4
3. Election Information and Communications	4
3.1 Candidate and Third Party Information	4
3.2 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption	4
4. Accessible Voting Locations	4
4.1 Voting Assistance	5
4.2 Accessible Voting Equipment	5
4.3 Service Animals	5
5. Voting Methods	5
5.1 Telephone Voting	6
5.2 Internet Voting	6
5.3 In-person eVoting at Polling/Voting Station(s)	7
5.4 Special Voting Provisions	8
6. Continued Improvement/ Feedback	8
6.1 Feedback Process	8
6.2 Post-Election Accessibility Report	8
7. Candidates	8

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The 2026 Election Accessibility Plan supports fair, full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities. The principal focus of this plan is to provide appropriate and accessible services to electors, candidates and staff during the 2026 Municipal Elections by:

- providing accessible electoral services to electors and candidates;
- identifying and eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities;
- providing services that respect the dignity and independence of electors with differing abilities;
- conducting the election in a manner that ensures that persons with differing abilities are able to vote independently and privately, with access to voting assistance if required; and
- creating a positive voting experience.

The Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust approaches to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

This planning document was developed in advance of the election to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election. This plan may be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available, including on Voting Day.

1.2 Municipal Elections Act

The Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors can fully participate in the 2026 municipal election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, states the following:

- 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 (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 (3) 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.

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

45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

1.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, as amended, (“AODA”), includes the following definitions:

Barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

Disability means,

- (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) a 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; (“handicap”)

1.4 Election Accessibility Plan (the “plan”)

This Plan is a “living” document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. The Plan provides an overview of the following items:

- developing and providing accessibility training to all election officials;
- providing information to voters and candidates in an accessible method;
- ensuring all voting locations are accessible to electors with differing abilities;
- assisting candidates and electors with differing abilities; and

- discussing with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with differing abilities to better understand their needs.

2. Training

Designated election staff will be trained on accessible election equipment and assisting electors with a disability. All election staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities, and with persons who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.

3. Election Information and Communications

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. The Town of Cobalt and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

This plan and other information regarding accessibility will be posted on the Town's website, and made available to candidates and third party registrants. Information generated by the Town of Cobalt on the website in relation to the election, will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, and allow for assistive software to be utilized.

Information on the 2026 Municipal Election is available in printed format from the Clerk's Office (18 Silver Street, Cobalt), or electronically at by contacting: cobalt@cobalt.ca

3.1 Candidate and Third Party Information

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.

3.2 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services occurs, notice will be posted on the Town's website, the Town's social media platforms, and in the local media, if possible. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort will be made to provide alternative methods of delivering the information or service to persons with differing abilities.

4. Accessible Voting Locations

To ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with differing abilities, an accessible voting location inspection/ checklist (Appendix 01) will be completed for each in-person voting location before the start of the voting period. The accessibility checklist includes the assessment of the following:

- parking areas;
- exterior walkways and ramps;
- entrances and hallways;
- elevators/stairways (if applicable);
- fire exits;
- general layout and services;
- public washrooms; and
- facility signage and information systems.

Upon completion of the inspection/ checklist, a list of any barriers which have been identified will be reviewed to determine if they can be modified to accommodate electors with differing abilities, or if an alternative location is required.

4.1 Voting Assistance

Election officials at in-person voting locations (during the advance voting period and on Election Day), will accommodate all electors requesting assistance, upon request. All election workers take an “Oath of Secrecy” for this purpose. An election official in the voting location can assist the voter in casting their vote, or an elector may request that a person of their choosing assist them in marking their ballot. That individual will be required to take an “Oath of Secrecy” prior to being permitted to assist. A magnifying glass will be made available to assist any individual with visual impairments.

4.2 Accessible Voting Equipment

If a voter is unable to physically enter a voting location, the Deputy Returning Officer may attend anywhere within the area designated as the Voting Place. All election workers take an “Oath of Secrecy” for this purpose.

4.3 Service Animals

Individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

5. Voting Methods

5.1 In-person Voting at Polling/Voting Station(s)

Access to the polling/voting station interior and voting area will be level. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area will be well lit and seating will be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

The Town will be operating the following voting place location(s) during the Advance Voting Period:

October 17, 2026: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Golden Age Club

22 Argentite Street, Cobalt

The following polling/ voting location(s) will be open on Election Day:

Monday October 26, 2026: 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Golden Age Club

22 Argentite Street, Cobalt

6. Continued Improvement/ Feedback

Clerk's Department staff members are available throughout the election to assist with any matters that may arise with respect to providing an accessible election.

6.1 Feedback Process

Feedback provides an opportunity to take corrective measures to address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services. The Town welcomes comments to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible election. Feedback on this Plan may be submitted through the following methods and will be summarized in the post-election accessibility report:

By telephone: 705-679-8877

By email: cobalt@cobalt.ca

In person or by mail:

Town of Cobalt

P.O. Box 70,

18 Silver Street

Cobalt, Ontario P0J 1C0

6.2 Post-Election Accessibility Report

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will also identify gaps in service and/ or areas that can be improved on for future elections. The post-election report will be posted on the Town's website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, and distributed to other stakeholders on request.

7. Candidates

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

2026 Election Barrier-Free Accessibility Checklist	
Location:	
Property Manager:	
Phone Number:	
Availability of Custodial Staff:	
Parking	
Adequate number of parking spaces?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Number of Accessible Parking Spaces:	
Vertical Signage	☐ Yes ☐ No
Pavement Markings	☐ Yes ☐ No
Location in respect to the entrance way/distance to walk:	
Is there adequate lighting	☐ Yes ☐ No
Walkways and Ramps	
Surface:	☐ Paved or Concrete ☐ Gravel
Accessible route from parking to entrance	☐ Yes ☐ No
Surface to voting location easy to travel and in good condition	☐ Yes ☐ No
Curb cuts where required	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
Is there a ramp to replace steps	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
Is the ramp well designed and safe	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
Handrails	Required: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Available ☐ Not Available
Obstacles:	

Drop-off and Loading Zones			
Location:			
Lighting			
Surface:		☐ Paved or Concrete	☐ Gravel
Appropriate for Voter Drop-off/Handi-Van:		☐ Yes	☐ No
Comments:			
Resolution:			
Entrances and exterior Doors			
Identify entrance to be used: Election Signs will be posted (Voting location)			
Is door hardware accessible:		☐ Yes	☐ No
Is door wide enough for wheelchair or scooter:		☐ Yes	☐ No
Power Assist		☐ Yes	☐ No
Location of Button:			
Direction of Door Swing		☐ Inward	☐ Outward
☐ Other (sliding)			
Exterior lighting of entrance:		☐ Yes	☐ No
Adequate turnaround space in vestibule for wheelchair:			
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable			
Lobby, Hallways & Corridors			
Path of travel from entrance			
Are corridors inside the voting facility spacious enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass comfortably:		☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there level access from the entrance of the voting facility to the voting area		☐ Yes	☐ No

Are any doormats level with the floor: (If not, remove)	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is voting facility well-lit:	☐ Yes	☐ No
Obstacles:		
Interior Doors		
Is door hardware accessible:	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is door wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter:	☐ Yes	☐ No
Power Assist	☐ Yes	☐ No
Location of Button		
Direction of Door Swing	☐ Inward	☐ Outward
If no power assist, can door be propped open in a safe manner	☐ Yes	☐ No
Vision Panels	☐ Yes	☐ No
Fire Exits		
Signage		
Location		
Are fire exits accessible	☐ Yes	☐ No
Washrooms		
Available to the public	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is door handle accessible	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does width of door meet accessible standards	☐ Yes	☐ No
Power Assist	☐ Yes	☐ No
Location of Button:		

Direction of Door Swing	☐ Inward	☐ Outward
If no power assist, can door be propped open in a safe manner	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there an accessible washroom stall	☐ Yes	☐ No
Voting Room		
Is there enough space inside the voting area for a wheelchair or a scooter	☐ Yes	☐ No
Number of exits:		
Regulations for service animals in the voting place	☐ Yes	☐ No

Comments: