



# Have Your Say: Shaping Disability Inclusion in Toronto's 2026 Election - What We Heard from Participants



On August 20, 2026, the GTA Disability Coalition (GTADC) and the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) held a non-partisan City election event that included a review of accessible voting options, how to find local candidates, Social Planning Toronto's [City for All](#) platform, and issues that matter most to cross-disability communities during this election cycle.

We invited participants into breakout rooms where they discussed issues and what calls to action they would like to ask of their local candidates. This resource highlights our collective messaging that can be used when speaking to City of Toronto election candidates.

## Housing

### What are the issues?

It is well known that Toronto is in the midst of a housing crisis. This crisis disproportionately impacts disability communities as many live in deep poverty, and some require accessible housing.

Accessibility is often left out of affordable housing conversations and has been absent from shelter planning discussions too. There is currently a critical lack of accessible units with waitlists that are extremely long, while many shelters remain inaccessible. The accessible housing gap is more extreme for Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQI+, and other marginalized disabled people who require housing that prioritizes their safety.

### Calls to Action

1. The City must honour its commitment to build deeply affordable, accessible, and supportive housing stock.

2. Expanding housing and tenant support programs like MURA, Eviction Prevention in the City (EPIC) and the Rent Bank to address the rising need.
3. Focused housing for communities disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis, including disabled Indigenous residents - especially youth and Elders, and disabled 2SLGBTQ+ people
4. The City must follow through on its commitment to adequately fund accessibility retrofits to its existing stock.
5. Develop a municipal standard for accessible or universal design housing stock that includes targets and incentives for landlords.
6. Pressure the federal government to allocate a significant portion of new federal housing funding to building accessible, deeply affordable housing across GTA.
7. Support the renewal of the Housing Rights Advocacy Committee in the next term of Toronto Council.

## Poverty Reduction

### What are the issues?

It is well documented that disabled people face more extreme rates of poverty compared to their non-disabled counterparts, which deepens for people who experience additional marginalization (e.g. disabled 2 Spirit youth). This is due to social assistance rates that are far below the poverty line, income support from other layers of government not meeting actual need and difficult to qualify for (e.g. Canada Disability Benefit) and a lack of accessible and welcoming employment opportunities that provide at least a living wage.

### Calls to Action

1. Make urgent progress on employment equity for disabled residents starting with accessible hiring policies, practices and targets.
2. Increase pressure on other levels of government to:
  - Adequately fund disability income/benefit programs such as ODSP and the Canada Disability Benefit.
  - Demand an end to clawbacks on earned income so ODSP recipients have a chance to achieve income security and escape perpetual poverty.

## **Transit**

### **What are the issues?**

Many disabled people living in Toronto must rely on the TTC to get around the city, to access resources and community, or get to work. However, issues such as accessibility, affordability, and reliability make the system hard or unsafe to use.

Changes to Wheel-Trans and Family of Services have forced many disabled people to use the conventional transit system, even when it may not be an accessible option for them. Some routes can be very unreliable, especially in the winter when there can be over hour-long delays. Fares can be prohibitive to using public transit regularly, especially for those that are on social assistance.

### **Calls to Action**

1. The TTC must ensure that all stations, wayfinding, and vehicles are fully accessible to meet their AODA obligations.
2. Freeze existing TTC fares and sustain Fare Capping program.
3. Introduce a graduated fare system.
4. Reduce TTC wait times in winter months.
5. Protect the right to Wheel-Trans Door-to-Door service.
6. Pressure other levels of government to invest their fair share of TTC Funding.

## **Disability Inclusive Civic Engagement**

### **What are the issues?**

While access has improved when it comes to elections at all levels of government, there is still progress to be made to ensure that disabled voters are included and are able to participate in their civic right to vote. Beyond elections, disabled people struggle to participate in civic engagement to shape policy and legislation that impacts them.

### **Calls to Action**

1. All aspects of Toronto's elections must be fully accessible, including polling stations, notices of candidate townhalls or debates, election information communications, and election staff fully trained to respond to a range of access needs.
2. Wheel-Trans or accessible shuttle bussing to get people to their polling station.
3. Free transit on election day to help people get to polling stations who can't afford to travel, including on Wheel Trans.

4. City must convene disabled residents to contribute disability leadership to their committees, strategies, services e.g. income support, housing, transit.
5. Candidates to commit to educating themselves and their team about concerns disability communities have, and work in partnership with disabled residents from a range of communities.

## What can you do?

There are different ways that you can take action to have your voice heard this election!

1. Learn more about the issues. Social Planning Toronto has a list of [election resources](#) including webinars and events. You can also check out the full [City For All](#) platform.
2. Find who to contact by [finding your ward](#) and the [list of local candidates](#).
3. Reach out to your local candidates by phone, email or social media and share these calls to action (or come up with your own!) with them.
4. Make sure you are [registered to vote](#). You can vote by [mail-in ballot](#), in advanced polls or on [election day](#).
5. Stay in touch with GTADC's election work by signing up for [Call to Action News](#)!