



Accessibility Plan

2026 Municipal Election



Town of / Ville de Penetanguishene

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2026 Municipal and School Board Election

Accessibility Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Section 12.1(1) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 states that the Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with accessibility needs. In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, specifically Section 12.1(2), the Ontarians with Accessibility needs Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Accessibility needs Act, 2005, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and implement appropriate measures, within budgetary limits, to provide persons with accessibility needs the opportunity to participate fully in Municipal Elections. Accordingly, the 2026 Municipal Election will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

1. Candidates and electors with accessibility needs have reasonable access to all election information and services.
2. Persons with accessibility needs have full access to Voting Places.
3. Persons with accessibility needs have access to alternative methods of voting assistance that will permit them to vote independently. In the event, their accessibility need cannot be accommodated through such alternative methods as are provided, a person with accessibility needs will have access to assistance from an Election Official who has received accessible customer service training.
4. Feedback regarding the conduct of the 2026 Municipal Elections from persons with accessibility needs will be collected and documented so for use in the administration of future municipal elections.

In accordance with Subsection 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days 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 accessibility needs.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with accessibility needs to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

DEVELOPMENT OF 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. In order to develop the plan below, several steps were taken in order to ensure that the statutory requirements were met and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from AMCTO, neighboring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups.
- Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.



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VOTING METHODS

The Town of Penetanguishene's 2026 Municipal Election will be working with Intelivote Systems Inc. to provide eVoting services to eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone, internet or in-person at the voter assistance centre during the October 13 – 26, 2026 voting period. In addition to the telephone and internet voting options being provided by the Town, the use of a ballot will also be available to voters on election day (October 26, 2026) only.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

The Intelivote Voting System 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 allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities 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 designated voter assistance centre, throughout the voting period.

Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

The Intelivote System has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

In-person Voting at the Voter Assistance Centre or Polling Station

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or Internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, a voter assistance centre will be open to provide in-person internet voting and/or paper voting opportunities via a laptop, tablet, touch screen monitor. In addition, on Election day only, voters may attend the Polling Station to vote by ballot and obtain assistance from an election official.

Access to the voter assistance centre/polling station interior and voting area shall be level and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available.



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Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

An accessible voting area will be available at both voter assistance centre and polling station. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

Special Voting Provisions

Election staff shall visit sites including long-term care facilities and retirement homes, as per the requirements of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to set-up on-site voting kiosks, or bedside voting opportunities for residents. Accessibility requirements will be assessed based on each location in consultation with the facility representative(s).

STAFF TRAINING AND ELECTION ASSISTANCE

Staff Training

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

Provision of Election Information

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that candidates and electors with accessibility needs are able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that considers their accessibility needs. The format may be agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk. In addition, candidates with accessibility needs may access the election information available on the Town Website using personal assistive technology such as screen readers. The ability to increase the font size of election documents is available on the Town's Website (www.penetanguishene.ca)

Staff Assistance

Legislative Services department 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:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Telephone | 705-549-7453 |
| 2. In Person | Town of Penetanguishene – Townhall
10 Robert Street West
Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2 |
| 3. Fax | 705-549-3743 |
| 4. Email | election@penetanguishene.ca |
| 5. Mail | Town of Penetanguishene
10 Robert Street West, P.O. Box 5009
Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2 |



ASSISTANCE TO CANDIDATES

Service Animals

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

Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with an accessibility need that are directly related to the accessibility need, 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

Voting Locations

An accessibility checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits for each voting place has been created to ensure each facility has:

- A barrier free path of travel from parking lot/sidewalk
- Barrier free parking, where provided
- Door operators or accessible doors
- Adequate lighting

Each voting location is inspected prior to the election and assessed to ensure that all accessibility needs are met.

All voting locations are accessible. Information relating to the voter assistance centre and voting day location will be available through the Town's Election Website at <https://www.penetanguishene.ca/townhall/elections/>

Accessible Route

Proximity of the voting location to accessible public transit routes shall be considered in the selection of voting location(s). The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage. Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the voting location and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.



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Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all Voter Help Centers. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the Voter Help Center. Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will monitor and enforce parking at voting locations throughout the day.

Service Animals

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

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Town of Penetanguishene's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible. In these instances of service disruptions, the Town of Penetanguishene shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with accessibility needs.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the Town of Penetanguishene website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include Voter Help Center's, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the Voter Help Center.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of the Help Centre or Polling location, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Town of Penetanguishene's website.

Paper Ballot Polling Location

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 the main entrance to the voting place is inaccessible, another entry point that is accessible will be used.

The entrance for persons with accessibility needs will be clearly posted. Every effort shall be made to ensure the door to the Voting Place is wide enough for a mobility aid to pass through easily; that door hardware is accessible and can be operated by a person using a closed fist or alternatively, will be propped open in a safe manner or manned.

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily traversed. All voting areas will be lit and seating made available.



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At least one accessible voting booth will be available at each Voting Place. Such voting booth(s) will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a mobility aid to vote independently and secretly. A large print Notice of Ballot shall be displayed in close proximity to the voting booth.

Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with low vision.

VOTING ASSISTANCE

Persons with accessibility needs may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, the Poll Clerk or another Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their ballot. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with accessibility needs, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which the assistance can be provided. This may include marking the ballot as directed by the person with the accessibility needs. All persons assisting a voter with accessibility needs 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.

Supplies will be provided at all voting locations in order to assist electors with accessibility needs:

- Magnifying sheets to assist electors with low vision
- Accessible ballot template to assist electors who are visually impaired
- Note pads and pens to assist electors who are deaf or hard of hearing

Support person/friend of the voter

Pursuant to the Town of Penetanguishene's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

Service Animals

Pursuant to the Town of Penetanguishene's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

Voter Assistance Centre Voting

For individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, a Voter Help Centre will be open to provide in-person internet voting opportunities via a computer, tablet, and/or touch screen monitor.

Access to the Voter Help Centre interior and voting area shall be level and slip resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. The entrance



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corridor shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a mobility aid.

An accessible voting area will be available at the Voter Help Center location. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

Voters may attend the Voter Help Center location throughout the voting period. The Town of Penetanguishene will be operating the following Voter Help Centre location during the Advance Voting Period:

Tuesday October 13 to Friday October 23, 2026 during regular office hours of Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Penetanguishene Council Chambers
(10 Robert Street West, Penetanguishene ON L9M 2G2)

Internet Voting

Internet voting provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with accessibility needs 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 use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently. By allowing persons with accessibility needs to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the resident to vote without any assistance. If persons with accessibility needs require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at designated Town of Penetanguishene Voter help centers, throughout the voting period.

At least one accessible internet voting method will be available at each advanced voting location. This may include, a secure tablet, computer, laptop, or other similar devices. In addition, the Poll Clerk or another Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting location, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with accessibility needs, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which the assistance can be provided. This may include marking the ballot as directed by the person with accessibility needs. All persons assisting a voter with accessibility needs will be required to swear an oath.

Telephone Voting

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, date of birth, and PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options.

The telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices.



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- Clear, plain language.
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

COMMUNICATION

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at Townhall and by way of the Town of Penetanguishene web site www.penetanguishene.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Information regarding the accessibility measures provided for the 2026 Municipal Election shall be included in general election advertising as well as in the 2026 Municipal Election Nomination Package.

Election Materials

The Town of Penetanguishene is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with accessibility needs, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's accessibility needs.

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user.

The Town of Penetanguishene and the person with accessibility needs may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Town of Penetanguishene or is supplied by a third party, the Town will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the Elector by providing assistive equipment.

General Election Materials

Large Print – Printed material generated by Penetanguishene will be provided in a Arial font, minimum 11 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – Information generated by Penetanguishene on the website in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA, and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

Video – Promotional and educational videos created for the 2026 municipal election shall incorporate audio and captioning.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Town of Penetanguishene's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the



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event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, Penetanguishene shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with accessibility needs.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the Town website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with accessibility needs at the voting place.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on Election Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Town website and election website.

CANDIDATES

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with accessibility needs. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible. Here is the link to the AMCTO's Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections - <https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2025-07/AMCTO-Candidates-Guide-to-Accessible-Elections.pdf>

REPORTING

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Town of Penetanguishene Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with accessibility needs.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with accessibility needs may be submitted to Legislative Services department staff through a variety of methods including:

Telephone	705-549-7453
In Person	Town of Penetanguishene – Townhall 10 Robert Street West, Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2
Fax	705-549-3743
Email	election@penetanguishene.ca
Mail	Town of Penetanguishene 10 Robert Street West, P.O. Box 5009 Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2



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The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar reoccurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of election services. Feedback can be provided to the Legislative Services department using any of the above-mentioned methods.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Town of Penetanguishene

The Town of Penetanguishene Election Website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the website for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year at [Elections - Town of Penetanguishene](#)

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Election Website

The Ministry website contains information about municipal elections including the Province of Ontario's 2026 Municipal Election Candidates Guide, the 2026 Voters' Guide and the 2026 Guide for Third Party Advertisers at the following link:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/municipal-elections>.

Service Ontario – e-Laws

The Service Ontario website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 | ontario.ca](#)