

City of Ottawa 2020 Cumberland By-Election Detailed Accessibility Plan

The [*Municipal Elections Act, 1996*](#) (the “MEA”) governs municipal elections and by-elections in all Ontario municipalities. Under the MEA, the Clerk is responsible for the preparation and conduct of municipal elections. The *Good Government Act, 2009* introduced changes to the MEA, which emphasized accessibility for people with disabilities. These changes took effect in time for the 2010 Municipal Elections.

The MEA was further amended by the *Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016* (“Bill 181”) and requires the Clerk to prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before Voting Day in a regular election. [Section 12.1 (2)]. The Elections Office will continue with this practice for the 2020 Cumberland By-election.

As in past elections, the City of Ottawa Elections Office continues to be proactive on accessibility initiatives. Elections staff continues to consult with the City’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and receive feedback from the public on accessible elections.

For the 2020 Cumberland By-election, the Elections Office will offer the same accessible tools and services that were available to electors and candidates during the 2018 Municipal Elections as well as the 2019 Rideau-Rockcliffe By-election. Staff will continue to put emphasis on advertising its accessibility services to electors and candidates, including the availability of accessible vote tabulators and the five public facing applications (online webpages that assist electors with reviewing and updating their voting information).

New for the 2020 Cumberland By-election, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Elections Office, in consultation with Ottawa Public Health, has developed special tools and procedures to ensure the health and safety of electors, candidates and elections workers. These special measures will be detailed throughout the Accessibility Plan and in section 9.

The 2020 Cumberland By-election Accessibility Plan contains ten sections:

1. Accessibility and the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*;
2. Training – Overview and Principles;
3. Accessible Voting Tools;
4. Accessible Transportation;

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5. Accessible Vote Tabulators;
6. Establishing Accessible Voting Places;
7. Built Environment;
8. Information for the Public;
9. COVID-19 Pandemic Measures; and
10. Conclusion.

1. Accessibility and *the Municipal Elections Act, 1996*

Accessibility Plan and Report

Under Section 12.1 of the MEA, a Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. To this end, the Clerk is required to develop a plan on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before Voting Day. Additionally, the Clerk must provide a follow-up report to the public within 90 days after Voting Day.

Accessible Voting Places and Voting Procedures

The MEA requires that voting places and voting procedures be accessible to electors with disabilities. The MEA further requires the Clerk to establish a voting place at institutions with 20 or more beds occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm. Similarly, the Clerk is required to establish a voting place at a retirement home with 50 or more occupied beds. The Clerk must also establish a voting place at an institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces.

The MEA also requires the clerk to develop a ballot that allows electors with visual impairments to mark it independently, and permits an elector with a disability to receive assistance from a support person or an election worker during the voting process. In instances where an elector cannot enter the room used for voting, election workers will attend to the elector elsewhere in the voting place.

Relevant Sections of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*

Electors and candidates with disabilities

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

Plan re barriers

(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.

Report

(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.

Ballots [...]

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).

Voting Procedure [...]

52. (1) 4. The deputy returning officer may permit an elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the deputy returning officer considers necessary.

Accessibility

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

Voting places in institutions, retirement homes

45 (7) 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.*

Attendance on resident

45 (8) The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote.

Attendance on electors with disabilities [“curbside and bedside voting”]

45 (9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place.

2. Training – Overview and Principles

Every election worker, which for the 2020 Cumberland By-election is exclusively City staff, participates in mandatory accessibility training prior to working on voting days. This training provides an overview of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (the “AODA”) and emphasizes service delivery to all electors.¹ The 2020 Cumberland By-election training also includes COVID-19 Pandemic measures developed by the Elections Office in coordination with Ottawa Public Health. In keeping with these authorities and the City's [Accessibility Policy](#), the Elections Training Program addresses the following relevant topics:

- COVID-19 Pandemic Measures
- Assistive Devices;
- Documentation;
- Service Animals;
- Support Persons;
- Communication and Terminology;
- Notice of Service Disruption(s); and
- Feedback.

Election workers are trained to apply four guiding principles when serving electors with disabilities:

- Dignity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Independence; and
- Integration.

Election workers are trained to identify and remove barriers and make adaptations at the voting place to ensure an accessible voting experience for all electors. Election workers are also instructed to refrain from making assumptions, and to offer service by asking if and how they can help the elector.

Accessible Voting Processes

Election workers receive training on various voting processes to ensure electors with disabilities have equal opportunity to cast their ballot privately and independently. This

¹ Customer Service Standards are found in Part IV.2 of the [O. Reg 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (“IASR”) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005*.

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training includes information and instructions regarding the use of accessible voting tools and disability-specific customer service tips.

Assisting an Elector

Electors may request assistance with all or part of the voting process. Assistance might include an election worker reading the names of the candidates aloud to the elector from the other side of the voting screen, and/or assisting the elector by marking the ballot on their behalf. Election workers take an oath to serve impartially and protect the secrecy of the vote.

Serving Electors at their Bedside in an Institution

If required, an election worker will attend to an elector who is a resident of a long-term care facility, seniors' residence, or hospital to allow them to vote. For example, election workers at a retirement residence or long-term care facility will bring a ballot, in a privacy sleeve, to the door or bedside of the elector. Once the elector has marked their ballot, it is placed in the privacy sleeve and immediately returned to the voting area and is inserted into the vote tabulator. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the 2020 Cumberland By-election, election workers attending electors in long-term care facilities will be paramedic staff.

Service for Electors who Cannot Enter a Voting Place (Curbside Voting)

If required, an election worker will attend to an elector with a disability to assist them with voting anywhere on the voting place property. For example, if a resident is unable to enter the voting place, they can contact the Elections Office and request that their ballot be brought to them outside of the building or to their vehicle. The Elections Office will contact an election worker and ask them to bring the ballot to the elector. Once the elector marks their ballot, the ballot is placed in the privacy sleeve and immediately returned to the voting area and is inserted into the vote tabulator. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, curbside voting procedure will also be used to serve an elector who cannot or does not want to wear a mask.

Support Persons

The election workers' training states that support persons are permitted in the voting place, as required under the IASR. The legislation defines a support person as a person

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who accompanies an individual in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs. The City's [Accessibility Policy](#) also states that if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and the person with a disability is not to be prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises. Elections workers are trained to seek the elector's consent before discussing confidential information in front of the support person. Finally, the support person is required to take the *Oral Oath to Assist an Elector* before accompanying an elector behind the voting screen.

Service Animals

The Elections Office ensures that service animals are permitted in the voting place, as required under the IASR. Election workers are instructed that a variety of animals can act as a service animal and can assist an elector in a variety of ways. Election workers are also taught that a service animal is a physical extension of a person with a disability and should not be touched or distracted.

Voting Proxies

If an elector is unable to attend a voting place, they can appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. The MEA establishes requirements pertaining to the proxy appointment process, including the completion of a prescribed form, and the dates and times during which the prescribed form can be certified. To certify the forms, the proxy has the opportunity to bring them to a voting place on voting days, or to the Elections Office or a Client Service Centre, by appointment only. The period for appointing a voting proxy begins on September 8 and ends on October 5.

Accessibility Leadership by City Staff

Over 100 City of Ottawa employees will provide important leadership on voting days to ensure the voting process is accessible to all electors and candidates. All City employees complete mandatory accessibility training when they become part of the corporation. For the 2020 Cumberland By-election, the Election Office is recruiting exclusively City staff for all election worker positions, the Elections Office ensures that all individuals have previously completed AODA training. The Elections Office also requires election workers to complete supplementary accessibility training, which focuses on practical ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for electors and candidates with disabilities.

Additional Election Assistants

The Elections Office will be assigning additional Election Assistants to all voting places to address any accessibility related issues. In cases where a voting place does not have accessible power doors, an Election Assistant will be hired to open the door. In some cases, additional Election Assistants will be required to operate elevators on behalf of electors.

Elections Workers' Right to Request an Accommodation

The AODA and IASR place an emphasis on workers' rights:

- *“Every employer shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.” [IASR, s. 22]*
- *“During a recruitment process, an employer shall notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.” [IASR, s. 23(1)]*
- *“If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the employer shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.” [IASR, s. 23(2)]*

A number of adaptations are available to remove barriers for election workers with disabilities. The Election Worker Application form provides applicants the opportunity to request an accessibility-related accommodation proactively.

The Elections Office will continue to focus on accessibility accommodations during the recruitment campaign and offer City staff the opportunity to develop an Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Information (“IWERI”) Plan.

3. Accessible Voting Tools

As in past elections, each voting place will continue to offer the following tools and services to electors:

- Braille listings of candidate names and Braille ballot templates;
- Large print ballot;
- Magnifying sheet;
- Access to a cell phone with Elections call centre staff on standby;

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- Notice of temporary disruption communication tools; and
- Accessibility feedback cards.

As an additional accessible tool for electors, due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, a temporary by-law authorizing the use of a Special Mail-in Ballot is in effect for the 2020 Cumberland By-election and will be available.

Large Print Ballot

A large print ballot is a large replica of the ballot that can be used as a guide for an elector with vision impairments. Every voting place will be equipped with a large print ballot.

Magnifying Sheet

For the first time during the 2010 Municipal Elections, a magnifying sheet was available behind every voting screen, at every voting place. Originally recommended by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (“CNIB”), the 4x Page Size Magnifier Sheet (“Fresnel Lens”) could be used to read ballots and/or any other election-related documents. The tool was so well received by electors that many inquired about obtaining a magnifying sheet for personal use. Based on this feedback, the Elections Office continues to offer the magnifying sheet in every municipal election and by-election.

Cell Phone

A cell phone is available to electors in every voting place should they choose to have an Elections Call Centre employee read the ballot aloud to them over the phone. Electors who have impaired vision, limited literacy skills, or a cognitive disability often choose to access this service.

Notice of Temporary 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; or
- Technology that is temporarily unavailable (for example, an accessible vote tabulator).

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

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

Election workers are instructed to post the sign in a highly visible place, with consideration of electors who are most affected by the disruption. For example, if the elevator is out of service, election workers should post the sign at the entrances of the voting place and ensure that it is placed at a height that someone in a wheelchair could easily see. The Supervisor Deputy Returning Officer is also instructed to notify the Elections Office so that it might take additional measures to provide notice, such as posting information on ottawa.ca, depending on the circumstances.

Special Mail-in Ballot

Due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic a temporary by-law authorizing the use of an alternative voting method is in effect for the 2020 Cumberland By-election. This is in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, subsection 42(1)(b). The by-law allows the use of Special Mail-in Ballot which will allow electors to vote without having to attend a voting place, should they be unable to make it to a voting place on September 28, September 29, or October 5, or, feel uncomfortable about voting in person.

Any elector will have the opportunity to request to vote by Special Ballot by submitting an application form to the Elections Office, via the online application, email, mail or in person by appointment only. The Application Period for a Special Mail-in Ballot will be from September 5 to September 13, 2020. Electors will be mailed a Special Ballot Voter Kit which will include instructions how to vote, a voter declaration form, a ballot, a ballot secrecy envelope and a prepaid return envelope. Completed Special Mail-in Ballots must be returned to the Elections Office no later than 4:30pm on October 5, 2020. Special Mail-in Ballots can be returned to the Orléans Client Service Centre, dropped off at the Elections Office (by appointment only) or mailed using the Outer Return Vote Envelope with prepaid postage.

4. Accessible Transportation

On the advice of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Elections Office partnered with Para Transpo for the 2018 Municipal Elections to provide Para Transpo customers the opportunity to reserve their trip to and from a voting place **7 days in advance** on voting days.

Based on positive feedback, Para Transpo will continue to offer this service for 2020 Cumberland By-election. This ensures that electors who use Para Transpo can schedule their trips ahead of the 24-hour casual bookings.

5. Accessible Vote Tabulators

The Elections Office will continue to deploy accessible vote tabulators ("AVTs") to voting places in the 2020 Cumberland By-election. AVTs will be available at all voting places and on three voting days.

Bilingual Messages

The Elections Office has worked with the AVT vendor and the City's French Language Services Branch to ensure electors can use the AVT in both English and French.

Pronunciation of Names

Among other messages, the AVT can read the candidates' names aloud to the elector. Based on the advice of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Elections Office will use a human's voice when recording the audio files as opposed to computer-generated speech.

To ensure accuracy of the pronunciation of candidates' names, candidates were invited to record their name on a dedicated phone line established by the Elections Office.

Testing and Preparation

Each AVT is thoroughly tested prior to being deployed to a voting place. The systems test takes approximately 90 minutes per AVT and uses the same ballot issued to electors on voting days. Each of the AVT's features are tested, including the audio and assistive technology devices.

Logistical Challenges

During the 2014 Municipal Elections, the AVT introduced unanticipated logistical challenges, which required the Elections Office to introduce several new processes. Due to the significant size and weight of the AVT, the Elections Office required two people per AVT to deliver the machines to their assigned voting places.

To address these challenges, the Elections Office created a new position on voting days: ImageCast Evolution (“ICE”) drivers. ICE drivers were responsible for delivering, setting up, and returning the AVTs to their command centres. In between deliveries, the ICE drivers were assigned as additional support and troubleshooting resources.

Elections Office will continue to hire ICE drivers and collaborate with the Public Works and Environmental Services Departments to deliver AVTs to the required voting places.

6. Establishing Accessible Voting Places

The Elections Office has developed comprehensive guidelines to ensure that every voting place is accessible to electors and candidates with disabilities. Efforts ensure that each voting place is as central as possible in the voting area it serves. When selecting a voting place, consideration is also given to factors such as parking, transit, and familiarity for electors. More information about the review of voting places is described in the Built Environment section of this plan.

Legislatively Required Voting Places

As previously described, one of the Clerk’s mandatory accessibility initiatives is the establishment of voting places in seniors’ residences and long-term care facilities. Subsection 45(7) prescribes that 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.*

Based on legislation and past practice, 5 seniors’ residences and/or long-term care facilities have been identified as voting places in the 2020 Cumberland By-election.

Restricting Candidate and Scrutineer Access to Long Term Care Facilities

Subsection 45(10) of the MEA allows candidates or one scrutineer per candidate to accompany the DRO (i.e. paramedic teams) who attends on an elector in a retirement home. In response to COVID-19 and in accordance with Section 12 and 53 of the MEA, the City Clerk is restricting access to long term care centres and candidates and scrutineers will not be permitted to observe the vote. However, candidates and scrutineers may be present when the counting of the vote occurs, as authorized under Section 16 of the MEA.

Multi-Residential Property Strategy

For decades, the Elections Office has established advance vote locations in multi-residential properties such as apartment and condominium buildings. Establishing these voting locations meets and exceeds legislative requirements and provides a convenient voting place for electors residing in the building, particularly if they are seniors.

To establish a voting place within a multi-residential dwelling, the property must meet one of the following descriptions:

- a) Within a multi-residential building where an advance vote location had previously been provided for and where it is anticipated that:
 - i) the number of qualified electors appearing on the Voters' List will be 400 or more; and,
 - ii) the average participation rate for the last three regular municipal elections is 10% or greater.
- b) Within a multi-residential building where an advance vote place had previously been provided for and where it is anticipated that the number of qualified electors appearing on the Voters' List will be less than 400 yet equal to or greater than 100; if
 - i) the percentage of seniors (65 years of age and over) is anticipated to be 25% or more; or,
 - ii) the average participation rate from the previous three municipal elections is equal to or greater than the City average of 44% for those three elections.
- c) Within the premise of multi-residential dwellings where an advance vote location has not been previously provided and where it is anticipated that:
 - i) the number of qualified electors appearing on the Voters' List will be 100 or more; and,

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ii) the percentage of seniors (65 years of age and over) is anticipated to be 25% or more.

7. Built Environment

Elections staff complete a comprehensive review of the built environment of each location identified as a voting place. This process is achieved through site visits and the completion of a detailed accessibility checklist, attached as Appendix A. The accessibility checklist was developed in consultation with staff in the City's Accessibility Office and the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department. Site visit reviews include the evaluation of features such as elevators, ramps, handrails, lighting and door widths. Where a barrier can be corrected, the Elections Office will make an investment in construction to make the facility accessible. In some cases, where the traditional or proposed voting place do not meet accessibility standards, an entirely new facility will be selected to ensure the voting place is accessible.

Preventing Barriers through Research and Collaboration with Infrastructure Services

Prior to conducting site visits, the Elections Office contacted the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department for background information regarding the accessibility of City facilities, including recent and planned renovations. In several cases, both departments worked together to review renovation schedules against the elections schedule to avoid posing barriers to electors.

The Elections Office will continue to collaborate with the Planning, Infrastructure and Economical Development Department throughout the by-election.

Accessible Parking Signage

To ensure a reasonable travel distance for electors, temporary accessible parking spaces are added to voting places by installing temporary signage in the parking lot. The Elections Office works with the Public Works and Environmental Services Department to have temporary signage installed near the entrance used by electors, as required.

8. Information for the Public

As voting tools and methods are not standardized across jurisdictions in Canada, electors are sometimes unsure about what to expect when voting in the City's municipal

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elections. An elector's negative experience, including an experience facing a barrier, can cause doubt about the accessibility of the City's present-day elections.

To ensure electors are aware of the accessible tools and initiatives offered during municipal elections, accessibility figures prominently in communications to electors and candidates.

Voter Notification Brochures

Electors who appear on the Voters' List in Ward 19 – Cumberland will receive an election brochure with their Voter Notification letter. The brochure includes information about the accessible tools and initiatives available to electors. The brochure also includes information on how to appoint a proxy for electors who are unable to attend a voting place and information on the new Special Mail-in Ballot. Included in the brochure is also information on in-person voting and what safety measures to expect at the voting place in regards to COVID-19 and the City's Temporary Mandatory Mask By-Law.

“How to Vote” Video

Based on the advice of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Elections Office created a “How to Vote” video for the 2018 Municipal Elections. The video visually and verbally explained the voting process to electors. The video was available on ottawa.ca/vote and YouTube and was also used as an alternative learning method to supplement in-class training. The video was available in both English and French, and it featured captioning. An accessible transcript was also available on the video's landing page.

The “How to Vote” video will be updated for the 2020 Cumberland By-election and will be available to electors on ottawa.ca/vote and YouTube.

Web Accessibility and ottawa.ca/vote

The Elections Office ensures that all content posted to ottawa.ca/vote is accessible and, in particular, compliant with the AODA and Section 14 of the IASR (Accessible Websites and Web Content).

The Elections Office maintains a webpage on ottawa.ca/vote dedicated specifically to the accessibility of the 2020 Cumberland By-election. This webpage includes details regarding the accessibility of the voting process, the built environment of voting places, voting by proxy, and information on how to contact the Elections Office to ask questions or to provide feedback.

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Public Facing Applications

The Elections Office and Information Technology Services developed five public facing applications (webpages) to increase overall accessibility and service levels for the 2020 Cumberland By-election.

The applications are:

- Where Do I Vote?;
- Am I on the Voters' List?;
- Add my Name to the Voters' List;
- Amend my Information on the Voters' List;
- Application for a Special Mail-in Ballot; and
- Election Worker Application.

The applications were developed to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") 2.0 AA standards, and have been user tested by persons with disabilities.

Paper forms of the web-based applications are also available and voting place and Voters' List inquiries will still be received over the phone, by email, and in person.

Social Media

The City makes accessibility information available on social media and mobile devices. Through its official Twitter accounts ([@ottawavote](#) and [@ottawavotez](#)), and official [Facebook accounts](#), the Elections Office will regularly communicate information about the by-election, including information about accessibility.

Other Web Content

The Elections Office works closely with Service Ottawa to ensure that all content posted to [ottawa.ca/vote](#) complies with relevant standards. All maps posted to [ottawa.ca/vote](#) will be accessible using screen readers. This includes adding accessible tags to maps in PDF format, and making the related information available in alternate formats. For example, voting subdivision maps will be posted with accompanying "street index" tabular data (such as accessible HTML 5 format).

The Elections Office will ensure that candidates' Financial Statements are posted to [ottawa.ca/vote](#) in an accessible format, in order to comply with requirements under both the MEA and the AODA.

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Financial Statements are submitted on a provincially prescribed form (Form 4). Subsection 88 (9.1) of the MEA requires the clerk to publish these forms for viewing by the public on a website, as soon as possible after the documents are filed. Meanwhile, the AODA requires the City to ensure that all its web content is accessible.

At this time, the province has yet to make Form 4 available in an accessible format. Furthermore, the forms are submitted by candidates in hard copy bearing an original signature, as required under the MEA, which makes it more challenging to comply with the above-noted accessibility requirements.

To ensure the City is compliant with both pieces of legislation, the Elections Office will post both a scanned copy of the original Financial Statement – Form 4 and an accessible copy of the form. The accessible version will be created by the Elections Office, which includes creating a template and manually entering variable data. Finally, to ensure compliance with the City’s Bilingualism Policy, the accessible version will be available in both English and French.

Information for Candidates

Through its Accessibility webpage, the Elections Office provides candidates with a copy of the “Candidate’s Guide to Accessible Elections.” This guide is produced by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (“AMCTO”) to provide accessibility information and guidance to candidates.

Candidates also can participate in a Candidate Information Session where tips and resources are shared on running accessible campaigns. Topics include accessible communications, selecting an accessible campaign office, budgeting for accessibility, and accessible customer service. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Candidate Information Sessions will be held online.

While the City Clerk is not responsible for administering, providing guidance or overseeing campaign activities, the Elections Office provides to candidates a copy of a guide titled “[COVID-19 Campaign Guidance for Candidates and Voters](#)”. This guide was designed by Ottawa Public Health to assist candidates and voters to remain safe while participating in campaign activities.

Printed Materials – Clear Print Design Standard

The Elections Office ensures that print materials meet accessible design standards. This approach is important, because as the City’s population ages, certain eye conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration become

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increasingly common. In turn, reading a form or sign can be difficult if materials are not designed with accessibility in mind.

The Elections Office works closely with the Printing Unit to ensure that forms, signs, Voters' Lists, and other documents are designed to meet the CNIB's Clear Print Design Standard. Following this design standard, the Elections Office ensures that fonts, point sizes, colours/contrast, spacing and other formatting are accessible.

The Elections Office also works with the Surveys and Mapping Unit to make the electoral maps more accessible. Improvements include varying the line colour and thickness of different types of boundaries. The improved maps will be available both in hard copy and posted in electronic format to ottawa.ca/vote.

9. COVID-19 Pandemic Measures

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Elections Office has implemented several measures to ensure the health and safety of electors, candidates and election workers. These measures are in addition to previously noted measures such as Special Mail-in Ballot and the "COVID-19 Campaign Guidance for Candidates and Voters". On advance voting days (Monday, September 28, 2020 and Tuesday, September 29, 2020) and voting day (Monday, October 5, 2020) several changes will be in place to protect electors, candidates and election workers. Following Ottawa Public Health and provincial health recommendations, these will include:

- Limiting the number of electors in a voting place and the elections office to ensure physical distancing;
- A line management strategy and installing signage at voting places, including floor markers, to notify electors of physical distancing requirements;
- Installing acrylic barriers in voting places;
- Requiring electors to wear masks in voting places in accordance with the City's Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law. Electors are encouraged to bring their own mask; however, masks will be available at voting places should an elector not have one;
- Providing appropriate personal protective equipment including masks and gloves for staff who are working and cleaning surfaces in voting places;
- Installing hand sanitizing stations at voting places;
- Providing single use stationery at voting places (voting pens, pens, privacy sleeves);
- Providing face shields (eye protection) for election workers who cannot work behind acrylic barriers;
- Restricting Candidates and Scrutineers to observe the vote on voting days in long term care homes;
- Having paramedic staff work at all long-term care home voting locations

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- Allowing the certification of proxy forms at voting places; and
- Implementing “anywhere voting” at all voting places, meaning that electors can vote at any voting place, regardless of their address.

Note that do to the rapidly evolving situation during COVID-19, health and safety measures and policies may change to ensure the safety of staff and members of the public.

10. Conclusion

Within 90 days of Voting Day, the Elections Office will be making public a report on the accessibility of the 2020 Cumberland By-election. The accessibility report will be a follow up to this accessibility plan.