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Message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is proud to present here the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan for the Town of Aurora. We are a committee designed and dedicated to making our town a more inclusive place, a place without barriers, restrictions, or roadblocks to access of any kind. We are motivated by the belief that a more accessible town, a more inclusive town, is, in every respect, a better town.

This report will review some of the Town of Aurora's recent achievements in the improvement of accessibility. These include: our continuous work updating the Town of Aurora website to comply with W.C.A.G. requirements; installing automatic door openers, induction loops, and wayfinding signage at municipal buildings; installing modern pool hoists, adult change tables, and a Sensory Pathway at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex; installing audible pedestrian signals at key intersections.

Looking to the future, we will continue our Power Door Operator Project at all town facilities, as well as our focus on installing audible pedestrian signals at other Aurora intersections for the accommodation and safety of our community members with mobility devices and visual impairments. With a view to easing the path to accessibility for all new/renovated town facilities, we will also work on integrating into one comprehensive document the A.O.D.A. Accessibility Standards and the new Ontario Building Code requirements. As an outreach strategy, we will partner with local secondary schools to provide accessibility co-op positions and positions for persons with disabilities. Finally, one of our ongoing goals will remain the enhancement of accessibility awareness in the community through campaigns of education and awareness.

On behalf of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, I thank the local members of Town Council, as well as members of the community, who have worked with us over the years and continue to do so, in our mutual determination to improve our town for the access of all, and establish Aurora as a leader in accessibility advancement and innovation.

Cheers to more positive changes for the future!

Sincerely,

Rachelle Stinson, Chair
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Town of Aurora Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022 – 2026

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Executive Summary

The Town of Aurora is dedicated to the continuous improvement of accessibility within the community, and achieving the goals set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A). The development of the Town of Aurora's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022 – 2026 illustrates how the Town will be implementing the legislative requirements of the A.O.D.A by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for residents, employees, and visitors.

The plan is established in compliance with the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (I.A.S.R), and is based on best practice research, input from the Town's 2018 – 2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee and Town staff. It is organized around the following standards:

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

Statement of Commitment

The Town of Aurora is committed to creating an accessible community that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities using Town goods, programs, services and facilities. The Town will continue its work to identify and remove barriers to accessibility and maintains its commitment to meet the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (O.D.A), Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (A.O.D.A), Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81), and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Background

The Town of Aurora celebrates its growing and diverse population as a source of strength, vitality and economic opportunity, and is committed to improving

opportunities for people with disabilities. The development of the Town of Aurora's Accessibility Plan illustrates how the Town will be implementing the legislative requirements of the A.O.D.A by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for residents, employees, and visitors.

Over the past several years, the Town of Aurora has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring that the Municipality remains as inclusive and barrier-free as possible by following the plans guiding principles. These include:

- Effective collaboration and engagement with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, residents and other community members to ensure that the Town makes informed decisions that shape our community;
- Be proactive and timely to meet the provincial compliance deadlines;
- Ensure fiscal responsibility to provide quality public services while maintaining a sustainable budget;
- Enhance training and leadership knowledge to ensure compliance with Town policies and Provincial legislations;
- Create barrier-free public spaces using standards above the minimum requirements of the Ontario Building Code and Design of Public Spaces to build a universally designed community for residents, employees and visitors;
- Innovate and improve through new technologies, solutions and approaches to accessibility; and,
- Provide respect and integrate all community members looking to use Town goods, services and facilities, including alternative measures if necessary to enable people with disabilities.

Structure and Governance

The responsibility for the implementation of the A.O.D.A falls within the Town's Corporate Services Accessibility Office. Accountability for the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (I.A.S.R) is a shared responsibility with various departments. The Accessibility Office has overarching responsibility for ensuring that respective clauses are executed according to legislative requirements pertaining to the service they deliver. For example:

- Accessible Taxis are led by Bylaw Services;
- Website compliance is led by Corporate Communications;
- Employment requirements are led by Human Resources;
- Information and communication supports are led by Corporate Communications;
- Procurement and Kiosks requirements are led by Financial Services;
- Design of Public Spaces are led by Operational Services; and,
- Library requirements are led by Aurora Public Library.

General clauses are led by the Corporate Services Department through the work of the Accessibility Office. Responsibilities of the Accessibility Office include, but are not limited to:

- Development of the Corporate Accessibility Plan;
- Implementing legislative consultation processes;
- Working with all levels of government on accessibility-related issues;
- Developing and reviewing policy;
- Creating training modules and materials; and,
- Reporting on progress to the Executive Leadership Team, Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Council on all compliance reporting to the Province of Ontario.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is a municipal requirement of the A.O.D.A. The objective of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to provide focus to the Town's initiatives in ensuring that goods, services and facilities will be provided in a manner that respects the inherent dignity, diversity and abilities of all individuals.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Members:

- Rachelle Stinson (Chair)
- Matthew Abas (Vice Chair)
- Hailey Reiss
- Max Le Moine
- John Lenchak
- Jo-anne Spitzer
- Councillor John Gallo

The Town of Aurora and its Accessibility Advisory Committee are committed to making sure people of all ages and abilities have the same opportunities as they live, work or visit the Town.

Duties and Functions of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The role of the Town of Aurora's Accessibility Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the Municipality on a wide range of processes to help make public services and facilities accessible to everyone. The three main activities of the 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 that the committee selects;
3. Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

By law, the Town will consult the committee on the following specific matters:

- When establishing, reviewing and updating multi-year accessibility plans;
- When developing accessible design criteria in the construction, renovation or placement of bus stops and shelters;
- When determining the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs needed in the community;
- On the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces when building new or making major changes to existing on-street parking spaces;
- Before building new or making major changes to existing recreational trails to help determine particular trail features;
- On the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities in their community when building new or making major changes to existing outdoor play spaces;
- On the design and placement of rest areas along the exterior path of travel when building new or making major changes to existing exterior paths of travel;
- On site plans and drawings from developers, when requested.

2022 – 2026 Priorities and Commitments

The new Town of Aurora Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022 – 2026 includes new and continuing initiatives, as well as their outcome, that will assist the Town to meet its commitment to an accessible community. The Town is committed to improving opportunities and eliminating barriers to equal access for all residents, employees and visitors of Aurora.

General Requirements

The general requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (I.A.S.R) under the A.O.D.A require the Town of Aurora to have accessibility policies, a statement of commitment and a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In addition to the requirements, the Town is continuously working to increase accessibility for residents, employees, and visitors by creating non-legislated initiatives to ensure that barriers to accessibility are identified and addressed across the organization.

General Requirement Outcomes

- Continue updating Town of Aurora by-laws, policies, procedures and guidelines to reflect the requirements of the A.O.D.A;
- Review established Accessible Customer Service Standard and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation policies as per the Town's retention by-law;

- Continue procuring goods, services, facilities and kiosks that include accessibility criteria and features;
- Continue updating the multi-year accessibility plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
- Continue to annually indicate progress being made in accomplishing goals of the Town of Aurora Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Continue to complete mandatory A.O.D.A training appropriate to the person's role as soon as possible and in a variety of formats;
 - Continue to embed and train staff to consider accessibility impacts of all new planning, projects, policies and initiatives;
 - Continue to record and track employee learning and development activities specifically related to A.O.D.A and accessibility requirements;
 - Continue ensuring that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are developed and delivered in accessible formats;
- Continue to engage and consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to advance accessibility;
- Continue to host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible

2022 – 2026 General Requirement Goals

- Establish Town employee resource groups to advance accessibility and inclusion. Employee resource groups can be established for one time consultation on a specific topic or established for ongoing engagement within a specific area. Target groups include:
 - Community Accessibility Committee (Parks, trails, facilities and recreation)
 - Elections Accessibility Committee (Town Clerks Office)
 - Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group
- Enhance accessibility awareness within the organization as well as the Town community through education and awareness campaigns;
- Establish annual departmental implementation plans which will include detailed deliverables and timelines;
- Enhance leadership knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with Town policies, Human Rights legislation, A.O.D.A and other related legislation;

Customer Service Requirements

The Town of Aurora is committed to providing excellent customer service for all residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities. The Customer Service Standard under the I.A.S.R requires the Town to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities, and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.

Customer Service Outcomes

- Continue to complete mandatory A.O.D.A training, including Customer Service training, to staff, volunteers and third parties to gain resources and tools on how to better assist a customer with a disability;
- Receive and respond to feedback about the manner in which goods, programs, services and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities; and,
- Provide notice of service disruptions.
- Continue providing accessible processes for receiving feedback;
- Continue providing Notice of Service Disruptions in a timely manner;
- Continue to ensure that people with disabilities receive Town goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives;

2022 – 2026 Customer Service Goals

- Establish a comprehensive accessibility plan for Municipal elections;
- Create election accessibility reports to capture and expand on accessibility efforts in areas such as community engagement, employment, voting place inspections, communication of voting options and staff training;
- Create and consult with the Elections Accessibility Committee about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates;
- Evaluate Town programs and services through the Community Accessibility Committee to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities in Town operated programs

Information and Communications Requirements

The Information and Communications Standard under the I.A.S.R requires the Town to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. The Town of Aurora Information and Communications Standard Policy was established to ensure digital accessibility in all services and information the Town provides to residents, employees, and visitors.

Information and Communications Outcomes

- Continue ensuring that Town processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing for, or arranging for, the provision of accessible formats and communication supports;
- Continue to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports;
- Continue to ensure that any process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports;
- Continue to arrange for accessible formats and communication supports by consulting with the person making the request to determine suitable accessible formats or communication supports in a timely manner at no additional cost;

- Continue to inform the public of the availability of accessible materials, and provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request;
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Town's website and web content to conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Guidelines (W.C.A.G) 2.1 in accordance with the timelines set out by the I.A.S.R; and,
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Town's website and web content to exceed accessibility compliance requirements by providing the appropriate frameworks, tools, guidelines and training for all Town staff;
- Continue to ensure that the Town's website and web content incorporate the Information and Communications Standard Policy;
- Continue reformatting and building corporate templates to meet W.C.A.G 2.1 in accordance with the timelines set out by the I.A.S.R;
- Continue conducting reviews of Town's Information and Communications Standard Policy and update to reflect current best practices in digital accessibility;

2022 – 2026 Information and Communications Goals

- Research and develop a streamlined process for Town employees to access American Sign Language (ASL), Communication Access Real-Time Translation (C.A.R.T) and other accessibility services and supports to provide equitable access to Town residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities;
- Ensure that employees have the tools and resources to develop and provide information in accessible formats;

Employment Requirements

The Town of Aurora is committed to creating an inclusive environment with equality for all who work, live and play here. The Employment Standard under the I.A.S.R sets out accessibility requirements that the Town must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities.

Employment Outcomes

- Continue to ensure all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available supports and accommodations;
- Continue to ensure all applicants are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment and the selection processes;
- Continue to consult with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports upon requested;
- Continue to provide employees individualized workplace emergency response information upon request;
- Continue to maintain a return to work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when required; and,

- Continue to ensure the needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement and redeployment;
- Continue the practice of preparing individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for Town employees with disabilities;
- Continue to conduct employee equity surveys to inform workforce planning priorities through data-informed decision making;

2022 – 2026 Employment Goals

- Establish an outreach strategy and partner with local Secondary Schools to provide accessibility Coop positions and opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Foster a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through analysis of the Employee Engagement Survey and the development of action plans in partnership with Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group

Transportation Requirements

The Transportation Standard of the I.A.S.R sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to make public transportation and related services more accessible. This Standard is shared by both the Town of Aurora and the Regional Municipality of York. York Region is responsible for and creates action items for removing barriers in conventional and specialized transportation services. While not directly responsible for all components of the Transportation Standard the Town still has obligations under the Duties of Municipalities and Taxi Cabs.

Transportation Outcomes

- Continue to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community
- Continue to ensure that owners and operators of licensed taxicabs are prohibited from:
 - from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip; and
 - from charging a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.
- Continue to ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab;
- Continue to ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format to persons with disabilities who are passengers;

2022 – 2026 Transportation Goals

- Prepare the Town for automated vehicles, ensuring accessibility considerations are incorporated in the earliest planning stages;
- Conduct a review of snow clearing policies, practices and procedures using an accessibility and equity analysis, and develop a strategy to reduce barriers that significantly limit the mobility of people with disabilities;
- Conduct a review of parking policies, practices and procedures using an accessibility and equity analysis, and develop a strategy to reduce barriers that significantly limit the mobility of people with disabilities;
- Investigate a low-cost vehicle sensor program to help manage parking and curb space.

Design of Public Spaces (D.O.P.S) Requirements

The Design of Public Spaces Standards of the I.A.S.R provide technical requirements that ensure that newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces are designed to allow for people with disabilities to move through and use amenity spaces comfortably. In addition to these requirements the Town must also comply with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment, often exceeding the requirements through the application of the Town of Aurora Accessibility Design Standards.

Design of Public Spaces Outcomes

- Implementation of Town of Aurora Accessibility Design Standards to incorporate the applicable requirements of the A.O.D.A Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the new Ontario Building Code requirements as they relate to accessibility to create one document where all accessibility provisions can be easily found, understood and applied. These standards will be applied to all new and/or renovated Town owned, leased or operated facilities;
- Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and facilities;
- Continue to improve the accessibility of Town public spaces and workplaces by incorporating accessible design during renovations and redevelopments of recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and facilities;
- Continue with the prevention and removal of barriers within Town recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and facilities through the use of the new Town of Aurora Accessibility Design Standards;
- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance;

- Continue to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.

2022 – 2026 Design of Public Spaces Goals

- Installation of Audible Pedestrian Signals to advise individuals who are visually impaired when they have the right-of-way to cross at a signalized intersection and in which direction they may cross the intersection:
 - Yonge Street and Kennedy
 - Yonge Street and Henderson
 - Wellington and Wells Street
- Power Door Operator Project to address all Town facilities lacking barrier-free entrances to a variety of spaces, providing accommodation for persons using mobility assistance devices;
- Develop universal design policy, encouraging developers to offer accessible features in homes;
- Procured consulting firm to assist in the review of facilities to identify opportunity to install universal washrooms:
 - Town Hall
 - Aurora Family Leisure Complex
 - Aurora Community Centre
 - Victoria Hall
- Procured consulting firm to assist in the review of facilities to identify opportunity to install universal washrooms:
- Procured consulting firm to assist in the review of Victoria Hall, providing a cost analysis and identifying barriers to be removed:
 - Ramp at front entrance
 - Level main floor to provide equal access to all amenities
 - Universal washroom
- Procured consulting firm to assist in the review of facility rinks, providing a cost analysis and identifying barriers to be removed:
 - Custom clear ice rink boards
 - Accessible change rooms
 - Accessible entrance into ice rink
- Acoustic accessibility to be addressed, reducing sound quality (echo) issues. Acoustic accessibility is achieved when what is spoken is received by the listener at a volume that allows the words to be clearly heard and potentially understood:
 - Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex
 - Aurora Family Leisure Complex