

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2028

Land Acknowledgement

The Municipality of Clarington is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas and Chippewas of the Anishinabeg, known today as the Williams Treaties First Nations. Our work on these lands acknowledges their resilience and their longstanding contributions to the area now known as the Municipality of Clarington.

We embrace our journey to understanding our treaty relationships and the invaluable contributions of Indigenous peoples to our community and country. We encourage all residents to reflect and acknowledge the importance of integrating Truth and Reconciliation into our communities where we live, learn and work.

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Statement of Commitment

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), all organizations must share a public statement of commitment to meeting the needs of people with disabilities. The following is Clarington's statement of commitment:

The Municipality of Clarington is committed to providing our community with goods, services, and facilities that are accessible and inclusive to all. We are committed to reducing barriers to municipal programs, services, and infrastructure. We will continue to work with community members and allocate the appropriate resources toward the elimination of barriers in our community. Clarington is committed to meeting the requirements of the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Overview

New findings from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability showed that 27% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8.0 million people, had one or more disabilities that limit their daily activities. This is an increase of 5 percentage points since 2017 when 22% of Canadians or 6.2 million people, had one or more disabilities¹. People with disabilities continue to be the largest minority group in Canada. Disability can affect anyone, at any time, and is not limited by race, gender, religion, or any other characteristic. With this information, it is clear that the needs of people with disabilities cannot be ignored, and we must make a conscious effort to identify and eliminate barriers for people with disabilities.

Acknowledging the AODA and its Standards is just the beginning, Clarington will continue to expand on the minimum requirements of this legislation. We will continue to do better for our residents, visitors, and staff.

This Plan is a roadmap to creating a better Municipality for everyone. The goals and outcomes laid out in the Plan translate into increased opportunities for people with disabilities to access employment and to fully participate in the social, cultural, political, and recreational life of Clarington.

¹ [The Daily — Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-627-x/2023001/article/00001-eng.htm)

Community Engagement and Input

The Municipality launched an online engagement survey during the 2023 National AccessAbility Week. This online survey provided the community an opportunity to provide feedback on the updated MYAP (Multi Year Accessibility Plan). The survey offered feedback on various subjects. There were multiple opportunities for participants to provide specific and open-ended feedback.

The survey was shared through our social media channels and targeted advertisements were run to further increase survey engagement. The survey was also shared in approximately 14 Facebook community groups. Community-based disability organizations were also contacted to ensure they were aware of the opportunity to provide feedback.

In total, 125 responses were received and carefully reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator and helped inform the updated MYAP. Feedback from the survey was shared with specific Municipal departments and areas of improvement were identified.

The Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) was consulted on the updated MYAP at their June 14, 2023, meeting. Additionally, members of the CAAC were encouraged to provide their feedback anonymously through the public survey.

How is the plan organized?

The sections below address key areas required by the AODA which include Customer Service, Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. After each area, there is a sub-section on key outcomes which provides a summary of what we expect to see as a key performance indicator.

Customer Service

Technology and assistive devices are constantly evolving, and Clarington is committed to ongoing research and investment into accessible customer service. This includes ongoing training, adding communication aids and embracing the flexibility required to meet diverse needs.

We want to be proactive, inclusive, and welcoming to all residents. We have a responsibility to build accessible, responsive, and inclusive spaces. We can do this by:

- Offering accessibility aids to support residents who access municipal services, programs, and facilities. Aids such as adult change tables, sledge hockey sleds, skate aids, and personal amplification devices.
- Continuing to incorporate mobility device charging stations into the facilities and spaces we own/operate.
- Focusing on creating sensory-friendly and wheelchair-accessible activities at community events, municipal spaces, and community centres to create a more inclusive experience.
- Continuing to offer on-demand language translation services, including American Sign Language (ASL).
- Using Clarington's Inclusive Lens Guide when developing programs and services for the communities we serve.

Key Outcomes

- People of all abilities receive seamless, dignified, and equitable access to services in a timely manner.
- Municipal staff have access to resources to support accessible customer service.
- Municipality will be able to track, through user feedback and surveys, a decrease in accessibility barriers and increased satisfaction among people with disabilities.

Employment

- Continue to engage with disability organizations to reach potential employees with disabilities. Utilize various disability organization job boards to ensure job postings are being seen by people with disabilities.
- Review job postings through an inclusion lens and remove non-essential requirements that may limit applicants with disabilities.
- Collaborate with Human Resources to determine different types of training needed for hiring managers to reduce bias in the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities.
- Streamline and integrate employment accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Review and update the return-to-work process.
- Continue to offer employees with disabilities individualized emergency response plans.
- Use Clarington's Inclusive Lens Guide throughout the hiring process and when developing policies and programs for employees.

Key Outcomes

- Job candidates and Municipal staff with disabilities have the support to join, work effectively, experience career growth, and have opportunities for learning, development, and progression.
- Ensure equitable, clear, and consistent employment and accommodation policies and procedures that seek to remove systematic barriers.
- The Municipality will be able to track, through the employee demographic survey an increased number of people with disabilities employed.

Information and Communication

- Continue creating accessible documents and content and offering alternative formats upon request.
- Offer staff continuing education opportunities to enhance their ability to create accessible documents.
- Recognize, and promote, days of significance such as National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Continue monitoring the accessibility of the Municipality's website and web applications to ensure they meet, or exceed, the minimum requirements set out in the AODA.

Key Outcomes

- Residents, visitors, and employees of all abilities are provided with equitable access to Municipal information.
- Municipal staff have access to training and resources to develop and provide information in accessible formats.
- During the next Multi-Year Accessibility Plan public survey, the Municipality will see a decrease in the number of respondents who indicate they've experienced an information and communication barrier with us.
- Customer feedback surveys will show increased satisfaction with how information is shared by the Municipality.

Transportation

- Public transportation is the responsibility of the Regional Municipality of Durham. As such, Clarington is not obligated to comply with most of the transportation requirements in the AODA.
- Active transportation initiatives can be found in the Design of Public Spaces section of this Plan.
- The Municipality will, with other lower-tier municipalities in Durham, discuss the availability and licensing of accessible on-demand taxis. Lower-tier municipalities in Durham are aware of community concerns about the availability of accessible on-demand taxis and we will work with our counterparts to work on solutions to address the barriers.

Key Outcomes

- Residents will have increased access to accessible on-demand taxi service in Clarington.
- Through the next Multi-Year Accessibility Plan survey, we will see a decrease in transportation-related complaints.
- The CAAC has the opportunity to provide feedback to Durham Region Transit.
- The Municipality will be able to demonstrate improved access to a range of accessible transportation and related services in the Municipality that are accessible, affordable, convenient, and safe for people with disabilities.

Design of Public Spaces

- Complete Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) accessibility audits of Municipal facilities and develop an action plan for achieving RHF Gold Level Certification.
- Using a strategic approach, install Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) picture boards in playgrounds across our communities.
- Utilize alternative accessible ground surfaces over woodchipped grounds at community parks to improve opportunities and access for those who use mobility aids or have ambulatory disabilities.
- Incorporate more accessible features at local parks, including sensory activities in each part of our community, so that children with disabilities and parents/caregivers with disabilities do not have to travel far to play.
- Continue installing Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI) and Accessible Pedestrian Signals as required under the AODA.
- Continue to consult with the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) on new, and re-developed, public spaces such as parks, sidewalks, and other community spaces.
- Continue to integrate accessibility considerations into multi-use pathways and recreational trails.
- Continue to consult with the CAAC on the design and location of accessible parking spaces in both on and off-street locations.
- Review snow-clearing operations and programs using an accessibility and equity lens to reduce barriers that limit the mobility of people with disabilities.

Key Outcomes

- Improved accessibility of facilities and public spaces by incorporating accessibility into the design of new/redeveloped facilities and public spaces so that residents, visitors, and employees of all abilities feel welcome.
- During the next Multi-Year Accessibility survey, the Municipality will see increased satisfaction with spaces covered by the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard.

LEAD (Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery)

In 2021, the Municipality worked with the Abilities Centre and went through a LEAD Canada assessment. This assessment looked at how accessibility and inclusion is embedded into our organization. LEAD challenges organizational systems and processes to create transformational change that enables full and meaningful participation for people with disabilities.

Through this process, the Municipality was given a LEAD Action Plan with a variety of short, medium, and long-term changes. Many of the LEAD Action Plan items for the various departments (Community Services, Communications, Human Resources, etc.) are reflected throughout the Key Outcomes listed above. The Municipality has made numerous strides in addressing these changes and will continue to work through the Improvement Plan.

Implementation

The absence of timelines in this plan reflects the fact that meeting the accessibility needs of the community must be part of a continuous improvement model. While we are committed to achieving the goals within this plan throughout the 5-year period, we recognize that flexibility is required when removing barriers and managing unknown situations. We will continue to report on our Accessibility Plan progress each year, keeping ourselves accountable for the goals within this document.

Conclusion

The actions outlined in this Accessibility Plan will help us pave the way to improvement for all. Accessibility does not belong to one committee, service area, or role. The Municipality embraces accessibility as an organization-wide movement, and we are fully committed to creating a more inclusive community.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- **By email:** accessibility@clarington.net
- **By Phone:** 905-623-3379 x 2131
- **TTY:** 1-844-790-1599
- **In writing:** 40 Temperance St, Bowmanville ON L1V 3A6
- **In Person:** Share your feedback with any Clarington staff member.

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at accessibility@clarington.net