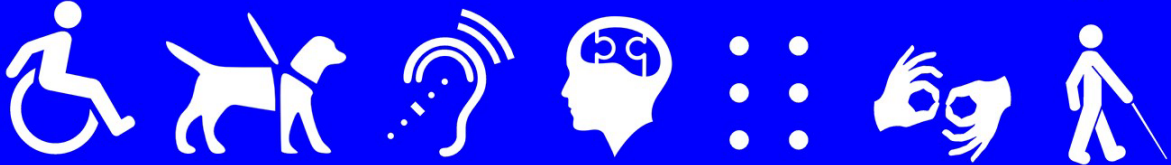


Accessible Whitby



Town of Whitby Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026

The Town of Whitby is committed to:

1. Ensuring that decisions, actions and planning for the community apply the principles of dignity, equal opportunity, independence and integration;
2. Identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to our programs, services and facilities; and,
3. Providing an inclusive community in which employees, residents and visitors have equitable access for all ages, abilities and circumstances.

The Town strives to deliver an inclusive and welcoming environment for all community members and visitors.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Why accessibility is good for Canada.....	4
Highlights from Accessibility Plan 2019-2022	5
Overall vision:	6
General Requirements:	6
Customer Service Standard:.....	6
Information and Communications Standard:.....	7
Employment.....	7
Design of Public Spaces	8
Transportation – taxicabs.....	8
Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of the Accessible Elements...	9
Accessibility Advisory Committee	10
Accessibility Staff Working Group	11
Consultation Activities.....	12
Review and Monitoring Process	12
Communication of the Accessibility Plan	13
Provincial Legislation	13
Ontarians with Disabilities, 2001 (ODA)	13
The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)	14
Accessibility Standards	14

Executive Summary

The Town of Whitby Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 outlines the initiatives the Town intends to achieve to ensure compliance with the Province's accessibility legislation. As a designated public sector organization, the Town of Whitby is required to have and make public a multi-year accessibility plan.

This Accessibility Plan holds more significance than previous plans, as included in this plan is the 20th Anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the goal set by the Province of being fully accessible by 2025.

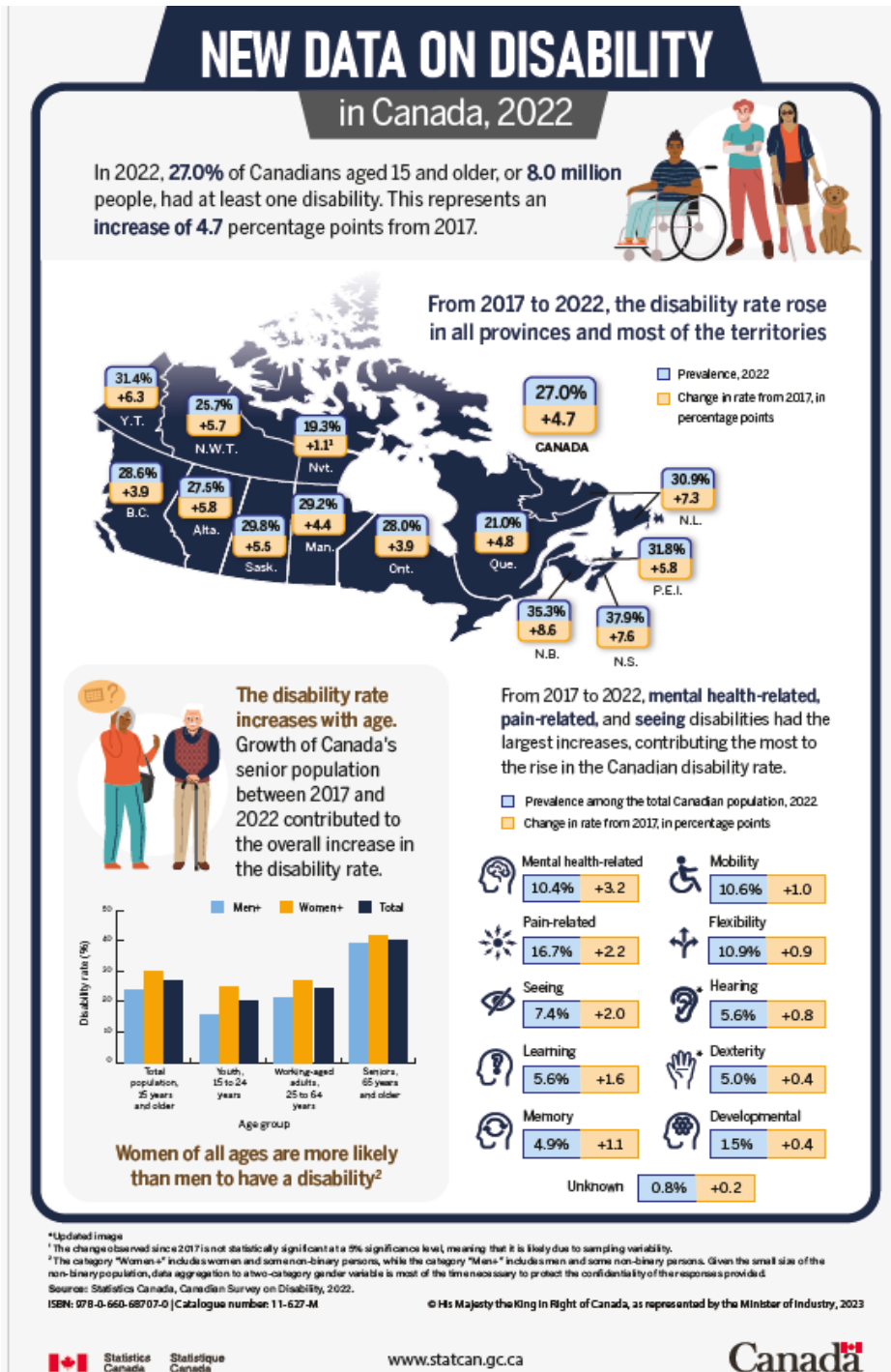
The multi-year accessibility plan creates a road map for the organization to demonstrate to its customers how it intends to increase accessibility. The plan puts into action an organization's commitment to accessibility. The intent of the Provincial requirement is that obligated organizations develop a multi-year accessibility plan, outlining their strategies to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. In the development of the Town of Whitby's accessibility plan, each Accessibility Standard Regulation enacted by the Province must be included and addressed. Once developed, organizations must maintain their Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is the law that sets out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. Accessibility Standards Regulations are laws that government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations must follow to become more accessible. The Province set a goal with this law to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. As the timeline grows shorter to reach this goal, the Province has provided the following update, on their website:

"We have made progress in making Ontario accessible and continue to work towards removing barriers. However, making Ontario accessible by 2025 is a complex and ongoing process that can't be completed by the province on its own. By working together, businesses, organizations, communities and all levels of government can meet the goal of making Ontario more accessible and inclusive."

Why accessibility is good for Canada

[Updated Accessibility statistics from Statistics Canada](#)



Highlights from Accessibility Plan 2019-2022

- **Whitby Public Library** provided staff development opportunities to ensure that staff have the tools to deliver library service in a way that respects the dignity and independence of each individual customer.
- **Corporate Communications** collaborated with Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide and promote a community accessibility survey in 2022.
- **Human Resources Division** reviewed of all corporate employment policies and procedures on an as needed basis to ensure that the Town remains current with legislative standards and presents no barriers to persons with disabilities.
- **The Office of the Town Clerk** developed and implemented a barrier-free Municipal Election in 2022, including consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **Planning and Development and Community Services** continued to provide all site plans and projects to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for comment at design phase and prior to tendering and building.
- **Human Resources Division** implemented the final phase of the attendance support program, including management training and staff awareness, resulting in improved attendance at work.
- **Human Resources Division** hired a consultant to conduct a mental health review of the Town.
- **Community Services Department** completed a renovation of the Civic Recreation Complex's Change Rooms, that now include three (3) new universal washrooms/changerooms, four (4) fully accessible change stalls and four (4) barrier free shower facilities, new accessible signage and new accessible door operators.
- **Community Services Department** completed detailed design on a new community centre (Whitby Sports Complex). This facility has been designed to exceed Ontario Building Code accessibility requirements.

Action Plan 2023-2026

Overall vision:

The Town of Whitby is committed to delivering an accessible environment for all community members, staff, and visitors; providing people of all ages and abilities with opportunities to participate in all areas of everyday life.

General Requirements:

- Departments will consult with Accessibility Advisory Committee for Town projects, studies, services, and programs to provide comments and advice for inclusion for all residents, staff, and visitors.
- Chief Administrative Officer to file Provincial Compliance Report on a bi-annual cycle.

Customer Service Standard:

The Town provides accessible, equitable and exceptional customer service that makes a difference in the community, through our CARE (collaborative, accountable, respectful, engaged) culture where everyone is valued.

Actions:

- Continue promotion and distribution of Town grant programs. The Accessibility Improvement Grant program will provide matching dollars to Whitby non-profit groups, not-for-profit organizations, and small businesses to assist with the costs of making accessibility improvements to applicant's facilities, programs, and services, which increase access for persons with disabilities. Accessibility Improvement Grant applications are reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Foster collaboration between departments and teams to ensure accessibility is considered from the planning stage through project completion. Include updates on accessibility initiatives as a standard agenda item in Communications meetings and reports.
- Continue to implement the Customer Service Strategy, including identification of opportunities that support the creation of Service Whitby and implementation of Customer Relationship Management software. The future state of customer service in the Town will include multi-channel options for customer communication, including

telephone, email, live chat, and expanded self-service options.

- Profile businesses in Whitby that have excelled in providing accessible services and products, encouraging others to follow suit.
- Explore and incorporate further partnerships, programs and collections that contribute to the independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for all at the Whitby Public Library.
- Enhance accessibility and inclusivity of all Town programs by providing appropriate staff training, research, and community input.

Information and Communications Standard:

The Town is dedicated to making information easy to access and understand. Content is available in different formats online and in person to meet the needs of our diverse community.

Actions:

- Continue to improve access to the Town's information and communications by providing appropriate training and tools for staff.
- Ensure public engagement on Town projects and studies are held through fully accessible and inclusive communication channels and platforms.
- Build accessible and inclusive on-line tools to improve access to Town processes for customers, residents, and visitors; including apps, budget information, payments, permit and application submissions, registrations, and Council business.

Employment

The Town is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible workplace where employees can thrive, regardless of their abilities, by actively working to remove barriers and foster a culture of inclusion that values the diverse perspectives and contributions of all team members.

Actions:

- Ensure current employment practices are accessible and inclusive, encouraging promotion of plain language and diversity at the Whitby Public Library.
- Establish a formalized corporate-wide Emergency Prevention and Preparedness Program. This will strengthen and streamline the process

for creating and updating individualized workplace emergency response plans, as well as integrating with individual accommodation plans.

- Streamline the Return-to-Work process for occupational and non-occupational incidents and continue to educate the corporation on Return-To-Work processes.

Design of Public Spaces

The Town is committed to providing inclusive public spaces through accessible design to ensure safety and usability for everyone in the community.

Actions:

- Strengthen collaboration between Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, through consultation on Town facility, parks, playgrounds, trails, and capital infrastructure projects, at design phase and prior to tendering and building, for comment and advice. Ensuring projects incorporate universal design features that prioritize safety and inclusivity for the community.
- Highlight accessibility features and improvements in the natural and built environment in all relevant communications, emphasizing the inclusivity of these spaces.
- Improve movement throughout Whitby for residents and visitors by building out the Accessible Signage and Wayfinding system developed for all vehicular and pedestrian movement to Town facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensure accessibility and universal design is incorporated within current and future Whitby Urban Design Guidelines; Comprehensive Block Plans and Urban Design Plans; all Site Plan proposals; Downtown Secondary Plan Update and proactively provide accessible materials and direction to all development proponents.

Transportation – taxicabs

The Town supports the provision of accessible taxi services for all, through licensing, promoting equitable access and inclusion in our community.

Actions:

- Collaborate with other local municipalities in Durham Region to help improve accessible taxi services. Include engagement with the public, people with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to consult on the on-demand taxi service within Whitby.

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of the Accessible Elements

As part of the Provincial legislated requirements, accessibility plans must include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. (O. Reg. 413/12, s.6.)

The Town is committed to:

- Maintaining annual service contracts to ensure equipment is safe and in proper working order;
- Maintaining an Asset Management Plan;
- Maintaining budget access for emergency repairs through the purchasing policy;
- Having an Emergency Communications plan; and
- Completing documented monthly and annual inspections of all playground equipment.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Mandate:

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is to advise and help council carry out its responsibilities under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Section 29 of the AODA describes three main activities for the AAC:

1. Advising municipal Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and other matters for which the council may seek its advice.
2. Review site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the Planning Act that the committee selects, including all municipal projects.
3. Perform all other functions specified in the regulations.

Responsibilities:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is responsible to provide advice to municipal Council to plan for accessibility on a wide range of municipal processes.

1. Provide input to staff reports on the following issues;
 - Reviewing official plans;
 - Reviewing zoning by-laws;
 - Reviewing site plans; and
 - Reviewing plans of subdivision and condominium
2. Participate in consultations with municipal departments on the requirements outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR):
 - When establishing and updating the Town's multi-year accessibility plan;
 - When developing design criteria related to the construction, renovation or placement of elements contained within the Design of Public Spaces regulation;
 - When determining the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community;

- On the need, location and design of on-street parking when building new or making major changes to existing on-street parking;
 - Before building new or making major changes to existing recreational trails to help determine particular trail features;
 - On the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities in their community when building new or making major changes to existing outdoor play spaces; and
 - On the design and placement of rest areas along exterior path of travel when building new or making changes to existing exterior paths of travel.
3. Provide advice on budget for accessibility; and
 4. Provide advice to help plan for and promote accessible voting for municipal elections.

Accessibility Staff Working Group

The Accessibility Working Group is comprised of staff from each department, including the Whitby Public Library. The Accessibility Working Group led by the Accessibility Coordinator, works in consultation to develop an implementation strategy to ensure the Town meets all legislated obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). This includes but is not limited to the development and implementation of:

- The Town's multi-year Accessibility Plan, next plan required in 2023 (2023-2026);
- Corporate accessibility policies and procedures; and
- Identification, prevention, and removal of barriers to the Town's goods, services, and facilities.

The Accessibility Working Group also serves as an internal liaison to provide information, by operating as a point of contact for their respective departments. Each Department must consider accessibility and barrier removal from two perspectives:

- What has been done in the past to address and remove barriers; and
- What formal process would be developed in the coming years and beyond to identify and remove barriers.

Each member of the working group is responsible for:

- Being the liaison for their department, sharing information from the working group with their department and sharing departmental information with the working group;
- Contributing departmental projects to the work plan;
- Implementing the targets and actions identified in the accessibility plan;
- Attending and participating at meetings; and
- Working with their department to ensure tasks are completed to ensure timelines are met.

Accessibility Working Group members will attend Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings, as required, to respond to requests for information and disseminate relevant information to their respective departments.

Consultation Activities

Municipal staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) have been consulted throughout the development of this plan, with draft versions circulated for review and comments.

Information will be communicated to Town staff and the public on the progress of accessibility initiatives through reports to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Staff Working Group and through annual staff reports presented to Council.

Review and Monitoring Process

With Council's approval of the Accessibility Plan, staff will monitor the progress made on the action items within the plan with the Staff Working Group on a quarterly basis. The Accessibility Coordinator will advise the AAC on the progress on the implementation of the Plan regularly.

In terms of updating the Accessibility Plan, an annual progress report via a staff report to Council and posted on the Town's website for community information. The Town's Accessibility Plan developed every four years, with the understanding as legislative requirements change, priorities within the

plan may also change. Any changes or new legislative requirements are to be communicated through the annual progress report.

Communication of the Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan is posted on the Town's website and copies, including alternative Formats and Communication supports, will be made available, upon request.

Key Contact for this Plan:
Michele Cotton, Accessibility Coordinator
accessibility@whitby.ca



Provincial Legislation

[Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility](#)

The Ministry's mandate is to help seniors and people with disabilities stay independent, active, and socially connected. Ontario is the first province and one of the first jurisdictions in the world to enact specific legislation establishing a goal and timeframe for accessibility. It is also the first jurisdiction to legislate accessibility reporting and to establish standards so people with disabilities can participate more actively in their communities.

Ontarians with Disabilities, 2001 (ODA)

The [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#) was established to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities. The legislation applies to all provincial and municipal governments, school boards, colleges and universities and hospitals.

Note: On a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor, the remainder of this Act is repealed by the Statutes of Ontario, 2005, chapter 11, section 42. See: 2005, c. 11, s. 42.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) is a law that sets out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. Persons with disabilities and industry representatives work together with the government to develop the standards.

Implementing and enforcing these standards will help us reach our goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Accessibility Standards

The [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) is law that government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations must follow to become more accessible. They help organizations identify and remove barriers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in five areas of daily life:

Customer Service Standard

To help remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services or facilities.

Information and Communications Standard

To help organizations make their information accessible to people with disabilities.

Transportation Standard

To make it easier for everyone to travel in the Province.

Employment Standard

To help make hiring and employee support practices more accessible.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

To help organizations make new and redeveloped outdoor public areas accessible.

**For more information on the Accessibility Standards contact -
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility**

601A-777 Bay Street, Toronto, ON M7A 2J4

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025 or 416-849-8276

TTY/Teletypewriter (for people with hearing disabilities):

1-888-335-6611 or 416-326-0148

Fax: 1-416-325-9620

accessibility@ontario.ca