



The Regional Municipality of Durham 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the **Accessibility Coordinator** at accessibility@durham.ca or **905-668-4113 ext. 2009**.

Message from the Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of Durham Regional Council, I am pleased to present the 2016-2021 Accessibility Plan.

In 2015 we marked the 10th anniversary of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), and the half-way point to the goal of becoming fully accessible by January 1, 2025. After more than a decade of planning and implementing accessibility initiatives throughout Durham Region, we look to the next 10 years as the pathway to an Accessible Ontario where people of all abilities may realize their full potential.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee and Regional employees are committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers through accessibility planning. The Durham Region 2016-2021 Multi – Year Accessibility Plan identifies the services and initiatives to address the needs of our growing and diverse community.

Our new Strategic Plan 2015-2019: Growing Together, Reaching Further, Aspiring Higher and our Accessibility Policy demonstrate the commitment that Durham Region has to think ahead and plan for tomorrow.

Through continuous improvement and service excellence, Durham Region will continue to provide an accessible, inclusive environment that values the diversity of our staff and the community.

Yours truly,

Roger Anderson

Roger Anderson
Regional Chair and CEO



Table of Contents

About Durham Region	5	Information and communications	16
Legislation	6	Employment	17
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)	6	Transportation	17
<i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> (AODA)	6	Design of public spaces	18
Accessibility standards	7	Accessibility strategies moving forward - general ...	19
Durham Region and accessibility	8	Organization wide	19
Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee .	8	Durham Region Transit (DRT)	19
Accessibility planning in the organization	9	Contact information	21
Accessibility planning supports Durham Region’s Strategic Plan.....	10	Janet Traer, Accessibility Coordinator.....	21
The 2015-2019 Strategic Plan: Growing Together, Reaching Further, Aspiring Higher	11	By mail	21
Accessibility partnerships.....	11	By phone.....	21
AODA progress to date	12	By email	21
AODA compliance timeline from 2016 to 2021	14	Acknowledgements	22
The Plan	15	AODA Staff Working Group members	23
Plan organization	15	Message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	24
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation work plan	16		
Customer service	16		



THE REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY
OF DURHAM
HEADQUARTERS

605 Rossland Road East

About Durham Region

Durham Region has a population of about 656,000 residents. According to Statistics Canada, we can estimate that more than 70,000 of these citizens are living with a disability. The Region covers a vast land area of 2,590 square kilometres (1,000 square miles), including both urban and rural settings.

Citizens within Durham Region are serviced by eight area municipal governments and the Regional Municipality of Durham. The Region is governed by a council, consisting of a Regional Chair and 28 elected members. The Regional Chair is the head of Regional Council and is the Chief Executive Officer of the Regional corporation. The Chief Administrative Officer is the most senior staff person in the Region of Durham and reports to Regional Council; working in close collaboration with the Regional Chair.

The Region, through various departments, is responsible for the following services:

- 9-1-1 management.
- Borrowing of Money for Capital Expenditures of upper-and lower-tier municipalities.
- Child-care Centres, Nursery School Programs and Durham Behaviour Management Services (children).
- Delegated Authority for Local Area Municipal Official Plans and Amendments.
- Durham Regional Official Plan and implementation.
- Economic Development and Tourism.
- Emergency Management.
- Family counselling.
- Industrial, Commercial and Residential Development Approvals.
- Land ambulance services.
- Land Division Consent Applications.
- Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors.
- Municipal water supply, treatment, distribution and billing.
- Ontario Works programs and services.
- Police services.
- Property tax policy.
- Provincial Offences Court, prosecution services, administration and collection of fines.
- Public Health programs and services.
- Regional roads, bridges and traffic signals and controls.

Legislation

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

In 2001, *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) was established to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. This Act applies to the public sector and led to the Region's accessibility planning process. Since this time, on an annual basis, our organization has been very successful in the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers through departments and services.

The enactment of ODA also required that the Region of Durham form an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to advise on accessibility throughout by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services. The AAC remains in formation today with 11 members, including a Regional Councillor. This committee provides important and valuable input into the Region's accessibility planning process.



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is to address discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario. The Act involves accessibility standards that have been developed to be implemented and enforced throughout public and private sectors. The AODA specifies that accessibility will be addressed in areas of goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by the year 2025.

Accessibility standards

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR)

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

In 2011, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), four accessibility standards were combined enacting one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

(IASR). As of July 1, 2016 the customer service standard has been rolled into the IASR. The IASR involves accessibility standards for customer service; information and communications; employment; transportation and design of public spaces. This allows for a phased-in approach to accessibility implementation in these five areas. This is a much more streamlined approach for broader public organizations, such as the Region of Durham.

More information on AODA and accessibility standards can be found on the **Region's website** at www.durham.ca and the **Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment** website at www.ontario.ca/accessON.



Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Ontario's accessibility laws require the Region of Durham to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee to advise Council about the preparation of accessibility plans and the achievement of actions outlined within the plan. The majority of members must be people with disabilities. This committee was first established in 2002.

Members of the Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) come from various backgrounds, several local area municipalities, and have different types of disabilities. They bring a wide variety of knowledge, expertise and experience to our committee.

The three main activities of an accessibility advisory committee are to:

1. Advise municipal council about:
 - The requirements and implementation of accessibility standards.
 - The preparation of accessibility reports.
 - Other matters for which the council may seek its advice.
2. Review site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act*.
3. Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

The AAC provides valuable feedback and advice to Durham Regional Council and employees. Members often participate in additional accessibility related activities. Since the last accessibility plan covering 2013 to 2015 the AAC has:

1. Participated in an emergency evacuation exercise, providing important insights into the needs of people with disabilities and special needs in an emergency.
2. Provided advice on:

- Site plans for new builds in the Region, such as the Clarington Police Complex and Fairview Lodge, to ensure they complied with AODA regulations.
- The Transit Advisory Committee policies and procedures.
- An accessible computer workstation in the Human Resources training room.
- Accessible door openers and placement of buttons at entrances and washrooms.
- The accessibility of the facilities that were being used for the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in our Region.

3. Accessibility Awards were presented to those who are accessibility champions in each of our municipalities.

4. Staff educational activities were set up during National Access Awareness Week celebrations in 2013 to 2015.

Accessibility planning in the organization

Since 2003, the Region of Durham has been reporting on accessibility and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers throughout departments and services. This work has been accomplished by examining our facilities, programs, services, policies and by-laws through the lens of accessibility. As a result of this ongoing work, many barriers have been addressed in areas of:

- Physical environment
- Technology
- Employment
- Information and communication
- Attitudes

Accessibility planning, over more than a decade now, has been a valuable and important process for the Region. It has allowed departments and services to fully examine their environments to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. While reporting on accessibility barriers continues, the continuous implementation of accessibility involves all aspects of the way the Region conducts business. This will continue through meeting the requirements of AODA with the implementation of accessibility standards.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), multi-year planning has been an integral requirement for our organization. Multi-year planning is not only addressing accessibility barriers, but is also ensuring that the Region meets legislative requirements within the identified timelines.

Creating communities where every person can participate is important for people, businesses and community life. It is important that Durham Region continues planning for the future so that programs, services and facilities are accessible and welcoming for everyone.

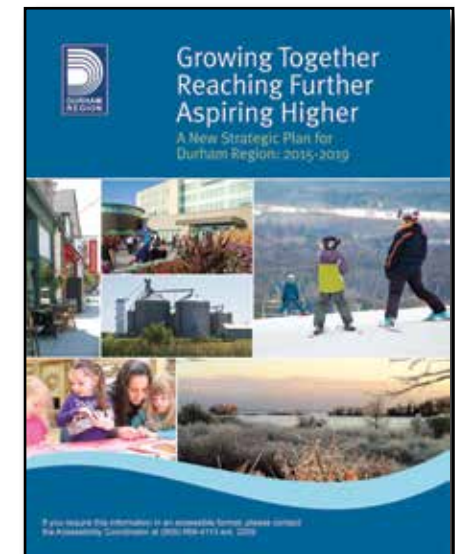
The Durham Region 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines strategies and actions to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The plan also details our strategy for meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Accessibility planning supports Durham Region's Strategic Plan

The Region uses strategic planning initiatives to create programs and deliver services that meet the needs of our growing population and an increasingly diverse community.

Accessibility planning in Durham includes the requirements of the AODA and supports the Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies. Creating a community that is inclusive and accessible for everyone links with the goals set out in the following Regional strategies and policies:

- The 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan – Growing Together Reaching Further Aspiring Higher
- Accessibility Policy
- Regional Commitment to Accessibility



The 2015-2019 Strategic Plan: Growing Together, Reaching Further, Aspiring Higher

The Region's Strategic Plan is aligned with the four-year term of Regional Council. The 2015-2019 Strategic Plan includes a direction that will support a healthier regional population and a better quality of life for our residents that is more affordable, livable, inclusive and safe. Accessibility planning supports this goal by enhancing our inclusive and welcoming communities to meet the evolving needs of youth, seniors and newcomers.

Accessibility partnerships

Each lower-tier municipality, within Durham Region, has an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) that reports to its respective municipal council about accessibility matters. This means that for the entire area (consisting of eight local area municipalities and the Region), we have a total of nine AACs dedicated to improving accessibility in our communities.

Co-ordinated by the Region, the nine AACs are brought together to share best practices and information related to accessibility. Meetings are held with AAC chairs, and on an annual basis the Region hosts an AAC Joint Forum. This is an opportunity for volunteers to network and collaborate on accessibility matters. This past year, the AAC Joint Forum was held in September, and included a presentation by Sharon Hill, Manager of Health, Safety and Wellness for the Region of Durham, as well as a presentation by Dr. Vicki Keith, C.M., O. Ont., LLD, ChPC Coach; Y Penguins Aquatic Club Founder/Coordinator; and the Y Abilities Programs YMCA of Kingston.

The Region's Accessibility Coordinator also belongs to the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP). This network is comprised of accessibility professionals within the broader public sector across Ontario and its purpose is to share best practices and resources in accessibility.

Accessibility awards allow us to demonstrate the importance of accessibility, and to honour leadership in breaking down barriers. Each year the Region of Durham honours individuals, services, and/or businesses that have improved accessibility in their community. Nominations for these awards are made by the accessibility advisory committees of municipalities within Durham Region.

Education about accessibility type issues and initiatives within our departments and community is a very important piece for our AAC and AODA Staff Working Group. Presentations allow us to learn so we can all in turn share with others.

AODA progress to date

The AODA sets out accessibility requirements that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces, with staggered compliance dates to 2021.

The following outlines the AODA requirements by the year achieved:

- 2010**
 - Requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service were met which included:
 - The Accessibility Policy which outlines our Customer Service mandate.
 - Training of all employees, students and volunteers is ongoing.
- 2011**
 - Incorporated specific accessibility criteria for Durham Region Transit (DRT) as required for 2011
- 2012**
 - Emergency and public safety information offered in an accessible format upon request.
 - Emergency response plan forms developed for employees with temporary and permanent disabilities.
 - Incorporated specific accessibility criteria for Durham Region Transit, Specialized Services as required for 2012.
- 2013**
 - Established a corporate Accessibility Policy to guide the Region's accessibility direction
 - Created a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines long-term strategies to achieve AODA requirements and improve accessibility within programs, services and facilities.
 - Incorporated accessibility design, criteria and features in the procurement process for new goods, services and facilities.
 - Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into DRT and Specialized Services as required for 2013.

- Trained employees, volunteers and contractors on the requirements of the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and Ontario's Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.
- Ensured processes for receiving and responding to feedback continue to be accessible to people with disabilities by providing accessible formats or communication supports upon request.
- Developed and documented accessible employment practices and policies across all stages of the employment life cycle.
- Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into DRT and Specialized Services as required for 2014.



Tracy Schmitt – Motivational speaker

2013

- Provided accessible formats and communication supports when requested by employees and members of the public.

It should be noted that while Durham Region complied with the above timetable, in many instances the initiatives were introduced or implemented at an earlier than required time frame.

AODA compliance timeline from 2016 to 2021

Compliance activities continue as the Region of Durham works towards meeting AODA requirements now and in the future. This timeline shows the upcoming provincial requirements to make an accessible Ontario for new initiatives in Durham.

2016

Design of Public Spaces Standards

- Consultation on newly constructed or redeveloped areas for recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths, on-street parking and service related elements.

2016

Public Transit

- Pre-boarding announcements (complete)
- Fare parity (complete)
- Hours of service

2016

Website to Web Content Accessible Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA

- All existing Internet websites and web content conforms with WCAG 2.0 level AA

The Plan

Plan organization

The actions outlined in the Region of Durham 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are specific AODA requirements during this timeframe. These actions are organized under the accessibility standards of the AODA to support one of the following accessibility goals.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations:

- **Customer Service** – Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities.
- **Information and Communications** – Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Employment** – Incorporate accessibility practices across all stages of employment including recruitment, selection and supporting Regional employees with disabilities.
- **Transportation** – Make it easier to move around the Region by considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
- **Design of Public Spaces** – Make Regional public spaces more accessible.



These goals correspond to the standards included in the AODA and represent the Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. This link ensures consistency across the actions of the plan and supports achieving compliance with the AODA.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the AODA, the Region will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers that people with disabilities may face when accessing Regional goods, services, facilities or programs.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation work plan

The Region of Durham will continue to develop plans and strategies to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The information outlined below, highlights the details and planned actions to comply with the individual standards within the regulation to 2021, with the date the action must be achieved by. Behind each requirement are detailed work plans to make the requirement operational.

Customer service

Durham Region met all the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation including:

- Created an Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- Trained all employees, volunteers and those providing service to the public on our behalf (ongoing).
- Established an accessibility feedback process.
- Notice of service disruption(s) are posted, where planned or scheduled service disruptions occur.

Information and communications

Corporate standards were established for providing accessible formats of information or communication supports upon request by:

- Developing guidelines and training to help employees in creating accessible documents (ongoing).
- Informing the public about the options of accessible information and communication supports available to them.
- Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information is offered in an accessible format upon request (ongoing).
- Conversion from Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 from Level A to Level AA.

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at accessibility@durham.ca or 905-668-4113 ext. 2009.

By January 1, 2021 all information and communications are required to be provided in an accessible format. Durham Region will:

1. Develop a strategy to ensure that all existing Internet websites and web content conforms to WCAG Guidelines 2.0 Level AA.
2. When requested, will provide an accessible document for material on our website that was created prior to 2014.

Employment

The requirement for accessible employment has been implemented within recruitment, assessment and selection processes. Accessibility has been included in practices with present employees with disabilities and there are job accommodation procedures in place.

Transportation

By January 1, 2017 Durham Region Transit will incorporate a number of services and processes outlined below into their plan to ensure compliance with the requirement.

Durham Region will:

1. Establish pre-boarding route or destination announcements (electronic) are in place. Currently these are handled by the Innovations in Transportation (INIT) systems, and if that is not available operators do this manually.
2. Implement on-board announcements of stops and connections (electronic) are in place. Currently these are handled by our INIT systems, and if that is not available operators do this manually.
3. Ensure fare parity for conventional and specialized transportation (already in place).
4. Harmonize the hours of service for conventional and specialized services.



5. Implement new eligibility application process.
6. Create categories of eligibility.
7. Develop a process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback.
8. Take steps to reduce waiting times.
9. Ensure measures to identify, prevent and address accessible equipment failure are documented. These include pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip inspections and regularly scheduled maintenance of vehicles.

Design of public spaces

As of January 1, 2016 the Region of Durham will incorporate accessibility into public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped that are within our jurisdiction.

Durham Region will:

1. Review and update current processes to make sure the accessibility requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standards are applied, where applicable, to new or redeveloped projects in the following areas: recreational trails, beach access routes, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and service related elements.
2. When developing the public spaces under this standard, the Region shall consult the public and persons with disabilities.
3. Update procurement procedures and guidelines, where needed, to reflect the requirements for public spaces.
4. Inform staff about the public spaces requirements.
5. We shall provide maintenance and restoration of public spaces, where applicable.

Accessibility strategies moving forward - general

The following is an overview of some of the organization's strategies for planned barrier removal. Each of the projects has been identified as a priority to ensure further accessibility for people with disabilities.

Organization wide

- Staff from all areas will work on the implementation of standards as required.
- Working towards creating accessible documents by training staff.
- Continue to gather feedback from the public and staff to assist in our planning for accessibility improvements.
- Ongoing training of accessibility standards, as required.
- Offering awareness workshops for staff to educate them on disability initiatives, types and issues.

Durham Region Transit (DRT)

- PRESTO is expected to be available on all Durham Region Transit vehicles, including Specialized Services, in spring/summer 2016.
- Further develop integrated service model to incorporate DRT's 100 per cent conventional accessible fleet.
- Planned training for all conventional and specialized bus operators and supervisors focused on customer service, including but not limited to:
 - ▶ Enhance accessibility at DRT and the role of operators in supporting customers.
 - ▶ Review of disabilities, including visible, invisible, physical and cognitive and what is required to deliver exceptional customer service.
 - ▶ Promote Human Rights issues and expectations for inclusion.
 - ▶ Assess the status of compliance with AODA and the Integrated Transportation Standard.

Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. That means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate in everyday life. Creating communities where every person who lives or visits can be involved makes good sense for people, for businesses, for communities, for all of us.



Contact information

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the Regional Municipality of Durham 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Janet Traer, Accessibility Coordinator

By mail:

The Regional Municipality of Durham
605 Rossland Road East, Post Office Box 623
Whitby, Ontario
L1N 6A3

By phone:

905-668-7711 extension 2009 or
1-800-372-1102

By email:

accessibility@durham.ca



Acknowledgements

A special thank you is extended to the Regional *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) Staff Working Group for their time and commitment to accessibility planning. Each person is representative of a department and/or service across the organization. Through regular meetings, this committee is kept informed of legislative information and resources. In turn, these representatives are able to share this knowledge with their respective departments.

The AODA Staff Working Group is an integral piece to Durham Region's accessibility planning. Members bring expertise in their respective areas, which adds to the collective knowledge of the organization as accessibility initiatives are implemented.

Representatives are also vital for the communication process regarding legislative compliance requirements along with the Region's various accessibility initiatives. Departmental staff are kept well informed of accessibility through these resourceful staff representatives and for that, we thank you.

Due to the commitment and accomplishments of the staff working group, as well as others who have provided support and expertise, appreciation is extended to them.

AODA Staff Working Group members

CAO's Office

Lorraine Dunn, Janet Traer

Corporate Communications Office

Sherri Munns, Jennifer Santos

Corporate Services Department

Angie Appleton, Dawne Chad, Crystal McNeil
(Human Resources Division)

Cheryl Bandel, Leigh Fleury, Jennifer Lanegger
(Legislative Services)

Alisa Cole, Jason Hunt (Legal Services)

Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)

Dave Simpson

Durham Region Transit (DRT)

Jack Dermegherdijian, Brad Eyre

Finance Department

Anne Smith

Health Department

Shelley Chamberlain, Glendene Collins

Planning and Economic Development

Michelle Stevenson

Social Services Department

Pauline Hopley, Tracey Tyner Cavanagh

Works Department

Ihor Kotowycz (Facilities)

Andrea Platt (Traffic), Ginny Tacij (Plant Operations)

Message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The members of Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) are a dedicated group of individuals who live across our region. They bring to the committee a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives related to the many challenges faced by people with disabilities. As a result, the group is able to provide invaluable support and advice to the Region as it continues to strive towards the identification and elimination of barriers.

This multi-year accessibility plan illustrates the efforts of many staff, community partners, volunteers and Regional Council in working towards an environment in which the interests of all groups of our society are represented.

It is important that all individuals who live, work and play within Durham Region feel included; so in an attempt to achieve this goal, the AAC strives to consider all aspects of accessibility and remove any barriers that may exist for people with disabilities. The committee assists by reviewing projects and initiatives within Durham, as well as support the Region in its effort to meet the legislative requirements.

On behalf of the AAC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Durham Region's AODA Staff Working Group for their time and commitment regarding accessibility planning. It is also my pleasure and honour to work with and learn from all of my fellow Accessibility Advisory Committee members.

Sincerely,

Mari-Lynn Cordahi

Mari-Lynn Cordahi
Chair, Regional AAC



Accessibility i-nformation



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