

2026 Election Voting Methods

March 17, 2025

Finance and Corporate Services Committee

Municipal Elections Act Requirements

Electors and candidates with disabilities

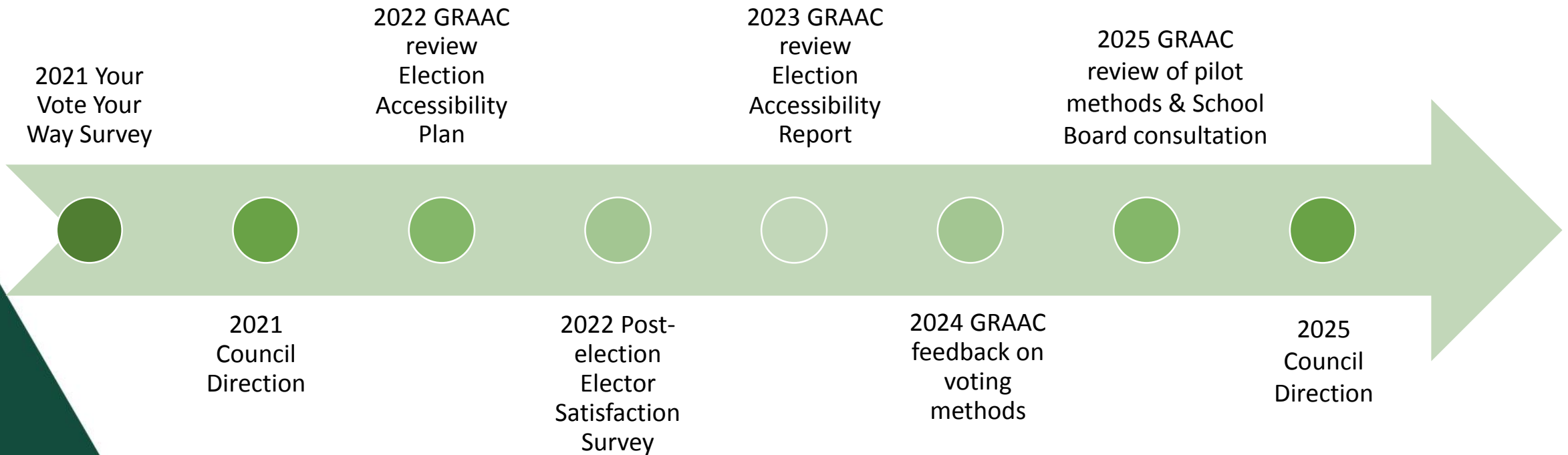
- **12.1** (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

By-laws re voting and vote-counting equipment, alternative voting methods

- **42** (1) The council of a local municipality may pass by-laws,
 - (a) authorizing the use of voting and vote-counting equipment such as voting machines, voting recorders or optical scanning vote tabulators;
 - (b) authorizing electors to use an alternative voting method.

By-law 2005-135 provides for the use of tabulators in Kitchener municipal elections.

Consultation on Voting Methods



Voting Methods Investigation

- Corporate Risk Assessment
- Reliability of the optical scan vote tabulators for the past 5 municipal elections
- High satisfaction rate (90%) from the 2022 voter exit survey
- Other programs that could leverage paper ballots and tabulators

Online/Internet Voting Considerations

- Accessible to electors that cannot attend an in-person voting location
- Technical and security infrastructure reliance outside of City control by private vendors
- Threat actors posing security risks with tampering or hacking of system
- No legal framework and limited standards
- Limited accountability for service delivery impacts

Vote By Mail Considerations

- Accessible to electors that cannot attend an in-person voting location
- Third-party dependency (Canada Post) potentially resulting in inability to deliver/return ballots, prolonged return times, resulting in delivery of ballots beyond deadline.
- High and increasing postage costs related to the mailing and returning of ballots.
- Voter confusion, possible, affecting the ability to ensure that all votes are cast as intended

Paper Ballots / Tabulators Considerations

- Accessible Ballot Marking devices present at locations to allow electors to independently mark a ballot
- Curbside voting at a Voting Locations permitted for accessibility
- Configured and tested through publicly available Logic and Accuracy Testing procedures (Vote Count Procedures)
- Not connected to the internet and physical results tapes produced verified against tabulator memory cards

Home Vote Program (upon request) (Proposed)

- Implemented in 2022 in Cambridge, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, Guelph, and for the 2022 and 2018 election by Oakville
- Support eligible voters who are unable to come to an in-person voting location due to illness, injury or disability
- Electors can mark their ballot from their residence, which is brought to them by election officials (registration and appointment is required) and then tabulated through a vote count tabulator

Drive Thru Voting (Proposed)

- Implemented in 2022 in Cambridge and Windsor
- Eligible voters attend a designated drive thru voting location and remain in vehicles until prompted to drive up to the registration desk (ID verification) then parks at a designated spot and all voters receive a ballot inside a secrecy sleeve and vote within the privacy of the vehicle
- Voters then place their ballot in the ballot box presented to them at their window and then tabulated through a vote count tabulator