

Appendix 1 – Alternative voting method options

Option 1 - Internet voting

How does it work?

Step-by-step information on how this alternative voting method works can be found in [Appendix 5](#) of the Voting Systems and Alternative Voting Methods for the 2022 Municipal Election, 2021-30.

Where has it been offered?

Chatam-Kent
Kingston
Sudbury
Cambridge
Vaughan
Barrie
Burlington

Considerations around the principles of the MEA

The use of internet voting upholds some principles of the MEA by:

- Offering a remote option that is fair, consistent and does not bias or provide increased influence for any candidate or voter.
- It provides a range of customization options, including the ability to change font size and adjust contrast, as well as integration with screen reading software on voters' personal devices to offer the most accessible voting experience for voters with disabilities.
- Generally treating voters and candidates fairly and consistently by using widely available technology for voters and not providing undue advantage to any candidate.

It is unclear or unlikely that internet voting upholds the following MEA principles by:

- Being unable to guarantee that the secrecy of the vote is maintained. A report titled "Online Voting in Ontario's Municipal Elections" co-authored by Dr. Aleksander Essex, Anthony Cardillo and Nicholas Akinyoukan, studied internet voting use in the 2018 municipal elections and found that some voters were re-identifiable based on login credentials that used date of birth. These findings raise questions around both the secrecy of the vote and the integrity of the voting process that require further study and should be addressed before further implementation of an internet voting method.
- Offering only digital audit and recount capabilities. While there have been no proven instances of an internet voting system being hacked, breached or tampered with, the fact that an audit or recount entirely relies on that

system and cannot be verified by another external process is concerning. There is no external way to verify whether results reflect the proper majority of votes cast, votes are counted accurately and only valid votes are counted and upheld. Should trust in the system be called into question, it would be very difficult to prove otherwise.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- This is the most independent and accessible option for individuals who have their own computer software.
- There is concern for the individuals in the community who don't have access to a computer or are computer illiterate.

Considerations around security

- Currently vendors and individual municipalities set requirements for security through the procurement process. There is no municipal, provincial or federal standard.
- A standard may be in development in the future but with current progress on other standards, it is unclear whether internet voting specific standards will be ready in time for the 2026 election. Staff are monitoring closely.
- If independent security standards are not ready in time for procurement for 2026 (anticipated around Q1 2025) then the City of Guelph will need to be prepared to set their own requirements for security and testing. An approach for this and any associated costs will be referenced in the Q2 2024 Council report so that Council and the public are aware of this when approving alternative voting methods.

Requirements to deliver

- System security testing.
- Procurement in advance (Q1 2025 ideally).
- System integration (need to select a vendor that integrates with Guelph's voters' list database).
- Communication of security requirements to use (would recommend 2 levels of identity verification).
- The voter must already be on the voters' list to get an online ballot.
- Likely would recommend advanced voting only due to logistics (lots of calls/emails) and the risk of technical issues on election day (like we had with VoterView in 2022 and issues on election day for other municipalities in 2018).

Engagement findings

- Consistently heard this is the most accessible option from the AAC and the highest preference option from the public year over year in engagement findings.
- For more information refer to [February 2021](#) meeting information

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support;

- Generally, yes – cost is per vote cast so the full cost is not known until after election day.
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations;
 - Requires integration with voters list database provider as it needs to offer a live strike-off at the time the person votes to prevent them from receiving more than one ballot.
- Workload or capacity;
 - Doable with existing resources but heavy support is needed when it's live (calls and/or emails with technical support to ensure people can vote). The movement towards a central contact centre for customer service will help with this in the future, however, this may not be ready in time for 2026. This is potentially something that could be planned for.
- Timing and requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.);
 - Procurement Q1 2025.
 - Testing ideally in Q2 - Q4 2025 no later than Q1 2026.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections;
 - Technical issues (not security issues) outside of municipal control have impacted previous municipal elections. (i.e. 2018 with Dominion Voting and in 2022 with Datafix, the voters' list database slowed down and created delays at polling locations). For these reasons, staff would likely recommend this option only during advanced voting.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026;
 - There is a potential for standards to be developed but it is unclear if they will be ready in time at this stage.

Option 2 – Vote from home

How does it work?

A vote from home pilot was offered for the first time in 2022. An overview of how the pilot was set up is included in the [Vote from Home Service Pilot for the 2022 Municipal Election information report](#) on June 4, 2021. A future offering of this service would be offered in a similar way with the consideration of a higher limit or removal of the limit on the number of appointments offered.

Where is it offered?

Oakville
 Toronto
 Cambridge
 Vaughan

Considerations around the principles of the MEA

A vote from home service supports all principles of the MEA by:

- Maintaining the secrecy, confidentiality and integrity of the voting process.
- Procedures similar to in-person voting with a voter receiving and returning their ballot in a secrecy folder and no way to connect the ballot in a ballot box with the voter who cast it.
- Supporting a fair, unbiased and accessible election by enabling voters to mark and cast their ballot.
- Providing certainty that results reflect votes cast assured with procedures similar to in-person voting and a paper ballot that could be audited or recounted if needed.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Does not account for immunocompromised individuals.

Considerations around security

- None.

Requirements to deliver

- Minimum of two trained individuals with access to a vehicle.

Engagement findings

- The 2022 election had 11 individuals vote through this method, with great appreciation for offering this method given their limitations.
- Refer to the March 2022 [report](#).

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - Internal support could be offered, and no external required.
- Process, system integration and privacy considerations
 - Would be the same as in-person voting.
- Workload or capacity
 - Does not require significantly more resources.
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - Was sufficiently tested during the 2022 election, no further testing required.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Not that we are aware of.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - None – assume the same approach as 2022.

Option 3 – Vote by mail

How does it work?

Step-by-step information on how this alternative voting method works can be found in [Appendix 5](#) of the Voting Systems and Alternative Voting Methods for the 2022 Municipal Election, 2021-30.

Where is it offered?

Hamilton

Toronto

Ottawa

Considerations around the principles of the MEA

The use of vote by mail upholds all principles of the MEA by:

- Upholding the secrecy and confidentiality of the vote with thorough and established processes for receiving ballots in secrecy folders and separating any link to the voter once a voter declaration is verified and the voter is struck off the list. Of the remote options, this is most similar to the in-person voting process. Any remote voting option is unmonitored, however, the voter declaration that must be signed requires that the voter acknowledge legal responsibility for marking their own ballot and for not being coerced.
- Offering a remote option that is fair, consistent and does not bias or provide increased influence for any candidate or voter.
- Increasing access for voters who are unable to come to a voting location, particularly voters living or temporarily outside of the City. This option would provide limited benefit to voters without a fixed address and for some voters with disabilities that would make picking up or getting to a mailbox difficult. Opportunities to support increased access through service providers, designated drop-off locations and an alternative home visit program could be explored to enhance access.
- Maintaining the integrity of the voting process by offering voters the option to cast a remote ballot through an established and trusted mail system. Impacts of potential mail delays or strikes could be planned for and addressed through the use of drop-off points and it is within the authority of the City Clerk to delay official election results should a large-scale delay of mailed ballots occur.
- Providing certainty that the results reflect the votes cast and that valid votes are counted and invalid votes are rejected consistent with in-person voting processes. By offering a paper ballot, vote counting would take place using the same type of pre-tested vote tabulator as at in-person voting locations. This means that the same criteria and process for accepting and rejecting ballots under certain conditions, like an over-voted ballot, would be applied in the same way as ballots cast in person. Counting mailed ballots would occur after the close of voting locations on Election Night and would be open to

viewing by candidates or scrutineers. Audit tracking and any questions regarding the accuracy of results could be verified by the physical ballots and a recount, if ordered by a judge, could be conducted by manual count.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- This may work for some people, but it won't work for all people, particularly for people with mobility disabilities getting to a mailbox for drop off.
- This method may require assistance marking the ballot for others. Not a fully independent voting experience for everyone.

Considerations around security

- None noted.

Requirements to deliver

- Doesn't require procurement (done through VoterView and under the threshold for procurement by-law).
- Integration with VoterView – so it's tracked and struck off appropriately when returned.
- Latex-free envelopes to be procured.
- No other new requirements are anticipated.

Engagement findings

- Refer to the February 2021 [report](#).
- Refer to the March 2022 [report](#).

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - Sufficient support was received from the vendor during the 2022 election.
- Process, system integration, and privacy considerations
 - VoterView integration.
- Workload or capacity
 - People resource intensive to manually prepare kits and receive them back. Could offer either this or internet voting in order to offer both would need to increase people and financial resources.
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - No procurement needed – prep and delivery in the election year.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Resource intensive in 2022 and challenge with timing – need to account for Canada Post delivery timelines there and back so earlier cut-off time to request in September.
 - People may not be aware of the option until it's already closed.

- Not a great last-minute option for people. If received after the deadline, then the ballot cannot be counted.
- Should there be a postal strike there could be concern for missed deadlines.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - None – assume the same approach as 2022.

Option 4 – Vote by phone

How does it work?

Step by step information on how this alternative voting methods works can be found in [Appendix 5](#) of the Voting Systems and Alternative Voting Methods for the 2022 Municipal Election, 2021-30.

Where is it offered?

Kingston,
Barrie.

Considerations around the principles of the MEA

The use of vote by phone upholds some principles of the MEA by:

- Offering a remote option that is fair, consistent and does not bias or provide increased influence for any candidate or voter.
- Generally treating voters and candidates fairly and consistently by using widely available phone technology for voters and not providing undue advantage to any candidate.

It is unclear or unlikely that vote by phone upholds the following principles by:

- Using the internet voting system as the underlying platform to receive ballots and count votes. Any questions raised regarding the ability of an internet voting system to ensure the secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process, ensure the integrity of the election or provide certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast would also apply to a vote by phone method.
- Providing limited ability for the voter to adjust set-up and receive assistance if needed which would compromise the ability to ensure the election is accessible to all voters. Previous discussions with Accessibility Services staff indicate that a vote by phone option would be difficult to use for voters with a variety of disabilities. To cast a ballot by phone, the voter would interact with an audio recording, not a person to mark the ballot. The recording could not be sped up or slowed down to accommodate voters needs individually and no assistive devices or software could be used by the voter. This method could also present a barrier for voters who speak English as a second language. The City does not translate the ballot or voting instructions into

multiple languages; however, voters are able to get assistance from a translator who accompanies the voter at a voting location in person. As long as the voter upholds their responsibility to mark their own ballot and to not be coerced, a vote by mail or internet voting option would allow this ability to receive similar assistance remotely. Getting assistance to mark an audio ballot over the phone would be much more challenging.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Unable to use personal technology to assist.
- Unable to speed up or slow down.

Considerations around security

-

Requirements to deliver

- System security testing.
- Procurement in advance (Q1 2025 ideally).
- System integration (need to select a vendor that integrates with our voters' list database).
- Communication of security requirements to use.
- Likely would recommend advanced voting only due to logistics (lots of calls/emails) and the risk of technical issues on election day (like we had with VoterView in 2022 and issues on election day for other municipalities in 2018).

Engagement findings

- Refer to the February 2021 [report](#).

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - Would need to research more.
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations
 - Would need to research more.
- Workload or capacity
 - Doable with existing resources but heavy support is needed when it's live (calls and/or emails with technical support to ensure people can vote). The movement towards a central contact centre for customer service will help with this in the future, however, this may not be ready in time for 2026. This is potentially something that could be planned for.
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - Procurement Q1 2025.
 - Testing ideally in Q2 - Q4 2025 no later than Q1 2026.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - The ballot can be difficult to maneuver and understand.
 - Significant voter support is required.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026

Option 5 – Remote accessible vote by mail

How does it work?

An overview of how the pilot was set up is included in the [Remote Accessible Vote by Mail as a Voting Method for the 2022 Municipal Election staff report](#) on November 1, 2021. As far as staff are aware, how this method is offered has not changed since this report.

Where is it offered?

None of the 13 municipalities that were engaged. This method has not been used in Canada to date.

Considerations around the principles of the MEA

The use of RAVBM would support some principles of the MEA by:

- Offering a remote option that is fair, consistent and does not bias, advantage or disadvantage any candidate or voter.
- Supporting accessibility through independent marking of a ballot by enabling the voter to change font size, adjust contrast or use any assistive technology on personal devices.

It is unclear or unlikely that RAVBM would uphold the following principles by:

- Limited secrecy, confidentiality and accessible functionality in the case of one of the options, as a voter may need assistance to print, assemble and mail their voter package.
- Being untested to ensure it meets legislative requirements, maintains the integrity of the voting process, provides certainty of results or verifies appropriate votes are counted under the Canadian electoral process and the MEA.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Usability and accessibility limitations for the option that requires printing – A mail-based return was designed to support overseas voters and is not considered an accessible option advertised by vendors. Voters would likely still require assistance to print, assemble and mail the VBM kit.

Considerations around security

- The need for thorough testing as this system has not been implemented before and the ballot would still be accessed and marked online.
- A lack of standards for testing online voting systems in Canada.
- The quality of voters' list data limits the ability to effectively verify the identity of the voter and provide a secure login to receive the ballot.

Requirements to deliver

- Significant testing would be required.

Engagement findings

- See November 1, 2021 [Report](#).

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 -
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations

-
- Workload or capacity
-
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
-
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
-
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
-

Appendix 2 – Alternative voting service enhancement options

If there is time during the workshop, we will explore these enhancements. However, staff have the ability to implement the voting enhancements, without requiring the direction of Council, so engagement on the voting enhancement options can be done at a later time.

Option 1 – Accessible voting equipment

How does it work?

This is equipment that plugs into the tabulator at in person voting locations. This is the audio-tactile interface (ATI) with sip and puff and paddle attachments.

Where is it offered?

All locations engaged with.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Allows individuals with various disabilities to independently mark a ballot in person.

Considerations around security

- none

Requirements to deliver

- Would require the rental of this equipment from the vendor.

Engagement findings

- NA

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - Internal staff can support election staff with training.
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations
 - Current technology integrates well.
- Workload or capacity
 - not a significant demand on staff resources.
- Timing / requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)

- No procurement needed – prep and delivery in election year.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Not significantly used by voters.
 - Election staff do not feel comfortable with equipment.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - None – assume the same approach as 2022.

Option 2 – Magnifying sheets

How does it work?

- A magnifying sheet is supplied to individuals that require magnification to read.

Where is it offered?

- All 13 municipalities that were engaged offered this.

Option 3 – Braille sleeves

How does it work?

- There are multiple designs for this there are options to have a blank braille sleeve that says candidate one, two, three etc. Or to have custom sleeves created with each candidate's name on the ballot in Braille.

Where is it offered?

Toronto,
Ottawa,
Barrie.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- The problem with the first option listed above is that the voter would need to know the order of the candidates on the ballot and not forget them. The second option is what the City of Guelph intended to pilot in 2022, and removes the barrier of having to remember or ask the order of candidates. This allows for a more independent ballot marking experience.

Considerations around security

- None.

Requirements to deliver

- Requires a vendor to complete the braille ballots between the completion of the ballot and in time to implement.

Engagement findings

- NA

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - NA
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations
 - NA
- Workload or capacity
 - Doable, not a significant amount of staff time required.

- Timing / requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - Would require procurement earlier in the process than in 2022, as the sleeves arrived too late to be utilized in the 2022 election.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Vendor didn't complete sleeves in time to be utilized.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - NA

Option 4 – Masked / scent free location

How does it work?

- A location is offered for individuals to vote where all individuals are masked, and no scents are worn, or used in the room.

Where is it offered?

- Masked locations were offered in Hamilton, Toronto, and Barrie.
- None of the Municipalities that were engaged offered a scent-free location.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Provides an in-person voting location for those that have scent sensitivities or are immunocompromised.

Considerations around security

- None

Requirements to deliver

- Learning from 2022, better communication that this option is available.
- Requiring people in the hallway prior to the masked room be masked/scent-free.

Engagement findings

- NA

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - No external support is required.
- Process, system integration, privacy considerations
 - NA
- Workload or capacity
 - Requires election staff to run poll location.
- Timing / requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - No procurement needed – prep and delivery in the election year.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Not a significant use by voters.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - None – assume the same approach as 2022.

Option 5 – ASL translation

How does it work?

- For 2022 the ability to book an ASL interpreter in advance was offered. Voters were required to book at a time/date and location that worked for the individual. Costs for this being covered by the city of Guelph.
- For 2026 the Canadian Hearing Society believes they will have their On-demand ASL translation services in full working order. This will allow individuals to access ASL interpretation without the requirement of an appointment.
- ASL interpretation can also be provided for digital content on various websites.

Where is it offered?

Kinston,
Kitchener.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Providing ASL translation of digital content will provide a better understanding of the process for members of the community.
- Providing an on demand ASL translation service at voting locations will assist voters with the process of marking a ballot.

Considerations around security

- NA

Requirements to deliver

- Procurement of the services of Canadian Hearing Services (CHS) for translation services.

Engagement findings

- NA

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
 - CHS does offer support, would need to research more.
- Process, system integration, and privacy considerations
 - On-demand services are not available at this time, would have to ensure that it is online and in working order prior to 2026.
 - Digital translation is currently available.
- Workload or capacity
 - No significant increase in workload.
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
 - On-demand is anticipated to be available in Q1 or Q2 of 2024.
 - Prep and Delivery could be done in the election year.
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
 - Little to no uptake on services offered.
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026
 - Enhancements from 2022 would include the on-demand service.
 - Translation of online materials to ASL.

Option 6 – City Hall as a central hub for accessible enhancements

How does it work?

City Hall would be open for voting for residents of any ward, not just during advanced voting days, but on election day as well. This would allow a place with accessible options all in one location, allowing the ability to offer more options, and more specialized voting experiences.

Where is it offered?

This would be unique to us for the 2026 election.

Considerations around accessibility and barrier reduction

- Would need to consider which options to offer at this location.
- Would need to consider what options to offer at other locations.

Considerations around security

- None

Requirements to deliver

- Unable to determine at this time, would need to decide on which options to offer, and what requirements would be needed for each individual option.

Engagement findings

- NA

Administrative considerations

- Resources – do they currently support?
- Process, system integration, and privacy considerations
- Workload or capacity
- Timing/requirements for delivery (procurement, testing, etc.)
- Challenges experienced in previous municipal elections
- Opportunities anticipated by 2026

Appendix 3 – Draft motion

Please note that these are a couple of examples of draft motions, to provide an idea of what to work toward. There is no finality to it. In addition to the motion should the AAC want to express any more information to Council, we are happy to put in quotations from the AAC in our report. In addition, or alternatively, the Chair of the AAC is welcome to present this report alongside staff. There will be a summary of all information received from this process included in the report to Council.

1. That the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends Council implement _____ and _____ as Alternative Voting Methods for the 2026 Municipal election.

OR:

1. That the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends Council implement _____ as an Alternative Voting Method for the 2026 Municipal election; and, That, if _____ is not possible, Council implement _____

and _____ as an Alternative Voting Methods instead of _____ for the 2026 Municipal election.

Appendix 4 – Contact information

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