

City of Ottawa Provincial and Federal Accessibility Plans 2026 Update (Resident Facing Report)

Introduction

This is the second annual update of the 2025-2029 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP). It explains what the City did in 2025 to improve accessibility for residents, visitors and employees.

To develop this plan, the Corporate Accessibility Office (AO) consulted with persons with disabilities, caregivers, organizations, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and members of the public.

This year, the AO and Transit Services also created the new 2026-2029 OC Transpo Accessibility Plan, which is required under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). A list of updates concerning transit-related initiatives can be found in the Transportation Initiatives section of this report.

The City is committed to meeting the requirements of both the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the ACA. The City works with people with disabilities, including residents, employees, and visitors, to make Ottawa accessible for all. The City's efforts to achieve these goals over the past year are outlined in this report.

AODA Compliance

The City must submit an AODA accessibility compliance report to the Province every two years, with the most recent report submitted in December 2025. City Council also receives an update on compliance each year through the COMAP update reports.

In 2025, the City met all the requirements of the AODA except for two areas:

- our websites and web content
- some parts of our pedestrian crossings

We are continuing to improve our websites, web content, and web applications so they are easier for everyone to use. Staff are also working to fix the accessibility issues at pedestrian crossings by adding the features needed to make them fully accessible for

all residents. The City provides the Government of Ontario with regular updates on its progress in these areas.

2025 Highlights

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a committee required by law under the AODA that provides guidance to City Council and staff on accessibility issues affecting persons with disabilities and older adults in Ottawa. Throughout 2025, the AAC consulted on about 20 projects during eight regular meetings and by email, and for hundreds of planned capital projects for the year presented to the Committee at their annual duty to consult meeting.

Some projects include:

- E-Scooter Pilot Project
- Accessibility Features in Parks Project
- Older Adult Plan 2025-2030
- Urban Design Guidelines for Mid-Rise Buildings
- Transportation Master Plan Capital Infrastructure Plan

Working with the Community

To develop the 2025-2029 COMAP, it was important to learn from people with disabilities. In 2025, the AO continued to engage with many community groups, including people who are blind or have low vision, Deaf persons and people who are deafened and hard of hearing, and the Ottawa Disability Coalition. During these meetings, held either virtually or in-person at various sites across the city, staff answered questions and received feedback about City buildings, programs and services. These meetings also help inform City staff of trends and new developments, which help set priorities.

The AO also received many accessibility-related questions, and feedback from residents. The City tracks these communications and directs them to the responsible service areas. While the City does not have the authority to enforce accessibility compliance for private businesses, the AO helps educate businesses on Provincial laws, encouraging them to be more accessible for all.

The AO will continue to work with the AAC, disability community partners, elected officials and residents to ensure that accessibility-related feedback is received and responded to.

Partnerships

The City also partners with organizations in Ontario, Canada and around the world to work on projects that improve accessibility for people with disabilities. Some of these partnerships include the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN), and the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP).

Events

The City held two major accessibility events in 2025.

AccessAbility Day 2025 in Ottawa took place in May at City Hall, and featured opening remarks from the Mayor, City Manager, City Councillors and staff, as well as a keynote address from disability advocate Rick Hansen.

Additionally, on December 3, the City of Ottawa celebrated the 2025 International Day of Persons with Disabilities at City Hall with a flag raising and the presentation of the inaugural Accessible Ottawa Awards. For the first time, two awards were given—one to an individual, Kyle Humphrey, and one to an organization, Whimble. The awards are given to people and organizations that are working to make Ottawa more accessible and inclusive. The event ended with raising the Rights of Persons with Disabilities flag.

Design of Public Spaces Initiatives

In 2025, the City continued major accessibility improvements in the built environment through projects like Lansdowne 2.0, which will include accessible entrances, more accessible seating and washrooms, and better routes during construction.

The new central library, Ādisōke, received the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification pre-construction Gold for its accessible design, including ramps, gender-inclusive washrooms, sensory rooms, and elevators.

Many parks and City facilities were also upgraded with accessible play equipment, adult change tables, more accessible parking, and better change rooms. By the end of 2025, 91 per cent of the City's traffic signals had been upgraded with accessible audible signals, making crossings safer for people who are blind or have low vision.

Transportation Initiatives

In 2025, the City continued providing accessible transportation for people with disabilities and older adults through \$164,000 in taxi coupons, which provides a discounted taxi fare to Para Transpo customers. Transit Services also gave \$856,000 to community agencies to provide transportation for people with disabilities and older adults in rural areas. Part of this funding came from the ride-share accessibility levy.

Wait times for accessible taxis have improved because of a new central dispatch system. About 80 accessible taxis are now operating across Ottawa, which means customers are waiting less time and can book these vehicles more easily.

Para Transpo customers can now use several new online features. A support person can book a trip online for their clients, and customers can get alerts about upcoming or active trips by text message, email, or voice call. These new supports make the service easier to use for persons with disabilities.

Information and Communication Initiatives

In 2025, the Accessibility Office published 12 regular and 5 special editions of its “Accessibility Spotlight” newsletter to share information about accessible programs, events, and services across the City. The newsletter now reaches more than 5,300 English subscribers and over 300 French subscribers.

American Sign Language and Langue des Signes Québécois interpretation are available at events and meetings, when requested, and accessible supports and resources are promoted across City departments.

Lastly, the Accessibility Office participated in the Climate Equity Engagement working group to help ensure communications, engagement activities and information about climate hazards are accessible to people with disabilities.

Employment Initiatives

In 2025, the City took steps to make hiring and employment more accessible for people with disabilities. Human Resources (HR) promoted workplace accommodations at career fairs and connected with organizations like CAN WiN.

The AO also helped deliver training to HR staff on the duty to accommodate and reducing barriers in hiring. Also, resources were shared to help employees create Individualized Workplace Emergency Response plans.

Customer Service Initiatives

In 2025, Children's Services created a new webpage to help families find inclusive childcare. They also tested a new program called the Inclusion Pedagogist program, which gave educators hands-on coaching and practical tools. This helped educators use more inclusive practices and provide better, individualized support for children with disabilities.

Employment and Social Services increased the number of people using the MyBenefits online platform. 72% of Ontario Works clients now use this. They have also made the platform more accessible and are planning to make it the main way they communicate with clients while still offering staff support, so no one faces barriers.

OC Transpo continued offering free, monthly workshops with a service dog training organization, giving service dog teams the opportunity to practice using buses and trains in a low-stress environment to build confidence and independence.

Finally, the recreation department also expanded one-to-one support in summer camps and enhanced adult day programs, increasing staffing and program availability to better meet participant needs.

Conclusion

The City continues its work with staff and partners, including people with disabilities and community organizations, to make Ottawa more accessible for all.

While there is still more work to do, the City will continue to lead and share resources and knowledge, while always learning from our partners and residents.