

## HOW TO PLAN ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR EVENTS

Prepared by:  
City of London Accessibility Advisory Committee

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Focusing on accessibility benefits us all. Though you may believe that only a few people will benefit from creating an accessible event, the fact of the matter is that the principles of sound accessibility will help everyone: from those with visible and invisible disabilities, to seniors, to young families.

An accessible event is one in which everyone gets to participate and enjoy -- regardless of the individual's ability. The items listed in this guide will help you effectively plan your outdoor events (including, but not limited to, festivals, concerts, picnics, and receptions) and make them accessible to all.

A few key notes:

- Be aware of the features that make your venue accessible;
- Hold events at accessible locations;
- If that's not possible, work modify the location so that all persons can participate without assistance or with minimal help; and
- Please be aware that while visible disabilities can be readily seen, invisible disabilities may not be so obvious.

Those with a physical disability often display some visual cues, such as requiring the use of a wheelchair, crutches, cane or other mobility aids. However, many in our community have varying degrees of invisible disabilities, which can often be more challenging to notice.

These can include those who are: deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing; blind or have some degree of visual impairment; presenting with a speech impediment, developmental disability, mental health issue, and/or psychiatric disability; and those who are presenting with an intellectual disability, learning disability, and/or cardiac disability.

Please review and implement the following items. As well, you are welcome to contact us for clarification or for additional suggestions. Our goal is to ensure all events are accessible and enjoyable for all Londoners and we appreciate your compliance.

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### 2.0 PARKING:

As people with disabilities or limited mobility can benefit from dedicated parking areas and drop-off points (in the case of ParaTransit) please ensure:

- Parking spaces are wide enough to accommodate accessible vans/buses and people who use mobility aids;
- Parking spaces are as close to the entrance of the event as possible; and
- Event personnel are familiar with the location of these parking spots.

### 3.0 PUBLIC ENTRANCE:

Reduce barriers that people with disabilities face entering facilities and venues by ensuring:

- The presence of a level entrance that persons using wheelchairs or mobility aids can pass over;

- An entrance that is wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through. (Greater than 32" recommended);
- In the event that the main entrance isn't accessible, there are signs directing people to the accessible entrance; and
- If the main entrance has steps, it also has a railing.

#### 4.0 EMERGENCIES:

As part of any event planning, there is the need to plan for emergencies and other contingencies. Traditional methods of notification can pose a challenge to those with visual and auditory challenges, and egress for those with ambulatory issues or in wheelchairs can be challenging in the event of an emergency. Please ensure the following:

- Auditory and visual alarms in the event of an emergency;
- Your evacuation plan addresses the evacuation of persons with special needs; and
- Staff are trained in these evacuation procedures.

#### 5.0 WASHROOMS:

Please provide the following:

- Two, at minimum, accessible outdoor portable washrooms;
- Washrooms located in accessible areas;
- Washrooms locations are displayed using large clear letters, and understandable pictures or symbols are used on the signs identifying the accessible washroom(s); and
- Event personnel know where the accessible washrooms are located.

#### 6.0 WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE:

Ensure all signs have large clear letters, use plain language, have good colour contrast, and can be read in all light conditions, in order to direct people to specific areas.

#### 7.0 ENTERTAINMENT SEATING:

Ensure seating areas are integrated with other seating areas (each price point) such as at the front, on the aisles, or along the sides of the stage. Also ensure:

- The seating ensures an unobstructed view;
- A companion can sit beside the person with the disability; and
- Supports are available for the deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.

#### 8.0 LIGHTING:

All areas of travel and the display/booth areas must be adequately lit.

#### 9.0 CABLES AND CORDS:

It is important for all patrons -- especially those with mobility issues -- that you cover electrical cables and cords that cross aisles or pathways. Cable covers should be no more than a half-inch (1.25 centimeters) thick so that they do not become a tripping hazard and so wheelchairs can traverse across them.

#### 10.0 FOOD:

There are a few considerations to keep in mind when providing food stations at events.

- Event personnel are available to assist participants in obtaining food and beverages;
- Part of the food counter is lowered to allow persons with mobility aids to access it easily. (34" is recommended); and
- There is a clear path between tables for a mobility aid user to maneuver. (42" is recommended).

#### 11.0 TICKETS:

Please ensure the following for ticketing purchase and fulfillment:

- The queuing (line-up) area is accessible (and maneuverable) for mobility aid users;
- There is adequate colour contrast between barriers;
- Tickets for accessible seating areas can be ordered in advance of the event by phone.

We strongly recommend offering free tickets to support people who provide supporting identification from approved agencies verifying with an access2 card (or other documentation at the organizers discretion).

#### 12.0 REST AREA/QUIET SPACES

Provide a designated quiet space for rest, especially if your event attracts large crowds and is longer than a couple of hours. These areas, where people have in-and-out privileges, are very helpful to your attendees who may have mental health issues, sensory issues, or fatigue issues. These areas can also serve as a welcome respite for service animals and nursing mothers.