

**MUNICIPAL  
ELECTION**  
**October 24 2022**



# **Guide to Accessible Elections**



**Accessibility**

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## Information

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Town of Pelham. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and implement appropriate measures, within budgetary limits, to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in Municipal Elections. Accordingly, the 2022 Municipal Election will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

1. Candidates and electors with disabilities have reasonable access to all election information and services;
2. Persons with disabilities have full access to Voting Places;
3. Persons with disabilities have access to alternative methods of voting assistance that will permit them to vote independently and privately mark their ballot and, in the event their disability cannot be accommodated through such alternative methods as are provided, a person with disabilities will have access to assistance from an Election Official who has received accessible customer service training in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*;
4. Feedback regarding the conduct of previous Municipal Elections from persons with disabilities is collected and documented so that in future Municipal Elections, available resources for the accommodation of persons with disabilities can be effectively directed to best satisfy community needs.

In accordance with Subsection 12.1(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, following the election, the Clerk will submit a report to Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will include specific recommendations for further initiatives to ensure that, in future, persons with all types of disability are able to independently and privately mark their ballots.

## **Staff Training**

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training will include:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
3. How to use voting equipment, and assistive devices to deliver election services;
4. What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

## **Provision of Election Information**

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that candidates and electors with disabilities are able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format may be agreed upon between the requester and the Town Clerk. Notice of this provision is located on the Town's Website which can be found at [www.pelham.ca](http://www.pelham.ca) and is included in election notices placed in the local newspaper. In addition, candidates with disabilities may access the election information available on the Town's Website using personal assistive technology such as screen readers. Instructions for increasing the font size of election documents is available on the Town's Website.

## **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Office of the Clerk shall provide public notice on the Town's Website, at the physical site of the disruption and when possible in the local media. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods for the provision of information or service to persons with disabilities.

## Staff Assistance

Office of the Clerk staff are available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election and can be reached by way of the contact information provided below:

Holly Willford, Town Clerk/ Returning Officer

Town of Pelham Telephone: 905-892-2607, Ext. #315  
Town of Pelham Direct Line: 905-980-6657  
Email: [hwillford@pelham.ca](mailto:hwillford@pelham.ca)  
Mail: Office of the Clerk, P. O. Box 400, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0  
In Person: Office of the Clerk, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill

Sarah Leach, Deputy Clerk/Assistant Returning Officer

Town of Pelham Telephone: 905-892-2607, Ext. #320  
Town of Pelham Direct Line: 905-980-6662  
Email: [sleach@pelham.ca](mailto:sleach@pelham.ca)

Jacqueline Miller, Legislative and Committee Coordinator/Deputy Returning Officer

Town of Pelham Telephone: 905-892-2607, Ext. #322  
Town of Pelham Direct Line: 905-980-6664  
Email: [jmiller@pelham.ca](mailto:jmiller@pelham.ca)

## Assistance to Candidates

### Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

### Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election

to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

## **Assistance to Electors**

### **Vote by Mail**

A person unable to attend a Voting Place in person may register to Vote by Mail. The On Demand Special Ballot Application for Registration is available on the Town of Pelham website or may be obtained through the Office of the Clerk. Completed Applications shall be returned to the Office of the Clerk. A Special On Demand Ballot Kit will be mailed to the elector and may be mailed back to the Town of Pelham or placed in a designated Vote by Mail Drop Box.

### **Parking**

Designated or reserved parking for people with disabilities is to be provided close to the entrance of the Voting Place where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly posted and easy to see from the road and marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility. The number of designated parking spaces will be increased at voting locations on Voting Day, where possible. Routine checks of routes to the entrance of the Voting Place will be made throughout the day by election personnel.

### **Service Animals**

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

### **Entrance to Voting Place**

Where the Voting Place has steps leading to the entrance, ramps will be provided to assist people using mobility aids or who have mobility impairments. Where possible, the slope of the ramp will conform to the barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code or the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) and the ramp will be equipped with handrails. If the ramp is temporary, it will be securely attached to the steps so it cannot slip or wobble. Where the main entrance to the voting place is inaccessible, another entry point that is accessible will be used. Where possible, the accessible entrance will be used as the main entrance for everyone.

Where a Voting Place is located on the second floor of a building, elevators shall be available and remain unobstructed for the movement of people.

The entrance for persons with disabilities will be clearly sign-posted, using the International Symbol of Accessibility. Every effort shall be made to ensure the door to the Voting Place is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through easily; that door hardware is accessible and can be operated by a person using a closed fist or alternatively, if the doors are heavy, awkward to open or have handles that are out of reach, they will be propped open in a safe manner or manned.

### **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 tripping hazards. All voting areas will be lit and seating made available.

### **Accessible Voting Booths**

At least one accessible voting booth will be available at each Voting Place. Such voting booth will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretly. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with low vision.

### **Voting Assistance**

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, the Deputy Returning Officer in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which the assistance can be provided. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. All persons assisting a voter with a disability will be required to swear an oath.

A Deputy Returning Officer is authorized to attend any place within a voting location to serve a voter including on-street adjoining the voting location.

Where a Voting Place is located in an institution or retirement home, the Deputy Returning Officer can attend on voters in their specific living areas or at their bedside to assist them to vote. All Deputy Returning Officers are sworn to an oath of secrecy.

## Feedback Process

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to the Office of the Clerk through a variety of methods including:

Town of Pelham Telephone:	905-892-2607, Ext. #315
Town of Pelham Direct Line:	905-980-6657
Email:	<a href="mailto:hwillford@pelham.ca">hwillford@pelham.ca</a>
Mail:	Office of the Clerk, P. O. Box 400, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0
In Person:	Office of the Clerk, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill

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 alternative methods of providing election services.

Feedback from our customers gives us the opportunity to learn and improve. Feedback may be provided by an individual with a disability in a format that is most convenient for them such as by telephone, in person, in writing, by e-mail or by delivering a diskette. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve the delivery of accessible customer service. A response to the feedback will be provided in the manner in which it was received.

## Additional Information

### **In the event of an Emergency declared under the *Municipal Elections Act, s. 53(1)***

If it is determined by the Clerk that an Emergency is to be declared causing a postponement or delay in the delivery of election information or services, the Office of the Clerk shall provide public notice on the Town's Website, at the physical site of the disruption and when possible in the local media. The notice shall include the reason for the emergency, anticipated duration and a description of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods for the provision of information or service to persons with disabilities.

#### Town of Pelham – Office of the Clerk:

The Office of the Clerk is located at Town Hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0. Clerk's office staff can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or specific provisions for persons with disabilities.

#### Town of Pelham – Website:

The Town of Pelham's Website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. You are invited to visit the website for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year at [www.pelham.ca](http://www.pelham.ca).

#### Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election Website:

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2022 Municipal Elections Candidates Guide and the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-municipal-affairs-housing>

#### Ministry of Community and Social Services:

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has developed several quick reference guides with respect to the overall management of an accessible election campaign. For more information, candidates can visit: <http://mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility>.

#### Service Ontario – e-Laws:

This website contains all current statutes including the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*; the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca).