

Alternative Voting Methods for the 2026 Municipal Election

Agenda

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2. Legislative Considerations
3. Explanation of Different Voting Methods
4. Options for Consideration
5. Next Steps
6. Questions & Comments

Purpose of a Public Meeting



Purpose of a Public Meeting

- Public consultation is being conducted through a Public Meeting for Council's consideration of Alternative Methods of Voting for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.
 - Staff and Council will not make a recommendation or decision at a Public Meeting.
 - This presentation and report will provide public consultation results and address any outstanding questions which required further research.
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Legislative Considerations

- Under section 5 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, herein referred to as the Act, the next Municipal and School Board election will take place on Monday October 26, 2026.
 - Section 42(1)(b) of the Act, authorizes the council of a local municipality to pass By-laws permitting electors to use an alternative method of voting that does not require the elector to be at a voting location.
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Legislative Considerations

- Section 42(1)(b) of the Act is limited by Section 42(2)(a) which stipulates that the By-law may only apply to the next regular election if it is passed on or before May 1 in the year of the election. It is best practice for a municipality to pass such a By-law well in advance of this legislative deadline.
 - An earlier decision can help ensure that the Town of Caledon can compete in what becomes a competitive procurement process in terms of both value for money and vendor availability as the marketplace for alternative voting method products or services rapidly scales up approximately a year in advance of the May 1, 2026 legislative deadline.
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Principal of the Municipal Elections Act (MEA)

The principals of the MEA are generally regarded as follows:

- the secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount;
 - the election shall be fair and non-bias;
 - the election shall be accessible to the voters;
 - the integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election;
 - there is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
 - electors and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently; and
 - the proper majority vote governs by ensuring that valid votes are counted, and invalid votes are rejected so far as reasonably possible.
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Explanation of Different Voting Methods



In-Person Paper Ballot:

The Town of Caledon has utilized in-person paper ballot voting to conduct municipal elections. The process is as follows:

- An elector receives voter notification card (VNC) in the mail
 - They proceed to a voting location
 - Their ID is confirmed, and a ballot is issued
 - The elector marks their ballot behind the privacy screen
 - The ballot is deposited in the tabulator where the elector's choice is recorded.
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In-Person Paper Ballot (Proxy Voting)

- An elector may appoint another eligible elector to be their proxy and cast their ballot on their behalf subject to some conditions outlined in the MEA.
 - The elector fills out a prescribed form and the person that is to become the proxy voter comes to Town Hall to have the form commissioned.
 - On a voting day, the proxy brings the form to the voting location and is issued two ballots. One for themselves and one for the elector they are being a proxy for.
 - The result is someone that could not come to the voting location is able to vote.
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Home Voting Service as an Expansion to In-Person Paper Ballots:

- This service would be limited in nature as it is a resources intensive extension of the In-person paper ballot method.
 - The service would be available during a set period before voting day.
 - Eligibility would be based on an elector being unable to leave their home owing to illness, injury, or disability.
 - No reason would have to be given.
 - The elector would have to be willing to sign a general acknowledgement that they meet the eligibility for the service. They would be informed of this requirement in advance of the service being scheduled.
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Home Voting Service as an Expansion to In-Person Paper Ballots:

- The elector would reach out to the clerk to request the service where their eligibility would be confirmed prior to a time being scheduled.
 - Ideally, a clerk and by-law enforcement team member would together visit the elector at the scheduled time. Together they would enter the electors' home and facilitate the voting process.
 - This would include confirming the electors ID, striking them off the voters' list, and issuing them a ballot.
 - Marked ballots would be sealed by the elector and returned to Town Hall by the two Deputy Returning Officers to be placed in a secured ballot bag until counted on voting day.
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Internet Voting

- The exact process for voting by internet can vary based on the third-party service contracted. Therefore, the following should be view as a general description of the process.
 - Voter Notification Cards (VNC's) are mailed to all eligible electors along with detailed instructions on how to vote and who to call if you have questions.
 - The elector would go to the website printed on the VNC and enter the PIN and date of birth that would also be printed in the VNC.
 - The elector would read and agree to the Elector Declaration Statement.
 - The elector would be presented their ballot, make their choice and once cast, they would be struck off the voters' list.
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Telephone Voting

- Eligible electors receive their VNC in the mail. It would include detailed instructions on how to vote by telephone.
 - The elector would then call the phone number included in the VNC and then enter the individual ID number and PIN that would be included in the VNC.
 - The elector would then listen to and agree to the Elector declaration statement.
 - The elector would then listen to an audio version of the ballot, once they have selected their choice, confirm their decision and ballot would be cast.
 - The elector would then be struck off the voters' list.
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Vote-by-Mail

- The elector would submit a request to the clerk's office before a set date to be able to receive their vote-by-mail package. A return postage deadline would be clearly indicated.
 - The elector would read and sign the voter declaration.
 - The elector would receive their ballot, mark it and seal it in the secrecy envelope then enclose that inside the return envelope (postage would be pre-paid) along with the signed voter declaration.
 - Completed packages would be received by the clerk's staff by mail or could be dropped off at designated Town facilities equipped to receive them where the clerk's team would collect them.
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Options for Consideration



Options for Consideration

Option 1 -
Expanded
Traditional

Option 2 - In-
person, Online
and/or Telephone
Advance Vote

Option 3 - In-
person and Vote-
by-Mail



Accessibility Advisory Committee Recommendation

- The AAC has recommended to Council the adoption of option two (In-person, Online and/or Telephone Advance Vote) as the alternative voting method for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.
 - The feedback received from the committee will be included in the report to the General Committee on May 6, 2025.
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Next Steps

- The consultation gathered at this public meeting will be minuted and included on the April 22, 2025, Council agenda and considered alongside feedback received from the survey in the report to the General Committee on May 6, 2025.
 - The received public consultation is used to inform Council's decision on the alternative voting methods for the 2026 Municipal Election.
 - Council's decision on this matter is scheduled to formally occur at its May 20, 2025, meeting.
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Questions & Comments