



Town of Aurora Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities

Presentation to Council
October 1, 2024



Project Purpose

- Identify the recreational program needs and preferences of persons with disabilities in the Town of Aurora, and
- Develop a plan to address the identified needs.



Project Context

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) was adopted in 2006 and addresses the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport.
- Creating inclusive and accessible recreation means placing the responsibility on those designing and delivering the spaces, policies, and programs to ensure they are welcoming to all.

Project Approach

Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities was completed in two core phases.



Phase 1:
Identification of Needs



Phase 2:
**Development of Recreation Plan
for Persons with Disabilities**

Engagement



Focus Groups:
community organizations,
caregivers, Town Staff,
Town of Aurora Recreation
Advisory Committee



Interviews: Members
of Council, Town Staff,
community organizations



Online Surveys:
community organizations,
persons with disabilities,
caregivers



Telephone Surveys:
persons with disabilities,
parents and caregivers

Who We Heard From



Key Findings - By the Numbers



27% of
Canadians
aged 15 years
and over had
a disability
(2022)



9,973 people
with disabilities
in Aurora
(2021)



Disability
among women
is higher
compared
to men



37.8% of adults
65 years and
over reported
having a
disability in
York Region
(2021)

Key Findings - Community Insights

- There is strong support for a recreation plan for persons with disabilities
- Program participants find Town programs welcoming and summer and spring break programs are highly valued
- Demand for programming with support is growing
- Many disabled people are not participating in recreation activities
- There are financial barriers to accessing recreation

Key Findings - Community Insights

- The built design in some facilities is not fully accessible
- Transportation is a barrier to accessing programming
- Lack of sufficient resources to offer inclusive programming
- Limited programs for youth and adults
- Some caregivers and persons with disabilities may not be aware of what programs are offered by the Town

Mapping Recreation

Town of Aurora Recreation Plan
for Persons with Disabilities



Community Priorities – Our Goals



Ensure programming is inclusive, adaptable to individual needs, and empowering

1. Introduce a wide range of inclusive and adaptive programs catering to various disabilities, interests, and age groups.
2. Implement regular training for staff on inclusivity, disability awareness, and adaptive techniques.
3. Offer "Try It" days for individuals to experience different activities and find what best suits their needs, enhancing empowerment and choice.
4. Develop a feedback mechanism to continuously adapt programs based on participant feedback and evolving needs.

Prioritize well-trained staff and adequate resources

1. Establish a continuous professional development program for staff focused on inclusivity, emergency preparedness, communication strategies, and specific disability accommodations.
2. Ensure resources (staff, equipment, facility, budget) are adequate to meet the individual needs of participants, particularly for those requiring more intensive support.
3. Create a volunteer program that includes people with disabilities to offer peer support, share experiences, and assist in program delivery.

Address financial, transportation, and accessibility barriers to full participation

1. Explore opportunities to make programs more affordable for individuals with disabilities.
2. Advocate to local transportation services to improve accessible transportation options to and from recreational facilities.
3. Develop a strategy to review and implement recommendations from Town facility audit to continue to address physical barriers, ensuring that all Town spaces are truly accessible.

Create volunteer and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

1. Develop a dedicated outreach program to recruit volunteers and employees with disabilities.
2. Implement a mentorship program that pairs experienced individuals with disabilities in leadership roles with those interested in volunteer or employment opportunities in recreation.
3. Explore expansion of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure it is a lens for all major Town planning and communication initiatives.

Increase the availability of adaptive sport and fitness equipment

1. Pursue funding through grants, donations, and partnerships to purchase adaptive equipment.
2. Organize adaptive equipment demonstration days for participants to try different equipment and provide feedback on what works best for their needs.
3. Develop training program to ensure staff are knowledgeable about proper equipment use, maintenance and safety protocols for adaptive equipment.

Enhance communication and awareness of program offerings

1. Develop a communication strategy to support program awareness and engagement.
2. Host an annual expo to promote awareness and community engagement.
3. Continue to create accessible informational materials in various formats and languages to reach a diverse audience in conjunction with strategies Corporate Communications is undertaking.

Enhance communication and awareness of program offerings

4. Create a new full time permanent program coordinator position dedicated to persons with disabilities.
5. Implement a centralized, accessible webpage where participants can easily find information about programs, register, and provide feedback.
6. Consider further enhancements to Town's Recreation Guide to ensure easy access to information needed to guide programming decisions.

Foster and deepen partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community groups

1. Work with local disability organizations and groups to continue to identify program needs and opportunities to collaborate on service delivery.
2. Partner with local organizations and experts to provide specialized training and resources for staff.
3. Partner with community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and local sports clubs to explore opportunities to bring additional resources and expertise to Town programming.

Implementation Plan



Action	Timeline	Resource Considerations	Potential Partners	Indicators
GOAL 1: Ensure diversity of programming that is inclusive, adaptable to individual needs, and empowering.				
1. Introduce a wide range of inclusive and adaptive programs catering to various disabilities, interests, and age groups. (Collaborate with Actions #23 and #25)	O	MODERATE - HIGH Staff time for program development New staff required, new equipment costs Modifications and maintenance of facilities	<u>External</u> • Local disability organizations (Community Living, Autistics for Autistics, Holland Bloorview, etc.) • Sport organizations • Boards of Education • Members of disability community	• Number of new programs introduced • Participation rates among individuals with disabilities • Participant satisfaction surveys
2. Implement regular training for staff on anti-ableism, disability culture, creating inclusion and adaptive techniques.	S	MODERATE Staff time Fees for professional trainers	<u>External</u> • Disability advocacy groups <u>Internal</u> • Human Resources	• Number of training sessions conducted • Staff attendance and completion rates • Improvement in staff knowledge and attitudes (pre- and post-training surveys)
3. Offer "Try It" days for individuals to experience different activities and find what best suits their needs, enhancing self-empowerment and choice.	S	LOW Staff time to facilitate events Potential marketing costs	<u>External</u> • Disability organizations • Local sport organization • members of disability community	• Number of "Try It" events held annually • Participant turnout and engagement levels • Feedback from participants on their experiences
4. Develop a feedback mechanism to continuously adapt programs based on participant feedback and evolving needs.	S O	LOW Staff time for development and staff time for monitoring		• Frequency and quality of feedback received • Number of program adjustments made based on feedback • Participant satisfaction post-implementation of changes

Timelines: O = Ongoing S = Short Term (1-2 years) L = Longer Term (3-5 years)

Resource Level Estimates: Low = Less than \$5,000 Moderate = Between \$5,000 and \$20,000 High = Greater than \$20,000 30



Thank you!

Jodi Ball

jodi@jconsultinggroup.ca

905-399-5634

