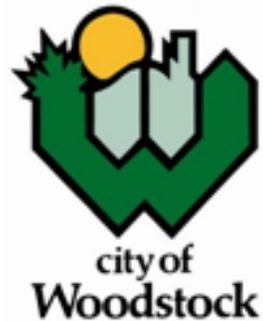


Revised May 2022



# **Municipal and School Board Election 2022**

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## **Pre-Election Accessibility Plan**

Woodstock City Hall  
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## Background

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Clerk must have regard for the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The plan must be made available to the public before voting day. Within 90 days after the election, the Clerk must also prepare a public report about the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates with disabilities.

## Legislation

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act* states that:

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

*“(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.*

*“(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.”*

Section 45(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act* states that:

*“In establishing locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.”*

## Polling Locations

Advance polls will be held at the following location:

- City Hall, 500 Dundas Street – City Hall basement
  - Saturday, October 8, 2022: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
  - Monday, October 17 to Thursday, October 20, 2022: 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
  - Friday, October 21, 2022: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Election Day Polls will be held on Monday October 24, 2022, from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. at the following locations:

- Goff Hall, 381 Finkle Street
- Unifor Hall, 126 Beale Street
- The Rock Community Church, 1140 Nellis Street

- Oxford Auditorium, 875 Nellis Street
- Cowan Park Sports Plex, 895 Ridgeway Drive

Prior to Election Day, Unifor Hall, Oxford Auditorium, Goff Hall, Cowan Sportsplex, and the Rock Community Church were all subject to a comprehensive accessibility review. The advanced poll location at City Hall also underwent an accessibility assessment. The review process entailed election staff to complete a detailed accessibility checklist to ensure that the environment in the proposed voting locations was free of barriers. The checklist included accessibility features pertaining to parking, walkways and ramps, loading zones, entrances and exterior doors, lobby, hallways and corridors, interior doors, fire exits, elevators, washrooms, and the voting room at all polling locations.

Goff Hall, Unifor Hall, the Rock Community Church and Oxford Auditorium were also used as Election Day polls in 2018 and the feedback regarding accessibility was positive.

Roving Polls will be conducted at all required nursing homes, retirement homes, and hospitals as per the *Municipal Elections Act*.

*The Municipal Elections Act* was changed in 2016 so that landlords and condominium corporations are no longer allowed to prohibit tenants or owners from displaying election signs on their premise. This includes the ability to display election signs in common areas of the building even if the space is being used as a voting place. As a result, the City of Woodstock will no longer be using apartment buildings as voting places in order to ensure the neutrality of the voting place.

Instead, a week of advanced voting noted above, a poll will be held at City Hall on the Saturday October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Thanksgiving weekend, 9:00 a.m. through to 4:00 p.m. This advanced voting will be accessible to all members of the public.

Additional election information can be found at the City of Woodstock website:

<https://www.cityofwoodstock.ca/en/city-governance/municipal-election.aspx>

### **Removing and Preventing Barriers**

The City of Woodstock is committed to taking measures to identify and remove accessibility barriers that may exist through the voting process and at polling locations. The following measures are being taken to remove and prevent barriers during the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election:

- The voting location at Oxford Auditorium was deemed fully accessible by the City's summer accessibility student in 2017, who utilized both a power wheelchair and a service animal. This location is fully accessible to any citizen with a mobility impairment or device.

- An election location Accessibility Checklist (Appendix A) has been created and completed for each location in order for election staff to review the polling location and ensure that any barriers are identified and removed.
- Chairs will be placed in the hallways of voting locations so individuals will be able to sit, in the event that there are line-ups at the respective voting location.
- Any polling location that does not have automatic power-assist doors, will have doors propped open so any individual using a mobility aid can freely access the voting space.
- Service animals are permitted at all polling locations.
- Letter sized magnifiers will be made available at all of the voting locations.
- None of the Election Day polls listed above have stairs at the location entrance and all have wide doors, thus ensuring persons using mobility devices will have access to the location.
- Voters will be able to cast their ballots at any of the five voting locations on voting day. This 'vote anywhere' method will assist all voters by providing the opportunity to vote at the most convenient location.
- When casting ballots, electors may have an election staff member, or a support person(s) assist with reading the ballot aloud and/or marking the ballot.
- To allow an elector with a disability to vote, election staff will attend to the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place.
- Advance polls as well as the Goff Hall poll on Election Day will be configured with an accessible voting terminal that is used by voters who require assistance to mark their ballot. The accessible voting terminal provides accessibility to those voters who are unable to navigate a paper ballot and manual marking device such as a pen. A standard ballot will be issued to the voter and inserted into the voting terminal. The accessible voting terminal will confirm votes selected for voter verification and generate a marked paper ballot with a mark that is indistinguishable from a ballot marked by hand to ensure voter secrecy. The accessible tabulator will then feed the ballot into the tabulator as per standard procedure.
- Election staff will also be visiting Woodingford Lodge, Park Place, Oxford Gardens, Caressant Care, Cedarview Retirement, and Woodstock Hospital on Election Day. Residents of these facilities will have the opportunity to cast their ballots in an accessible space without leaving their residence.
- As noted above, advanced roving polls will no longer be held at apartment buildings. However, advance polls as well as a poll on Thanksgiving weekend will provide all voters with multiple opportunities to cast a ballot.
- An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed

form available at the Clerks Department. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration. Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on voting day. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after all nominations have been certified, and is null and void after the final voting day.

- All voting locations can be accessed by Para-Transit.
- Transit and Para-Transit will be running at all times when the polls are open.
- Free public transit will be provided on October 24, 2022, for the Municipal and School Election in order to encourage and make it possible for more residents to vote.
- Accessible formats and communication support for all election material will be made available upon request.
- In accordance with Regulation 429/07 Customer Service for persons with disabilities, all election staff will be provided training on the following:
  - Assistive Devices;
  - Service Animals;
  - Support Persons;
  - Communication and Terminology;
  - Notice of Service Disruption; and
  - Feedback

## **Feedback**

Feedback, comments, and suggestions regarding the accessibility of elections is encouraged and invited. Please contact the City Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

### **City of Woodstock**

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Website: <http://www.cityofwoodstock.ca>



# Appendix A: Barrier-Free Accessibility Checklist for Voting Locations

## Voting Location:

### 1. Parking

- a. Number of accessible parking spaces on site:
- b. Location in respect to the entrance way/distance to walk:
- c. Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility? Yes  No
- d. Is there adequate lighting? Yes  No
- e. Surface: 

Paved	Gravel	Concrete
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### 2. Exterior Access

- a. Accessible route from parking to entrance: Yes  No
- b. Are curb cuts provided along the barrier-free path of travel? Yes  No
- c. Ramp landings are wide enough for wheelchairs and scooters and have a firm, level, non-slip finish: Yes  No
- d. Is the building and route signage displayed, in large and high-contrast lettering? Yes  No
- e. Obstacles (please list)
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Drop off and Loading Zones

- a. Surface: 

Paved	Gravel	Concrete
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- b. Appropriate for voter drop-off/para-transit: Yes  No
- c. Bus Shelter or stop nearby: Yes  No

### 4. Entrances and Exterior Doors

- a. Barrier-free path of travel to entrance: Yes  No
- b. Adequate lighting leading to entrance: Yes  No
- c. Power Assist door at entrance: Yes  No
- d. If no power-assist, can door be propped open: Yes  No

## 5. Lobby, Hallways & Corridors

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. Are interior doors power-assist?                                       | Yes | No |
| b. If no power-assist, can door be propped open:                          | Yes | No |
| c. Do floor finishes have non-slip surfaces under wet and dry conditions? | Yes | No |
| d. Overhanging/protruding objects:  | Yes | No |
| e. Obstacles (please list)  |     |    |
| i. _____  |     |    |
| ii. _____   |     |    |
| f. Will queue extend to outdoors:   | Yes | No |
| g. If yes, is there shelter available:                                    | Yes | No |

## 6. Interior Doors

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. Interior doors are equipped with power-assist: | Yes | No |
| b. If no power-assist, can door be propped open:  | Yes | No |

## 7. Fire Exits

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Signage: _____  |     |    |
| b. Are fire exits accessible:  | Yes | No |
| c. Are exit instructions printed in large text and mounted in an accessible and highly visible location? | Yes | No |

## 8. Washrooms

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Proximity to voting room: _____             |     |    |
| b. Available to the public:                    | Yes | No |
| c. Power assist:                               | Yes | No |
| d. Accessible Sink (knee clearance of 685 mm): | Yes | No |
| e. Style of faucet (automatic or not): _____   |     |    |
| f. Grab bar beside the toilet:                 | Yes | No |