

ACCESSIBLE AJAX



Accessibility Plan

2018-2019 Status Report
(Appendix A to 2018-2022 Plan Document)



Alternative formats of this document are available upon request.
Please call 905-683-4550 or email contactus@ajax.ca.



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★ Policy & Procedure

Identification of accessibility barriers and implementation of solutions to prevent and remove them throughout the organization.

★ Supported through:

- Staff and volunteer training on new and existing accessibility policies, processes and legislation.
- Ongoing policy, programming and legislation reviews, using a diversity and inclusion lens, to identify, remove and prevent barriers.
- Development of new and review of existing policies and processes relating to accessibility and accommodation.
- Incorporating new and existing tools and resources into daily business practices.

★ Highlights from 2018

Legislative & Information Services

- **Formally documented Municipal Election procedures and processes, incorporating considerations for accessibility, diversity and inclusion**
- **Reviewed and refreshed staff and volunteer accessibility training content to ensure it addresses legislative requirements and employee/volunteer role needs.**
 - Training was delivered using multiple delivery methods, including an accessible online module and in-person group sessions.
- **Development of 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan and Post-Election Report**

Recreation, Culture & Community Development

- **Volunteer Training**
 - Town of Ajax Volunteer Training is now delivered via an online module which allows for more convenience and accessibility for participants to access training in advance of starting as a Town volunteer. The flexibility of this method allows for participants to access training remotely, using the device of their choice.

★ Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Legislative & Information Services

- **Ongoing delivery of Integrated Accessibility Standard & Ontario Human Rights Code Training to new staff and volunteers**
 - Refreshed content will move to an accessible, online delivery format in 2019.
- **Private Transportation Reform (By-law Services)**
 - Modernize the private transportation industry by-law to include taxis, Uber, Lyft, etc.

- **New Parking Management System**
 - A complete upgrade to both the software and hardware of the Town's existing system. The new system will feature more automated processes, include an online permitting process (pilot), online real-time payments, etc.

Office of the CAO

- **Creation of an informal staff working group for staff education and training (2019)**
 - This working group provides the opportunity for staff to collaborate and share information on education initiatives relating to corporate training, customer service, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and accessibility.
- **Review of Corporate Customer Service Standards (2019)**
- **Re-introduction of ISO Certification (2019)**
 - Accessibility and diversity lens used when writing policy and procedure documents.

Planning & Development

- **Undertake a comprehensive review of the Town of Ajax Zoning by-law (Zoning Our Future) and Official Plan Review**

Recreation, Culture & Community Development

- **Age-Friendly Community Planning (2019)**
 - This project will involve extensive community consultations through connections with community groups, organizations and key stakeholders, as well as through public surveys and open houses. Consultations will focus on determining the Town's status with respect to the eight dimensions of an Age-Friendly Community, as well as addressing gaps and establishing objectives moving forward.
 - The Steering Committee will include staff subject matter experts as chairs for each sub-committee, as well as representatives from community organizations and members of the public 55 years of age or older.

+ Customer Service

Provision of accessible, quality customer service in response to the diverse needs of the Town of Ajax.

+ Supported through:

1. Provision of diverse programs and services, meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.
2. Ongoing outreach and consultation with persons with disabilities, the community and Accessibility Advisory Committee.
3. Availability of accessible feedback methods.
4. Widely available accessibility-related information.

+ Highlights from 2018

Ajax Public Library

- **Develop services and programs for people with various abilities**
 - The Library organized 12 sessions with Community Living offering various themes such as screening educational short films from the National Film Board, sensory story time, Lego, books, and inclusive toy tables for clients to explore.
 - In recognition of Brain Tumor Awareness Month (May), the Library hosted the Brain Tumor Awareness Foundation of Ajax Support Group's annual information kiosk.
 - The Library co-hosted a Mental Health Symposium with the Carion Fenn Foundation. The theme of the event was 'resilience', and 6 panel speakers discussed personal experiences with mental health or the services that their organization provides. Approximately 70 people were in attendance.
 - The Library hosted 6 sessions of Brain Wave Cafés for individuals concerned about cognitive change and dementia.
 - Continued hosting of monthly meetings of a Rare Disease and Wellness Support Group, where experts offer support, education, and resources for chronic disease management.
- **Development of online membership application process and online fees payment options for customers to improve accessibility**
 - An online membership application and fees payment process has been developed to allow customers who cannot come into the library to sign up for a library card to access the library's online resources, (databases, eBooks, movie streaming, etc.).
- **Staff Training**
 - Library staff attended sensory Storytime training on how to offer Storytime programs for children with autism.
- **Implementation of Self-Check-out units**
 - Self-check-out units have been implemented to offer self-sufficient service to borrow materials and improve service efficiently for customers.

Legislative & Information Services

- **2018 Municipal and School Board Elections**
 - Facilitated online and telephone voting methods, in addition to three in-person

Voter Assistance Centres.

- Special Voter Assistance Centres were set up at local long-term care facilities and retirement residences to support older adult voters with online and telephone voting methodology.

Recreation, Culture & Community Development

• McLean Community Centre Water Wheelchair

- The new chair is more robust and should assist with avoiding downtime due to maintenance and repair, issues that were prevalent with previous models. The new chair has powder-coated stainless steel framing for increased durability and protection. The weight capacity is 300lbs, an increase from the 250lbs capacity of the previous model.

• Affordable and Dignified Access to Recreation

- Created a resource flyer which provides information on Municipal, Regional, Provincial and Federal programs for individuals and families
- Staff took part in regional training on Financial Empowerment, Subsidy and Dignity in Access
- The Town of Ajax participates on a partners committee for the development of income tax clinics for low income populations
- The Town of Ajax is part of the Region of Durham's Financial Empowerment Steering Committee (reviews and provides recommendations on various approaches to financial empowerment)
- Shower access provided free of charge at all three community centres during designated time to ensure every resident is treated with dignity and respect. The Town is dedicated to the well-being of all Ajax residents and providing a safe environment for all.

• IMPACT Ajax Community Support Program

- Funded the "BSmart Kidz Foundation "Helping Families with Special Children and Youth for their Future" event. This event helped families with children with exceptionalities to learn about navigating the mental health system and processes for completing forms for the Registered Disability Savings Plan and Disability Tax Credits.

• Inclusion Services

- 169 support spaces were offered during the 2018 summer camp season.
- 31 registered support spaces were offered seasonally (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Support at non-registered (drop-in) programs was offered at Basketball and the Youth Room
- Inclusion Fusion Events were held once monthly at the Youth Hub (The SPO) with programming for youth with special needs.

• Community Partnerships

- Community Living Pickering, Ajax and Whitby was provided with additional program space at the McLean Community Centre to run their programming.
- Grandview Kids and Special Olympics offer programming within Ajax facilities
- The new Grandview "Let's Get Active" program was started for children and youth with developmental disabilities.

+ Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Ajax Public Library

• Develop inclusive services and programs

- Offer sensory storytime programs for children with autism.
- Develop partnership with Grandview to engage with and promote library programs to clients.
- Explore opportunities with local schools to offer special education class visits.
- Investigate opportunities to offer sensory-friendly film screenings.
- **Continue to Offer Staff Training**
 - Explore opportunities for staff training for serving customers with intellectual disabilities.

Recreation, Culture & Community Development

- **Continue to offer a variety of accessible and inclusive programming opportunities**
- **Continue to explore new partnership opportunities with Special Need-focused Organizations**
- **IMPACT Ajax Community Support Program (2019)**
 - Funded Autism Home Base Durham's "Creative Connections Ajax" event. This program invited adults with autism to explore arts and music alongside their parent/caregiver. The event was a classical music concert that was held at the St. Francis Centre and allowed participants who might not have access to such events due to behavioral barriers, to access the event in a welcoming and supportive environment.
- **Inclusion Services (2019-2020)**
 - Events hosted in the Youth Room, such as a monthly "Social Colouring Club" for youth with special needs, that incorporate sensory feedback and adapted equipment (scented pencil crayons, large grips, etc.) and the "Sensory Safe Hour" where bright lights are dimmed, games and music are muted and noise cancelling headphones are provided for use.

Office of the CAO

- **Conduct Citizen Engagement & Satisfaction Survey (2019)**

▲ Information & Communication

Provision of Town of Ajax information and communications in accessible and alternative formats.

▲ Supported through:

1. Accessible intranet, internet sites, and applications.
2. Growing staff knowledge and training on assistive technology.
3. Awareness of alternative communications methods (TextNET, language line, etc.).
4. Availability of communications materials in accessible and alternative formats on request.

▲ Highlights from 2018

Ajax Public Library

- **Accessible Hardware and Software Updates**
 - Accessible workstation hardware and software has been updated.
 - Staff have improved the packaging of the Daisy Reader (for talking books) to provide easier access and portability for customers to borrow the device.
- **Library promotional material review to ensure inclusion of all accessibility features and services offered**
 - Staff enhanced the Library's "What's On" Newsletter by developing accessible versions for people with visual or cognitive disabilities.
 - Promoted collections and services to schools, such as the Summer Reading Club children's collection availability in Daisy reader format.
- **Continue to investigate a sustainable library by engaging in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community**
 - The Library has reached out to organizations such as Ajax PROBUS, Kelly's Place and Community Living to promote the Library's resources and services.
- **Support the Town's Age-friendly Community Initiative**
 - Staff engaged Ajax's diverse communities to enhance the quality of life of older adults and support lifelong learning by offering one-on-one and group technology training at four senior's residences.
 - Staff developed a program called "Empower Yourself" to offer workshops on various topics that were vital to know while accessing technology, such as internet safety and security, online shopping, and safe use of social media.

Legislative & Information Services

- **Regular promotion and use of Notice of Service Disruption process and posting.**
- **Routinely received accessibility feedback from the public and provided appropriate responses in consultation with key departments.**
- **Attendance at accessibility-related forums and conferences to network, share best**

practices and learn about new and emerging issues.

- **Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to plan and implement events and activities in recognition of National AccessABILITY Week and promotion of accessibility awareness:**
 - Partnership with Ajax Public Library and WindReach Farm to coordinate an interactive presentation for local school visits to the Library.
 - Partnership with City of Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee to host an Accessible Ajax information booth at the Pickering Town Centre during National AccessABILITY Week.
 - Community flag raising.
 - Hosted TIFF Film Circuit film screening of “Breathe”.
 - Accessible Ajax Information booth at Older Adults 55+ BBQ.
 - Bi-monthly publication of Ajax Accessibility Buzz newsletter.

Office of the CAO

- **Website redesign**
 - During the website redesign and public engagement platform (PEP) development, the Town made accessibility a priority. Each vendor’s platform was vetted during the selection process to ensure that they met AODA compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.
 - 36 staff participated in a modern writing workshop with the website vendor (eSolutions). The session included how to write to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.
 - AODA improvements to the website redesign include:
 - Website colour palettes: background colours and text overlays were rigorously inspected to meet AODA compliance.
 - All content was reviewed, simplified using common language and updated with proper headings to improve accessible standards. The Town reduced content pages from 950 to 220 pages.
 - 45 staff participated in Content Management System training that included “how to” accessibility training.
 - Met with key community stakeholders (25+ community members) including members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to discuss the naming convention for pages and navigation to assist all visitors in understanding the Town’s content structure.
 - New customized search bar (search bar is 100% customizable to track any pages that require special consideration in ordering; also allows the Town to modify search results to meet audience needs).
 - Navigation (naming convention, colours, titles)
 - News and calendar feeds (colours, language, images with alt tags, headings, and links).
 - Images with alt tags and description.
- **In My Opinion (IMO) Hub – Public Engagement Platform**
 - As this platform was new to the Town, staff reviewed the platform for AODA compliance and made updates to the vendor’s template prior to launching. AODA improvements include:
 - Colours (text, headings background, navigation)
 - Content (simplified language, links, heading)
 - Functionality (ensured that all features of this user engagement platform were AODA compliant)
 - Form fields
 - Contact information

- **Site Improve**
 - The Town purchased a new software called Site Improve that specializes in AODA compliance. The software actively scans the Town's sites and provides staff with scheduled reports for accessibility issues including but not limited to spelling, links, alt text for images, colours, headings, code (not visible to the eye) and more.
- **Live Streaming Videos**
 - Approximately 25 events were live streamed online in 2018, providing residents the opportunity to "attend" from a mobile or desktop device.

Recreation, Culture and Community Development

- **In Conversation With... Speaker Series (*moved to Office of the CAO 2019*)**
 - In November 2018 one session focused on The Criminalization of Mental Health: Culture Stigma and Incarceration. The session included 5 expert speakers as part of a panel discussion on mental illness, culture, stigma and incarceration. The background of the speakers included Ontario shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, McMaster University, Canadian Mental Health Association and the Provincial Government. This session was live streamed so people could access and interact with the presentation remotely, which provided more accessibility and flexibility to the audience.

▲ Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Ajax Public Library

- **Review accessibility features on all online resources (i.e. databases, downloading, streaming, etc.)**
- **Continue to review the Library's promotional materials, including website to ensure inclusion of all accessibility features and services offered.**
- **Investigate the creation of signage in Braille format.**
- **Continue to investigate a sustainable library by engaging in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community.**
 - Expand outreach initiatives to other organizations, such as the Learning Disability Association of Ontario, Abilities Centre, Hearing Society and CNIB to educate and inform key leaders about the existing and potential role of the Library in serving their clients.
- **Continue outreach initiatives to promote the Library's resources, particularly for the Daisy collection and downloadable collections.**
 - Outreach to local schools to engage students with disabilities.

Legislative & Information Services

- **Participation in joint-hosting of 2019 Spring Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals conference with other Durham municipalities (2019).**
- **Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to plan and implement events and activities in recognition of National AccessABILITY Week and promotion of accessibility awareness (2019)**
 - Partnership with Ajax Public Library "Movies at the Main" event to screen "The Upside" as a kickoff event to National AccessABILITY Week.
 - Partnership with Ajax Public Library and WindReach Farm to coordinate an interactive

- presentation on adaptive sports for local school visit to the Library.
- Partnership with Ajax Public Library and various community organizations to host 5th Accessibility Awareness Fair.
 - Host community flag raising.
 - Hosted film screening of “Life, Animated”, in partnership with Grandview Kids.
 - Accessible Ajax Information booth at Older Adults 55+ BBQ, Spring Fling, and Canada Day community events.
 - Bi-monthly publication of Ajax Accessibility Buzz newsletter.

Office of the CAO

- **Accessible Documents Training (2019)**

- 2 sessions will be offered for staff who create documents for the public and/or are content managers for the website.

● Employment

Full participation of persons with disabilities in Town of Ajax employment.

● Supported through:

1. Provision of individual employee accommodation plans and emergency situation support for employees with disabilities.
2. Accessible human resources considerations (e.g. throughout recruitment practices, interview process, employee growth and development, redeployment, etc.).
3. Ontario Human Rights Code training and resources for staff and volunteers.

● Highlights from 2018

Recreation, Culture and Community Development

● Inclusion Services

- 2 Inclusion Advocates for Summer Camps Programs were hired through grant-funding program
- 18 Summer Inclusion Support Staff hired (additional staff through grant funding)
- 11 March Break Inclusion Support Staff hired
- 8 Seasonal Inclusion Support Staff hired
- Full-time Recreation Supervisors participated in Behaviour Management Training Systems to become trainers
- Inclusion Support Staff offered training in Lifts & Transfer by a Registered Occupation Therapist from Grandview Children's Centre, CPI Training was offered through Variety Village, and Autism 101, Sensory Processing, Personal Care Trainings were run in-house.

● Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Recreation, Culture & Community Development

● Inclusion Services (2019-2020)

- Planned implementation of 2 permanent Inclusion Advocate positions for the Summer Camps Program and will seek additional Support Staff.
- Plan to implement Behaviour Management Systems training to all Inclusion Support Staff, youth Staff, and Supervisors of Recreation Programs.

Transportation

Contribute to accessible Regional transit planning and ensure municipal taxicab licensing meets the needs of persons with disabilities

Supported through:

1. Ongoing public discussion and consultation relative to the proportion of accessible municipal taxi cabs.
2. Continued liaising with the Region of Durham and Durham Region Transit relative to transit bus stops and shelters to be installed in the Town of Ajax.

Highlights from 2018

Operations & Environmental Services/Legislative & Information Services

- Staff continue to liaise with Durham Region Transit on proposed location of transit stops to identify pedestrian connections.

Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Planning & Development Services

- **Integrated Transportation Master Plan (2019)**
 - A toolkit with a series of recommendations to achieve a community vision of a well-connected, inclusive, and accessible transportation system that caters to the needs of all users and all modes. Accessibility considerations within the ITMP include:
 - AODA requirements should be met to the greatest extent possible in development of active transportation networks
 - Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces should be applied when designing pathways, trails and sidewalks
 - Recommendations with regard to a Complete Street Policy includes the continued promotion of multi-functional street corridors to provide better accessibility and travel options to different users.

♥ Public Spaces

Greater accessibility into, within, out of, and around Town of Ajax facilities, parks, trails and public spaces.

♥ Supported through:

1. New facility construction and future renovations and retrofits in compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards.
2. Consideration for accessibility improvements during maintenance and repairs to facilities, trails, parks and public spaces.

♥ Highlights from 2018

Operations & Environmental Services

- **Village Community Centre**
 - Retrofitted two existing non-accessible washrooms into two universal accessible washrooms.
- **Door Replacements**
 - New entrance doors were installed that incorporated automatic door operators or automatic sliding doors, complete with accessible signage. Doors were replaced at the following facilities:
 - McLean Community Centre east and west entrances (completed spring 2019)
 - Main Branch Library front entrance
 - Ajax Community Centre Pads 3 & 4 entrance
 - Ajax Community Centre HMS Room entrance doors (funded by the Enabling Accessibility Fund Grant)
- **Quaker Meeting House restoration**
- **Pat Bayly Square construction**
- **Parks & Playgrounds**
 - Lakeside Park
 - Horne Splashpad
 - Harkins Park
- **Capital Design & Construction Projects**
 - McLean Community Centre Parking lot rehabilitation
 - Ajax Community Centre Parking lot expansion
 - Ajax Plaza Parking lot rehabilitation

♥ Future Goals

Implementation of Future Goals is subject to future budget approvals.

Ajax Public Library

- **Investigate accessibility option of push-button automatic doors for the Rotary Rooms A and B at the Main Branch**

Operations & Environmental Services

- **Construction of Audley Recreation Centre Phase II (2019)**
- **Town Hall (2019)**
 - Retrofitted existing washrooms and installed a new universal accessible washroom (partially funded by the Enabling Accessibility Fund Grant).
- **Paradise Park Washroom Facility (2019)**
 - Construction of a new washroom facility will include accessible entrances, interior routes, washrooms and a universal accessible washroom.
- **Parks, Trails and Playgrounds (2019)**
 - Paradise Park
 - Duffins Village Central Park
 - Picov Park Retrofit
 - Horne Playground Retrofit
 - Mulberry Meadows Parkette
- **Ajax Community Centre Flooring Replacement (2019)**
 - Replacement of existing flooring throughout various areas; installation will include tactile walking surface indicators at stairs.
- **Council Chambers & River Plate Room Upgrades – Design (2019)**
 - Designing new audio-visual solutions for Ajax Council Chambers and River Plate Room, as well as a physical space re-design for the River Plate Room. This project will ensure that the Town's most critical meeting rooms adhere to modern technology and accessibility standards.
 - Council Chambers: Possible project elements include higher quality presentation technology, video recording and/or web-streaming equipment, video captioning technology, and electronic voting capability. In addition, the design phase will include plans for a re-orientation of Council member and staff seating on the dais.
 - River Plate Room: This project will consider similar technological upgrades to those in the Council Chambers to ensure consistency in the level of service and procedural approach to the delivery of public meetings. Installation of a proper microphone system for the benefit of the audience is also needed. Revisions to the physical design of the River Plate Room are needed in order to improve accessibility and usability of the space for public meetings, such as increasing gallery seating room.
- **St. Andrews Community Centre – Design (2019)**
 - Construction of a new pickleball court, improved pedestrian and vehicle connections, resurfacing of parking lots, tree planting, and age appropriate AODA compliant site furniture. The improvements will be located adjacent to the existing St. Andrew's Community Centre.

♣ Feedback

The Town of Ajax encourages comments on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and suggestions for accessibility improvements. What does accessibility mean to you? There are a number of ways that you can connect with the Town to share your accessibility-related comments:

Staff Lead: Sarah Moore
Committee & Accessibility Coordinator

Email: accessibility@ajax.ca

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TextNET: 1-866-460-4489

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Hardcopy Customer Feedback Forms are also available at all Town of Ajax facilities.



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