

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: January 12, 2026</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of Governance Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Diana Rusnov, Director, Legislative Services and City Clerk</p>	<p>Meeting date: March 31, 2026</p>

Subject

2026 Mississauga Regular Election – Vote From Home Pilot Program and Alternative Voting Methods and Vote Counting Equipment By-law

Recommendation

1. That a Vote From Home Pilot Program be implemented by the City Clerk to provide for an additional alternative accessible voting method for the 2026 City of Mississauga regular election and any subsequent by-elections.
2. That to implement a Vote From Home Pilot Program:
 - a. \$48,000 be made available to cover the cost of the pilot program to be funded through the Election Reserve, RF 30135.
 - b. That in accordance with section 42 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, a by-law be enacted on or before May 1, 2026, authorizing the City Clerk to implement a Vote From Home Pilot Program as an alternative voting method for the 2026 City of Mississauga regular election and any subsequent by-elections.
3. That in accordance with section 42 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, a by-law be enacted on or before May 1, 2026, authorizing the City Clerk to use the following equipment during the 2026 City of Mississauga regular election and any subsequent by-elections:
 - a. The ExpressVote Universal Voting System to be supplied by Elections Systems and Software and to be used on any Advance Vote days; and
 - b. Optical Scanning Vote Tabulators to be supplied by Election Systems and Software and to be used on all voting days.

Executive Summary

- Section 42 (1) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, (the Act)

gives municipal councils the authority to authorize the use of voting and vote counting equipment during a regular election.

- It is recommended that a by-law be enacted in accordance with section 42 of the Act to authorize the use of DS200 vote tabulators and the Universal ExpressVote Voting System (EVS) for the 2026 City of Mississauga regular election.
- It is also recommended that Governance provide direction on the implementation of the Vote From Home Pilot Program.

Background

At the December 3, 2025, meeting, Governance Committee requested that staff report back on the implementation of a Vote From Home program to provide accessibility and flexibility to voters who cannot go to a voting location and cannot appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. This report discusses how such a program could run and the associated costs.

Since 2000, the City of Mississauga has worked with Elections Systems and Software (ES&S) to use vote counting equipment to efficiently tabulate and transmit election results. Initially, M100 Optical Scan Units were used. These machines would tabulate results and transmit via a fax line. To improve efficiency and accommodate for updated software, the City upgraded to using Precinct Scanner and Tabulator – DS200s (DS200 Vote Tabulators) for the 2022 regular election and 2024 municipal by-election.

The ExpressVote Universal Voting System (EVS) was used for the first time on Advance Vote Days during the 2022 regular election. The EVS units provide accessibility by allowing voters to electronically and independently mark their ballot using a variety of tools, including a touch screen.

Comments

Vote From Home Pilot Program

Program Overview

- Allows individuals to vote from home if they:
 - Are physically unable to get to a voting location due to illness or injury; and
 - Cannot appoint someone to act as their Voting Proxy.
- Once an individual is deemed eligible, they will be able to book an appointment to vote.
- Staff will go to the voter's home to administer the vote.

Administration

- Corporate Security Officers will be appointed as Election Officials to administer the vote for the Vote From Home Pilot Program. To meet with corporate standards, two Security Officers (Election Officials) will work in teams to go to voter's homes. This helps to mitigate concerns as Security Officers are trained to manage security risks.
- Staff will call voters 10 minutes prior to arrival.
- An Elections staff member will remain in the Elections Office to monitor scheduling, answer questions and take check-in calls from the Election Officials informing the Elections Office of when they arrive at a voter's home and when they leave.

Booking an Appointment

- Appointments will be booked through the FrontDesk application.
- The voter will be required to complete a questionnaire to vet their eligibility and to determine if there are security concerns.
- Once deemed eligible, the voter will be given appointment options. Tentatively proposed appointment dates are September 28 and 29 and October 1, 2, 5 and 6 between 9:00 am – noon and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Up to 40 appointments will be made available.
- The Election Officer will plan daily routes for the Security Officers to maximize efficiency.
- If concerns related to security arise out of the questionnaire, staff will follow up with the voter to gather further details.
- The voter will receive a confirmation of their appointment window through the FrontDesk application.

Voting Procedure

- When they arrive at the voter's home, Election Officials will take the applicable ballot, ballot transfer container and other supplies to the voter.
- To further mitigate security risks, the voter will be encouraged to vote from the front door, but bedside voting will be made available for individuals when necessary.
- Election Officials will check the voter's identification, confirm the voter's eligibility and provide the ballot in a secrecy folder.
- The Election Officials will ensure that the voter is able to mark the ballot privately.
- Once the individual votes, the ballot will be placed in the locked ballot transfer container.
- Once the voting process is complete, Election Officials will call the Elections Office to have the voter struck off the voters' list.
- At the end of the day, the ballot transfer container will be returned to the Elections Office to be secured.
- The Clerk will determine a date on which to insert the Vote From Home ballots into a tabulator to be counted; the tabulator will be stored until the close of voting on Election Day when the results will be run.

Promotion

The City of Mississauga's Strategic Communications division recommends the following promotion with the goal of reaching individuals who will most benefit from the Vote From Home Pilot Program:

- Incorporate promotion of the Vote From Home Pilot Program into a “There are many ways to vote” initiative. This promotion includes information about all voting methods available to voters and is already scheduled and budgeted for.
- Website information about the program, who qualifies and how to request an appointment.
- News release messaging will include “we have many ways to vote, including accessible options”.
- 311 Knowledge Base to include new information about the Vote from Home Pilot Program.
- Outreach to Mississauga Befriending and Companion Befriending & Companion Services such as:
 - Indus Community Services (55+): is an organization that offers weekly one-hour in-home visits or 30-minute phone check-ins to reduce loneliness.
 - Canadian Red Cross (18+): is an organization that provides the “Friendly Calls” program, connecting individuals with trained staff for emotional support and social connection.
 - Links2Care: is an organization that offers friendly visits and calling for seniors and adults with disabilities.
 - Acclaim Health: is an organization that provides friendly visiting and specialized memory visiting.
 - Private Services: this includes agencies such as Everest Home Health Care, iCare Home Health, and Approved Healthcare offer private, tailored companionship for seniors.

There is no additional cost related to the recommended promotional activities.

Estimated Vote From Home Pilot Program Cost

The estimated cost of the Vote From Home Pilot Program is \$48,000. A breakdown is included in the Financial Impact section of this report. It is recommended that if the program is implemented, \$48,000 be made available in the Elections operating budget and that the program be funded through the Election Reserve, 30135.

DS200 Vote Tabulators and EVS

DS200 Vote Tabulators

DS200 vote tabulators provide rapid ballot tabulation and transmission of results. Additionally, DS200s standardize the interpretation of ballot markings rather than leaving it up to the personal interpretation of a ballot issuing officer when ballots are hand counted. To ensure accuracy, they are tested by ES&S and then independently tested by City of Mississauga Information Technology staff.

It is recommended that DS200s be used on all voting days during the 2026 regular election and any subsequent by-election.

ExpressVote Universal Voting System

ExpressVote units are accessible ballot marking devices. Benefits of the system are:

- Individuals with accessibility needs have access to a variety of tools including a touch screen. The EVS allows all voters to electronically and independently mark their ballot.
- The EVS streamlines the Vote Anywhere process for voters and election workers by printing ballots on demand as voters come to vote. Ballots are printed based on the individual's Ward and school support. The alternative is election workers would have to manage 55 different pre-printed ballot types. Vote Anywhere allows voters to vote at any voting location during advance voting days.

The process for EVS:

- When the election worker determines that a voter is eligible to vote the worker will use the EVS software to print a blank ballot card with a code indicating the ballot type applicable to the voter.
- The voter will insert the blank ballot card into the EVS unit.
- The EVS unit will display the appropriate ballot type.
- The voter will use the touch screen or other accessible devices to mark their ballot.
- The EVS unit will print the voter's choices on the ballot card.
- The ballot card will be inserted into the DS200 vote tabulator to be counted.

EVS is recommended for all voters on any advance voting days but should an individual request a pre-printed traditional ballot, one will be provided.

Estimated Equipment Cost

It is estimated that using DS200 vote tabulators and the EVS will cost \$776,240. This amount has been identified in the Elections budget, which is funded through the Election Reserve, 30135. A detailed cost breakdown can be found in the Financial Impact section of this report.

A by-law to authorize the use of the DS200 vote tabulators, EVS and Vote From Home Pilot Program

Under section 42 of the Act, Council is required to enact a by-law authorizing vote counting equipment and alternative voting methods intended for use during a regular election. It is recommended that the draft by-law, attached as Appendix 1, be enacted by Council authorizing the Clerk to:

- Use DS200 vote tabulators.
- Use the EVS; and
- Implement the Vote From Home Pilot Program.

Financial Impact

The Vote From Home Pilot Program has not been approved in the 2026 budget and is currently unfunded. The proposed budget for the program is as follows:

Item	Cost
1 Administrative Staff (4 months)	\$25,000
Election Officials (Corporate Security Officers will be designated as Election Officials to administer votes. 2 are required per visit to fulfill procedural requirements. Security Officers will work in 2 teams of 2.)	\$22,000
Administrative supplies	\$1,000
Total	\$48,000

Should the Vote From Home Pilot Program be approved, it is recommended that \$48,000 be made available to cover the costs as specified above. This will be funded through the Election Reserve, RF30135.

The DS200 vote tabulators and EVS are already funded through the Elections Reserve, RF30135. There is no additional financial impact from this initiative, but Council must enact a by-law authorizing their use. The breakdown of the cost is as follows:

Item	Cost
Equipment (DS200 vote tabulators, EVS equipment, USBs, EVS ballot paper etc.)	\$571,160
Software and Licence	\$11,205
Professional Services	\$143,875
SIM Cards	\$20,000
AWS Support and Licence	\$30,000
Total	\$776,240

Conclusion

The City of Mississauga has used M100s or DS200 vote tabulators to efficiently tabulate and transmit results since 2000. Use of vote tabulators is an industry standard across North America and staff recommend their continued use. In addition, to provide accessible voting options for voters and to streamline processes, staff recommend the use of the EVS which was previously implemented during the 2022 regular election. Staff are also seeking direction on the implementation of a Vote From Home Pilot Program. The program would allow individuals who are unable to leave their homes and cannot appoint someone to vote on their behalf, to vote from their home.

DS200 vote tabulators, the EVS and implementation of a Vote From Home Pilot Program require Council to enact a by-law authorizing their use.

Attachments

Appendix 1: A by-law to authorize the use of voting and vote counting equipment and an alternative voting method to facilitate the Regular Election and any by-election held in the 2026 to 2030 term in the City of Mississauga (Draft)



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