

Report to Corporate Services Committee

To: Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee
From: Rumina Morris, Director Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression
Division
Subject: 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
Date: May 23, 2023

Recommendation

That on the recommendation of the City Manager, the report dated May 23, 2023, entitled 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, BE RECEIVED for information.

Executive Summary

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Appendix A) has been endorsed by the Accessibility Community Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Directorate, and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires a multi-year accessibility plan and an annual report on the status of the implementation plan.

Once received, a copy of the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the annual Status Update will be posted on the City of London website.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aligns with the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan's Strategic Area of Focus "Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion" and specifically to the outcome "The City of London is a leader in becoming an equitable and inclusive community."

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

Between 2020 and 2021, community engagement was sought through a Get Involved website, active outreach, a survey and focus groups. Key themes and improvement requests have been incorporated into the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan with a renewed focus on continuous improvement.

After a Get Involved site survey was complete, focus groups were held with community partner organizations who are led by or serve the disability community to better understand ableism and the barriers to inclusion within the City of London. The Access Without Limits Employee Resource Group, which is comprised of employees with disabilities and accessibility supporters, also shared their ideas on ways to create a more inclusive workplace for staff with disabilities.

Once community feedback and information were collected through these engagement strategies, common themes of challenges and proposed recommendations and solutions helped to inform our planning. In spring and summer 2022, we shared the draft of the plan publicly, calling for community input. In the fall of 2022, a draft of the plan was presented to the Accessibility Community Advisory Committee and our Senior Leadership team to ensure feedback from all Service areas.

While the drafting of the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was underway, all accessibility requirements of the AODA were met and we continued to evaluate new initiatives using the City of London's Equity Tool. After input from the Accessibility Community Advisory Committee, the final draft was presented and has been fully

endorsed by them. The lived experience and expertise of ACAC has been essential to the development of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Once received, a copy of the 2022-2026 Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be made publicly available on the City of London website as well as any annual status reports.

2.0 Discussion and Consideration

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been well underway, and principles of accessibility and equity have been an expectation in all areas of work for some time. All service areas had a chance to offer their insights, ideas and suggested projects for this plan.

As projects and policies are updated and rolled out, these projects will be annually reflected in our Annual Accessibility Plan Status Update (Appendix B).

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

Implementation of the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be resourced through existing budgets.

Conclusion

The City of London has met all current AODA compliance standards and as such has an opportunity to expand our focus to continuous improvement on accessibility enterprise wide. This plan will allow us to take important steps forward to deliver on our commitment to an accessible City for all.

Prepared by:	Melanie Stone, Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor
Submitted by:	Rumina Morris, Director Anti-Racism and Anti- Oppression
Recommended by:	Lynne Livingstone, City Manager



2022-2026 **Accessibility Plan**

Accessibility was considered in the design and development of this document. If you require an alternate format, please email accessibility@london.ca with the details of your request.



London
CANADA

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the City of London is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewakand Attawandaron peoples. We honour and respect the history, languages and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home.

We acknowledge all the treaties that are specific to this area: the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy/Silver Covenant Chain; the Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Haudenosaunee NANFAN Treaty of 1701; the McKee Treaty of 1790, the London Township Treaty of 1796, the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, with the Anishinaabeg, and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee.

The three Indigenous Nations that are neighbours to London are the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; and the Munsee Delaware Nation who all continue to live as sovereign Nations with individual and unique languages, cultures, and customs.

Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgment	2
Statement of Commitment	4
Changing Landscapes for Accessibility Work in the City of London	5
Formation of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division	5
Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Mandate	5
Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework and Equity Tool	6
The Impact of COVID-19	6
City of London’s Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)	7
City of London’s Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	7
2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	8
Community Engagement and Input	8
How is this plan organized?	9
Customer Service	9
Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan	9
Community Feedback	10
2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items	10
Employment	11
Information & Communication	13
Transportation	15
Design of Public Spaces	16
Continuous Improvement	18
Enterprise-wide Approach to Accessibility	18
Climate Emergency Action Plan	19
Mobility Master Plan	20
Safe Cities for Women and Girls	21
Downtown Wayfinding Plan	21
Accountability & Communication	22
Implementation	23
Conclusion	23



Statement of Commitment

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) all organizations need to share their statement of commitment publicly. The following is the City of London's Statement of Commitment:

The Corporation of the City of London is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve. We will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.



Changing Landscapes for Accessibility Work in the City of London

Formation of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

In June 2021, the City of London established an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression division led by a Director, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression. The Accessibility Specialist role transitioned from People Services to the new division as an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor. This move supports an enterprise-wide approach to addressing systemic barriers to inclusion.



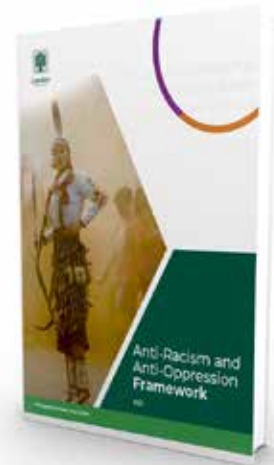
Intersectionality is a Guiding Principle of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression division. Including accessibility and anti-ableism to the anti-oppression work ensures our efforts are cohesive and inclusive. Anti-ableism efforts are intentionally focused on addressing ableism in our community and within our organization. Achieving the shared vision of an accessible City requires an enterprise-wide approach.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Mandate:

Our mandate is to create and sustain action-focused, positive, and lasting systemic change in the City of London so that race or membership in an equity denied group does not predict one's access to opportunities or ability to engage whole heartedly in the London community. We will do this through relationship building, research, community engagement, best practices, education, critical self-reflection, and shared leadership.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework and Equity Tool

The City of London's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework has been designed to support the Corporation by embedding the principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work, from design to implementation of corporate policies, procedures, programs, projects, plans, services, and decisions. Within the framework is an Equity Tool which prompts users to consider and respond to the specific impacts of their work on equity denied groups including those with visible and invisible disabilities. Through the duration of this Accessibility Plan, employees will be trained and supported in applying the Equity Tool to their work.



The Impact of COVID-19

Despite the significant impact on service delivery because of the COVID-19 pandemic, City staff from all service areas worked together to pivot and meet the emerging needs to ensure public health and safety guidelines were adhered to. Some of the work included:

- The Fleet and Facilities team built plexi-glass barriers quickly to stop the spread of COVID-19, but with caution and attention to using visual indicators to prevent confusion and injury about the location of plexiglass for those with disabilities, who are partially sighted or are blind. In addition, microphones and speakers were installed in key customer service contact points in order to ensure access for hard of hearing customers.
- The Health and Safety team worked with Communications and with Fleet and Facilities to put up accessible, easy to understand and consistent signage throughout City properties to help residents navigate to service areas.
- Over 700 cloth windowed masks were distributed to City staff to support effective communication with their fellow colleagues as well as residents accessing City services. We were also able to offer upgraded medical grade clear masks.
- Additional accessibility toolkits were distributed as well to increase accessibility in communicating during a time of increased barriers for physical protection against COVID-19. These toolkits contain hearing supports such as an Ubi-Duo Machine, a counter hearing loop, and personal amplifiers

City of London's Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)

The Province of Ontario has determined that all municipalities who have more than 10,000 residents must create a Council appointed volunteer group known as an Accessibility Advisory committee, comprised of at least 50% people with disabilities. The City of London's Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) meets monthly and provides vital input and suggestions on ways to improve and achieve accessible outcomes on municipal projects, city site plans, programs, and activities. The committee has representation from various community groups and disability advocates who have lived experience with disabilities. The City of London benefits from their input, education, and expertise.

City of London's Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

In 2017, over 200 Londoners, Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) members and community partners stepped forward to help create the Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (CDIS). This group developed a strong vision, statement of commitment, a glossary of terms, and strategies for a more inclusive community. A working group for Priority #4, Increasing Accessibility in our Community, was developed with the support of the Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor and the members of ACAC. The group helped advance awareness about challenges, needs and considerations for people with disabilities.



2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Overview

While specific Corporate Service Areas have been named as leads for the actions identified in this plan, the City of London approaches accessibility and inclusion with an enterprise-wide approach for the best possible outcomes.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines three areas of focus including:

- Compliance in accordance with the required legislation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) with respect to our Customer Service and Program Delivery, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces;
- Strategies identified to meet anticipated future legislative requirements; and
- Continuous improvement strategies and collaborative opportunities which further enhance accessibility and inclusion beyond compliance including, continuous improvement, creating a safe London for women and girls, the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Master Mobility Plan, and our Wayfinding Plan.

Community Engagement and Input

After this Get Involved site survey was complete, focus groups were held with community partner organizations who are led by or serve the disability community to better understand ableism and the barriers to inclusion within the City of London. We also heard from the Access without Limits Employee Resource Group who shared their ideas on ways to create a more inclusive workplace for staff with disabilities. Once community feedback and data was collected from these engagements we affirmed common themes of shared challenges and proposed recommendations and solutions which helped to inform this plan. In spring and summer 2022, we then shared the draft of the plan publicly, calling for community input. In the fall, we then presented the draft to the Accessibility Advisory committee and our Senior Leadership team to ensure feedback from all Service areas. Once we had collected some important feedback on the plan itself, it was edited and designed accessibly.

It is important to note that while the drafting of the multi-year accessibility plan was underway, we continued to meet all accessibility requirements of the AODA and to continue work on new accessibility initiatives and to ensure that the City of London's Equity Tool was at work to address ableism.

How is this plan organized?

The sections below speak to the key areas required by the AODA which include Customer Service, Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces. In addition, we have added a “Continuous Improvement” area to highlight our commitment to embedding anti-ableism work into our ongoing enterprise-wide improvements in our programs, procedures, and practices. Under each heading is an update from the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan, an overview of the community engagement feedback, and a list of action items we are committed to for the duration of this plan.

Customer Service

Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan

- We made significant changes to customer service training, and embedded accessibility principals into our training design. We worked with community partners to deliver timely and updated training on a variety of themes including “dementia friendly cities” and intersectional and accessible policy and problem solving.
- New Accessible Customer Service Toolkits were developed for use at every customer service area in the City of London. With input from our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee, these toolkits were developed to provide proactive engagement with the public and to ensure seamless communication and customer service. These customer service toolkits contain:
 - Ubi-Duo machine
 - Personal amplifier
 - Hearing loops for service counters
 - Magnifiers, pen grips and signature guides
- Several service areas purchased a variety of accessibility aids to support residents to access our municipal services. Examples of aids that have been purchased include pool and change room lifts, water wheelchairs, mobility scooters, sledge hockey sleds (inclusive ice sleds for arenas), FM hearing systems, and adjustable presentation lecterns.
- Accessibility was a top priority during the 2018 Municipal Election. Accessibility training was given to all elections staff. A training video was created to teach staff about accessible customer service at the polling stations. A second video was filmed and aired on Rogers TV informing the public about accessibility during the election. Advanced polling

locations were equipped with accessible voting tools including magnifiers, headphones for read-aloud ballots, voting paddles and a sip and puff mechanism for marking a ballot.

Community Feedback

- Increased and consistent availability of accessible equipment for recreational activities like sledges and skate aids for arenas and rinks across the city, especially for taller children, teens, and adults with disabilities
- More sensory friendly and wheelchair accessible activities at community events, city spaces and community centres to create a more inclusive experience
- Increased communication of available tools and opportunities like the Service London Reporting tool to provide feedback including a demonstration on how to report an issue using the tool.

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

Technology and supportive devices are constantly evolving and at the City of London we are committed to ongoing research and investment into accessible customer service. This includes upgrading our customer service training, adding accessible communications devices to all our service desks, and demonstrating flexibility.

Our goal is to be proactive, inclusive, and welcoming to all residents of the City of London and to understand that we all share responsibility for building accessible, responsive, and inclusive spaces.

- Obtain and promote larger/adult-sized skate aids for public use at City arenas and rinks
- Obtain and promote new ice sledges for adults and children with disabilities using our arenas and rinks
- Obtain and promote sport wheelchairs for use at community centres for inclusive and accessible programming
- Repeat 2019's successful Accessible Halloween Outreach campaign at Storybook Gardens including building in sensory friendly nights for children with disabilities for an inclusive Halloween.
- Continue to increase the number of accessible community garden plots by adding more benches, wheelchair accessible plot spaces, accessible water access and accessible tools for community gardens across the City.

- Review, update and prepare an accessible elections plan including updating materials, offering American Sign Language Interpretation at advanced polls, and ensuring accessible voting tools are available and broadly communicated for the 2022 and 2026 Municipal elections.
- Review and evaluate service area accessibility toolkits for necessary upgrades and updated tools for supportive communication and customer service
- Prepare a new American Sign language procedure to improve engagement with ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters within City programs and services.
- Showcase and spotlight the improvements to accessible customer service by Service Areas in developing accessible projects across the Corporation through the corporate intranet.

Employment

Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan

- We supported the formation of an Employee Resource Group, called Access Without Limits, to develop support amongst employees with disabilities in the Corporation and to help build awareness and advocacy for training initiatives, programming, and resources to support improved outcomes for those with disabilities throughout the City of London.
- We made accessibility improvements to employment onboarding for persons with disabilities and increased participation of employees with disabilities in our internship program. This included updated training for our recruiters, the development of new materials to support awareness of accessible supports. It also included the implementation of accessibility toolkits into People Services for use in interviews and with job applications, and ongoing support to staff on accessibility best practices in hiring, onboarding, and training.
- We trained our recruitment staff on accessible best practices and inclusion such as using ASL interpreters for interviews and developing alternative interview strategies.
- The City of London maintains an internship program for individuals who identify as Indigenous, Black, people with disabilities, newcomers, and recent local post-secondary graduates. Each year, up to 12 paid internship positions are available for a 15-week period that gives the intern the opportunity to develop strategies to increase job readiness, marketability, and overcome potential barriers. In 2021, internship opportunities were also made available in the Anti-Racism and Anti- Oppression division to further assist in developing important work in this area by those with lived experience.

Community Feedback

- People with disabilities feel represented in part-time, contract and casual opportunities but would like opportunities for longer term work, advancement opportunities and promotion. They want the City of London to identify and eliminate barriers to meaningful permanent and full-time work and to see employees with disabilities take on more responsibilities and leadership roles.
- Significant feedback was shared on the need for more accessible onboarding and recruitment practices, including a review of interview best practices, candidate screening, and improved and inclusive job postings.
- Employees with disabilities wanted more detailed information about accommodations available to them and about devices and assistive technology which can support them in their roles and in customer service delivery.
- Employees with disabilities requested improved Accessibility and Accommodation Procedures and improved training for people managers on how to accommodate employees, and how to see the advantages that employees with disabilities bring to the workplace. In general, employees requested a more inclusive, positive, and intersectional understanding of the value of employees with disabilities in the workplace.

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

- Create a new Accommodation and Inclusion for Employees with Disabilities Procedure
- Develop training on the revised procedure on Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities to inform all employees about the procedure, and the steps to provide accommodations.
- Develop a new training program for managers on accommodations, inclusion, and anti-ableism in performance management
- Develop a mental health support training program for managers to ensure a holistic, intersectional, and inclusive understanding of mental health.
- Create a virtual catalogue and “how to guide” of available accessible tools and aids for managers and employees
- Review the Performance Management system and processes with the Equity Tool
- Review and update the return-to-work and employee accommodation programs using the Equity Tool.
- Review and update mental health awareness programs, procedures and accommodations using the Equity Tool.

- Review, adopt and evaluate accessibility principles for all learning and development opportunities
- Conduct a review of internal training facilities, training delivery software and equipment to implement new accessibility features and enhancements.
- Evaluate the impact of the new Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities Procedure and the training on the accommodations policy
- Conduct an employee survey about the experiences of employees with disabilities in our organization through a workforce census and equity audit
- Provide a centralized list of professional development opportunities and resources for employees to learn more about anti-racism and anti-oppression including ableism and intersectionality.

Information & Communication

Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan

- One of the biggest improvements was the redevelopment of the City of London's website. The website was made fully accessible and all documents on the site were also updated to an accessible Web Compliance Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA) standard on January 1, 2021, as required by the AODA. The website is now more intuitive, accessible, and dynamic and staff have been provided training, and continue to have training available to them on accessible document development and remediation.
- Our graphic designers have received training on accessible graphic design and have actively incorporated accessible design in their day-to-day work.
- Over 800 City staff were trained on accessible document revisions to develop their skills related to accessible documents

Community Feedback

- Work with communications to create simple, easy to understand maps and lists of City parks and the locations of public accessible bathrooms including those with adult change tables and other accessible features in community parks, Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and downtown locations.
- Clearer signage in construction sites to detail accessible pathways to goods and services in the areas affected.
- Improved access to pathways and accessible spaces during construction, and increased attention to clearing of debris and tools from walkways and pathways.

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

- Engage and support all Service areas in revising and remediating documents on our Corporate “Team London” Intranet webpage to meet WCAG 2.0 AA Standards, as per AODA standards and requirements.
- Collaborate with all service areas to build processes and procedures to ensure as many internal facing applications are updated to be accessible as possible.
- Ensure ongoing accessible document training and support for accessible document revision and upgrades for both external-facing websites and intranet documents and upgrades, including coaching hours for more complicated and technical documents.
- Create online video tutorials for staff on how to revise common accessibility errors and concerns in corporate documents.
- Offer ongoing training and coaching to staff to enhance expertise in the development of accessible documents
- Plan, implement and evaluate ongoing training on accessible document revision, creation and remediation including accessible forms training, accessible design, and accessible app design
- Develop a communications plan to share information about accessible features of our parks, including simple and easy to understand maps of community parks listing essential services such as accessible bathrooms and rest areas. Work with communications to create simple, easy to understand maps and lists of City parks and the locations of public accessible bathrooms including those with adult change tables and other accessible features in community parks, Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and downtown locations.
- Increase awareness of accessible features in our community centres and public spaces through communications including social media
- Prepare “how to” videos and/or easy to follow guides to share about accessible equipment available at the city and how to access and use them.
- Collaborate with community partners who serve persons with disabilities to build more accessible evaluation and feedback opportunities for community programs/services
- Develop a communications plan to recognize and acknowledge key accessibility awareness date(s), to promote inclusion for persons with disabilities and alongside community partners, ACAC and the Access without Limits Employee Resource Group.

Transportation

Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan

- Worked with community members and partners to consult the Accessibility Community Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), and the broader public, including persons with disabilities, on the development of accessible design criteria in the construction of Rapid Transit bus stops and/or shelters.
- Reviewed the Vehicle for Hire By-Law in consultation with the ACAC to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxi cabs needed.
- Reviewed the Vehicle for Hire By-Law cap on accessible taxi cabs in consultation with the ACAC and investigated incentives for accessible taxis to address the current gap in Accessible taxi cabs because of COVID-19.

Community Feedback

- There is growing concern about the lack of availability of accessible taxi cabs in the City of London, especially outside of the hours of paratransit services. There is a need for flexible on-demand accessible transportation for people who rely on it to get around the city.
- Residents want clearer signage about transit stops and taxi pick-up locations at City sites like community centres, and Storybook Gardens.
- Residents raised significant issues navigating the City because they could not access Paratransit services. Lack of available, responsive and timely Paratransit was a significant and ongoing site of complaint at community focus groups, and through calls to the City

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

- Research and investigate options to meet the community need for on-demand Accessible Taxi Cabs, recognizing that the number of accessible taxis on-demand within the City dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Pilot, monitor and evaluate an accessible taxi incentive to increase the number of accessible taxi cabs available to community members with disabilities
- Continue to support community accessibility partners to consult the Accessibility Community Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), and the broader public, including persons with disabilities, on the development of accessible design criteria in the construction of Bus Rapid Transit bus stops and/or shelters

Design of Public Spaces

Highlights of the 2018-2021 Accessibility Plan

- Our Facilities Accessibility Design Standards were updated in 2021 after an extensive process and support from our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee. Our Fleet and Facilities team has done significant work overhauling the manual to be more inclusive, accessible and to address several improved standards. This detailed manual guides how to build accessible signage, spaces, pathways and more has been used nationally and internationally as it highlights best practices for municipalities and organizations.
- Our Environment and Infrastructure team continued to consult with ACAC and build increasingly accessible parks with a broader understanding of accessibility including sensory related disorders. Our park upgrades included cooperative and inclusive play structures, wheelchair accessible ramps to slides and swings, and rubberized mats in areas where there were no flood zones. Significant attention was given to inclusive design, colour and cooperative play for children of all sizes and abilities.
- Accessible Pedestrian Control Signals (APCS) assist the visually impaired to locate crosswalks and instruct them using sound and vibration when the walk signal is on so that they can begin crossing. Currently 233 APCS have been installed to make wayfinding around the City of London safer and more accessible. As of 2022, 57% of all intersections are equipped with APCS systems with a plan to continue to increase these signals across London as upgrades to intersections are completed.

Community Feedback

- Increased public awareness of the locations of Accessible Pedestrian Control signals and improved communication how to use them.
- Increase the number of sidewalks and improved sidewalk and accessible pathway connections to essential shopping, library, and community centres to support increased mobility around the city.
- Improved lighting in public areas to assist those who have low vision and those who need assistance with wayfinding
- Increase the time at intersection crossings to allow for safer crossings for older adults and persons with disabilities?
- Alternative accessible grounds over woodchipped grounds at community parks to improve opportunities and access for those who use mobility aids or have ambulatory disabilities.

- More accessible features at local parks including sensory activities in each part of our community, so that children with disabilities and parents or caregivers with disabilities do not have to travel far to play.

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

- Use our newly revised London Facilities Accessibility Design Standards for all new facilities and public spaces. This guide, located at www.london.ca/accessibility is a refreshed guideline on best practices and standards related to inclusion of those with physical, sensory, and other disabilities.
- Update the Neighbourhood Community Safety evaluation tool to include the identification of safety concerns for people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups such as women and girls.
- Use an Equity Tool when making decisions about neighbourhood connectivity (sidewalks and pathways)
- Continue to consult with the ACAC and community partners on the need and location of on-street parking as part of the roadwork planning process. Include accessible on-street parking spaces as part of new roadway construction or the redevelopment of roadways.
- Create traffic control training guidelines for employees based on new requirements of Book 7 training, with a specific focus on pedestrian detours and sidewalk disruptions. Review the new temporary traffic control training to review pedestrian safety requirements and best practices for accessibility
- Pilot Visual Communication Play Space Signage in public parks to increase accessible communication opportunities among children with disabilities and those who are non-verbal.
- Implement new accessible signage in (Environmentally Significant Areas) ESAs as new trails are created, or existing trails are significantly redeveloped.
- Evaluate the neighbourhood connectivity engagement strategy and its impact on accessibility in communities.
- Retrofit and enhance existing pathways and networks in parks to provide accessible recreational and social opportunities for all.
- Upgrade existing outdoor eating areas to include accessible picnic tables and clear pathways to access them
- Continue the renovation of existing outdoor playgrounds with improved accessibility features such as rubber surfacing, curb drops and pathways
- Notify and consult ACAC for advice about the continued design and construction of new facilities and those which are undergoing major renovations.
- Create a prioritized list of accessibility enhancements required at City of London buildings and identify which projects, during lifecycle renewal, could benefit from accessibility upgrades.

Continuous Improvement

2022-2026 Accessibility Plan Action Items

- Implement, facilitate, and evaluate an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression framework to improve equitable outcomes and deliverables across the Corporation. This framework includes an important Equity Tool to help facilitate a review of all corporate services, programs, budgets, and policies. It will help us to build a better understanding of the impact of our work. The tool includes reflection on ableism, and accessibility which will help us identify opportunities at the earliest stages of planning and make ongoing changes as required.
- Roll out Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Foundations required training for all City staff.
- Develop metrics to evaluate accessibility programming and policies and their impact in the organization through the City of London's Strategic Plan
- Host regular designated coaching hours for staff to facilitate increased understanding of disability and accessibility in City programs, projects, and policies.
- Participate in community-based accessibility research opportunities with local academic institutions to ensure town and gown collaboration
- Develop a simple customer feedback survey about accessible programs and services via a commonly shared QR code or survey link at all City services.

Enterprise-wide Approach to Accessibility

The City of London has several major projects teams working towards improved outcomes for our residents such as how we commute, how we connect, our emissions and our social impact. Based on community feedback about cycling strategies, communications, wayfinding, and snow removal, it is important to highlight the work of the following teams as they also build action plans that will improve accessibility and inclusion. We will take an intersectional and enterprise-wide approach and work collaboratively to ensure our commitment to accessibility is embedded in our day-to-day work in all operations and plans.

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Historically, accessibility goals and climate emergency measures have been positioned as antagonistic but that has not been the City of London's approach to this work. The City of London has a robust Climate Emergency Action Plan and is working intentionally to listen and be responsive to the impacts of climate change on equity denied groups including those with disabilities. By using an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression framework, we can balance the important measures in our Climate Emergency Action plan with attention to improvements to accessible environments, and to more inclusive calls to action.

The City of London's Climate Emergency Action Plan is a community wide plan to achieve three main goals

1. Net-zero community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050
2. Improve resilience to climate change impacts
3. Bring everyone along (e.g., individuals, households, businesses, neighbourhoods)

Community engagement for the Climate Emergency Action Plan is underway and will be intentional about hearing from people with disabilities, providing accessible outreach activities and in reimagining change that is inclusive to people with disabilities.

For more information about our Climate Emergency Action Plan and to give your feedback please visit our [Climate Emergency Action Plan site](#).



#LdnOnt
ClimateAction

Mobility Master Plan

Transportation is defined as the act of moving people or goods. Mobility offers a more holistic perspective, which includes options for getting around and having access to everyday places like school, work, shopping, parks, and health care. Our mobility system is linked to quality of life and creating places and spaces that function more effectively and safely for everyone. The Mobility Master Plan is working towards a future where everyone has safe, healthy, affordable, and accessible mobility options to get where they need to go.

The City of London’s Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor works directly with the Mobility Master Planning team and has shared feedback from the community engagement for this Accessibility Plan to ensure that mobility means thoughtful, inclusive communities and accessible spaces for all.

“By 2050, Londoners of all identities, abilities and means will have viable mobility options to allow them to move throughout the city safely and efficiently, as well as providing connectivity to the region. The movement of people and goods will be environmentally sustainable, affordable, and supportive of economic growth and development.”

The guiding principles include equitable mobility which means that the plan will “recognize diverse mobility needs and embed equity into decision making to enable everyone to move through the City.”

The findings from our research and community feedback on the accessibility plan have been shared with our mobility master plan team, to ensure that these plans speak to each other, and focus on inclusive and accessible mobility changes ahead.

To share your mobility experience with the team, please visit our [Master Mobility Plan Get Involved Site](#).

Mobility Master Plan

Help shape the future of transportation & mobility in London.



Safe Cities: Safe London for Women, Girls, Gender-diverse and Trans People

Safer cities for women and girls means that our communities are also accessible, inclusive, and safe for people with disabilities. The City of London has representation on the Safe Cities Committee from our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee and Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor. As we build new spaces and redesign older spaces, we will be attentive to the intersectional experiences and needs within physical space.

Downtown Wayfinding Plan

Policy 3.6 of Our Move Forward: London’s Downtown Plan directs us to establish “a downtown wayfinding program that makes it easy to get to downtown and effortless to navigate through it.” In response to this we initiated a wayfinding study in 2021. The results of this study informed the Downtown Wayfinding Plan.

The Downtown Wayfinding Plan is a comprehensive strategy to assist people visiting, living, and/or working in London, effectively navigate within and through the downtown area. The goal of the Plan is to improve navigation with a variety of signs that support different modes of travel and travel speeds. These signs will ensure that whether someone is walking, cycling, rolling, taking transit, or using a personal vehicle that they are effectively guided to their destination within the downtown. This Plan will be implemented in phases over several years and the signage will be updated regularly with accessibility in mind.



Accountability & Communication

To ensure we are properly monitoring the implementation of the City's Accessibility Plan 2022-2026, we are committed to improving reporting opportunities for residents who would like to inquire about accessibility or make a complaint about inaccessibility.

All residents can make a service request, including accessibility service requests or complaints at www.service.london.ca. Our customer service representatives have had training to assess complaints and determine if their ability to access spaces is a part of the complaint. This will allow us to better track issues of mobility within the city.

We currently have accessible customer service feedback forms available online at www.london.ca/accessibility or in physical form at our City service counters.

Through our community engagement, residents with disabilities shared that they did not always know where to turn to share positive or negative feedback. In response, we will work to develop a simple customer feedback survey with focus on accessibility and inclusion in programs and services through a commonly shared QR code or survey link available at all City services. We will also research and explore more accessible feedback methods with input from community partners. In addition, we seek to hold more open houses on accessibility to invite and elicit ongoing and direct feedback from the community.

As required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the City of London will review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every five years. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a living document and is intended to be flexible and adapt to the changing accessibility environment and the feedback of our residents, employees, and customers. Gathering feedback is an important part of the ongoing evaluation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. As the needs of Londoners change, the plan will be reviewed in consultation with key partners in accessibility such as the Accessibility Advisory Committee, customers, and persons with disabilities. In addition, an Annual Status Update Report will be developed to provide an update on the progress made towards achieving the action items outlined under this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and will be posted on our www.london.ca website



Implementation

The absence of timelines within this plan reflect that the needs of the accessibility community and anti-ableism efforts must be part of a continuous improvement model at the City of London. While we are committed to enacting this plan throughout the 5-year period, we recognize that supply chain issues as a result of the pandemic may impact our ability to deliver on some physical changes within specific timelines. Meanwhile other action items are currently already well underway. We will continue to report regularly to our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC), Council, the province and the public on our progress including through our annual our status reports.



Conclusion

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must work to continue to build an inclusive recovery and response. The actions outlined in this Accessibility Plan will help us pave the way to improvement for all. Accessibility and the work of anti-ableism does not belong to one committee, one service area or one role. The City of London embraces accessibility as an enterprise-wide initiative, and we are deeply committed to creating a more inclusive city.

As required by legislation, once approved, the Plan will be posted on the City of London website so that it is available to the public. The Plan will be reviewed and updated every five years or as determined by further changes to AODA legislation. Status updates on this Plan will be posted on the City of London website at www.london.ca/accessibility.



London
CANADA



2022 – 2026 – Accessibility Plan

2022 Status Update



Accessibility was considered in the design and development of this document. If you require an alternate format, please email accessibility@london.ca with the details of your request.



London
CANADA

Our 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a roadmap to continuous improvement in the City of London. The Accessibility Plan outlines key steps we will take together to meet and exceed our legislative responsibilities. These accessibility achievements improve access to employment and full participation in London. The accomplishments we have highlighted in this report demonstrate the City of London's commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive experience for all residents and visitors. This accessibility plan status update was developed with feedback and input from the City's Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC), Access without Limits (AWL) our Employee Resource group for employees with disabilities, community input from persons with disabilities, accessibility partners, our Senior leadership team and staff. It is organized around the AODA's accessibility standards. This 2022 status report highlights key actions taken from January 1st to December 31st, 2022 and is not meant to be a complete inventory of accessibility accomplishments but to highlight improvement and inclusion in key areas of focus.

This 2022 status update aligns our work under the key areas of focus of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

These include:

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



Information & Communication Standards



What did we do in 2022? The following components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been developed and/or implemented:

- Facilitated ongoing accessibility training and document remediation sessions with City staff to ensure that all documents on our website met compliance standards.
 - Over 200 employees were trained on accessible document standards in 2022.
- Worked with our People Services team to ensure ongoing accessibility document training for corporate document revision and upgrades for both external-facing websites and intranet documents and upgrades
 - Over 300 hours of coaching was provided on complex accessible document remediation in 2022
- Began work on an accessible communications plan to share information about accessible features of our parks, including simple and easy-to-understand maps of community parks listing essential services such as accessible bathrooms/
- Prepared “how to” videos and began work on easy-to-follow guides for City staff on the use of accessibility toolkits and equipment.
- The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression division developed a communications plan to recognize and acknowledge and recognize significant dates. As part of this initiative, we worked to ensure corporate acknowledgment of accessibility awareness date(s), to promote inclusion for persons with disabilities and alongside community partners, ACAC and the Access without Limits Employee Resource Group.

Employment



What did we do in 2022? The following components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been developed and/or implemented:

- Drafted a new Accommodation and Inclusion for Employees with Disabilities Procedure with input from employees with disabilities and our Employee Resource Group (ERG) Access without Limits.
 - As part of the outreach for the preparation of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan, employees were interviewed to capture changes required to our Accommodation and Inclusion plan.
 - Our ERG, Access without Limits, was presented the findings of this research to help begin the organization and scope of the new plan.
- We began a thorough review to adopt and evaluate accessibility principles for all learning and development opportunities
 - We have equipped our learning locations with accessible hearing technology, and adjustable teaching desks and are now looking at developing a framework, using our equity tool, to advance accessibility in educational programs offered to employees at the City of London.
- We drafted and collaborated to build an employee survey about the experiences of employees with disabilities in our organization through a workforce census and equity audit for distribution early 2023.
 - The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division alongside People Services worked to develop an accessible, plain language survey to better understand experiences of equity and inclusion in our workplaces and to assess needs in our workplace.
- We began the development of a centralized list of professional development opportunities and resources for employees to learn more about anti-racism and anti-oppression including ableism and intersectionality.

Customer Service



What did we do in 2022? The following components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been developed and/or implemented:

- Obtained 10 larger/adult-sized skate aids for public use at Storybook Gardens.
- Worked to create another successful Accessible Halloween Outreach campaign at Storybook Gardens including building in sensory friendly nights for children with disabilities for a more inclusive "Storyboo" experience.
- Continue to increase the number of accessible community garden plots by adding more benches, wheelchair-accessible plot spaces, accessible water access and accessible tools for community gardens across the City.
 - We added 8 new wheelchair-accessible plots in 2022 and updated pathways, signage, water access, and accessible gardening tools for our community gardens.
- Reviewed, updated, and prepared a 2022 Accessible Elections plan including updating materials, offering American Sign Language Interpretation at advanced polls, and ensuring accessible voting tools were widely available and broadly communicated for the 2022 Municipal elections.
 - In addition, we added a new accessible customer service training component for all poll workers to encourage understanding of accessibility at the polls.
- Reviewed and updated service area accessibility toolkits for necessary upgrades and updated tools for supportive communication and customer service. Three new toolkits were distributed in 2022 and accessible training videos were developed for the toolkits to ensure continuity of use and support for new users of the kits.
- Drafted a new American Sign language procedure to improve engagement with ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters within City programs and services.
- We launched sensory backpacks at Storybook Gardens, providing 25 backpacks for children with disabilities to borrow while they are in the park.
 - We worked with community partners and our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee to build these backpacks so they address a wide range of sensory needs.

Transportation



The following transportation components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been implemented and or developed in 2022.

- Researched and investigated options to meet the community's need for on demand Accessible Taxi Cabs, recognizing that the number of accessible taxis on-demand within the City dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - In 2021 we continued to hear from the public about their concerns about a lack of accessible transportation options, especially for same-day trips. We also heard from members of the taxi industry about the concerns they share about the financial sustainability of accessible taxi options, especially because of the COVID-19 crisis.
 - Using this research and feedback, we have worked to develop options to address the crisis and will be developing these resources for piloting in 2023.
- We better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on the accessible taxi industry and have prepared proposals to address the gaps which will be evaluated and piloted in 2023.
- We have continued to work with our Accessibility Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) to review transportation requirements related to Rapid Transit and our Mobility Master Plan, and we continue to engage this committee and the public on issues of mobility and transportation in our community.





Design of Public Spaces

What did we do in 2022? The following components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been developed and/or implemented:

- Made use of our newly revised London Facilities Accessibility Design Standards (2021) for all newly constructed facilities and public spaces, including workspaces for employees to ensure improved accessibility standards across the Corporation. This guide, located at www.london.ca/accessibility is a refreshed guideline on best practices and standards related to the inclusion of those with physical, sensory, and other disabilities.
 - Notify and consult ACAC for advice about the continued design and construction of new facilities and those which are undergoing major renovations.
- Worked with City planners and engineers to ensure continued support of accessibility and equity as part of a new sidewalk neighbourhood connectivity plan.
- Continued to consult with the ACAC and community partners on the need and location of on-street parking as part of the roadwork planning process.
- Our Health and Safety team updated the traffic control training guidelines for employees based on new requirements of Book 7 training, with a specific focus on pedestrian detours and sidewalk disruptions.
 - The Health and Safety team reviewed the new temporary traffic control training to review pedestrian safety requirements and best practices for accessibility
 - Our environment and infrastructure staff continued to consult with our Accessibility Community Advisory committee (ACAC) on new park designs and on accessible park features





Continuous Improvement

What did we do in 2022? The following components of the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan have been developed and/or implemented:

- In 2022, we implemented an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression framework and Equity Tool to improve equitable outcomes and deliverables across the Corporation. The tool includes reflection on ableism, and accessibility which will help us identify opportunities at the earliest stages of planning and make ongoing changes as required.
 - We began the roll-out Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Foundations required training for all City staff with priority areas identified by our Senior Leadership team
- The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression division began hosting regular designated coaching hours for staff to facilitate an increased understanding of anti-racism, and anti-oppression work including disability and accessibility in City programs, projects, and policies.
 - In particular, areas of advancement in this area included: accessible document preparation and remediation, accessible workspace review, policy and procedure review, and equity tool engagement.



What are our next steps in 2023?



Employment

- We will be finalizing and launching our new Accessibility and Inclusion Procedure for Employees with Disabilities in 2023, and developing training to help facilitate engagement and awareness of the procedure.
- We will complete an employee Equity and Inclusion survey to help us better understand the equity and inclusion needs in our corporation in 2023



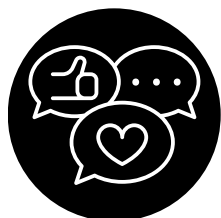
Customer Service

- We will be updating our accessibility toolkits and rolling out updated training on accessible customer service.
- We will be piloting new sensory backpacks at our camps in 2023.
- We will be updating our Accessible Customer Service training
- We will be building an accessibility working group with community partners to encourage improvements in accessible engagement and collaboration



Transportation

- We will be working to continue outreach and engagement for our Mobility Master Plan, our neighbourhood connectivity plans, and a pilot project to improve accessible taxi opportunities in our City for Londoners with disabilities.



Information and Communication

- We will be further developing and rolling out an accessible communications plan to better communicate accessible features available in our city facilities.
- We will continue to train our city staff on accessible document creation and remediation.



Design of Public Spaces

- Continue the renovation of existing outdoor playgrounds with improved accessibility features such as rubber surfacing, curb drops and pathways.
- Pilot Visual Communication Play Space Signage in public parks to increase accessible communication for children.

Statement of Commitment

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) all organizations need to share their statement of commitment publicly. The following is the City of London's Statement of Commitment:

The Corporation of the City of London is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve. We will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Contact Us:

To obtain a physical copy of this status update, or to inquire about accessibility in our City services, please contact accessibility@london.ca for more information.

