



The Corporation of the Town of Ajax Council Information Package April 2, 2026

Durham Region Municipalities Correspondence

1. The Regional Municipality of Durham – Smart Mobility Durham 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Workplan
 - Background Materials: [Report: 2026-CG-8](#)
2. The Regional Municipality of Durham – Motion Regarding Request for a Comprehensive Review of the Provincial–Municipal Fiscal Framework
3. The Regional Municipality of Durham – Approval of 2026 to 2030 Meeting Schedule and the First Meeting of Regional Council following the 2026 Municipal Elections
 - Background Materials: [Report: 2026-A-7](#)
4. The Regional Municipality of Durham – Correspondence from Mike Bradley, Mayor, City of Sarnia to The Premier of Ontario regarding Requesting the Province to Consider Giving Municipal Councils more Authority to Adjust Police Service Budget Proposals to Reduce Municipal Financial Vulnerability
5. Town of Whitby – Hotel and Conference/Convention Centre Attraction Program
 - Background Materials: [Report: CAO 11-25](#); [Attachment 1 – Feasibility Study - Figures 1-6](#); [Attachment 2 – Hotel Marketing Brochure](#)
6. Town of Whitby – Request for a Comprehensive Review of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework
7. Town of Whitby – Enhancing Municipal Accountability: Mandatory Disclosure of Third-Party Consultants and Strategic Advisors used by Members of Council

Other Municipalities, Organizations and Individuals Correspondence

8. Township of Rideau Lakes – Concerns re: Alto High Speed Rail Project (Bill C-15 Budget)
9. City of Ottawa – Proposed New Regulation Under the Restricting Consumption of Illegal Substances Act.
10. Municipality of Chatham-Kent – Food Insecurity Emergency Declaration

11. [Town of Lincoln – Request to Province of Ontario to Extend the Deadline for Notices of Intention to Designate Listed Heritage Properties.](#)
12. [Town of Saugeen Shores – Architectural Conservancy of Ontario \(ACO\) Proposal to Include \\$10M per Year in the 2026 Provincial Budget for Heritage Helping Housing \(HHH\) Grant Funding](#)
13. [Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – Decision Notice on the Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities](#)
14. [Durham District School Board – Request for Provincial School Board Governance Consultation Process](#)
15. [Durham District School Board – Request for Review of the Potential Impacts of Removing English Public School Trustees](#)
16. [Ryan ULC – Motion to Reassess: Unfreeze Ontario - The Cost of Inaction](#)

Summary of Advisory Committee Activities

17. [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#)
18. [Heritage Advisory Committee](#)

Proclamations and Flag Raisings

None.

Staff Correspondence

19. [Memo – Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist, Corporate Services – 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan](#)

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact: accessibility@ajax.ca or 905-619-2529, extension 3347.



March 25, 2026

Ron Lalonde, Chair
Durham Active Transportation Committee
c/o Region of Durham Community Growth Division
605 Rossland Road East, Level 4
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

Dear R. Lalonde:

**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Corporate Services
Department –
Legislative Services
Division

605 Rossland Rd. E.
Level 1
PO Box 623
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3
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905-668-7711
1-800-372-1102

durham.ca

**Alexander Harras
M.P.A.
Director of
Legislative Services
& Regional Clerk**

**RE: Smart Mobility Durham 2025 Annual Report and 2026
Workplan (2026-CG-8), Our File: D00**

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on March 25, 2026, adopted the following recommendations of the Community Growth & Economic Development Committee:

- A) That Report #2026-CG-8 of the Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development, including the Smart Mobility Durham's 2025 Annual Report as outlined in Attachment 1, be received;
- B) That Smart Mobility Durham's 2026 Workplan be approved, as outlined in Attachment 2 to Report #2026-CG-8; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2026-CG-8 be forwarded to the Durham Active Transportation Committee and the Area Municipalities.

Please find enclosed a copy of Report #2026-CG-8 for your information.

Alexander Harras

Alexander Harras, M.P.A.
Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
AH/TF

- c:
- J. Grossi, Clerk, Town of Ajax
 - F. Lamanna, Clerk, Township of Brock
 - J. Gallagher, Clerk, Municipality of Clarington
 - M. Medeiros, Clerk, City of Oshawa
 - S. Cassel, Clerk, City of Pickering
 - B. Labelle, Clerk, Township of Scugog
 - D. Leroux, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge
 - C. Harris, Clerk, Town of Whitby
 - S. Austin, Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON, M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Corporate Services
Department –
Legislative Services
Division

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**Alexander Harras
M.P.A.
Director of
Legislative Services
& Regional Clerk**

**RE: Motion Regarding Request for a Comprehensive Review of
the Provincial–Municipal Fiscal Framework, Our File: A00**

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on March 25, 2026, adopted the following resolution:

Whereas current provincial–municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining the Region of Durham's economic prosperity, taxpayer affordability, critical front-line service levels and infrastructure conditions, impacting the quality of life of its residents;

Whereas nearly one third of all municipal spending in Ontario is directed toward services in areas of provincial responsibility including health and social services, with expenditures outpacing provincial contributions by approximately \$4 billion annually;

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has emphasized that the ongoing requirement for municipalities to fund provincial responsibilities such as social housing, health related capital obligations, and social services results in at least \$1.5 billion annually in net municipal expenditures for social housing alone, a problem unique to Ontario; for the Region of Durham, in 2026, approximately \$284.7 million in property taxes are committed to health and social services programs including \$95.3 million for social housing and homelessness supports;

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Legislative Services at clerks@durham.ca or at 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

Whereas communities are further required to contribute 10% of capital funding for new provincial hospitals, diverting local revenue away from essential municipal infrastructure when property tax funds are used;

Whereas municipal revenue sources, primarily property taxes, do not grow at the same rate as the economy or inflation, yet municipalities including the Region of Durham are responsible for managing major growth related infrastructure such as roads, transit, water, sewer, police, and paramedics;

Whereas AMO has estimated that Ontario municipalities are planning for between \$250 billion and \$290 billion in capital investments over the next ten years, with \$100 billion of that related to infrastructure growth. For the Region of Durham, capital investments of \$14.1 billion are forecasted for 2026 to 2035. This level of investment cannot be funded by municipalities alone;

Whereas AMO has stated that allocating a portion of these housing related provincial revenues to municipalities would provide a predictable, growth linked revenue stream necessary to support housing targets and the expansion of critical public infrastructure;

Whereas AMO has cautioned that proposals to reduce or limit development charges shift costs away from growth and onto existing property taxpayers and water and sewer users, threatening municipalities, ability to finance essential infrastructure, given that most municipal reserves are already allocated to specific projects or required for responsible asset management practices;

Whereas Regional staff have already identified \$22.7 million in expenditure reductions for 2026 and continue to identify efficiencies through the 2026 Core Services Review;

Therefore Be It Resolved That The Council of the Region of Durham calls upon the Province of Ontario to work collaboratively with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) and Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) to undertake a comprehensive Social and Economic Prosperity Review to modernize and realign the provincial–municipal

fiscal framework, ensuring that municipal revenues are aligned with the actual costs of today's service delivery and growth;

Be It Further Resolved That The Region of Durham requests that this review specifically address the \$4 billion annual gap where municipal property taxes are currently used to fund provincial responsibilities, including social housing, health, and transit, and further evaluate:

- The \$1.5 billion annual municipal burden created by the provincial download of social housing costs;
- The requirement for communities to fund 10% of provincial hospital capital projects;
- The opportunity to allocate a portion of provincial Land Transfer Tax and HST revenues generated by housing activity to municipal infrastructure supporting growth;

Be It Further Resolved That The Province be urged to establish a predictable, housing linked revenue stream for municipalities that reflects the economic, social, and infrastructure demands associated with growth, including addressing the financial impacts of changes to development charges;

Be It Further Resolved That A copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Finance, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Health, Minister of Infrastructure, Durham MPPs, Durham Area Municipalities, Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO), and The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

Alexander Harras

Alexander Harras
Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk

AH/nb

c: Hon. P. Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, MPP Pickering-Uxbridge
Hon. R. Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. S. Jones , Minister of Health

Hon. K. Surma , Minister of Infrastructure
Hon. T. McCarthy, Minister of Environment, Conservation and
Parks, MPP Durham
Hon. D. Piccini, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and
Skills Development, MPP Northumberland/Peterborough South
R. Cerjanec, MPP, Ajax
L. Scott, MPP, Haliburton/Kawartha Lakes/Brock
J. French, MPP, Oshawa
L. Coe, MPP, Whitby
J. Grossi, Clerk, Ajax
F. Lamanna, Clerk, Brock
J. Gallagher, Clerk, Clarington
M. Medeiros, Clerk, Oshawa
S. Cassel, Clerk, Pickering
B. Labelle, Clerk, Scugog
D. Leroux, Clerk, Uxbridge
C. Harris, Clerk, Whitby
K. Redman, Chair, Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario
(MARCO)
L. Jones, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of
Ontario (AMO)
E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
N. Pincombe, Commissioner of Finance
A. Burgess, Director, Communication and Engagement



March 25, 2026

Jaclyn Grossi
Clerk
Town of Ajax
65 Harwood Avenue South
Ajax, ON, L1S 2H9

**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Corporate Services
Department –
Legislative Services
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**Alexander Harras
M.P.A.
Director of
Legislative Services
& Regional Clerk**

Dear J. Grossi:

RE: Approval of 2026 to 2030 meeting schedule and the First Meeting of Regional Council following the 2026 Municipal Elections (2026-A-7), Our File: A00

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on March 25, 2026, adopted the following recommendations of the Finance & Administration Committee:

- A) That the Regional Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law to provide for the First Meeting of Regional Council to be held on Wednesday, November 25, 2026, at 10:00 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, Whitby;
- B) That the monthly Regional Council and Standing Committee meeting schedule outlined in Section 5.1 of Report #2026-A-7 of the Commissioner of Corporate Services be adopted for the 2026 to 2030 term of Council; and
- C) That a copy of Report #2026-A-7 be forwarded to the Clerks of the Area Municipalities for their information.

Please find enclosed a copy of Report #2026-A-7 for your information.

Alexander Harras

Alexander Harras
Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
AH/nb

Attachment

c: B. Goodwin, Commissioner of Corporate Services

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Legislative Services at clerks@durham.ca or at 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.



Sent Via Email

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON, M7A 1A1.

**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Corporate Services
Department –
Legislative Services
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605 Rossland Rd. E.
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durham.ca

**Alexander Harras
M.P.A.
Director of
Legislative Services
& Regional Clerk**

Dear Premier Ford:

RE: Correspondence from Mike Bradley, Mayor, City of Sarnia to The Premier of Ontario regarding Requesting the Province to consider giving municipal councils more authority to adjust Police Service Budget Proposals to reduce Municipal Financial Vulnerability, Our File: A00

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on March 25, 2026, adopted the following resolution:

That Council Correspondence CC 08 from Mike Bradley, Mayor, City of Sarnia to The Premier of Ontario regarding requesting the province to consider giving municipal councils more authority to adjust police service budget proposals to reduce municipal financial vulnerability be received for information and endorsed.


Please find enclosed a copy of the Correspondence for your information.

Alexander Harras

Alexander Harras, M.P.A.
Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
AH/nb

c: Hon. Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
Hon. R. Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. P. Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Heads of Council for Municipalities across Ontario
B. Bailey, MPP Sarnia-Lambton
E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
N. Pincombe, Commissioner of Finance
A. Burgess, Director, Communication and Engagement

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Legislative Services at clerks@durham.ca or at 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
Date & Time Received:	February 26, 2026 9:29 am
Original To:	CIP
Copies To:	
Take Appropriate Action	<input type="checkbox"/> File <input type="checkbox"/>
Notes/Comments:	

The Honourable Doug Ford
 Premier of Ontario
 Legislative Building
 Queen's Park
 Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

February 19, 2026

Re: Mayoral Authority and Municipal Police Budget Sustainability

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to express concern regarding the province's current position that limits a mayor and council's ability to meaningfully reduce or amend police service budget proposals once they have advanced through local police governance structures.

Municipal leaders across Ontario are operating within an increasingly constrained fiscal environment. Escalating administrative costs, combined with sustained growth in police budgets, are placing significant pressure on municipal finances. Without the tools to influence or moderate these expenditures, municipalities are left financially vulnerable, undermining long-term stability and responsible budget planning.

Mayors and members of council are accountable to residents for overall municipal fiscal health. However, under the province's current interpretation, they lack sufficient authority to address one of the fastest-growing areas of local spending. This creates a clear imbalance in accountability, where elected leadership bears responsibility for budget outcomes without the ability to manage risk, respond to local conditions, or ensure alignment with broader municipal priorities.

You have recently noted that education costs have become unsustainable, and the Minister of Finance has expressed similar concerns regarding health care expenditures. Policing costs present the same challenge, with the added constraint that mayors are now unable to intervene. This limits a municipality's capacity to balance competing service demands, invest in preventative and social supports, and respond flexibly to emerging community priorities, including housing. Over time, this approach risks crowding out essential services and capital projects while placing increased pressure on taxpayers.

In Sarnia, veto authority was used for the first time, and only with respect to capital funding. The operational police budget, which has increased by 40% over the past four years, was left untouched. The mayoral veto removed a proposed \$5 million capital item that would have committed the municipality to a long-term financial obligation estimated to reach \$120 million. Allowing such exposure without intervention would have been fiscally irresponsible and inconsistent with the principles of responsible municipal governance. The existing building was reported to be suitable for upgrades and maintenance at a cost of approximately \$5 million; however, the Sarnia Police Board and Chief have insisted that the Cadillac of all buildings is required. Proceeding with this option would saddle the taxpayers with substantial long-term debt and sustained tax increases for decades to come.


After 21 years of carrying municipal debt, the City of Sarnia has just recently achieved the distinction of being one of the few debt-free cities in Ontario. Under the current framework, renewed debt will become unavoidable, with financial impacts extending to future generations.

While this issue may not yet have arisen in every municipality responsible for funding and overseeing its own police service, the experience in Sarnia illustrates a challenge that other mayors may reasonably face in future budget years. As policing and capital costs continue to escalate, circumstances will emerge where elected municipal leaders are required to intervene to protect long-term fiscal sustainability. This is a critical issue that warrants careful reconsideration. I have therefore copied Heads of Council for municipalities across Ontario to unite in encouraging an approach that better aligns accountability with decision-making and supports more sustainable municipal governance across Ontario.

Given the practical implications for municipal budget deliberations and fiscal planning, I believe this matter should be addressed in advance of the next municipal council taking office. I respectfully urge the province to engage with municipalities on this issue and to explore legislative or policy adjustments that would provide local elected leaders with the tools necessary to manage fiscal pressures responsibly, transparently, and in the best interests of their communities.

I appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to the province's consideration of next steps.

Sincerely,



Mike Bradley
Mayor, City of Sarnia

Cc: The Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Heads of council for municipalities across Ontario
Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton
Sarnia City Council

Encl.: [CBC News February 18, 2026 - Province tells Ontario mayors they can't use 'strong powers' on police budgets | CBC News](#)

[CTV News February 18, 2026 - Sarnia Police Board weighing options in efforts to build new headquarters](#)

London

Province tells Ontario mayors they can't use 'strong powers' on police budgets

Finance expert says province needs to review fiscal relationship with municipalities to keep up with costs

Isha Bhargava - CBC News - Posted: Feb 18, 2026 5:00 AM EST | Last Updated: February 18



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A file photo of a police officer walking in downtown Hamilton, Ont. (Bobby Hristova/CBC)

The Ontario government is reminding municipal leaders that they cannot use their provincially granted "strong mayor powers" to challenge or limit police budgets.

This comes two months after Sarnia's mayor vetoed his city's police budget request of \$5 million for a new police headquarters, in what's led to an ongoing battle over the city's police funding.

In a letter sent to mayors and police board chairs in January, the province reiterated that municipalities are required to provide police boards with "sufficient funding" to comply with the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA).

"The Head of Council's strong mayor budget powers do not include the power to limit police service board budget increases or veto estimates submitted by police service boards," Solicitor General Michael Kerzner and Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Flack wrote in their Jan. 12 letter.

"Although municipalities are not required to adopt the board's estimates as submitted, they cannot approve or reject specific line items within the estimates."

- **Less than half of 'strong mayors' were using powers before Ontario expanded system: reports**

Municipal budgets include estimates of amounts required during the year and includes various boards, the letter explains. A police service board must submit their operating and capital costs to municipalities, which then establish the service's overall budget.

Premier Doug Ford's government created the strong mayor system in 2022 and it now applies to 216 mayors. The powers give the leaders control over appointments, the ability to hire and fire most city staff, vetoes over some council votes and the ability to pass some bylaws with support of only a third of council support.

'We can't chop public safety' says Premier

When asked by CBC about the issue of strong mayor powers relating to police budgets on Tuesday, Ford said investments in public safety need to be a top priority.

"We can't chop safety and protecting communities," Ford told reporters. "We need to make sure our priority is keeping our community safe because right now people don't feel safe. So we have to continue investing in our police, give them the tools they need to keep our community safe."

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley disagrees arguing the legislation prevents municipalities from balancing the needs of police and taxpayers. He said Sarnia police has received a 45 per cent operational increase over the last four years, and he only vetoed one capital spending item which the city cannot afford this year.



Sarnia's Mayor Mike Bradley says police budget increases in recent years have led to spending cuts in other city projects. (Facebook)

"The province has just wiped out our ability to control spending in our own communities. In most cases [police budgets] run from 30 to 40 per cent of the

municipal budget, so what the Ford government is saying is that councils and mayors cannot touch it," he said.

"So the message is, police boards who are unaccountable, can now just set the budget and the taxpayers have to pay. That's a pretty shocking statement from Queens Park."

Bradley argues he has supported increasing police budgets for frontline services, which have been substantial over the years and have led the city to cut back on spending for other projects.

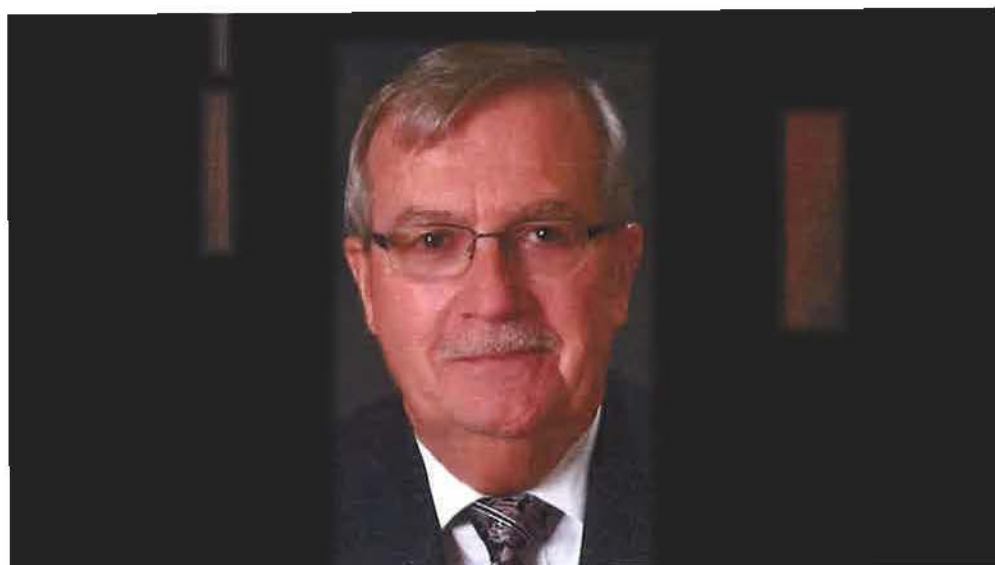
In its letter, the province clarifies that there are dispute resolution mechanisms under the CPSA, namely arbitration, when a council disagrees with a police board's budget request.

Municipalities limited in challenging police budgets

However, proving a case against the police can be difficult for municipal councils who don't often have the capacity or technical knowledge to offer a challenge, said Nigel Bellchamber, a London, Ont., consultant specializing in municipal finances.

"It's a high bar that the municipality has to meet in order to succeed in an arbitration," he said, noting that municipalities are tasked with funding a variety of services whose costs outpace inflation.

"As a result, there are some significant challenges and tough decisions being made as to prioritizing capital expenditures in municipal budgets. So councils and municipal staff, whether you're in a strong mayor situation or not, they're all caught in a very difficult situation."



Nigel Bellchamber is a consultant in London, Ont., who specializes in municipal finances (Nigel Bellchamber/LinkedIn)

Bellchamber said the provincial and municipal fiscal relationship hasn't been properly reviewed in about 25 years and it needs to be revisited to respond to changing economic demands.

London's Mayor Josh Morgan agrees. His council approved a historic \$672-million investment in police spending during the last four-year budget, and while he's satisfied with the results of crime trending lower in the city, ballooning police budgets are a concern for municipalities, he said.

"Obviously when the largest portion of your budget is increasing by a fair amount, that's concerning in multiple ways," said Morgan.

"It's difficult for a municipality to shoulder all of the necessary investments in public safety that we need to make with all of the other things that we're obligated to do, and with the revenue streams we have available to us."

Morgan said it's important for municipalities to partner with provincial and federal governments to seek "broad-based, stable multi-year support for public safety funding."

In London's case, Morgan notes the police returned more than \$2.3 million to city coffers in the budget's first two years.

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Questions of 'strong mayor' veto powers remain after province attempts to clarify police budgets

By [Bryan Bicknell](#)

Published: February 18, 2026 at 5:14PM EST



The provincial government says municipalities can't use strong mayor powers to limit police budgets. CTV's Bryan Bicknell visits local reaction.

The chair of the Sarnia Police Service Board says the board is still weighing options in its bid to build a new police headquarters.

The comments follow a letter from Ontario's Solicitor General to municipalities that mayors cannot use so-called strong mayor powers to challenge police budgets.

"We sent the letter to council requesting that the veto to be vetoed, basically, and that the five million [dollars] be added back into the budget," explained Board Chair Kelly Ash. "We are re-evaluating, looking to see what we can get accomplished with the funds that we do have, while still hoping that council does deliberate over the \$5 million so that we can get started."



Sarnia Police Board Chair Kelly Ash speaks to CTV News via Zoom on Feb. 16, 2025. (Byron Bickell/CTV News London)

Late last year Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley vetoed the city's police budget request of \$5 million to begin work on a new police headquarters. Bradley insists he's not about to re-open the city budget.

"This idea that police boards now, without any accountability, they're not elected and they don't report to the public and you can't remove them, will now be able to say to any town, 'This is how much money we want each year, and govern yourself accordingly. You're going to have to find money or kill other projects that are really important to your community because we're number one,'" he said.

In London, the police budget has also been a sensitive item.



London City Mayor Josh Morgan speaks to CTV News on Feb. 5, 2026. (Byron Bickell/CTV News London)

The most recent police budget passed two years ago in the city's four-year budget cycle increased police spending by \$672 million.

The London Police Service has since returned \$2.3 million in a bid to keep municipal property taxes at bay, explains London Mayor Josh Morgan.

"It's a pretty high bar to set for a municipality to not supply the budget, which is why my approach has been to work closely with the police board as a member of the board. And this board has returned dollars for the past two years," Morgan said.

Introduced in 2022 for Ontario's largest urban centres, strong mayor powers were expanded last year to include all 216 Ontario mayors. At least one legal opinion suggests this was when questions of interpretation began to arise.



London (Oni) (Gerrit) Sam Trosow speaks to CTV News in Feb. 18, 2024. (By-wm B. Inell/CTV News London)

London Coun. Sam Trosow is a retired Western University law professor. He believes the strong mayor legislation was rushed.

"I think if it was the intention of the legislature to categorically exempt police services matters from the act they would have or they should have said so. And they probably rushed this through so quickly, maybe they didn't even bother to think about it," he explained.

"But I think that the mayor of Sarnia is within his rights to challenge this part of the budget," Trosow said.



Sarnia Mayor Mike Ridd speaks to CTV News via Zoom on Feb. 18, 2024. (By-wm B. Inell/CTV News London)

Related Stories

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- > [Sarnia police headquarters funding reduced by city council](#)
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March 13, 2026

Via Email

Alexander Harras
Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of Durham
clerks@durham.ca

Re: Hotel and Conference/Convention Centre Attraction Program

Please be advised that at its meeting held on March 9, 2026, the Council of the Town of Whitby adopted the following as Resolution # 47-26:

Whereas the Town of Whitby continues to experience strong economic growth and increasing demand for tourism supportive infrastructure, including modern hotel and conference/convention centre facilities;

Whereas Council has received and endorsed Staff Report CAO 11-25, which identified that Whitby lacks sufficient hotel and conference/convention centre capacity to meet current and future tourism, business travel, and sport tourism needs, and that such facilities are essential to supporting the Town's long term economic development objectives;

Whereas despite demonstrated market interest, the Town does not currently offer commercial development incentive tools of the type that could help attract major hotel chains and qualified proponents, and Council wishes to establish conditions that remove barriers to investment while ensuring fairness, transparency, and compliance with applicable legislation;

Whereas a development charge deferral—rather than a discount or exemption—constitutes an appropriate, non bonusing mechanism available under Section 27 of the Development Charges Act, permitting the Town to support strategic economic development objectives without requiring tax supported supplementation of forgone development charge revenues;

Whereas such a program must be made available equitably to all eligible hotel and conference/convention centre proposals in order to avoid bonusing concerns, ensure competitive fairness, and support the attraction of high quality development consistent with Council's direction;

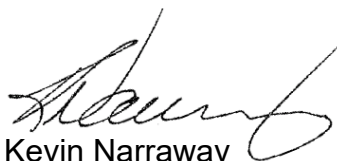
Whereas Regional and School Board development charges are currently payable at the building permit stage, the Town seeks to collaborate with the Region of Durham to explore similar deferral opportunities that would further reduce front-end capital barriers for strategic tourism infrastructure; and,

Whereas time-limited or uptake-limited incentive programs have been used effectively in other contexts to accelerate private sector investment and support municipal growth objectives, and Council desires a similar structured, sunset bound approach for hotel and conference/convention centre attraction.

Now therefore be it resolved:

1. That Staff report back on a Hotel and Conference/Convention Centre Attraction Program, that includes the following:
 - a. a payment deferral of the Town of Whitby's portion of development charges (DC) from time of building issuance to time of occupancy permit issuance, at the earliest, for up-to two (2) qualifying hotel and conference/convention centre developments that enter into a Section 27 deferral agreement under the Development Charges Act, 1997;
 - b. a definition of qualifying hotel and conference/convention centre development that is alignment with the Town's economic development goals and consistent with Staff Report CAO 11-25;
 - c. provisions that encourage timely development which may include cancellation of the deferral if construction and other milestones are not met after full execution of the Section 27 agreement; and,
 - d. a sunset or termination of the program upon the earlier of:
 - i. Two (2) years following Council approval of the program; or,
 - ii. The development of two (2) hotel and conference/convention centres under this program.
2. That the Mayor and Regional Councillors be requested to advocate to the Region of Durham for the establishment of a reciprocal Regional Development Charge deferral program for hotel and conference/convention centre developments, to further align incentive tools and enhance the investment readiness of the Town and the Region; and,
3. That the Clerk be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Regional Municipality of Durham and the local area municipalities within Durham Region.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 905.430.4300.



Kevin Narraway
Sr. Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
clerk@whitby.ca

Copy: C. Harris, Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk – clerk@whitby.ca
S. Klein, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer – kleins@whitby.ca
F. Wong, Commissioner, Financial Services and Treasurer – wongf@whitby.ca

J. Grossi, Municipal Clerk, Town of Ajax – clerks@ajax.ca
F. Lamanna, Clerk/Deputy CAO, Township of Brock – clerks@brock.ca
J. Gallagher, Municipal Clerk, Municipality of Clarington – clerks@clarington.net
M. Medeiros, City Clerk, City of Oshawa – clerks@oshawa.ca
S. Cassel, City Clerk, City of Pickering – clerks@pickering.ca
B. Labelle, Director of Corporate Services/Municipal Clerk, Township of Scugog – blabelle@scugog.ca
D. Leroux, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge – dleroux@uxbridge.ca

March 13, 2026

Via Email

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Re: Request for a Comprehensive Review of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework

Please be advised that at its meeting held on March 9, 2026, the Council of the Town of Whitby adopted the following as Resolution # 41-26:

Whereas current provincial–municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining the Town of Whitby’s economic prosperity and the quality of life of its residents;
Whereas nearly one third of all municipal spending in Ontario is directed toward services in areas of provincial responsibility, with expenditures outpacing provincial contributions by approximately \$4 billion annually;

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has emphasized that the ongoing requirement for municipalities to fund provincial responsibilities—such as social housing, health related capital obligations, and social services—results in at least \$1.5 billion annually in net municipal expenditures for social housing alone, a problem unique to Ontario;

Whereas municipalities are further required to contribute 10% of capital funding for new provincial hospitals, diverting local revenue away from essential municipal infrastructure;

Whereas municipal revenue sources, primarily property taxes, do not grow at the same rate as the economy or inflation, yet municipalities—including the Town of Whitby—are responsible for managing major growth related infrastructure such as roads, transit, water, sewer, fire, and parks;

Whereas only 34 cents of every residential property tax dollar collected in Whitby remains with the Town, while 55 cents flows to the Region of Durham and 11 cents to school boards;

Whereas AMO has highlighted that provincial housing related revenues—including \$5.8 billion in Land Transfer Tax revenues in 2021/22, which exceeded the provincial budget plan by \$2 billion, as well as billions in HST revenue from new home construction—are not currently shared with municipalities, despite being generated by housing activity that requires significant local infrastructure investment;

Whereas AMO has stated that allocating a portion of these housing related provincial revenues to municipalities would provide a predictable, growth linked revenue stream necessary to support housing targets and the expansion of critical public infrastructure;

Whereas AMO has cautioned that proposals to reduce or limit development charges shift costs away from growth and onto existing property taxpayers, threatening the ability of municipalities to finance essential infrastructure, given that most municipal reserves are already allocated to specific projects or required for responsible asset management practices; and,

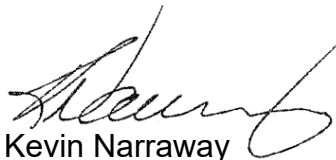
Whereas municipal staff have already identified \$2.5 million in expenditure reductions for 2026 and continue to identify efficiencies through the ongoing 2026 Core Services Review.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. The Council of the Town of Whitby once again calls upon the Province of Ontario to work collaboratively with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) to undertake a comprehensive Social and Economic Prosperity Review to modernize and realign the provincial–municipal fiscal framework, ensuring that municipal revenues are aligned with the actual costs of today’s service delivery and growth;
2. The Town of Whitby requests that this review specifically address the \$4 billion annual gap where municipal property taxes are currently used to fund provincial responsibilities, including social housing, health, and transit, and further evaluate:
 - the \$1.5 billion annual municipal burden created by the provincial download of social housing costs;
 - the requirement for municipalities to fund 10% of provincial hospital capital projects; and,
 - the opportunity to allocate a portion of provincial Land Transfer Tax and HST revenues generated by housing activity to municipal infrastructure supporting growth.

3. The Province be urged to establish a predictable, housing linked revenue stream for municipalities that reflects the economic, social, and infrastructure demands associated with growth, including addressing the financial impacts of changes to development charges; and,
4. A copy of this resolution be forwarded to:
 - The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
 - The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health;
 - The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance;
 - The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure;
 - The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services;
 - Lorne Coe, MPP (Whitby);
 - The Region of Durham;
 - The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);
 - The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); and,
 - All Ontario Municipalities.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 905.430.4300.



Kevin Narraway
Sr. Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
clerk@whitby.ca

Copy: C. Harris, Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk - clerk@whitby.ca
F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer - wongf@whitby.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health - Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca
The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance - minister.fin@ontario.ca
The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing - minister.mah@ontario.ca
The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure - Minister.MOI@ontario.ca
The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services - MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca
Lorne Coe, MPP (Whitby) - lorne.coe@pc.ola.org
Alexander Harras, Regional Clerk, The Regional Municipality of Durham - clerks@durham.ca
Lindsay Jones, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) - ljones@amo.on.ca
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) – info@fcm.ca
All Ontario Municipalities

March 13, 2026

Via Email

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Re: Enhancing Municipal Accountability: Mandatory Disclosure of Third-Party
Consultants and Strategic Advisors used by Members of Council

Please be advised that at its meeting held on March 9, 2026, the Council of the Town of
Whitby adopted the following as Resolution # 51-26:

Whereas transparency in municipal governance is essential to maintaining public
trust and ensuring accountability of elected officials throughout their term of
office;

Whereas the Town of Whitby is committed to the highest standards of
transparency and ensuring that all influences on municipal decision-making are
visible to the public;

Whereas Members of Council may receive strategic, communications, advisory,
or political support from consultants, lobbyists, or third-party organizations
outside of formal election periods;

Whereas such support may create real or perceived conflicts of interest, confer
indirect benefits, or influence municipal decision-making in ways that are not
visible to the public;

Whereas the current lack of a formal disclosure regime for strategic, political, and
communications consultants used by Members of Council during their term of
office represents a gap in the local accountability framework;

Whereas the Municipal Act permits municipalities to implement Lobbyist
Registries to track third-party influence; and,

Whereas the Province of Ontario introduced Bill 9, the Municipal Accountability
Act, 2025, which creates an opportunity to modernize the Municipal Act and the

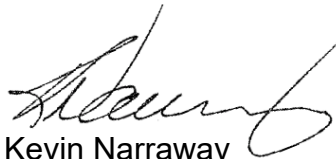
Municipal Conflict of Interest Act to standardize third-party influence disclosure requirements across Ontario.

Now Therefore be it Resolved:

1. That the Council of the Town of Whitby formally seek the assistance of the Province of Ontario and the Integrity Commissioner to implement disclosure requirements based on the following framework:
 - a. Mandatory Disclosure Requirement - Requirement that, outside of formal election periods, all Members of Council disclose the names, roles, and nature of services provided by any consultants, advisors, communications strategists, lobbyists, or third-party organizations who:
 - Provide strategic, political, communications, or advisory support to the Member during their term of office; and,
 - Are engaged, compensated, or otherwise supported directly or indirectly by the Member, a third party, or any political campaign or campaign account.
 - b. Scope of Disclosure – That the disclosures include:
 - The identity of the individual or firm;
 - The type of support provided (e.g., communications strategy, political advice, lobbying, digital outreach, issue management);
 - Whether compensation is provided directly by the Member, indirectly by another individual/campaign, or in-kind; and,
 - The duration of the support.
 - c. Public Registry Model - The establishment and maintenance of a publicly accessible registry on the Town’s website listing all such disclosures.
2. That the Council of the Town of Whitby formally request the Province of Ontario to utilize the current legislative window provided by Bill 9 to establish a province-wide standard for the disclosure of third-party consultants and advisors, ensuring that all municipal accountability frameworks include mandatory reporting of strategic, communications, and political support provided to elected officials outside of formal election periods; and,

3. That, subject to the adoption of Bill 9 or any successor legislation and in any event no later than the expiry of this Term of Council, that the Integrity Commissioner and Staff report back with a framework to fulfill the disclosure requirements as outlined in Item 1, including the opportunity to more broadly define lobbyists beyond those providing support to Members of Council and to include those who seek to lobby Members through the establishment of a Lobbyist Registry; and,
4. That the Clerk be directed to circulate this resolution to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MPP Lorne Coe, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and all Durham Region municipalities.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 905.430.4300.



Kevin Narraway
Sr. Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
clerk@whitby.ca

Copy: C. Harris, Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk – clerk@whitby.ca

The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing -
minister.mah@ontario.ca
Lorne Coe, MPP (Whitby) – lorne.coe@pc.ola.org
Lindsay Jones, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
(AMO) – ljones@amo.on.ca
J. Grossi, Municipal Clerk, Town of Ajax – clerks@ajax.ca
F. Lamanna, Clerk/Deputy CAO, Township of Brock – clerks@brock.ca
J. Gallagher, Municipal Clerk, Municipality of Clarington – clerks@clarington.net
M. Medeiros, City Clerk, City of Oshawa – clerks@oshawa.ca
S. Cassel, City Clerk, City of Pickering – clerks@pickering.ca
B. Labelle, Director of Corporate Services/Municipal Clerk, Township of Scugog
– blabelle@scugog.ca
D. Leroux, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge – dleroux@uxbridge.ca



Rideau Lakes

1439 County Road 8, Delta, ON K0E 1G0
T. 613.928.2251 | 1.800.928.2250 | F. 613.928.3097
rideaulakes.ca

March 10, 2026

Dear Senator,

Re: Rideau Lakes Concerns re Alto High Speed Rail Project (Bill C-15 Budget)

We in Rideau Lakes Township are writing this letter because of major concerns about the Alto High Speed Rail Project (HSR), as well as a request to fully evaluate our concerns of Bill C-15 in relation to Alto HSR and expropriation of land.

The Alto HSR is lacking full and meaningful consultation of critical information for the early design and development phase. We recognize that having this information is important to the engineers in determining routes that minimize disruptions to the communities, residents, businesses, farmland, waterways, environment, and ecosystems that they pass through. What we have experienced is less than adequate information upon which to base our ability to conduct impact assessments involving our rural communities, agriculture, businesses, and countless heritage buildings and monuments. Alto's recently proposed Southern Ontario route included a 10 km wide corridor, and they provided high-level maps which are not useful in determining the impacts which more detailed route maps would give us and that are vital to our informed feedback. Without more information from Alto, this reduces our more local and valuable ability to provide critical information to Alto planners and engineers.

HSR will divide communities. There will be a major impact on our roadways for school buses, public transportation and emergency vehicles given the many closed roadways when fences are erected along the HSR route. This will increase mortality and morbidity as it will take longer to receive timely care. Farther to travel will also increase emissions and costs for plowing and road maintenance. Without more information from Alto, this reduces our local and valuable ability to provide critical information to Alto planners and engineers.

The Southern route would traverse the UNESCO recognized Frontenac Arch Biosphere Region, the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee (Kanien'kehá:ka) and Anishinaabeg (Algonquin); where a land bridge of the Canadian Shield connects the Algonquin and Laurentian Highlands to the Adirondack Mountains in the USA. Many animals use this migration route in both directions every year, and unless wildlife corridors are included in the ALTO plans, this would cut off their migration.

This does not begin to speak to the negative impact on tourism which is estimated in the order of \$30 million for the UNESCO Rideau Canal system from Ottawa to Kingston.

Another major concern is that the government proposes to grant Alto, as a Crown Corporation, the right to 3 methods of property expropriation! Until now the government itself held the right to a single method of property expropriation. This causes our residents varying degrees of stress ranging to mental anguish if their properties are affected and they will not get full current market value if they decided to sell. Under the new proposed legislation, they would be forced to sell to the Corporation! This is of particular concern to many potentially affected property owners who are in the business of farming and feeding our population.

Cost analysis to build the railway in the northern and southern routes has not been done. We have also been told that a route parallel to the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario is not viable. We do not have enough information to understand why this option is not viable.

Rideau Lakes Township is asking you, and your Senate colleagues, to undertake your considered review of our concerns that are being sent to you for First Reading. We hope that you will see that this portion of Bill-C15 (HSR and expropriation) is premature, given that there are many unanswered questions and important issues have not been adequately addressed in the information provided. There has been inadequate public consultation to move to the development stage of this generationally important Canadian transportation project affecting so many lives along whatever corridor may eventually be approved. Should the Senate determine that a delegation to a Senate committee be appropriate with a view to consolidating recommendations for changes that would go back to the House of Commons, we would be available to participate, of course upon invitation.

Thank you for your attention in this very important matter affecting all of us here and across Ontario! It would be very much appreciated if I could receive a response in order to brief my Council.

Yours respectfully,



Arie Hoogenboom
Mayor, Rideau Lakes Township
mayor@rideaulakes.ca
613-323-0901

Cc: Prime Minister of Canada
All Members of Parliament
All Provincial Cabinet Ministers
MPP Steve Clark
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario
All Ontario Municipalities



Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor | Maire

**Office of the Mayor
City of Ottawa**
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1
Tel.: 613-580-2496
Fax: 613-580-2509
Email: Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

**Bureau du maire
Ville d'Ottawa**
110, avenue Laurier Ouest
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Tél. : 613-580-2496
Télééc. : 613-580-2509
Courriel : Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

February 26th, 2026

The Honourable Michael Kerzner
Solicitor General
Ministry of the Solicitor General
George Drew Building
25 Grosvenor St. Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6
SOLGEN.Correspondence@ontario.ca

By electronic submission

Re: Proposed New Regulation under the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act

Dear Solicitor General,

Please be advised that Ottawa City Council, at its meeting of February 25, 2026, considered and approved the following motion:

MOTION

Moved by / Motion de: Councillor S. Plante
Seconded by / Appuyée par: Mayor M. Sutcliffe

WHEREAS the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025* (RPCISA) was brought into force on June 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN) is considering regulatory amendments to the RPCISA to prescribe special constables employed by authorized public transit agencies, including OTranspo special constables for the purpose of the Act, thereby granting them the same enforcement powers as police officers, and is seeking public input on this proposal until March 1st; and

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa has invested significant resources to improve public safety in the downtown core and the ByWard Market; and

WHEREAS OC Transpo deploys on average approximately 4 special constables in the downtown daily, and 13 deployed across the city-wide transit network, who are already present in high-traffic transit environments, including stations, platforms, and bus stops throughout the downtown core and across the city; and



Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor | Maire

**Office of the Mayor
City of Ottawa**

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Email: Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

**Bureau du maire
Ville d'Ottawa**

110, avenue Laurier Ouest
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 1J1
Tél. : 613-580-2496
Télééc. : 613-580-2509
Courriel : Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

WHEREAS public transit riders include workers, students, seniors, people with disabilities, youth, and low-income residents who rely on transit as their primary or only mode of transportation and require a safe environment at all times; and

WHEREAS restoring ridership is essential to the financial sustainability of Ottawa's public transit system, to achieving the City's climate and transportation goals, and to ensuring equitable access to employment, education, healthcare, and community services; and

WHEREAS enabling OCTranspo special constables to enforce the RPCISA would allow for timely, proportionate, and location-specific interventions focused on transit spaces, while reducing reliance on police response for matters that occur primarily within the transit system; and

WHEREAS any extension of authority under the RPCISA would be accompanied by appropriate training and would operate alongside existing public health, outreach, and harm reduction services, recognizing that enforcement alone does not address substance use but that clear rules and safe public spaces remain necessary;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Ottawa endorse the proposed regulatory amendments under the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor write to the Solicitor General of Ontario in support of the proposal before March 1st, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk share this motion with other Municipalities in Ontario, prior to March 1st, 2026; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor write the Solicitor General of Ontario to renew or extend the funding associated with the Ontario-Ottawa agreement.

Should you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,

Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor
City of Ottawa

cc. All Ontario Municipalities
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

March 20, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Via email: Pm@pm.gc.ca

The Honourable Marjorie Michel
Minister of Health
Via email: Marjorie.michel@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Via email: Premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Via email: Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca

Dear Prime Minister Carney, Minister Michel, Premier Ford and Minister Jones:

Re: Food Insecurity Emergency Declaration

The following motion was passed by Council declaring food insecurity an emergency in our community. This declaration reflects our growing concern about the impact of food insecurity on the health and well-being of residents across Chatham-Kent.

In passing this motion, we have joined other cities in Ontario who have declared food insecurity an emergency and hope it will initiate collaborative action and policy development at the provincial and federal levels of government.

“Whereas food insecurity is defined as, the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints, a marker of material deprivation (poverty), and a serious public health problem because it increases the risk of non-communicable and infectious diseases, and premature death.

Whereas chronic stressors like disability, precarious work, and acute shocks like COVID-19, illness or eviction, make it more difficult to afford life’s basic needs and live free from poverty. Whereas income-based policies are necessary to effectively reduce household food insecurity, which Chatham-Kent Public Health reports is experienced by at least 1 in 5 households in Chatham-Kent. Whereas the income provided through provincial and federal programs has not kept up with rising costs of food, housing and other basic needs.

Cont’d...

Whereas Ontario Works rates have been frozen since 2018: the maximum single person monthly benefit for basic needs is \$343 and \$390 for shelter, totalling \$733 per month.

Whereas Chatham-Kent Public Health reports a single person on Ontario Works spends ~134% of their income on food and rent. Whereas the Municipality of Chatham-Kent provides programs and services that decrease the impacts of poverty and income inequality and provides participants with a better quality of life which can positively improve health and well-being.

Whereas the number of individuals using Chatham-Kent Outreach for Hunger has increased by ~38% from 2022 to 2024, from 2781 unique individuals in 2022, to 3752 unique individuals in 2024, with a ~51% increase in families with children.

Whereas the number of households using the food assistance program within the Village Pantry has increased by ~124%, from 76 unique households in 2022, to 170 unique households in 2024.

Whereas the number of meals served to under-housed people by Reach Out Chatham-Kent has increased by ~17% from 2022 to 2024, from 43,594 meals in 2022, to 51,313 meals 2024.

Whereas Hope Haven has already had 4000 more visits in 2025 compared to 2024.

Whereas poverty costs Ontario around \$27.1 – 33 billion dollars per year: justice system \$1.1 billion; health care \$3.9 billion; lost income \$19.4 – 25 billion; lost tax revenue \$2.7 – 3 billion.

Whereas the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy's (Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020-2025)) primary measure of success is that more social assistance recipients move into employment, despite people with employment income being one of the fastest growing groups at food banks.

Whereas the Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council's mission is to lead in the development of relevant policies and to advocate for our local food system, and values that all people should have physical and economic access to healthy, culturally diverse, local food.

Whereas the Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council's Strategic Plan for 2025-2027 highlights the need to advocate for government-level policies that impact food systems, and specifically, to advocate for income-based solutions to food insecurity to provide families with more agency in food choices.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Mayor and Council support the advocacy of the Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council by declaring food insecurity an emergency in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

Cont'd...

And that Mayor and Council request the Provincial Government focus its upcoming 2026-2030 Poverty Reduction Strategy around reducing measures of material deprivation, such as food insecurity.

And that Mayor and Council request the Provincial Government immediately raise social assistance rates to meet life's basic needs.

And that Mayor and Council request the Provincial and Federal Governments to address the causes of food insecurity by establishing a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income for those living in poverty.

And that Mayor and Council request the Provincial and Federal Governments to increase the rates of income support programs to ensure they are adequate to address the basic needs of individuals and families.

And that Mayor and Council request that the Provincial and Federal Governments include the reduction of food insecurity as a component of all appropriate government policies. And that a copy of this motion be forwarded to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA), Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Federation of Municipalities of Canada (FCM), Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), all Ontario Municipalities, all Members of Provincial Parliament and Parliament, The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada, all federal party leaders, the Honourable M.P.P. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, and the Federal Minister of Health Marjorie Michel.”

Sincerely,



Darrin Canniff, Mayor/CEO
Municipality of Chatham-Kent

C: All Members of Provincial Parliament and Parliament
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)
Federation of Municipalities of Canada (FCM) Association of
Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA)
Ontario Municipalities



4800 SOUTH SERVICE RD.,
BEAMSVILLE, ON L3J 1L3

905-563-2799

March 25, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL: graham.mcgregor@pc.ola.org

Hon. Graham McGregor
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
10215 Kennedy Rd. N
Brampton, ON L6Z 0C5

RE: Town of Lincoln Resolution – Request to the Province of Ontario to Extend the Deadline for Notices of Intention to Designate Listed Heritage Properties

Please be advised that Council of the Corporation of the Town of Lincoln at its Committee of the Whole Meeting held on March 23, 2026, passed the following resolution:

Resolution Number: PED-2026-22
Moved by: Councillor Lynn Timmers

WHEREAS amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act under the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 introduced timelines requiring municipalities to issue Notices of Intention to Designate for properties listed on municipal heritage registers as of December 31, 2022, originally requiring action by January 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS the Province subsequently amended the legislation through the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 to extend the deadline to January 1, 2027 in response to concerns raised by municipalities and heritage stakeholders; and

WHEREAS municipalities require sufficient time and resources to undertake research, documentation, consultation, and evaluation to determine whether listed properties warrant designation under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

WHEREAS the removal of listed properties from municipal heritage registers if the prescribed timelines are not met may place cultural heritage resources at increased risk of demolition or irreversible alteration before municipalities have the opportunity to properly evaluate their cultural heritage value or interest; and

WHEREAS many municipalities, including the Town of Lincoln, do not have dedicated heritage planning staff and must rely on volunteer Heritage Advisory Committee members or external heritage consultants to undertake property evaluations, which can result in additional financial and administrative pressures; and

WHEREAS municipalities across Ontario are facing significant workloads associated with evaluating listed properties; and

WHEREAS the Town of Lincoln Heritage Advisory Committee, at its meeting of March 12, 2026, recommended that Council advocate to the Province of Ontario for a further extension to the current deadline;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Council of the Town of Lincoln endorse the recommendation of its Heritage Advisory Committee and respectfully request that the Province of Ontario further amend the Ontario Heritage Act to extend the January 1, 2027 deadline for issuing Notices of Intention to Designate for properties listed on municipal heritage registers as of December 31, 2022; and
2. The Province consider extending the deadline to January 1, 2030, or another reasonable timeframe that would provide municipalities with adequate time to complete heritage evaluations and make informed designation decisions; and
3. This resolution be circulated to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the local Member of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Heritage Committee Association, and all Ontario municipalities for their information and consideration.

CARRIED

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Regards,



Julie Kirkelos
Town Clerk

jkirkelos@lincoln.ca

JK/dp

- c.c. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Niagara West Member of Provincial Parliament
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- Community Heritage Ontario
- All Ontario Municipalities
- Manager of Planning and Development
- Chair of the Heritage Advisory Committee

March 23, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
minister.fin@ontario.ca

The Honourable Graham McGregor, MPP
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
graham.mcgregor@pc.ola.org

RE: Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) Proposal to include \$10M per year in the 2026 provincial budget for Heritage Helping Housing (HHH) grant funding

At the March 23, 2026, Regular Council meeting for the Town of Saugeen Shores, the attached motion was passed endorsing the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) Proposal to include \$10M per year in the 2026 provincial budget for Heritage Helping Housing (HHH) grant funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hailey Leigh-Mossley".

Hailey Leigh-Mossley
Deputy Clerk
Encl.

cc. MPP Lisa Thompson
All Ontario Municipalities

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SAUGEEN SHORES

MOVED BY: C. Grace

RESOLUTION NO: 096-2026

SECONDED BY: M. Myatt

DATE: March 23, 2026

Whereas older buildings have inherent sustainability and provide economic, environmental and social benefits for Ontario communities; and,

Whereas re-use of existing buildings reduces the need for increased infrastructure that accompanies new builds such as sewer and water services, new roads and sidewalks; and,

Whereas re-use of existing building can reduce construction waste and extend the life expectancy of landfills; and,

Whereas keeping older buildings helps a community remain visually richer and enhances identity while building its tourism brand and appeal; and,

Whereas creating a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10M/year, modelled on an existing Alberta program would incentivize owners and smaller developers to keep, fix and reuse heritage buildings to create new housing; and,

Whereas such a grant program would provide an alternative to the Ontario heritage property tax relief program, which has limited impact on developers and reduces municipal revenues; and,

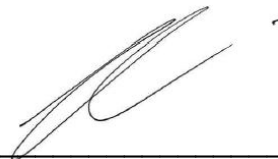
Whereas such a grant program would provide a simpler and more direct way for heritage building owners to fund renovations or conservation; and,

Whereas Ontario developers surveyed by the National Trust for Canada in 2014 ranked a heritage-revolving fund as their top incentive to encourage heritage development if:

- the grants are simple to apply for and to administer; and,
- the fund is large enough to meet at least 33% of the demand so that applicants have a reasonable chance of recovering the cost and effort of applying.

Therefore, be it Resolved That the Council of the Town of Saugeen Shores endorse the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) Proposal to include \$10M per year in the 2026 provincial budget for Heritage Helping Housing (HHH) grant funding, and that this resolution be sent to the Premier, Minister of Finance, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, and MPP Lisa Thompson, and be circulated to all municipalities in Ontario.

- Carried
- Carried, as amended
- Defeated
- Deferred
- Referred
- Tabled
- Withdrawn



Mayor

From: [ca.office \(MECP\)](#)
Cc: [ca.office \(MECP\)](#)
Subject: Decision Notice on the Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities
Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:27:11 PM

You don't often get email from ca.office@ontario.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do NOT reply, click links (embedded links) or open attachment(s) unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Municipal Partners and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO),

We are writing to inform you that a decision notice has been posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) regarding the proposal notice posting #025-1257 on the "Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities."

The proposal initially consulted on by the government proposed boundaries that would have resulted in seven regional conservation authorities. As a result of the feedback received during consultation, the province adjusted the boundaries to accommodate areas with distinct geographies and development contexts, to better balance differing priorities across rural, urban and northern areas and improve alignment with watersheds and with source protection regions. The government is now planning to move forward with consolidation to create nine optimized regional CAs. A map showing the planned boundaries and the nine new CAs is available at [Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency | ontario.ca](#).

In the coming weeks, the government plans to introduce amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) that would implement the consolidation and set out a smooth path to consolidation to ensure service continuity for communities. Consolidation is targeted to take effect in early 2027 to allow transition planning to occur over the next year. The government's plan would ensure a clear, coordinated and successful transition led by the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), that would minimize disruptions to CA staffing, services, permitting processes and with all existing partnerships and obligations carried forward to maintain service stability. A summary of the consolidation plan, and details on transition, are included in the decision notice [Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities | Environmental Registry of Ontario](#).

The government's plans to consolidate CAs build on recent progress Ontario has made to improve the CA system, including establishing OPCA to provide centralized leadership and oversight for Ontario's CAs. Under these plans, the important work that conservation authorities do to protect people and property from the risks of flooding and other natural hazards would not change. The nine new regional CAs would continue to operate as independent, municipally governed organizations and to fulfill their provincially mandated programs such as managing flooding and other natural hazards, drinking water source protection under the Clean Water Act,

watershed management programs, and the management of their lands and recreational trails, ensuring public access to local natural areas and outdoor activities.

We recognize the important role that municipalities have in the governance of conservation authorities. We are committed to keeping you informed throughout the transition and ensuring that the relationships, programs and services that CAs provide to municipalities continue.

The province is committed to working closely with municipal partners and AMO throughout this process and ensuring local knowledge informs next steps. In the coming weeks you will be invited to technical briefings to provide further information on the next steps in the planned transition process.

For questions regarding the plans for consolidation, please contact CCEO@ontario.ca. If you have questions about the planned legislative amendments and day-to-day CA business, please reach out to MECP staff via ca.office@ontario.ca.

We thank you for taking the time to share with us your perspectives during the consultations that helped to shape this plan and look forward to working closely with you and your municipal/association colleagues over the next year.

Sincerely,

Chloe Stuart
ADM, Land and Water Division
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Hassaan Basit
Chief Conservation Executive
Office of the Chief Conservation Executive

March 26, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier
Premier's Office
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

And

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca; minister.edu@ontario.ca

Re: Request for Provincial School Board Governance Consultation Process

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Durham District School Board, I am writing to request that a province-wide consultation process take place before making any governance changes or decisions that would result in the elimination of school board trustees.

The potential elimination of trustees is concerning and represents a significant shift in Ontario's education governance. Trustees serve as a longstanding, essential democratic link between local communities and the public education system. Any change of this magnitude should not be considered without seeking input through evidence-based research and meaningful public engagement.

It is essential that communities have an opportunity to fully understand and respond to the implications of a proposal that would remove school board trustees, which may have unintended negative consequences on the communities that we are elected to serve. We understand you have recently heard from a number of other boards across the province, and we strongly agree with the statement from our colleagues at Avon Maitland DSB that *"transparency regarding the rationale, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of this proposal is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring informed dialogue."*

Durham Region includes diverse, urban, suburban, and rural communities, all with vastly varying histories and needs. Local representation ensures the unique needs of each of our communities are considered and met. As a Board of Trustees, we are firmly and proudly



Durham District School Board

400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1R 2K6

Phone: 905-666-5500; Toll Free: 1-800-265-3968

committed to promoting meaningful learning, connected communities, and well-being, being responsive to the priorities of the local community in carrying out our duties and responsibilities.

In parallel to this letter, we are also writing to the Ombudsman's Office to request an immediate review of the potential impacts of removing school board trustees with respect to fairness, openness, transparency, and accountability.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tracy Brown
Chair, Board of Trustees
Durham District School Board

cc.

Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Durham Region
Members of Parliament (MPs) for Durham Region
Regional Chair, Mayors and Council for Durham Region Municipalities
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Members Board
DDSB Board of Trustees



@DurhamDistrictSchoolBoard



@DDSBschools

ddsb.ca

March 26, 2026

Paul Dubé
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street, 10th floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Sent via email: info@ombudsman.on.ca

Re: Request for Review of the Potential Impacts of Removing English Public School Trustees

Dear Ombudsman Dubé,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Durham District School Board, I am writing to request your office's review of the provincial government's proposal to eliminate democratically elected English public school board trustees. The DDSB recognizes the important role of the Ombudsman in safeguarding the principles of fairness and accountability across Ontario's public institutions, and we also firmly believe that trustees serve as a longstanding, essential democratic link between local communities and the education system. Recent public statements suggesting the possible elimination of trustees would represent a significant shift in Ontario's education governance and we have concerns with the steps taken towards this outcome to date by the Ministry of Education. Specifically the removal of English public trustees could impact:

- **Indigenous Representation and Truth and Reconciliation:** Inclusion of Indigenous voice through our First Nations trustee is essential to uphold the distinct and inherent rights and unique needs and interests of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis students and families and students.
- **Student Representation:** The loss of Student Trustees who are elected from among their peers to advocate and bring student issues forward for awareness and resolution.
- **Fairness:** Different governance structures for English public boards and French and Catholic boards could result in inequitable treatment of students and families depending on the type of education they choose to access.
- **Transparency:** The potential of fewer public meetings would reduce public awareness and transparency in decision making.
- **Accountability:** School board trustees are a direct link between local communities

and the education system. Their removal would significantly reduce local accountability in a sector that affects nearly every family in Ontario.

- **Absence of Public Consultation or Evidence of Support:** To date, there has been no indication or effort from the province or the Ministry of Education to consult the public on the potential removal of trustees. We firmly believe that Ontarians value the role of trustees and, if invited to provide feedback, would question whether the proposed changes would have any impact on improving public education.

Alongside our colleagues from other Ontario school boards, we respectfully request that your office undertake a review of the process and potential impacts of removing English public school trustees. Such a review upholds the principles of fairness, openness, transparency, and accountability that Ontarians expect and deserve.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tracy Brown
Chair, Board of Trustees
Durham District School Board

cc.

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Durham Region
Members of Parliament (MPs) for Durham Region
Regional Chair, Mayors and Council for Durham Region Municipalities
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Members Board
DDSB Board of Trustees



Ontario's Tax Freeze: Costing Jobs, Raising Prices

Unfair property tax policies are placing a hidden tariff on consumers, driving up the cost of goods and putting immense pressure on small businesses. Local retailers, the backbone of our communities, are overtaxed, threatening jobs and economic stability across Ontario.



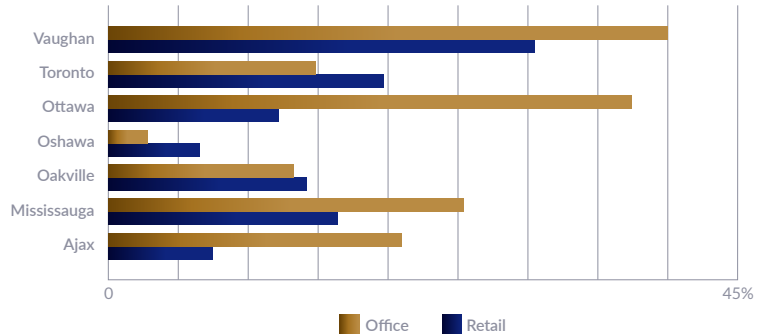
Who's Bearing the Hidden Consumer Tariff in Ontario?

Local Businesses, Unfairly Taxed

Unfair taxation is placing a hidden burden on local communities across Ontario. Independent businesses are overtaxed, driving up prices for consumers and putting jobs and livelihoods at risk. Residents are paying the price while trying to support their local retailers.

Residents want to support local businesses but are facing higher prices due to an outdated tax system that favors large properties. This province-wide issue is putting undue pressure on communities and demands immediate action.

Median Overtaxation



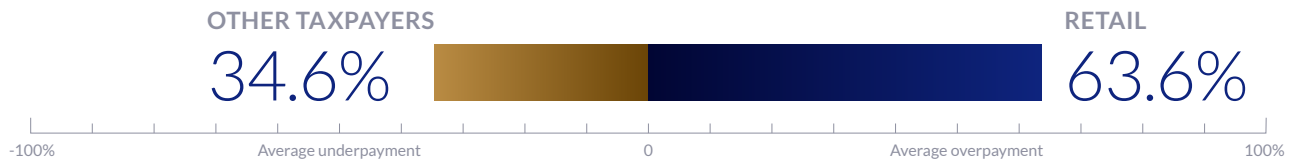
Retail and Office Tenants Overpay While Others Get a Pass

Ontario's outdated assessed values are putting jobs and local businesses at risk. Retail and office tenants are taxed based on inflated values, while other businesses get a pass—leaving everyday residents to make up the difference through higher prices.

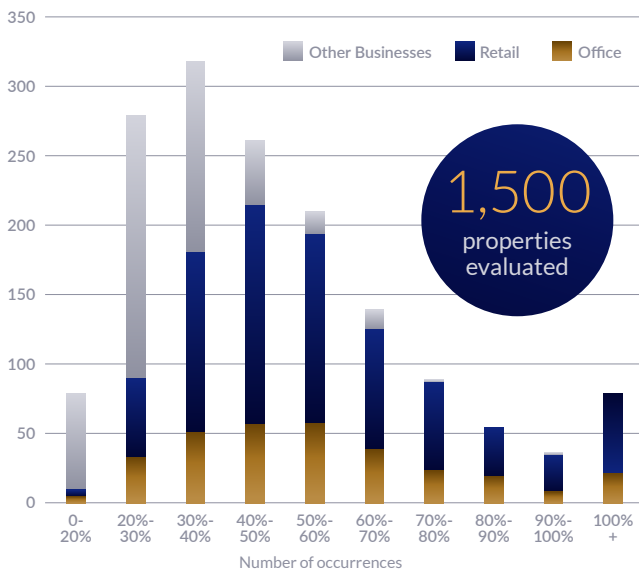
It's time to reassess and restore fairness.



% Under/Over Taxation

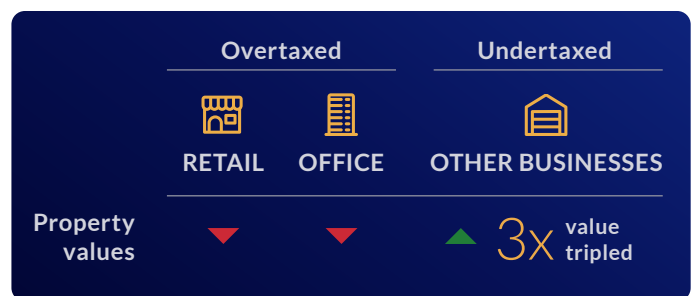


Assessed Value as % of Sale Price



Property Taxes Out of Sync with Reality

Ontario's property tax system is out of sync with market reality. Retail and office properties have declined in value, yet remain overtaxed, while other businesses—whose values have tripled—are undertaxed.



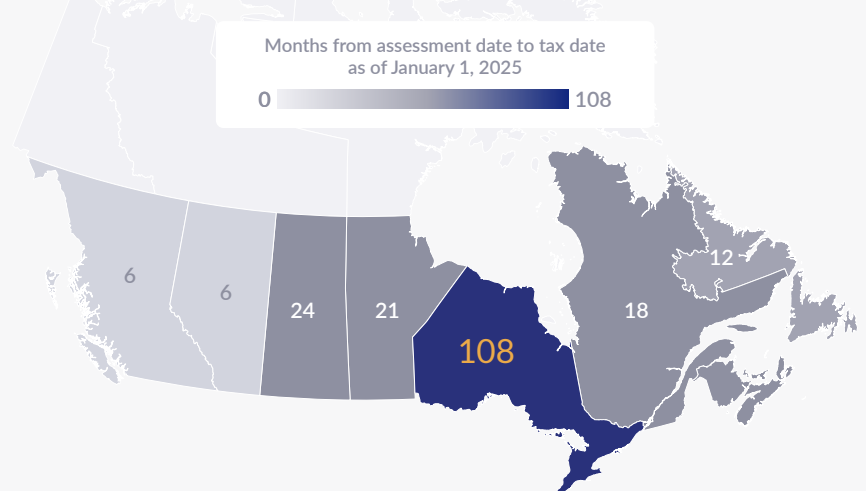
Without reassessment, struggling retail and office sectors face rising costs, lower occupancy, and mounting pressure.

The Only Province Without Reassessment Since the Pandemic

Ontario is the only province that hasn't reassessed property values since the pandemic. As of January 1st 2025, Ontario taxes were based on values that are 108 months in the past, while in the rest of Canada assessed values are 6-24 months in the past.

Regular reassessments give businesses the stability to plan and invest. Without it, struggling sectors like retail and office face uncertainty and discouraging costs.

How out of date are Ontario assessments?



It's Time to Reassess and Restore Fairness

Reassess Ontario's Properties:
Support Local Jobs and Economic Balance

Learn more at ryan.com



We kindly request that that Council call on the Government of Ontario to promptly move to update property assessments in the Province.

The following resolution has been drafted for Council's consideration at its next meeting:

- **WHEREAS** a well-functioning and up-to-date assessment system supports strong communities and makes the province an attractive place to invest; and
- **WHEREAS** property assessments in Ontario have not been updated in over a decade, making them the most outdated in Canada, while provinces such as Alberta and British Columbia update assessments annually to reflect current market conditions; and
- **WHEREAS** the prolonged pause in the reassessment cycle has created significant distortions in assessed values, resulting in inequities among property classes; and
- **WHEREAS** outdated assessments negatively impact investment decisions, economic competitiveness, municipal planning, and disproportionately affect independent small businesses; and
- **WHEREAS** reassessments are designed to be revenue neutral for the municipality, ensure fairness in taxation, maintain public confidence in the property tax system, and support long-term municipal financial planning; and
- **WHEREAS** a coalition of municipalities, chambers of commerce, tourism organizations, small businesses, and major property owners have called upon the Government of Ontario to update property assessments;
- **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of **[Name of Municipality]** hereby calls upon the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Finance to direct the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to promptly resume the regular property assessment cycle; and
- **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; the Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation for their consideration and timely action.

Summary of Accessibility Advisory Committee Activities

Report To: Council
 Prepared By: Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist
 Date: As of March 26, 2026



Accessibility Advisory Committee – March 18, 2026 (AAC-2026-03)

Agenda Item	Decision(s)/Motion(s)
<p>2026 E-Mobility Launch Update: LIME</p> <p>Armi De Francia, Active Transportation Coordinator</p> <p>Dan Klein, LIME</p> <p>Rachel Rappaport, LIME</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Klein, Lime, provided a comprehensive update on the Lime e-mobility program in Ajax, covering ridership data, community engagement, new accessibility features, the introduction of Lime Vision AI, and ongoing efforts to address sidewalk riding, parking, and helmet use, while soliciting Committee feedback and discussing future collaborations • Lime staff described their community events, which include device demonstrations, helmet fittings, and safety education. • Rachel Rappaport explained the Lime Assist program, which allows users to reserve mobility devices free of charge. The Lime Team sought Committee suggestions for increasing awareness, especially among disability organizations and senior • Lime Staff detailed the Lime Vision pilot, an AI-enabled camera system that detects sidewalk riding, alerts riders, and collects anonymized data to inform infrastructure improvements. • Committee members raised concerns about devices blocking sidewalks and accessibility routes. Lime staff explained the challenges of GPS drift and described efforts to increase compliance through visible parking demarcations, rubber mats, and potential on-road parking with bollards. Members noted a decline in helmet availability on devices later in the season. • Lime staff discussed the benefits of seated scooters for seniors and those with mobility challenges, referencing successful adoption in Tokyo. However, current Ontario regulations prohibit seats on shared scooters.

Town of Ajax Summary of Advisory Committee Activities – March 2026

Agenda Item	Decision(s)/Motion(s)
<p>Digital Recreation Program Guide</p> <p>Michelle Gillis, IT Project Manager and Business Analyst</p> <p>Laurie Turner, Recreation and Culture and Community Development Marketing Coordinator</p> <p>Grant Kelk, Graphic Designer, Recreation and Culture</p>	<p>N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff presented the new Ajax Digital Recreation Guide to the Committee, demonstrating its features, gathering accessibility feedback, and discussing plans for a soft launch, ongoing improvements, and integration with community needs. • M. Gillis demonstrated the online guide, which allows users to filter programs by category, location, age group, and time, create wish lists, and download customized PDFs. The guide includes direct links to Active Ajax for registration, a video tutorial, and frequently asked questions. • Committee members provided feedback on accessibility, including requests for calendar integration, visual aids for children and non-readers, location-based filtering, and notification options for program availability. • Staff committed to exploring these suggestions, working with GIS for location features, and testing for screen reader compatibility, font size adjustments, and language barriers.
<p>2026 National AccessAbility Week Recognition Planning</p>	<p>N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Moore led a discussion with the Committee on preparations for National Accessibility Week, including event scheduling, collaborative opportunities, promotional items, and strategies for community and staff engagement, while considering the impact of the election year on capacity. She identified that National Accessibility Week is scheduled for May 31st to June 6th, with events including a film screening, flag raising, and a webinar on neurodiversity in the workplace already in the planning stages. • The Committee discussed potential to explore collaborations with age-friendly and Pride Parade events, and the possibility of hosting targeted Lime training sessions for seniors and people with disabilities.

Town of Ajax Summary of Advisory Committee Activities – March 2026

Agenda Item	Decision(s)/Motion(s)
<p>Staff/Work Plan Updates</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Moore updated the Committee on several work plan items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service Animal Complaint Process ○ 2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election ○ End-of-Term Evaluation and Member Reflections ○ Land Acknowledgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members discussed the new addition to the Land Acknowledgement and identified that it represented the intent of previous Committee discussions well. <p>Motion:</p> <p>Moved By: N. Henry Seconded By: H. Azzarello</p> <p>That the following language be added to the Town of Ajax Land Acknowledgement read at each Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting:</p> <p>“We also recognize that the impacts of colonialism intersect with ableism, resulting in overlapping barriers for Indigenous Peoples and people with disabilities. As the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we commit to our ongoing work to prevent, identify, and remove barriers, and to support the inclusion, dignity, and participation of everyone.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carried.</p>

To access Advisory Committee Meeting minutes and agendas, please visit www.ajax.ca/meetings.

Summary of Heritage Advisory Committee Activities

Report To: Council
 Prepared By: Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist
 Date: As of March 26 2026



Heritage Advisory Committee – March 4, 2025 (HAC-2026-03)

Agenda Item	Decision(s)/Motion(s)
<p>Street Names Research</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Sawchuck reviewed the research completed to date for the priority list of street names identified at the February 4, 2026 Meeting. He identified items requiring additional content. • Members discussed details to be added to Roosevelt Avenue, Station Street, Church Street, Audley Road, Christena Crescent, Elizabeth Street, Topp Street, and Wishbone Crescent. Members agreed to provide updated information in advance of the April 1, 2026 Meeting.
<p>Jane’s Walk Event Planning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Sawchuck shared an overview of the origin of Janes Walks and the history of the Committee’s participation in the annual event. The Committee discussed logistics for hosting this year’s walk, deciding upon the morning of May 2, 2026 at 10 a.m. Members and staff proposed returning to the D.I.L. walking tour. • S. White and M. Daniels volunteered to lead the tour. T. Kessler and T. Matthews volunteered to assist with the event.
<p>War of 1812 Veteran’s Markers – Event Planning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members facilitated a detailed discussion on organizing the War of 1812 Veterans Marker recognition event. Details including location selection, site logistics, guest invitations, and potential programming elements were discussed.

Town of Ajax Summary of Advisory Committee Activities – March 2026

Agenda Item	Decision(s)/Motion(s)
<p>Project Updates</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Sawchuck provided updates on several ongoing projects, including the demolition timeline for 209 Squire Drive, commemorative panel replacement at Simcoe Point Cemetery, Pickering Village BIA signage removal, and door replacement at 479 Kingston Rd.
<p>209 Squire Drive – Research Update</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. McEwan provided a research update on 209 Squire Drive, reporting that no significant photographs or documentation were found in the archives. She noted that further research will continue to explore the family lineage and the relationship between Squire and Squires Beach Road.
<p>Heritage Video Theming Discussion</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A – information item only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Chair Patel introduced a suggestion to expanding the heritage video project themes to include post-incorporation Ajax stories. She suggested that future heritage videos could focus on prominent families, individuals, and businesses that shaped Ajax after incorporation. • Members expressed interest in exploring the proposed theme, after current video projects are completed.

To access Advisory Committee Meeting minutes and agendas, please visit www.ajax.ca/meetings.



Memo

To: Council
From: Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist
Department: Corporate Services
Department Head: Nicole Cooper, Deputy CAO
Date: 2026/03/06

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* requires municipalities to consider the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities, ensure accessible voting locations, and prepare an election accessibility plan prior to Voting Day.

The **2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan** outlines measures to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to participation for electors, candidates, and election officials with disabilities. The Plan aligns with the principles of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and reflects lessons learned from the 2022 Municipal Election.

The Plan outlines the measures the Town of Ajax will implement to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to participation for electors and candidates with disabilities, and focuses on accessible voting methods, Voter Assistance Centres, election communications, staff training, and candidate resources to support inclusive participation throughout the election process.

New for the 2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election, to support inclusive campaign practices and align with the Town’s commitment to accessibility and inclusion, the Accessibility Advisory Committee has developed a **Municipal Election Candidate Accessibility Checklist**. The checklist resource is a best practice guide providing considerations for accessible campaign materials, offices, communications, volunteers and events and is included as **Appendix B** to the Plan.

The Accessibility Plan and checklist resource will be made publicly available through the Town’s election website. Following the election, staff will publish a post-election accessibility report outlining the implementation of the Plan and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

Attachment

ATT-1 **2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election Accessibility Plan**

Should you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[Sarah Moore](#)
Legislative Specialist

Alternative formats of this document are available on request.

2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

AJAX 2026
VOTES

ACCESSIBLE
AJAX 

65 Harwood Avenue South
Ajax, ON L1S 2H9
Phone: 365-282-8683 (VOTE)
TextNET: 1-866-460-4489
Email: election@ajax.ca
www.ajax.ca/vote

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1. Overview

This plan addresses the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Municipal Election in the Town of Ajax.

Within the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) as amended, there are several provisions in relation to accessibility considerations mandated for the 2026 Municipal Election. The Clerk responsible for an election must:

- Have regard for the needs of electors, candidates and Election Officers with disabilities
- Ensure that voting places are accessible to people with disabilities
- Prepare accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers that could affect electors and candidates with disabilities, and make the plan available to the public prior to voting day.
- Publish a report about the identification, removal and prevention of election barriers that affect people with disabilities within 90 days of Voting Day

The Town of Ajax has made great efforts in promoting a barrier-free community. This commitment has been echoed through the Town's ongoing implementation of provincial accessibility standards requirements and best practices. 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, to identify measures to be taken and reported on following the election.

2. Objectives

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

- That all Voter Assistance Centre locations are accessible
- That people with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection, and that assistance is available if desired
- That people with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates
- That people with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, Election Officer, or registered third-party advertiser

- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, election communications, the Town’s website, and social media

3. Development of the plan

This Plan is a living document which will be updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. To develop the plan below, several steps have been taken to ensure that the statutory requirements are met, and a feasible implementation plan is in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal Election, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies, and other supporting materials from Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), neighbouring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and other various stakeholder groups
- Establishment of staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities can vote in an inclusive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officers recognize that a voter’s needs shall be accommodated wherever possible

3.1 Consultation

Consultation will provide a breadth of knowledge, experiences, and understanding of election accessibility considerations to ensure the Election is accessible and inclusive to all. The Town shall:

- Review 2022 post-election accessibility considerations with the 2026 Election Team and Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Consult on election accessibility considerations with people with lived-experience to ensure Election planning meets the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Age-friendly Ajax Steering Committee, and Town of Ajax Staff Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee)
- Partner with accessibility service providers to channel election information through their networks, clients and communities (using newsletters, links, etc.)
- Attend Town community events to demonstrate accessible voting options and raise awareness of the accessibility of the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election

4. Voting Location

An accessibility site audit of each physical Voter Assistance Centre location will be conducted. Audits shall ensure that voting locations are supportive to the needs of Election Officers and voters and shall take into account the following considerations:

4.1 Accessible Transit Route

Proximity to accessible public transit routes shall be considered in the selection of Voter Assistance Centres. The name and/or address of the Voter Assistance Centre shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the Voter Assistance Centre and into the voting area within the location. The voting area shall be identified with clear signage. Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location. Information on Durham Transit bus routes will be included on the Town's Election website where information about Voter Assistance Centres is posted.

4.2 Ingress and Egress

The route to the entrance of the Voter Assistance Centre shall be accessible, unobstructed and wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, mobility scooter, other assistive device, and/or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the Voter Assistance Centre and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the Voter Assistance Centre's hours.

Lineups and the flow of voters into and out of Voter Assistance Centres shall remain unobstructed as much as possible, and clear barrier-free pathways of travel shall be maintained. Additional seating shall be provided for those individuals who may not have the ability to wait in line. Access to emergency exits shall be unobstructed and fully accessible if evacuation is required. Routine checks of entrance and egress routes will be made throughout the voting day.

4.3 Parking

Free accessible parking shall be provided at all Voter Assistance Centre locations. The designated barrier-free 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 location. By-law officers will monitor and enforce parking at Voter Assistance Centre locations throughout the day.

5. Voting Methods

The 2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election will work with Simply Voting to provide eVoting services to eligible voters. This includes the provision of convenient and independent voting from anywhere via telephone or internet, or in-person at one of three Voter Assistance Centres during the Voting Period between October 19 – 26, 2026.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other personal devices can present enhanced accessible opportunities for people with disabilities, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

The Simply Voting system provides voters with the capability and convenience to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates a voting process for people with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation to access a physical Voter Assistance Centre. Additionally, people who have personal assistive devices can use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently. By allowing voting from any location, eliminating the need for voters to attend a specific voting location, and using a variety of methods, there is an increased ability for the voter to cast their ballot without any assistance. This provides people with disabilities with the same independence, privacy, and convenience in participating in the election as other voters. If individuals require assistance with the voting process, trained Election Officers will be present at in-person Voter Assistance Centres during the Voting Period, as well as over the phone via the Election Help Line, 365-282-8683 (VOTE)

5.1 Telephone Voting

Communications barriers can make it difficult for people with disabilities to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low audio volume, use of unclear language, and confusing or disorganized menu options. Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone or cell phone, using the election telephone number and Personal Identification Number (PIN) contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot.

The Simply Voting telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices
- Clear, plain language
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections

- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized

Voters may also use TTY (Teletypewriter) service to access eVoting services. TTY users should have full confidence when using the TTY service integrated with the Simply Voting application by phone. TTY operators received training and are required by law to maintain confidentiality of the information disclosed. No record-keeping of conversations is stored. Voters interested in using the TTY service to access telephone voting may wish to consider utilizing the internet voting service, if able to do so, as an alternative.

5.2 Internet Voting

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

The Simply Voting system has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), so that people 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.

5.3 In-person Voting at Voter Assistance Centres

Eligible voters participating in the 2026 Town of Ajax Municipal Election are strongly encouraged to vote from the convenience of their home, either online or by phone during the Voting Period for the best possible voting experience. However, for those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Officer, Voter Assistance Centres will be open to provide in-person internet voting opportunities via a public-use computer, also referred to as a voting kiosk.

Access to the interior of the Voter Assistance Centre and voting area shall be firm, 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 and paths of travel shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or mobility device.

A minimum of two accessible touchscreen voting kiosk will be available at each Voter Assistance Centre. These areas shall be low enough in height and have a wide, unobstructed floor area to allow for individuals who use a mobility device to vote independently and privately. Such kiosks will be identified with the International Symbol of Accessibility. Voters may attend any Voter Assistance Centre location throughout the voting period, regardless of their ward of residence within Ajax. Additionally, magnifying sheets will be available at all voter assistance centres to assist voters with low vision. Note pads and pens will be made available to assist communication with voters who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. A list of languages spoken by Election Officers at each Voter Assistance Centre will be posted onsite to assist voters who may require assistance in another language.

The Town will be operating the following Voter Assistance Centres during the 2026 Voting Period:

- Audley Recreation Centre, Banquet Hall (1955 Audley Road North):
 - October 22, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 23, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 24, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 - October 26, 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via **Durham Transit Route 915**. Please use **Entrance C, (east entrance)** to access the VAC.

- Ajax Community Centre, HMS Room (75 Centennial Road):
 - October 22, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 23, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 24, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 - October 26, 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via **Durham Transit Route 224**. Please use the **south parking lot entrance** (near the tennis court) to access the VAC.

- McLean Community Centre, Gymnasium (95 Magill Drive):
 - October 22, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 23, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 - October 24, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 - October 26, 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.Free parking is available onsite. This location is accessible via **Durham Transit Route 915**. Enter through the main or east entrance to access the VAC.

A map of Voter Assistance Centre locations is attached as **Appendix A**.

5.4 Special Voting Provisions

Under the *Municipal Elections Act*, the Town is required to provide special polling opportunities to all long-term care facilities with more than 20 occupied beds and all retirement facilities with more than 50 occupied beds. Town staff will attend each site for a scheduled period to assist voters at these locations.

6. Voting Assistance

6.1 Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to Section 4.6 of the Town of Ajax Accessible Customer Service Standards, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any Voter Assistance Centre. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' other than an Election Officer will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Officer prior to providing any such assistance to an elector.

6.2 Service Animals

Pursuant to Section 4.7 of the Town of Ajax Accessible Customer Service Standards, individuals requiring service animals for the purposes of the 2026 Municipal Election are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at a Voter Assistance Centre.

6.3 Election Officers

At in-person Voter Assistance Centres, upon request, Election Officers are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Officer are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to the Voting Period.

6.4 Virtual Assistance

For electors who may not be able to attend a Voter Assistance Centre or Town Hall due to a disability and may require support (e.g. revision to their information on the Voters List, issuance of a PIN, overview of the voting process, etc.),

accommodations may be arranged to facilitate support online, by request. Those requiring online support are encouraged to contact the Elections Team to schedule an appointment. Please note, online assistance will require access to a device with a camera and microphone.

7. Election Officers

7.1 Election Officer Recruitment

Recruitment and training of Election Officers shall be conducted pursuant to CSD-WI-055 Recruitment, Selection and Training of Election Staff, and shall include notification of the availability of accommodations throughout the recruitment, screening and training process, in accordance with provincial accessible employment standards. The Town may seek to engage existing Town of Ajax volunteers and/or partner with Community Living Ajax-Pickering-Whitby to offer Election Officer employment opportunities to its participants.

7.2 Election Officer Training

All staff carrying out Election Official duties shall be trained to recognize and ensure that people with disabilities are provided with customer service in a way that accommodates individual needs. Training content shall include:

- Review of the purposes of the *AODA, 2005, Ontario Human Rights Code*, and Accessible Customer Service Regulations
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of abilities, including information on the Town's participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program
- How to interact with people using assistive devices, or requiring the assistance of a service animal or support person
- How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election assistance to voters
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services

The Town will develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to effectively serve voters with disabilities and shall make reasonable efforts to provide individual accommodations available upon request to staff during training and election period deployment.

Pursuant to provincial accessibility standards requirements, a record of all Election Officer training shall be maintained.

8. Communications

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at Town Hall and by way of the Town's election website www.ajax.ca/vote. 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.

8.1 Election Materials

The Town is required, as per the provincial Accessible Customer Service Standards, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that considers 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 Town 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 Town or is supplied by a third party, the Town will make reasonable efforts 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 the Town will be provided in a sans serif font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – Information generated by the Town 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 fonts can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information, including social media. Language uses will be clear and simple.

Video – Promotional and educational (how-to) videos created for the 2026 municipal election shall incorporate audio and captioning.

Efforts will be made to explore options for Voter Information Letter formatting, so they are easily identifiable and visually different from regular mail.

8.2 Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Town's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary service disruption, Election Officers will make 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 shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided onsite, and information shall also be posted on the Town and Election websites. 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 but are not limited to Voter Assistance Centres, Election Help Line, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the voting place.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the voting period or on Election Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time:

- on the Town's website www.ajax.ca
- on Facebook: [myAjax](https://www.facebook.com/myAjax)
- on Instagram: [@townofajax](https://www.instagram.com/townofajax)
- on X: [TownOfAjax](https://twitter.com/TownOfAjax)
- at the site of the disruption
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued

9. Candidates

Candidates should also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials, and canvassing should all be reviewed in order ensure that they are fully accessible. Several resources are available to provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible:

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation – Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Constituency, Riding Association, Central Party and Campaign Offices](#)
- [Count Us In” Removing Barriers to Political Participation – Quick Reference Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings](#)
- [AMCTO Candidate’s Guide to Accessible Elections](#)

The Town’s Accessibility Advisory Committee has created an **Accessibility Checklist for Municipal Election Candidates**, which candidates are strongly encouraged to review and implement in their campaign planning, launch, and daily operations. The checklist is attached to this document as **Appendix B**.

The 2026 Town of Ajax Candidates Guide and other relevant publications will be made available in an accessible format. The Town of Ajax 2026 Voter’s list will be made available in an accessible electronic format to all candidates, free of charge. Any candidate information sessions shall be held in accessible locations, with consideration for accommodation and communication support on request (ASL interpreter, large print, etc.).

10. Election Feedback

Pursuant to Section 4.11 of the Town of Ajax Accessible Customer Service Standards, any individual has the opportunity to submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service. This feedback can be submitted through regular mail, email, telephone, facsimile, or by using the Town’s Customer Feedback Form, which is available to all staff, at all service counters and via the Town’s website.

Telephone: 365-282-8683 (VOTE)
TextNET: 1-866-460-4489
Email: Election@ajax.ca
In person: Town Hall, 65 Harwood Avenue South
Mail: Elections - Town Hall, 65 Harwood Ave. S., Ajax, ON L1S 2H9
Website: www.ajax.ca/vote

All feedback pertaining to election services will be forwarded to the Election Deputy Returning Officer for response. In addition, staff working at Town facilities can complete the feedback form for submission on behalf of any person requiring assistance.

11. Reporting

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, within 90 days after voting day, the Town Clerk shall publish a report on the implementation of the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, including details on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

12. Additional Resources

Further election accessibility information can be found by visiting the Town's election website www.ajax.ca/vote, or by contacting any one of the following individuals:

Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist/Election Support

Phone: 365-885-2161

Email: Sarah.Moore@ajax.ca

Thomas Street, Deputy Clerk/Deputy Returning Officer

Phone: 365-885-6983

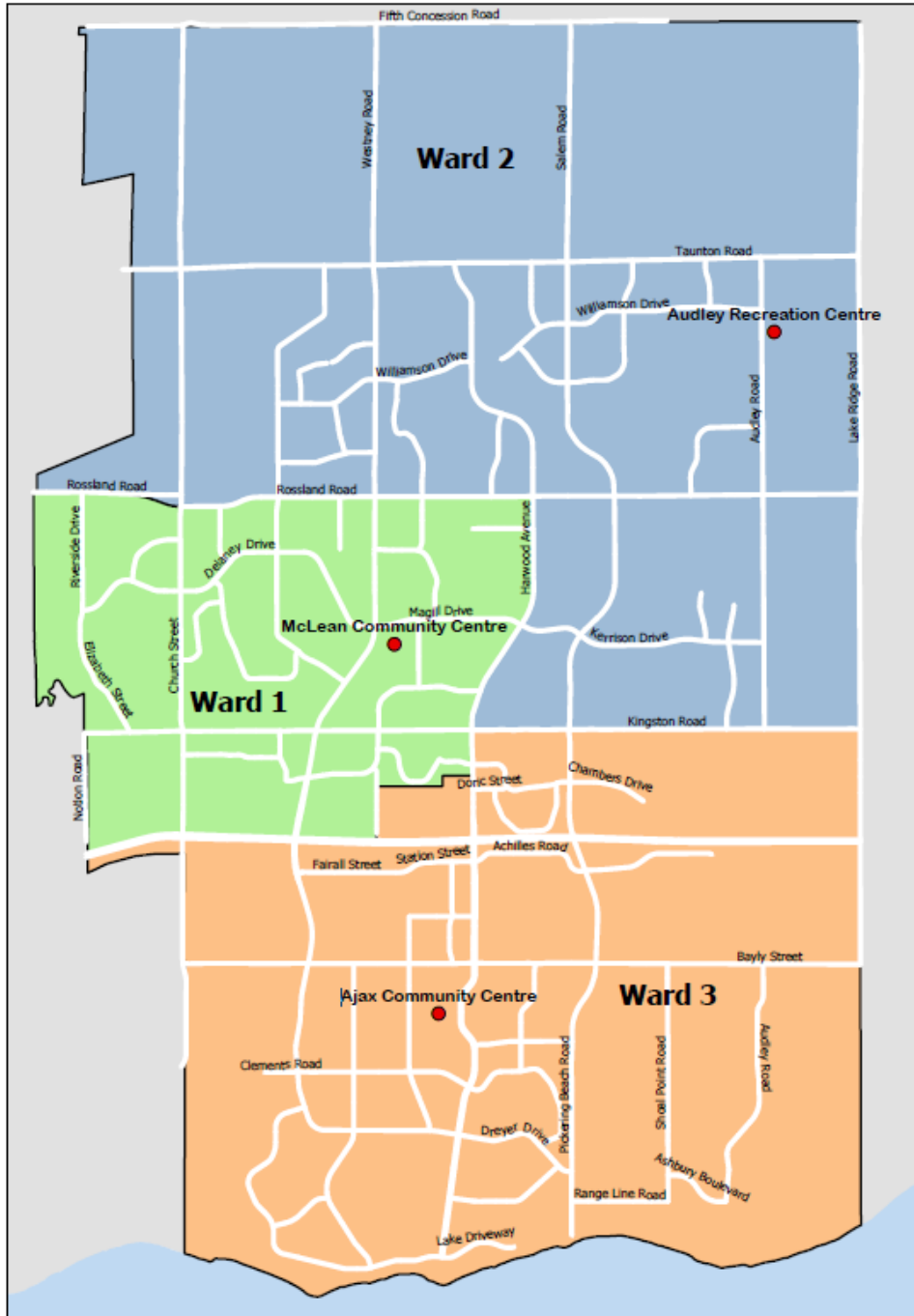
Email: Thomas.Street@ajax.ca

Jaclyn Grossi, Municipal Clerk/Returning Officer

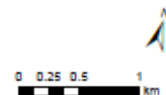
Phone: 365-885-6329

Email: Jaclyn.Grossi@ajax.ca

Appendix A – Voter Assistance Centres Map



Town of Ajax
2026 Voter Assistance Centres



2026 Municipal Election

Candidate Accessibility Checklist

1. Know the Local Election Context (Town of Ajax)

- Coordinate with the **Town of Ajax Elections Office (Legislative Services)** to ensure you are sharing clear information on:
 - Where, when, and how to vote
 - Voter Assistance Centres
 - Advance voting options
 - Accessible voting support
 - Town of Ajax Municipal Election Accessibility Plan
- Encourage voters with disabilities to contact the **Town of Ajax Elections Team** for voting assistance or questions
- Review the **2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan**

2. Campaign Office (if applicable)

- Use an already accessible space (e.g. home or office with step-free entry and automated door operator)
- If not fully accessible, **disclose limitations honestly** and offer alternatives (phone/virtual meetings)
- Choose locations near accessible transit; provide clear external signage; ensure accessible parking with marked stalls, curb cuts, firm and slip resistant surface; plan for snow/ice removal so it does not impact barrier-free parking access.
- Provide step-free entry or a ramp with handrails and safe slope; install lever/pull handles that pass the ‘fist test’ (ability to open with a closed fist); ensure adequate door width and good lighting.
- Maintain interior circulation: non-slip, level flooring; 1100mm – 1800mm clear paths; remove clutter/obstructions; provide seating; minimize glare.
- Ensure at least one accessible washroom: tactile signage, L-shaped/rear grab bars, lever taps; shield hot-water pipes beneath sinks.
- Allow service animals wherever the public is permitted; confirm lease/agreements do not restrict them.
- Offer telephone access via TTY and clear after-hours recorded messages.
- Train staff/volunteers on AODA Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR). The Government of Ontario provides a free online accessibility training resource through the [Access Forward](#) modules.

Minimum Requirements

- Step-free access or virtual meeting option
- Clear pathways (no cords, clutter, or narrow passages)
- Seating options for waiting or rest
- Service animals and support persons always welcome

3. Events & Meet-and-Greets

Venue Choice

- Select accessible venues: verify transportation options, signage, accessible parking, level paths of travel, entrances/corridors, and accessible washrooms.
- Choose venues accessible via **Durham Region Transit (DRT)** routes
- Avoid restaurants or private venues with stair-only access

Event Accessibility

- Use microphones (rent or borrow from venue, if possible)
- Pace speech; describe visuals verbally; ensure one speaker at a time
- Ask speakers to face the audience and speak clearly
- Provide reserved seating near the front/aisles for individuals using mobility devices
- Share event details in advance (location, duration, format)
- Make handouts available in alternative formats
- Advertise accessibility in event promotions and provide clear instructions/deadlines for requesting accommodations.

Interpreting & Captioning

- For small events: provide written summaries or live notes/transcription
- For virtual events: auto-captions may already be available in platform (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, Teams)
- Provide communication supports as needed: consider booking ASL interpreters 2–3 weeks ahead; plan for two interpreters for events over ~2 hours; consider real-time captioning (CART) for live/virtual events, assistive listening systems, deaf-blind intervenors, and attendant services; budget accordingly.

4. Campaign Signs

- Understand local by-laws for **sign placement** (especially sidewalks, boulevards, and curb ramps) and review the **Town of Ajax Election Sign By-law**.
- Use high-contrast colours (e.g., dark text on light background or light text on dark background)
- Use large, simple (sans serif) fonts; avoid thin or decorative lettering
- Place signs so they **do not block sidewalks, curb cuts, or trails**

5. Website & Social Media

Website

- Use accessible platforms (i.e. Wix, WordPress, Squarespace templates)
- Simple layout, clear headings, plain language, sans serif font
- Add alt text to all images
- Avoid text embedded in images
- Include an **Accessibility Statement** (see below)

Social Media

- Add alt text to images (available on Instagram, Facebook, X)
- Caption all videos (auto-captions are acceptable)
- Avoid flashing graphics or fast animations

6. Printed & Digital Materials

- Use minimum 12–14 pt font that is sans serif (e.g. Arial, Verdana, Calibri)
- Use high contrast (black text on white or light background)
- Provide content in short paragraphs and bullet points
- Make materials available digitally (accessible PDF or webpage)
- Add a line: ‘Alternate formats available upon request.’ And include contact details (see below)

7. Canvassing in Ajax Neighbourhoods

Door-to-Door

- Do not block ramps, driveways, or accessible entrances
- Respect “no knocking” or accessibility signage

- Be ready to leave accessible materials rather than insist on conversation
- Speak clearly and patiently; avoid assumptions

Phone / Text

- Use clear, plain language scripts
- Allow extra response time
- Offer to follow up by email or text

8. Volunteers & Training

- Brief volunteers on disability awareness
- Emphasize:
 - Ask before helping
 - Respect invisible disabilities
 - Use person-first or identity-first language as preferred
- Ensure volunteers know how to escalate accommodation requests

9. Accessibility Requests & Feedback

- Provide at least **two contact methods** (email + phone/text)
- Respond promptly, even if the answer is “we’re working on it”
- Keep a simple log of requests and solutions
- Adjust future events based on feedback

10. Sample Wording

Campaign Accessibility Statement:

Our campaign is committed to accessibility and inclusion. We strive to remove barriers wherever possible and welcome requests for accommodation so that everyone in Ajax can participate fully in the democratic process.

Accommodation request template (include on invites and website):

“To request an accessibility accommodation (e.g., ASL, captioning, large print, Braille, assistive listening), please contact: _____ by _____ (date). We will confirm arrangements and follow up within X business days.”