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2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

severn.ca





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1. Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Municipal Election in the Township of Severn.

The Township of Severn has made great efforts in promoting a barrier-free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2026 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election.

2. Objectives

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township of Severn will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection.
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates.
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official.
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Township of Severn website and social media.
- That all Voting Centres are accessible.

3. 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.

This plan was reviewed and endorsed by the Township’s Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee on May 29, 2026.

4. Voting Methods

The 2026 Township of Severn Municipal Election will be working with Intelivote Systems Inc. and Election Systems & Software to provide voting services to eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via internet or in-person at a Voting Centre during the October 15 – 26, 2026 voting period.

Everyday tools like computers 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 voting system provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home online, or in person if they require assistance. 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 people with disabilities to vote using a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote in a way that works for them. 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 in-person Voting Centres offered across the Township of Severn throughout the voting period.

4.1 Internet Voting

Using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, eligible voters may vote online using 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.

4.2 In-person Voting at Voting Centres

For those individuals without means to access voting via Internet at home, or who require assistance of a trained Election Official, Voting Centres will be open on Election Day and advance voting days to provide in-person internet voting via a tablet or paper ballots.

Access to the Voting Centre 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. 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 each Voting Centre. 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.

The Township of Severn will be operating advance vote Voting Centres for all wards (vote anywhere) on the following dates & times:

- October 17, 2026 – 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Township Office)
- October 20, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Coldwater & District Community Centre)
- October 23, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Washago Community Centre)

The following Voting Centres will be open on Election Day, Monday October 26, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with ward-specific voting as follows:

- Coldwater and District Community Centre, 11 Michael Anne Drive (Wards 1 and 2)
- Administration Centre, 1024 Hurlwood Lane (Ward 3)
Internet and Paper Ballot
- Washago Community Centre, 4261 Hamilton Street (Wards 4 and 5)

5. Voting Centres

An accessibility assessment of each physical polling location will be conducted. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which locations will be used:

5.1 Accessible Route

Proximity of the voting location to Simcoe County Linx public transit routes shall be considered in the selection of Voting Centres. The name and/or address of the Voting Centre shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the Voting Centre 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 Centre for individuals needing a rest.

5.2 Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the Voting Centre 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 Centre and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open for the duration of the voting hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

5.3 Parking

Accessible parking shall be available. 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 Voting Centre. By-law staff will monitor and enforce parking at voting locations throughout the day.

6. Voting Assistance

6.1 Support Person

Pursuant to the Township of Severn's Election Procedures people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any Voting Centre. A designated support person will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

A support person is permitted to accompany the voter throughout the Voting Centre, including the privacy screen/voting area. The Township will not prevent the person with a disability from having access to their support person while at the Voting Centre.

The support person is able to mark the voter's ballot for the person with a disability if required; however the support person must complete an oral oath to maintain the secrecy of the vote. The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) may also assist the voter in marking the ballot if requested. The DRO will mark the ballot as directed by the voter and place the ballot into the secrecy envelope at the voting area.

6.2 Service Animals

Pursuant to the Township of Severn's Accessible Customer Service Policy, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Centres.

Service animals may be an animal assisting a person with a disability. Service animals include, but are not limited to guide dogs, hearing alert dogs, seizure alert animals, special skills animals and animals that provide emotional support to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal at all Voting Centres. A service animal should never be touched without the expressed permission of its owner.

In most cases, it is readily apparent that an animal is providing assistance to a person with a disability as the animal may be observed assisting the person, or the animal is wearing an identifiable vest or harness. In situations where it may not be



apparent that the animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, Election Officials may ask the customer for one of the following:

- A letter from a physician or nurse stating that the customer needs the animal for reasons relating to a disability; or
- A valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized service animal training school.

6.3 Election Officials

At Voting Centres, upon request, Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online or paper ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to Voting Day.

7. Communication

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Administration Office and by way of the Township of Severn website, www.severn.ca/election. Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

7.1 Election Materials

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

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 Township of Severn and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Township of Severn or is supplied by a third party, the Township of Severn 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.

Requests for election materials in an alternative format must be requested in advance as much as possible due to limited access to resources during the voting period.

General Election Materials

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

Ballots - Paper ballots are pre-printed for use with optical scan tabulators and are not available in an alternate print format.



Magnifying Sheets – Magnifying sheets that enlarge text will be available at all Voting Centres.

Online Voting – The online voting option provides the ability to use screen-reading software, audio, and enlarged print if required. Voting Centres will have touch-screen tablets available for use.

Website – Information generated by the Township of Severn on the website in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 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.

7.2 Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township of Severn's control, such as temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary 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, the Township of Severn shall provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a visible place and manner as soon as possible in the event of disruption, and information shall also be posted on the Township of Severn 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 Centres, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities.

8. Candidates

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible.

9. Reporting

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after Voting Day, the Township of Severn Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

10. Feedback Process

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to the Clerk's Department.


Feedback may be provided in the following manner:

- 1) Completing the appropriate form
- 2) In person at: 1024 Hurlwood Lane, Severn, ON
- 3) By telephone: (705) 325-2315 x 232
- 4) By email: agray@severn.ca
- 5) By fax: (705) 327-5818

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

11. Facility Accessibility Audits & Floor Plans

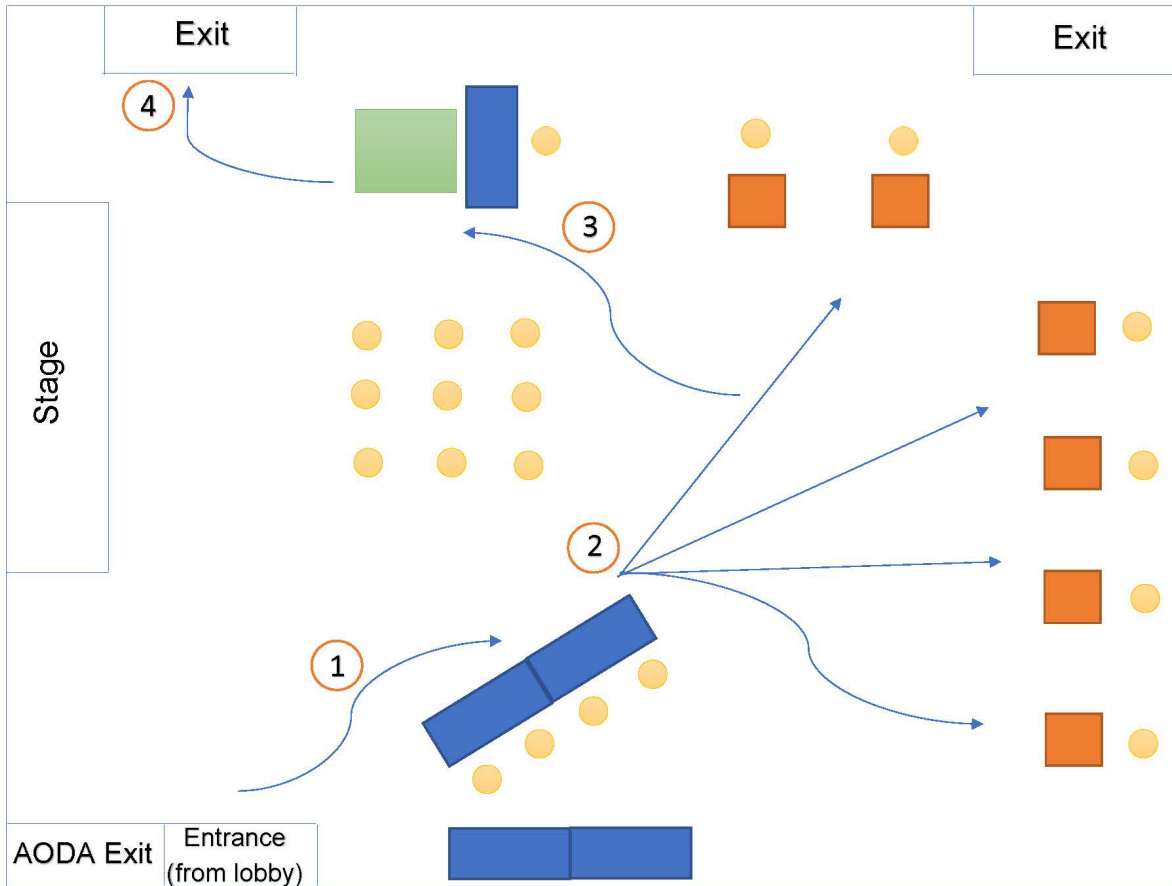
11.1 Washago Community Centre

Facility Name: Washago Community Centre	Voting Centre: Ward 4 and Ward 5
Street Address: 4361 Hamilton Street	Inspection Date: April 17, 2026
Staff Name: Alison Gray & Michael Mayer	Phone Number: 705-325-2315 x232
Facility	
Is the name and address of location visible from the street or sidewalk?	Y or N
Parking	
Is the parking area close to the entrance of the voting area?	Y or N
Is there external lighting to the entrance for evening use?	Y or N
Number of accessible parking spaces:	2
Number of regular spaces available to the public:	20
Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked (International Symbol of Accessibility )?	Y or N
Are the accessible parking spaces firm and level?	Y or N
Are the spaces large enough for an elector who uses a van equipped with a w/c lift?	Y or N
Is curbside voting an option?	Y or N
Is there an accessible drop off area?	Y or N
Do the sidewalks have curb cuts?	N/A
Is the surface of the pathway firm and obstacle/pothole free?	Y or N
Building Entrance	
If there is more than 1 entrance, are there signs posted from all possible routes?	N/A
Is the entrance to the building accessible? (level surface or with ramp)	Y or N
If applicable – Is the ramp well designed and safe? (1:20 slope, handrails on both sides)	N/A



Is the exterior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N
Is the exterior door easy to open (lever handle) or automatic?	Y or N
Building Interior - Getting to the Ballot Box	
Is there directional signage?	Y or N
Is the flooring non-slip and level?	Y or N
If there are doormats are they removable?	Y or N
Is the interior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N
Is there an automatic door opener?	Y or N
If the door is not automatic – can it be propped open?	Y or N
Are any other doors easily opened (lever handle, weight) (does it pass the closed fist test)?	Y or N
Is there maneuvering space of 600mm (24") on both sides of the door?	Y or N
Are the corridors spacious enough for a w/c or scooter to pass through? (no clutter)	Y or N
Is the interior well lit?	Y or N
Is there a wheelchair accessible washroom?	Y or N
Voting Area	
Is the voting area on the same level as the entrance?	Y or N
If not, can electors access the voting area using an elevator or a level access ramp?	N/A
Is the voting location well lit?	Y or N
Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?	Y or N
Does the voting area have sufficient space for a w/c or scooter to move about easily?	Y or N
Is there a voting booth low and wide enough to allow a person in a w/c or scooter vote independently?	Y or N
Is the tabulator machine easy to identify for people with visual impairments?	Y or N
Are there magnifying sheets available to assist persons with low vision?	Y or N

Washago Community Centre –
4361 Hamilton Street




Blue table = DRO and Election Officials taking voter registrations & issuance of ballots, or managing tabulator

Orange squares = Voting Booths

Green square = Tabulator



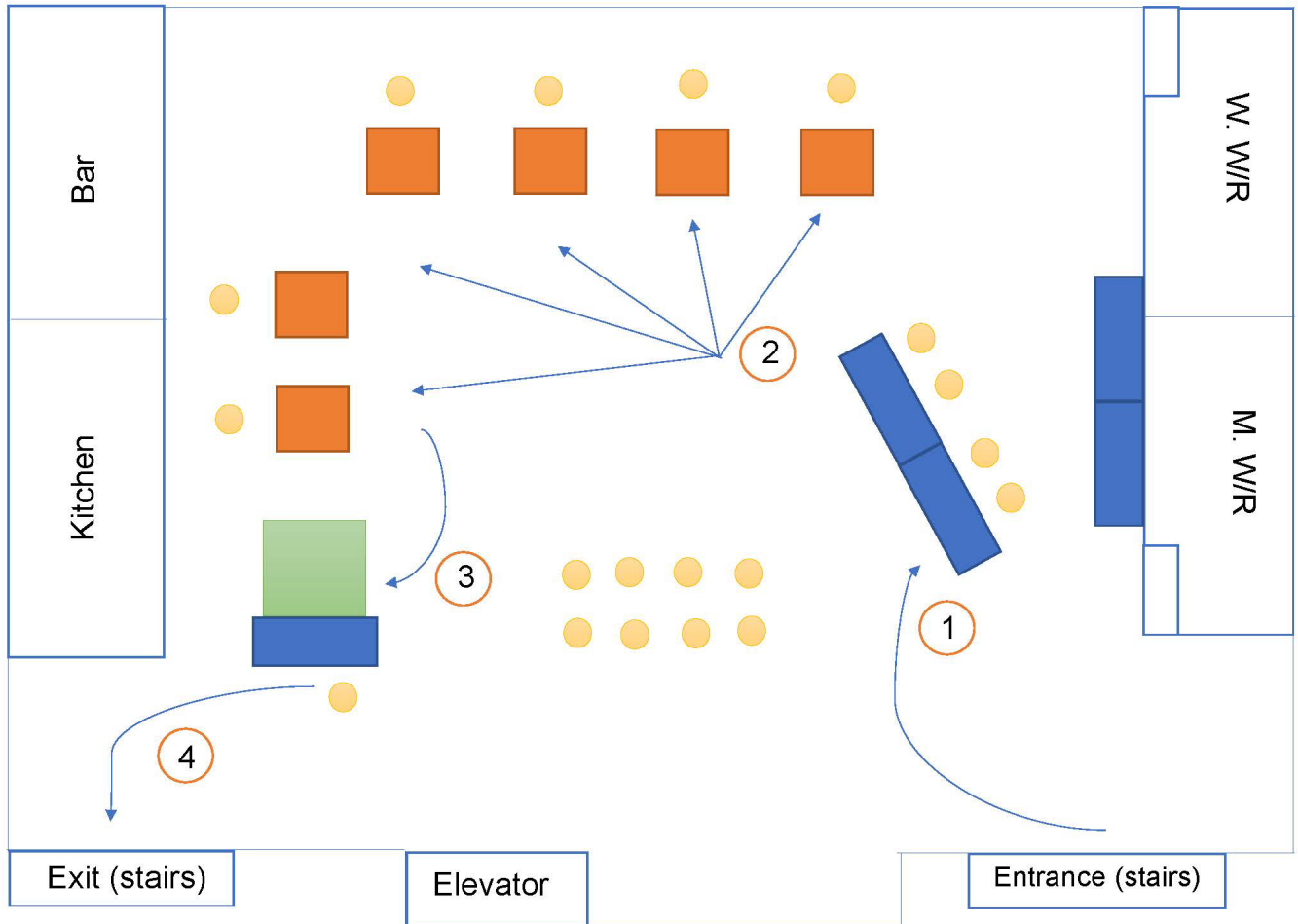
11.2 Coldwater & District Community Centre

Facility Name: Coldwater & District Community Centre	Voting Centre: Ward 1 and Ward 2
Street Address: 11 Michael Anne Drive	Inspection Date: April 17, 2026
Staff Name: Alison Gray & Michael Mayer	Phone Number: 705-325-2315 x232
Facility	
Is the name and address of location visible from the street or sidewalk?	Y or N
Parking	
Is the parking area close to the entrance of the voting area?	Y or N
Is there external lighting to the entrance for evening use?	Y or N
Number of accessible parking spaces:	2
Number of regular spaces available to the public:	40
Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked (International Symbol of Accessibility )?	Y or N
Are the accessible parking spaces firm and level?	Y or N
Are the spaces large enough for an elector who uses a van equipped with a w/c lift?	Y or N
Is curbside voting an option?	Y or N
Is there an accessible drop off area?	Y or N
Do the sidewalks have curb cuts?	Y or N
Is the surface of the pathway firm and obstacle/pothole free?	Y or N
Building Entrance	
If there is more than 1 entrance, are there signs posted from all possible routes?	N/A
Is the entrance to the building accessible? (level surface or with ramp)	Y or N
If applicable – Is the ramp well designed and safe? (1:20 slope, handrails on both sides)	N/A
Is the exterior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N



Is the exterior door easy to open (lever handle) or automatic?	Y or N
Building Interior - Getting to the Ballot Box	
Is there directional signage?	Y or N
Is the flooring non-slip and level?	Y or N
If there are doormats are they removable?	Y or N
Is the interior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N
Is there an automatic door opener?	Y or N
If the door is not automatic – can it be propped open?	Y or N
Are any other doors easily opened (lever handle, weight) (does it pass the closed fist test)?	Y or N
Is there maneuvering space of 600mm (24") on both sides of the door?	Y or N
Are the corridors spacious enough for a w/c or scooter to pass through? (no clutter)	Y or N
Is the interior well lit?	Y or N
Is there a wheelchair accessible washroom?	Yes
Voting Area	
Is the voting area on the same level as the entrance?	Y or N
If not, can electors access the voting area using an elevator or a level access ramp?	Y or N
Is the voting location well lit?	Y or N
Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?	Y or N
Does the voting area have sufficient space for a w/c or scooter to move about easily?	Y or N
Is there a voting booth low and wide enough to allow a person in a w/c or scooter vote independently?	Y or N
Is the tabulator machine easy to identify for people with visual impairments? (big arrow)	Y or N
Are there magnifying sheets available to assist persons with low vision?	Y or N

Coldwater Community Centre –
11 Michael Anne Drive




Blue table = DRO and Election Officials taking voter registrations & issuance of ballots, or managing tabulator

Orange squares = Voting Booths

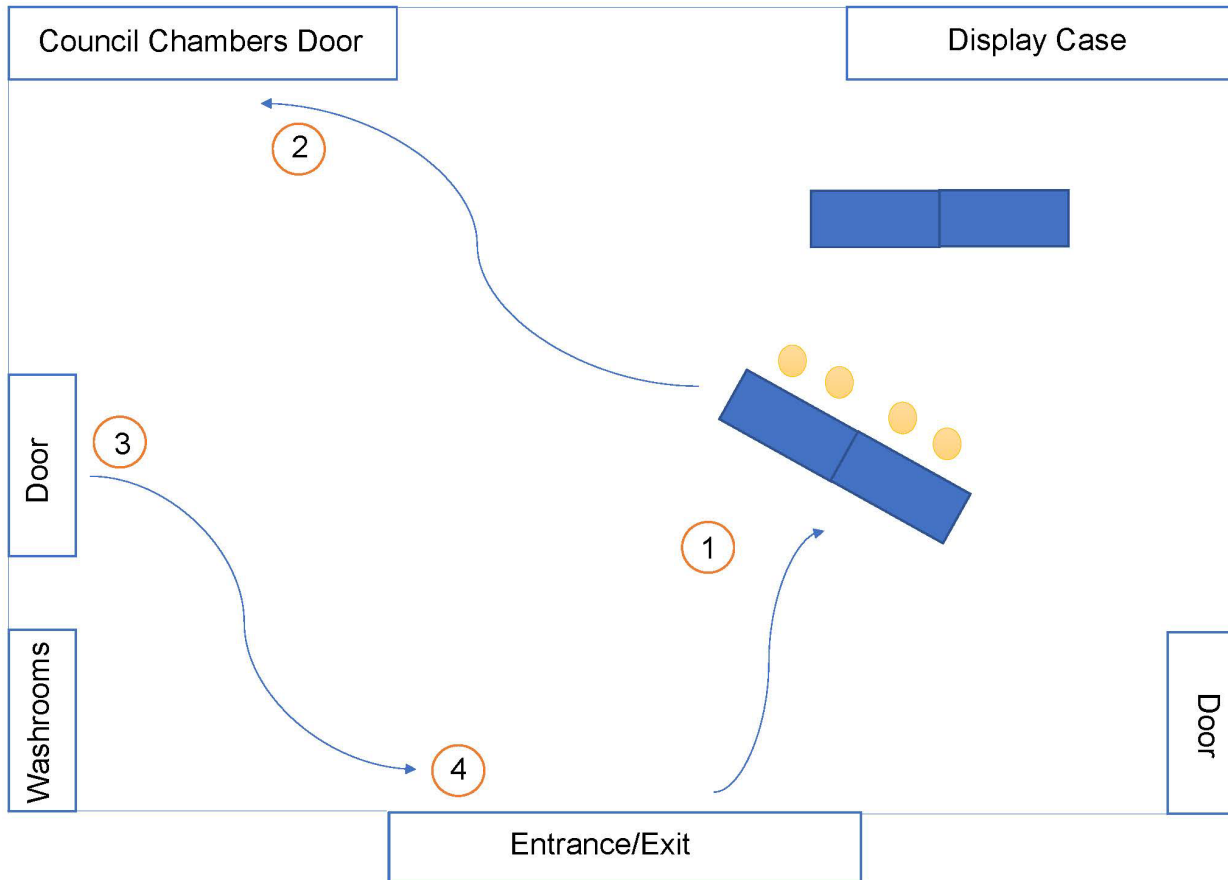
Green square = Tabulator



11.3 Administration Office

Facility Name: Administration Office	Voting Centre: Ward 3
Street Address: 1024 Hurlwood Lane	Inspection Date: April 17, 2026
Staff Name: Alison Gray & Michael Mayer	Phone Number: 705-325-2315 x232
Facility	
Is the name and address of location visible from the street or sidewalk?	Y or N
Parking	
Is the parking area close to the entrance of the voting area?	Y or N
Is there external lighting to the entrance for evening use?	Y or N
Number of accessible parking spaces:	2
Number of regular spaces available to the public:	60
Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked (International Symbol of Accessibility )?	Y or N
Are the accessible parking spaces firm and level?	Y or N
Are the spaces large enough for an elector who uses a van equipped with a w/c lift?	Y or N
Is curbside voting an option?	Y or N
Is there an accessible drop off area?	Y or N
Do the sidewalks have curb cuts?	Y or N
Is the surface of the pathway firm and obstacle/pothole free?	Y or N
Building Entrance	
If there is more than 1 entrance, are there signs posted from all possible routes?	N/A
Is the entrance to the building accessible? (level surface or with ramp)	Y or N
If applicable – Is the ramp well designed and safe? (1:20 slope, handrails on both sides)	N/A
Is the exterior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N
Is the exterior door easy to open (lever handle) or automatic?	Y or N

Building Interior – Getting to the Ballot Box	
Is there directional signage?	Y or N
Is the flooring non-slip and level?	Y or N
If there are doormats are they removable?	Y or N
Is the interior door wide enough (34") for a person using a w/c or scooter?	Y or N
Is there an automatic door opener?	Y or N
If the door is not automatic – can it be propped open?	Y or N
Are any other doors easily opened (lever handle, weight) (does it pass the closed fist test)?	Y or N
Is there maneuvering space of 600mm (24") on both sides of the door?	Y or N
Are the corridors spacious enough for a w/c or scooter to pass through? (no clutter)	Y or N
Is the interior well lit?	Y or N
Is there a wheelchair accessible washroom?	Y or N
Voting Area	
Is the voting area on the same level as the entrance?	Y or N
If not, can electors access the voting area using an elevator or a level access ramp?	Y or N
Is the voting location well lit?	Y or N
Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?	Y or N
Does the voting area have sufficient space for a w/c or scooter to move about easily?	Y or N
Is there a voting booth low and wide enough to allow a person in a w/c or scooter vote independently?	Y or N
Is the tabulator machine easy to identify for people with visual impairments?	Y or N
Are there magnifying sheets available to assist persons with low vision?	Y or N



Blue table = DRO and Election Officials taking voter registrations & issuance of ballots, or managing tabulator

Orange squares = Voting Booths

Green square = Tabulator

