



2025-2029

# Municipal Accessibility Plan



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Message from  
**Mayor Mark Sutcliffe**

**The City of Ottawa is dedicated to creating a barrier-free and inclusive environment for everyone, including those with visible and invisible disabilities, whether permanent or temporary. Our commitment is clearly outlined in the 2025-2029 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP). We are actively working to remove barriers and enhance accessibility for all our residents, visitors, and employees.**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of our new COMAP during the consultation period. Your insights, feedback, and personal experiences are invaluable. They will help us design communities, workspaces, programs, and services where everyone can participate fully and without barriers.

I also want to recognize the years of advocacy from both current and former members of our Accessibility Advisory Committee and our community partners. Your efforts have significantly transformed equitable access for people with disabilities in Ottawa. We have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges many face in a world that was not initially designed with their needs in mind. This has raised greater compassion, awareness, and respect in our community. However, we acknowledge that there is always more work ahead.

By continuing to work together and maintaining our commitment to accessibility, we will achieve the goals set out in our new COMAP. Our vision is to make Ottawa an accessible city for all and to position ourselves as a leader among the most accessible capital cities in the world.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to make Ottawa a place where everyone belongs.



## Message from City Manager Wendy Stephanson

**The City of Ottawa is proud to continue to be leader in accessibility by not only meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* but going above and beyond minimum standards to ensure our communities are more accessible for all.**

As City Manager, I know first-hand of the tremendous amount of work that goes into ensuring our programs, services, information, communications, and public facilities are inclusive and accessible. It is truly a Team Ottawa effort!

Community engagement with persons with disabilities has been a primary focus of our work, as we continue to listen and learn about the needs of people with disabilities. This will continue to be a priority in the new 2025-2029 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan as we look for new ways to improve.

On behalf of the City, I would like to recognize everyone who provided feedback on our new City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan. Thank you for your time and continued efforts to ensure Ottawa is accessible for all.

## Message from Accessibility Advisory Committee

On behalf of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is pleased to support the 2025-2029 COMAP.

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), the AAC is a legislated advisory body that provides expertise and advice to Ottawa's City Council and staff on the prevention and removal of all types of barriers to accessibility for both people with disabilities and older adults. A Councillor Liaison also works closely with Committee members and promotes their work to Council colleagues and City staff.

Members meet regularly to receive presentations from City staff, hear from public delegations, ask questions, provide advice and play a critical challenge function to evolve accessibility in our City's plans, initiatives and strategies. Thank you to our members for their ongoing commitment as we move ahead with the initiatives outlined in this plan.

Remembering the civil rights motto for persons with disabilities, "Nothing without us", our Committee strives to uphold that important value by ensuring our members not only have lived experience with disability, but also includes a minimum of two older adults, and meets in a public forum to encourage all residents to attend and voice their concerns as delegates.

The Committee works closely with staff and our City partners to implement accessibility in all aspects of planning, delivery, and construction. The Committee regularly advocates for accessible communities to ensure that all residents can participate fully. At our core, members remember at all times that dignity is a right, equity is the law, and full participation results in a better quality of life, stronger communities, and more equitable outcomes for everyone.

As we look to 2025, we will continue to work towards an equitable, inclusive, and accessible Ottawa. Governments are mobilizing to build new public housing together. And technologies, such as artificial intelligence, are creating opportunities to build smart cities where the world around us is conducive to making life easier and more accessible. To fully harness these opportunities, it is especially important to engage, hear from, and inform our city's residents. We must ensure that for those who are aging and/or living with disabilities, these technologies of the future are incorporated thoughtfully into daily life in an equitable way.

Working together, we can look beyond today's barriers and expand current boundaries to see how each of us, individually, can help support a more accessible future and through that, a more inclusive community for the residents of Ottawa.

# Introduction

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**The City of Ottawa’s Accessibility Policy states that, “The City of Ottawa is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and that is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, visitors, and employees with visible or non-visible, and permanent or temporary disabilities.”**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* require designated public sector organizations, such as the City of Ottawa, to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The City is also required to review and update its plan at least once every five years. The 2025-2029 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP) will replace the expiring 2020-2024 COMAP.

The City is strongly committed to meeting and/or exceeding the Standards of the AODA and fulfilling its purpose. The Province of Ontario states the following as the purpose of the AODA:

Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by,

- developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and,
- providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries

and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards. 2005, c. 11, s. 1.

The City’s commitment extends beyond the AODA to the *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*. Under the OHRC, every person has the right to freedom from discrimination and harassment based on 17 specified protected grounds, including disability. At its core, the Code’s basic aim is to provide equal rights and opportunities without discrimination and create a “climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and able to contribute fully to the development and well-being of the community and the Province.” These commitments are incorporated into the 2025-2029 COMAP and for the work to increase accessibility and inclusion at the City in the coming years.

Further, with the implementation of the *Accessible Canada Act* in 2019, the Government of Canada has committed to the principle of, “Nothing without us.” For years, the disability community has called for disability inclusion, emphasizing that disability is an integral part of Canada’s diversity. The engagement of persons with disabilities in decision making, planning and design is critical for the City moving forward. The spirit of this commitment will be carried forward in the 2025-2029 COMAP and the work plan of the Accessibility Office in the years to come.



## Persons with disabilities in Canada and Inclusion

According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, which was published by Statistics Canada in December 2023, nearly one in three Canadians, or approximately eight million people aged 15 years and over, have one or more disabilities that limit them in their daily activities. This represents 27 per cent of the Canadian population.

The rate of disability in Canada has increased by 5 per cent since 2017, when 6.2 million people identified as having one or more disabilities. This increase could be partially attributed to both the aging population and the large increase in mental health-related disabilities among youth and working-age adults. In 2022, the rate of disability was also higher among women, representing approximately 30 per cent compared to men, representing approximately 24 per cent.

Youth (aged 15 to 24 years), the working-age population (aged 25 to 64 years) and seniors (65 years and older) all experienced an increase in the rate of disability from 2017 to 2022. In 2022, 20 per cent of youth had a disability, an increase of 7 per cent from 2017. Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of working-age adults had a disability in 2022, an increase

of 4 per cent from 2017. In 2022, the disability rate for seniors was 40 per cent, an increase of 3 per cent from 2017.

Using this data, it can be estimated that over 290,000 people in Ottawa have one or more disabilities. The number of people impacted by disability increases this number further when we include family members, friends, and colleagues of a person with a disability.

**The City defines disability as per Section 2 of the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as follows:**

- A. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury,



any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- B. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- C. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- D. A mental disorder, or
- E. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

However, in accordance with the City's Equity and Inclusion Lens, the Accessibility Office also takes a broader view of disability to include consideration of intersectional identities and social factors that may intersect with disability

and effect a person's experiences with City programs, services and facilities. These factors include gender, age, language, sexuality, race, and culture. An intersectional view on disability allows us to consider an individual's experiences, rather than viewing disability and the barriers experienced by persons with disabilities as a universal experience.

Additionally, older adults are one of the fastest growing population groups in our communities. According to Statistics Canada, about one in four Canadians will be 65 years of age or older by 2043, and Canada is home to nearly 13,500 centenarians, a 43 percent increase compared to 2018. According to the 2021 census, 172,150 older adults aged 65 and over reside in the City of Ottawa, representing 16.9 per cent of the city's total population. Though many people with disabilities are not older adults, and many older adults do not identify as persons with a disability, accessibility impacts both groups.



## Statement of Commitment

The City of Ottawa is committed to providing equitable treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods, facilities, and information. By enabling accessibility for all, the City seeks to identify and remove barriers to accessibility and prevent the creation of new barriers. The City of Ottawa is dedicated to ensuring that it meets its AODA legislated obligations in a timely manner and that compliance with these standards is maintained. This commitment extends to Ottawa's residents, visitors, and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities.



## Methodology

In keeping with the requirements of the AODA and the IASR, from May to August 2024, City staff consulted with people with disabilities to develop the 2025-2029 COMAP. The engagement of persons with disabilities in the development of this plan was critical to ensuring the plan adequately captures the diverse experiences and addresses the barriers and discrimination that people with disabilities face in their daily lives.

This plan serves as a multi-year strategy of initiatives that will increase the accessibility of City programs, facilities, and services. People with disabilities, agencies that support people with disabilities, their caregivers, friends, family members and the general public were invited to provide disability-related feedback.

### The purpose of these consultations was:

- To record experiences with City programs, services, and facilities, and
- To inform the City about gaps and barriers that currently exist for people with disabilities and provide ideas on how to reduce and/or eliminate them.

### There were four methods to provide feedback for the COMAP consultations. These methods included:

- In-person consultations
- Virtual consultations
- An online survey through Engage Ottawa
- A community toolkit, for groups/ organizations wishing to host their own consultation without City staff present. This included a proposed process for hosting the consultation discussion, the consultation questions and a method for submitting feedback.

Consultations on the new COMAP officially began at the City's celebration of AccessAbility Day on May 30, which took place in-person at Ottawa's City Hall. Approximately 115 participants registered to attend this

consultation and City staff from across the organization provided support during these sessions.

Additional public consultations took place throughout June and July, which included three in-person consultations held in various locations across the City, including central, west end and east end locations, and three virtual consultations held over Zoom. Consultations were held at various times to increase the opportunity for participation. City staff from across the organization were trained to volunteer for these consultations, allowing them to actively listen and solicit meaningful feedback. The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was engaged throughout the planning and consultation process. They received multiple updates, were encouraged to participate in public consultations or complete the survey and were consulted on the completed plan. Information packages were also sent to over 350 clients of the Ottawa Public Library's Homebound Services program. These clients were provided the option to attend a public consultation session, complete the online survey, and/or submit their feedback in writing and mail their responses back to the Accessibility Office.

Additionally, the Accessibility Office also hosted three targeted consultations with various disability groups, including persons who are blind or have low vision, the d/Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing community, and the Ottawa Disability Coalition. Those that attended the session for persons who are blind or have low vision included

representatives from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), the Canadian Council for the Blind (CCB), and the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBEC). Those that attended the session for the d/Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing community included representatives from the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) and the National Capital Association of the Deaf (NCAD). The Ottawa Disability Coalition includes 19 organizations and individual advocates. Written feedback was also submitted by a representative from DeafBlind Ontario Services. Accommodations were actively offered and provided to all participants who requested them.

Finally, the French Language Services Advisory Committee was asked to provide feedback on matters affecting Francophones with disabilities following a presentation from the Accessibility Office.

81 residents participated in the online survey and two community toolkits were sent upon request, with both groups submitting feedback. Ultimately, a total of 259 residents participated in the consultations and over 1,800 lines of recorded feedback were collected and shared with departments ahead of the creation of new initiatives. The consultation process included considerations for outreach to groups that may be at risk for exclusion, using the City's Equity and Inclusion Lens.

As such, based on formal and anecdotal data, we are confident that we received feedback from a diverse group of residents with disabilities. Full details on the consultation process, and feedback highlights, can be found in the Consultation Report on [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca).



## Scope

This plan describes initiatives that ensure all applicable clauses for which the City has met compliance within the AODA are maintained. This plan includes the accessibility work of all City departments including the Ottawa Public Library and Ottawa Public Health. This plan excludes the Ottawa Police Service, which is deemed a large organization and, as such, reports to the Province separately.

As Transit Services provide services that are federally or independently regulated, the

services they provide fall under the Accessible Canada Act. However, Transit Services has always participated in COMAP and remain committed to meeting the spirit and intent of the AODA legislation. As such, their accessibility initiatives are included in this plan. Further details on transit accessibility can also be found in the new 2025-2029 OC Transpo Accessibility Plan.



# Implementation strategy

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The City of Ottawa supports the goals of the AODA to make the Province of Ontario accessible by the year 2025. As this deadline approaches and passes, the City remains committed to both meeting and going above and beyond its legislated requirements. As such the City Clerk recommends Council approve the following approach and initiatives to fulfill the City's requirements.



## Strong Governance and Leadership

City Council has supported accessible City programs, services, and facilities to help improve inclusion to benefit all residents, visitors, and employees. Staff shall report on the identification, prevention and/or potential creation of barriers within all reports going to Committee and Council.

The 2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities provides a clear vision for Ottawa that will direct the focus of City staff over the next four years.

### **These four priorities will create an Ottawa that:**

- Has affordable housing and is more liveable for all
- Is more connected with reliable, safe, and accessible mobility options
- Is green and resilient
- Has a diversified and prosperous economy.

Along with these priorities, Council identified three long-term goals it has targeted over the next ten years to provide a vision for the future of Ottawa as a national capital that is prosperous, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

### **The goals will help create a city:**

- Where residents experience a good quality of life and live in neighborhoods that are diverse, inclusive, safe, connected, accessible and affordable
- Where residents benefit from a healthy, sustainable and equitable built environment that supports efforts to address climate change
- That is economically diversified and prosperous, attracting people to Ottawa to live, work, play, invest, learn, and visit.

COMAP, which aims to create an accessible, inclusive City for all, reflects both the City's Term of Council Priorities and its long-term goals.

As per the Delegation of Authority (By-law No. 2024-265), the overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the plan falls within the Office of the City Clerk to ensure that the legislation is met in accordance with the City's Strategic Plan. Accountability for implementation of the various clauses within the AODA and its regulations is a shared responsibility with operational departments. The Office of the City Clerk has oversight responsibility for coordinating compliance efforts at the corporate level and operational departments retain the accountability for ensuring that their respective clauses are executed according to legislative requirements pertaining to the service they deliver. For example:

- Emergency Clauses are led by Emergency and Protective Services
- Accessible Taxis are led by Emergency and Protective Services
- Web-based product compliance is led by Finance and Corporate Services
- Employment requirements are led by Finance and Corporate Services
- Information and Communication Support is led by Finance and Corporate Services
- Procurement and Kiosks requirements are led by Finance and Corporate Services, and
- Public library requirements are led by Ottawa Public Library.





General clauses are initiated by the Office of the City Clerk through the work of the Accessibility Office and guided by the corporation's Accessibility Working Group (AWG) with representation from each department, as well as a member of the AAC. Responsibilities of the Accessibility Office include, but are not limited to, supporting Members of Council and all departments to provide equitable services for people with disabilities, the development of COMAP,

supporting the implementation of the legislative consultation process, working with all levels of government on accessibility-related issues, developing and reviewing policies with an accessibility lens, creating accessibility-related training modules and materials, reporting on the progress of accessibility plans to Senior Management, the AAC, and Council, as well as working with the City Clerk on all legislated compliance reporting.

## Status of the AODA legislated requirements

When implemented in 2005, the goal of the AODA was to create a barrier-free Ontario by the year 2025. In his report entitled, “2023 Legislative Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005,” Rich Donovan, an expert in business development and accessibility, describes the AODA as “a failure,” with missed opportunities and stalled progress for implementing or complying with the regulation. He identifies five categories of assessments required, as well as numerous crisis, strategic, and tactical recommendations as to how to improve the outcomes of the AODA and its impacts on persons with disabilities. The Province has not yet provided any information on how, when, or if it intends to implement any of these recommendations. The City is proud of its commitment to meeting the requirements of the AODA, while recognizing that barriers continue to exist and that there is still much work to be done to achieve full inclusion. This plan incorporates

Mr. Donovan’s Review of the AODA as another source of information to understand the work that remains in our goal to become fully accessible.

Moving forward, the City’s 2025-2029 COMAP will focus on maintaining compliance with all the Standards under the IASR, while seeking new, innovative ways to go beyond legislation. As such, the plan also contains many non-legislated initiatives that will be implemented to address issues brought forward by both the public and our community collaborators during ongoing consultation activities as well as through service requests and other feedback mechanisms. Regular meetings with our community of disability collaborators will continue as part of this plan to ensure meaningful consultation and engagement about current accessibility-related issues.



These meetings will include representation from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Canadian Council for the Blind, the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, and the Ottawa Disability Coalition, among others. Additionally, the Accessibility Office will also initiate regular meetings with the D/deaf community, including representatives with the National Capital Association of the Deaf and the Canadian Association of the Deaf to ensure their feedback is captured.

The initiatives included below are meant to provide highlights of those included in this plan. A full listing of initiatives that make up the 2025-2029 COMAP can be found on [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca)

To maintain our obligations under the AODA, all new City staff, including part-time, seasonal, and occasional staff, continue to be trained in the requirements of the standards, including: Customer Service; Information and Communications; Employment; Transportation; and Design of Public Spaces.

The City will continue to provide training to strengthen the understanding of legislated requirements as operationally feasible. This includes, but is not limited to:

- AODA: Accessibility for All
- Accessible Procurement Workshop
- AODA management compliance (mandatory for managers and supervisors from Level 1 to Level 6)
- Accessibility Impact Statement Workshop
- Individualized Workplace Emergency Information.

Since 2015, the City has reported non-compliance with Section 14 (4) of the IASR which include standards for web sites and web content. The City updated its compliance plan agreement with the Province in December 2020 and the most recent update on its progress was submitted in June 2024. This agreement plan update highlights the resources the City has committed as a leader in web accessibility, and the steps the City continues to take towards this goal. Significant effort, time, and resources continue to be invested to comply with this standard.

Furthermore, in 2023, the City undertook a fulsome review of all Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard elements which have been redeveloped or newly constructed since January 1, 2016. During this review, it was discovered that some traffic control measures installed since 2016, which included the implementation of All Way Stop Controls, Pedestrian Cross Overs, and Adult School Crossing Guards, did not meet the IASR at the time of implementation, due to the vague definition of redevelopment in the legislation. There are a total of 97 non-compliant locations. As such, the City submitted another Compliance Plan Agreement to the Province in December 2023 to fix these issues before 2029. An annual update on this place will be provided to the Province and to Council through the annual COMAP update reports.

# Legislated goals

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## General requirements

The City shall meet and maintain compliance with the IASR General Requirement by:

- Reviewing relevant City of Ottawa by-laws, policies, procedures, and guidelines to reflect the requirements of the AODA's *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*
- Continuing to ensure the procurement of City goods, services, facilities, and kiosks include accessibility criteria and features
- Continuing to provide training on the AODA's *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* to all new City of Ottawa employees and volunteers, those who participate in developing the organization's policies, as well as all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the City of Ottawa.



### Customer service

The City shall maintain compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standard and continue to identify customer service requirements to improve the client experience by:

- Providing accessible Customer Service training to all City of Ottawa staff and volunteers, as well as and notifying third parties doing business with the City of their training obligations
- Acting in accordance with our Accessibility Policy regarding service animals and support persons
- Receiving and responding to feedback regarding the manner in which goods or services are provided to persons with disabilities, and
- Providing notice of service disruptions.



### Information and communication

The City shall continue to provide accessible information and communication to residents, visitors, and employees by:

- Ensuring City policies and procedures for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities
- Providing and arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports
- Providing upon request timely accessible feedback and communication supports in consultation with the requestor, which takes into account the person's accessibility needs for all City documents including emergency plans and public safety information
- Ensuring all City of Ottawa websites and web content conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, and
- Informing the public of the availability of emergency plans and policies and providing accessible materials where they exist and communication supports, upon request.



## Employment

The City shall continue to ensure its employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities by:

- Ensuring all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available supports and accommodations
- Ensuring applicants with disabilities are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment, and selection processes
- Consulting with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request
- Providing to employees, upon request, individualized workplace emergency response information
- Maintaining a return-to-work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when required, and
- Ensuring the needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement, and redeployment.



## Design of public spaces

The City shall ensure that all City built environment projects meet or exceed the provincial Design of Public Spaces Standards by:

- Continuing to audit and implement an annual retrofit plan based on approved budgets
- Continuing to utilize the City's Accessibility Design Standards for all new and redeveloped City owned, operated, or leased spaces and facilities to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to everyone, and
- Completing the remediation of all non-compliant all-way-stop-controls, pedestrian crossings, and adult school crossing guard locations through the Pedestrian Accessibility and Intersection Ramping (PAIR) program.





## Transportation

As mentioned above, Transit Services are independently or federally regulated under the Accessible Canada Act. However, the clause regarding accessible taxi services, under the Transportation Standard, is legislated as it is managed by Emergency and Protective Services.

### Accessible taxi services

The City shall ensure accessible taxi service is available to the public within the City of Ottawa by:

- Consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public on regulations that determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in Ottawa and demonstrate progress toward meeting that need
- Ensuring that no person with a disability is charged additional fees or is charged a fee for storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices
- Ensuring vehicle registration and identification is visible in accordance with Provincial legislation and is available in accessible formats for passengers with disabilities, and
- Conducting a Vehicle-for-Hire Regulation and Services Review.



# Non legislated goals

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In addition to the legislated goals under the AODA, the City of Ottawa is committed to additional operational initiatives that help the City in our efforts to prevent and remove barriers. The Accessibility Office currently coordinates the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), which includes members from designated public service organizations from across the Province. This group is an unincorporated, voluntary “network of accessibility professionals working towards the advancement of universal access for persons with disabilities through the sharing of information, resources, and best practices.” The group is very active over email and meets twice per year.

The City is also a member of the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN), coordinated through the Accessibility Institute at Carleton University. City staff participate on their Advisory Council and Communities of Practice.

The City of Ottawa is proud to be a leader in accessibility across the Province and openly shares our policies, procedures and practices that have demonstrated success in reducing and/or eliminating barriers. Staff at the City regularly answer requests for information from public sector staff across Ontario, Canada and even internationally.





## Customer service

The City will continue to enhance its accessible customer service practices to meet the daily needs of our community by:

- Exploring the feasibility of homebound voting to allow electors with disabilities to have the ability to vote privately and independently
- Prioritizing and addressing supports for children with disabilities as a strategic priority through the Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan
- Increasing awareness of the City's Scents and Sensitivities in the Workplace Policy and Procedure for both employees and the public
- Offering a variety of programming through the Ottawa Public Library, including programs for people with sensory disabilities and those experiencing memory loss, as well as having resources available for those with sight loss
- Offering increased supports and resources to provide accessible service to residents who are d/Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.



## Employment

The City will seek to increase the quality and quantity of accommodations to employees and applicants by:

- Ensuring managers, supervisors and staff are familiar with accommodation plans and supports through mandatory training and internal communication channels
- Promoting the City as an employer of choice with various community organizations and through the participation of job fairs to recruit people with disabilities, and
- Increasing the accessibility awareness of hiring managers through the promotion of accessible hiring practices.





## Public engagement, information and communication

The Accessibility Office (AO) is committed to learning from the intersectional experiences and perspectives of persons with disabilities and will continue to build connections with other marginalized communities, including but not limited to, Indigenous, racialized people, immigrants, refugees, newcomers and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

The AO will also continue to connect and consult with people with disabilities through the continuation of our e-newsletter, Accessibility Spotlight, as well as consulting regularly with the disability community through informal consultations. This includes regularly scheduled meetings, as well as specific project-related site visits to engage in continuous feedback, and improve existing programs, services, and facilities.

The City will also provide additional opportunities for public engagement, as well as improve the accessibility of its information

and communications through the following methods:

- Continuing to host major events throughout the year to celebrate nationally and internationally recognized days to promote accessibility for staff and the public
- Highlighting new or existing accessibility-related initiatives on [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca) and promoted to local media outlets
- Improving the availability of information regarding accessibility features in City parks and facilities
- Launching the new Older Adult Plan in 2025, pending Council approval, which will include many accessibility enhancements for older adults, and
- Increasing prevention strategies to maximize the impact and reduce the stigma for mental health, addictions, and substance use.





## Transportation

The City will provide more transportation options for residents and visitors with disabilities, as well as increase the accessibility of existing transportation options by:

- Continuing to use funds provided through the voluntary per trip surcharge from Private Transportation Companies to improve and expand accessible transportation, including modifying the taxi-coupon program and better supporting not-for-profit agencies that provide transportation services to older adults and people with disabilities city-wide
- Enhancing the accessibility to on-street bus stops and facilities through new construction, renovations and/or maintenance
- Expanding the availability of services on the My Para Transpo app
- Streamlining the use of both Presto passes and e-purse options on all Para Transpo buses and taxis
- Replacing Para Transpo buses that have reached the end of their life cycle with a new fleet of accessible vehicles, and
- Continuing to offer familiarization sessions for our accessibility community collaborators, customers with disabilities and older adults before and after the opening of the new O-train extensions.



## Design of public spaces

The City will continue to increase the accessibility of new and existing City facilities by:

- Completing a thorough review and update of the City's Accessibility Design Standards to better align with provincial requirements and the City's evolving practices
- Improving pedestrian facilities through the installation of new sidewalks and connecting existing sidewalks and paths
- Ensuring the new sports and entertainment facility as part of the Lansdowne 2.0 project incorporates accessibility considerations throughout the entire design process and prevents barriers from being created, and
- Increasing the accessibility of family shelters to provide accessible solutions for everyone seeking emergency shelter.



# Compliance monitoring

The Accessibility Office shall monitor progress of this plan and shall coordinate and report on progress annually to Senior Management and Committee and Council through the COMAP Update Report. The Office of the City Clerk is responsible to report on City compliance to the Province, as per the provincial schedule.

