



# 2025 Osgoode By-election



## 2025 Osgoode By-election Detailed Accessibility Plan

City of Ottawa



Elections Ottawa



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## **Introduction**

The City of Ottawa's Elections Office is committed to providing an accessible voting process for electors, election workers, candidates, and third party advertisers. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* ("MEA") governs municipal elections for all Ontario municipalities. Under the MEA, the City Clerk is responsible for the preparation and conduct of municipal elections.

In accordance with Subsection 12.1(2), the Elections Office prepared a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities for the 2022 Municipal Elections any by-elections that occur in the 2022-2026 Term of Council.

This plan has also been updated by the Elections Office and reviewed by the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Office to reflect the 2025 Osgoode By-election.

In addition to the requirements set out in the MEA, the Elections Office will continue to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), the related standards and regulations, and the accessibility-related provisions of the MEA, while administering the 2025 Osgoode By-election and providing day-to-day services.

The Elections Office regularly consults with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee on the accessibility of municipal elections. Should any additional accessibility tools or services become available, the plan will be updated accordingly.

## **Section 1: Overview of the 2025 Osgoode By-election**

Electors have three options to vote in the 2025 Osgoode By-election, including the option to vote in person, by proxy, and by special mail-in ballot.

### ***Voting in person***

There are two in-person voting opportunities for electors to cast their ballot in the 2025 Osgoode By-election. Advance Vote Day will take place on Friday, June 6, 2025, and Voting Day will occur on Monday, June 16, 2025. Voting places will be open from 10 am to 8 pm with the exception of voting place in identified institutions and retirement homes which may have reduced hours.

During these voting events, all voting places will offer "anywhere voting" which allows electors to vote any voting place regardless of their address. All voting places will offer two ImageCast Evolution (ICE) accessible vote tabulators available to electors. In

accordance with the MEA, all voting places will be fully accessible as further described in Section 3 of this plan.

### ***Voting by proxy***

An elector may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf in accordance with Section 44 of the MEA. A proxy is someone that can go to the voting place and cast a ballot on someone else's behalf. A proxy must be an eligible elector in the City of Ottawa and can still cast their own ballot if they are eligible to vote in the 2025 Osgoode By-election. A proxy can vote for only one other person unless they are representing members of their own family. Voting by proxy requires the prior completion and certification of a prescribed form (Appointment of Voting Proxy – Form 3).

### ***Voting by special mail-in ballot***

On March 23, 2022, City Council approved a report from the City Clerk titled "[Update on the 2022 Municipal Elections and amendments to election-related by-laws and policies](#)", which included the recommendation to implement a special mail-in ballot process for the 2022 Municipal Elections as well as any by-elections that may occur during the 2022-2026 Term of Council. This alternative voting method is available to all eligible electors who apply.

The period to apply for a special mail-in ballot will run from May 15 to May 23, 2025, at 4:30 pm. Electors will be able to apply online on [ottawa.ca/vote](http://ottawa.ca/vote), by email, mail, or in person at the Elections Office or any Client Service Centre during the application period.

Electors who are voting by special mail-in ballot can mail, or deliver, their ballot to the Elections Office (1221 B Cyrville Road) or any Client Service Centre. All ballots must be received at the Elections Office or Client Service Centres by 4:30 pm on Monday, June 16, 2025, in order to be counted.

At the writing of this report, the Elections Office is aware of a potential labour disruption of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, which may affect the special mail-in ballot process. More information will be communicated to electors and on [ottawa.ca/vote](http://ottawa.ca/vote) as it becomes available.

### ***Public facing applications***

Building on the successful rollout of new technologies during past elections, the Elections Office will continue to make available several public facing applications on

ottawa.ca/vote for the 2025 Osgoode By-election. These applications will allow electors to:

- Verify when and where they can vote
- Verify, add, or amend their information on the Voters' List
- View a list of candidates running in their ward
- Apply for a special mail-in ballot

The above-noted tools underwent accessibility testing to ensure that they meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards.

### ***Information and outreach***

The Elections Office works with internal stakeholders, including the Accessibility Office, to provide more information on participating in the 2025 Osgoode By-election.

Feedback cards will be available at all voting places listing ways for electors to provide feedback to the Elections Office, as required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The feedback cards are printed to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) guidelines for clear print and include Braille.

Feedback forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked, as per the [Accessible feedback and resident-inquiry procedure](#).

Finally, within 90 days after Voting Day, the Elections Office will make public a report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities as required by the MEA.

## **Section 2: Voting places**

Section 45 of the MEA prescribes that the City Clerk has the statutory duty to establish the number and location of voting places for an election as she “considers most convenient for the electors”. Pursuant to Subsection 45(2) of the MEA, in establishing the locations of voting places, the City Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

Subsection 45(7) of the MEA mandates that on Voting Day, a voting place be provided on the premises of:

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.

In addition to the provisions of the MEA, the Elections Office considers a number of factors to ensure equitable access for all electors and prevent undue hardship when participating in the democratic process of electing their representative in the 2025 Osgoode By-election.

In accordance with the above-noted provisions, the Elections Office has identified six institutions and retirement homes that meet this threshold in Ward 20 Osgoode. This includes multi-residential facilities that provide care that do not meet the “bed count” threshold set out in the legislation but have been historically used as voting places in previous municipal elections.

As in past elections, the Elections Office has reviewed the accessibility of every location that will be used as a voting place. Staff has conducted a comprehensive review of the built environment of each location and has completed a detailed accessibility checklist to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors and candidates with disabilities.

The accessibility checklist was previously developed in consultation with staff in the City’s Accessibility Office and the City’s former Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department, and includes the evaluation of features such as parking, elevators, ramps, handrails, lighting, and door widths.

Steps taken to remediate barriers in voting places can include:

- Hiring additional election workers to work in voting places without automated power doors or to direct electors to the voting place.
- Creating accessible parking spaces at voting places by installing temporary signage in parking lots, ensuring a reasonable travel distance for electors.
- Installing threshold ramps.

- Installing extra exterior signage to direct electors to the accessible entrance of a voting place.
- Installing extra interior signage to direct electors to the voting place inside the building or facility.

### ***Advance Vote Day voting places***

On Advance Vote Day on Friday, June 6, eligible electors in the 2025 Osgoode By-election can vote in person at any of the voting places from 10 am to 8 pm:

1. Osgoode Village Community Centre, 5660 Osgoode Main Street
2. Parkway Church, 7275 Parkway Road
3. Carlsbad Springs Community Centre, 6020 Piperville Road

### ***Voting Day voting places***

On Voting Day on Monday, June 16, eligible electors in the 2025 Osgoode By-election can vote in person at any of the following voting places from 10 am to 8 pm:

1. Osgoode Village Community Centre, 5660 Osgoode Main Street
2. Greely Community Centre, 1448 Meadow Drive
3. St. Mark Catholic High School, 1040 Dozois Road
4. Parkway Church, 7275 Parkway Road
5. Metcalfe Community Centre, 2785 8th Line Road
6. École élémentaire catholique Saint-Guillaume, 5750 Buckland Road
7. Vernon Recreation Centre, 7950 Lawrence Street

## **Section 3: Accessible voting tools and services**

The Elections Office offers several accessibility tools that allow electors to mark their ballot privately and independently to ensure that the in-person voting process is accessible for all. A list of the accessible voting tools available at each voting place, institutions and retirement homes, can be found by using the “Where do I vote?” tool on



ottawa.ca/vote, or by contacting the Elections Office at [elections@ottawa.ca](mailto:elections@ottawa.ca) or by calling 613-580-2660. Accessibility tools include:

- Large print ballots
  - A larger replica of the ballot that may be used as a guide for an elector with low vision.
  - Large print ballots are available at all voting places and can be used upon request.
- Magnifying sheets
  - Magnifying sheets can be used to read ballots and other election-related documents.
  - Magnifying sheets are available behind every voting screen, at every voting place.
- Braille listing of candidates and Braille ballot templates
  - Electors with vision impairments may choose to use these tools together, by matching the Braille on the listing of candidates to the corresponding Braille on the template.
  - An elector may also choose to use the template on its own. For example, an elector may ask the elections worker to read the candidates' names in order and out loud from the other side of the voting screen, while they use the Braille template to feel for the corresponding holes and mark the ballot as desired.
  - Braille listing of candidates and Braille ballot templates are available at all voting places and can be used upon request.
- A cell phone with elections call centre staff on standby
  - Electors may use this feature to call elections staff to have their ballot read to them over the phone.
  - A cell phone is available at all voting places and can be used upon request.

### ***Accessible Vote Tabulator***

In the 2025 Osgoode By-election, all voting places will offer two Accessible Vote Tabulators (AVT). The AVT allows electors with disabilities to vote privately and independently through the use of its accessible features, which include:

- Bilingual visual support through a 19-inch screen with zoom with high contrast features
- A braille keypad
- Left-right paddles (colour-coded left and right paddles)
- A sip 'n' puff device
- Bilingual audio through headphones

### ***Curbside voting***

If an elector is physically unable to go inside the voting place, they can request to have their ballot brought to their vehicle, outside of the building, or to another area within the voting place. Electors can notify election workers that they wish to curbside vote when they arrive at the voting place by calling the Elections Office at 613-580-2660 or a friend or support person can notify election workers inside the voting place.

### ***Voting in institutions and retirement homes***

Subsection 45(7) of the MEA states that, on Voting Day, a voting place shall be provided in the premises of institutions in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm and a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied.

Election workers that work in identified institutions and retirement homes may assist an elector in casting their ballot by their bedside if the elector is unable to make it to the designated voting area.

Eligible electors in the identified institutions and retirement homes with voting places for the 2025 Osgoode By-election will have access to an Accessible Vote Tabulator and the accessible voting tools to cast their ballot.

### ***Voting place disruptions***

In the event of a disruption in service related to accessibility, the City has a legal obligation to provide notice to electors. Disruptions of service include, but are not limited to:

- An elevator under repair
- Renovations that limit access to an area
- Technology that is temporarily unavailable (for example, an accessible vote tabulator)

During a voting event, Notice of Temporary Disruption signs are provided to all Supervisor Deputy Returning Officers. In the case of a temporary disruption, election workers are to complete the blank fields on the sign, indicating the following:

- Reason for the disruption
- The date(s) of disruption
- Its anticipated duration
- A description of alternative facilities or services

Election workers are instructed to post the sign in a highly visible location, with consideration of electors who are most affected by the disruption. The Supervisor Deputy Returning Officer will also notify the Elections Office of the disruption in service so that it might take additional measures to provide notice, such as positing information on [ottawa.ca/vote](https://ottawa.ca/vote) and/or social media, depending on the circumstances.

### **Section 4: Transportation**

Electors can request accessible transportation to voting places on voting days through the following community support service agencies that support Osgoode ward:

#### **Rural Ottawa South Support Services**

Serving Osgoode and Rideau-Goulbourn

<https://rosss.ca/>

Telephone: 613-692-4697 ext. 240

Email: [info@rosss.ca](mailto:info@rosss.ca)

## **Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre**

Serving Gloucester, Orléans, Cumberland, Sarsfield, Navan and Vars

<https://eorc-creo.ca/>

Telephone : 613-741-6025 ext. 300

Email: [css@eorc-creo.ca](mailto:css@eorc-creo.ca)

Requests for transportation must be made at least 7 days in advance and are subject to the agency's regular service fees.

### **Section 5: Election workers**

Given the expedited legislative timelines when administering a by-election, and as was done for the 2020 Cumberland By-election, voting places will be staffed by City staff only. Using City staff is necessary to support the “anywhere voting” model as election workers will be required to use and be familiar with City assets to access the electronic Voters' List.

Furthermore, using City staff provides the Elections Office with additional flexibility when providing training options to election workers and ensures that each voting place has bilingual staff as well as staff who have already completed the City's mandatory Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training.

Every election worker also participates in mandatory training prior to working on voting days. This training provides an overview of the AODA and emphasizes service delivery to all electors. In keeping with the AODA and the City's [Accessibility Policy](#), the training program covers various processes to ensure that electors with disabilities have equal opportunity to cast their ballot independently and privately, including how to:

- Assist electors through the voting process
- Assist electors at their beside in institutions
- Assist electors who cannot physically enter the voting place through curbside voting
- Assist electors with support person
- Assist electors with service animal

Election workers are trained to apply dignity, equality of opportunity, independence, and integration as the four guiding principles when serving electors with disabilities.

## **Section 6: Information for electors and candidates**

Information about the 2025 Osgoode By-election, including information about accessibility tools and initiatives, will be communicated to electors and candidates through a number of bilingual and accessible communications platforms, as set out below.

### ***Online content***

The Elections Office works closely with Service Ottawa to ensure that all content and materials posted to [ottawa.ca/vote](https://ottawa.ca/vote) is accessible and in compliance with the AODA and the IASR.

The Elections Office has a section on [ottawa.ca/vote](https://ottawa.ca/vote) dedicated to providing information about accessibility in the 2025 Osgoode By-election. This includes information regarding the accessibility of the voting process, voting tools and voting options for electors.

The Elections Office will also regularly communicate information about the election, including information about accessibility, on its official X account (formerly Twitter), [@ottawavote](https://twitter.com/ottawavote), and official Facebook account, [Elections Ottawa](https://www.facebook.com/ElectionsOttawa).

### ***Online tools***

As previously noted, the Elections Office and Information Technology Services has developed online tools to convey information and assist electors throughout the elections process, as follows:

- Where do I vote?
- Am I on the Voters' list?
- Add my name to the Voters' List
- Who is running in my ward?
- Application for special mail-in ballot

The online tools were developed and tested to ensure that they meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards.

It is important to note that the online tools do not replace the availability of paper forms, and inquiries will still be received over the phone, by email, and in person.

### ***Voter notification letters***

Electors that appear on the Voters' List will receive a Voter Notification Letter listing their voting options, dates, and times for in-person voting. The voter notification letter also provides an accessible entrance for each voting place listed.

Along with their Voter Notification Letter, electors will receive a brochure which includes information about applying to vote by special mail-in ballot, appointing a proxy to vote on their behalf should they be unable to attend a voting place on voting days, and additional information about voting in person.

At the writing of this report, the Elections Office is aware of a potential labour disruption of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, which may affect the special mail-in ballot process. More information will be communicated to electors and on [ottawa.ca/vote](https://ottawa.ca/vote) as it becomes available.

### ***Advertising***

The Elections Office works closely with the City's Public Information and Media Relations staff to ensure that communications about the 2025 Osgoode By-election are available to members of the public in a variety of formats, including:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Public service announcements
- Radio advertisements
- Media advisories
- Promotional digital signs in City facilities and bus stops
- Billboards
- Television advertisements
- Online advertisements
- Printed material

- A variety of infographics and promotional videos shared on social media

### ***Printed materials***

The Elections Office works closely with the City's Print, Mail and Operations Branch to ensure that election-related documents are designed to meet the CNIB's Clear Print Design Standard. This means that forms, signs, Voters' Lists, and other election-related documents are designed and reviewed to ensure that fonts, point sizes, colours/contrast, spacing and other formatting are accessible.

The Elections Office also works with the City's Survey and Mapping Branch to make the electoral maps more accessible, including adjusting the line colour and thickness of the different types of boundaries. During the election cycle, the maps are available for download and printing [ottawa.ca/vote](http://ottawa.ca/vote).

For the 2025 Osgoode By-election, candidates were provided with a printed copy of the ward map upon the filing of their nomination forms.

### ***Information for candidates***

The Elections Office also provided candidates with a copy of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) "Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections" upon the filing of their nomination forms.

Throughout the election cycle, information regarding accessible communications, selecting an accessible campaign office, budgeting for accessibility, and accessible customer service is provided to candidates through candidate updates and information sessions.

## **Section 7: Report after Voting Day**

In accordance with Subsection 12.1 (3) of the MEA, within 90 days after Voting Day, the City Clerk will make public a report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

This report will be available on [ottawa.ca/vote](http://ottawa.ca/vote) and will be provided in printed formats upon request through the Elections Office.

## **Section 8: Contact**

Questions about this plan and accessibility in the 2025 Osgoode By-election can be directed to the City of Ottawa's Elections Office by email at [elections@ottawa.ca](mailto:elections@ottawa.ca) or by phone at 613-580-2660.