

Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Accessibility Status Report 2023

A status report outlining the achievements and measures taken to implement the
Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury's 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

This document is available in an accessible alternate format by request.



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Introduction

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (BWG) is dedicated to the continuous improvement of accessibility within the community and as such, continues our pursuit of the prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities. The Town has made great strides during 2023 in the implementation of our 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Background

As required under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations* (IASR) O. Reg. 191/11 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), section 4(1) states that designated public sector organizations (municipalities) shall establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Regulation. Additionally, section 4(3) states that municipalities shall prepare annual status reports on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan.

The 2023 Accessibility Status Report is an update that the Town of BWG provides on the measures taken to improve accessibility and implement the requirements set out by the Province of Ontario on accessibility. The annual status report outlines the actions taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services, facilities, and public spaces. It also details the Town's strategy for meeting the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation.

Ongoing commitment

The Town of BWG's 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Council in February 2020. The 2023 Annual Status Report allows the Town to outline and communicate the past year's achievements and ongoing commitment in achieving accessibility. Town Staff from all service teams participate in the development and implementation of accessibility planning within the Town. Primary focus is placed on the five standards legislated by AODA: information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service.

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury is dedicated to achieving a barrier-free community and is proud of the accomplishments achieved thus far.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was established in 2002. The AAC is responsible for the provision of advice to Council on specific initiatives to be undertaken by the Town. This consultation assists with the prevention, identification and removal of barriers that restrict people with disabilities from participating in Town programs or accessing services and facilities. The Committee is comprised of dedicated volunteers committed to working towards a barrier-free municipality.

The Town's AAC is made up of citizens and Council representatives. Members are representing and advocating for persons with disabilities in the community. The BWG AAC continues to champion, promote, and facilitate a barrier-free BWG and provides valuable advice and feedback to Council and staff. In addition, the AAC participates in various accessibility related activities within the community.

Committee Membership for 2022-2026 Term:

- Councillor Peter Dykie (Chair)
- Councillor Cheraldean Duhaney
- Tracey Doncses
- Meade Helman
- Olivia Khan
- Karla Piloza
- Lexi Tokhi
- Lynn Woods

The AAC meets at minimum quarterly each year and meetings are open to the public. During meetings, updates are provided to the Committee, which may include presentations or discussions led by staff.

In 2023, the AAC consulted, reviewed, and made recommendations with respect to internal and external programs and initiatives such as:

- Reviewed and endorsed the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury's 2022 Accessibility Status Report. Completed facility accessibility audits of the Town's Leisure Centre, Library, and customer service locations at 100 Dissette Street, 305 Barrie Street, and 61 Holland Street East.
- Reviewed options to increase inclusive transportation for all residents and conducted an Accessible Taxicab public engagement survey to gather feedback and investigate the potential need for additional accessible transportation options in the BWG community.
- Reviewed site plan applications and provided recommendations on accessibility relating to the design of public spaces including local community parks.
- Provided ongoing public awareness of accessibility within the community.
- Held an annual public consultation meeting encouraging the public to provide feedback with respect to transportation services, on-street parking spaces, recreational trails, outdoor play spaces and rest areas, along with exterior paths of travel.

Priorities moving forward:

- Accessibility review of BWG's parks and trails.
- Enhancing accessibility awareness within local schools and the community

- Incorporate on-street barrier free parking spaces.
- Assessing the results of the Accessible Taxicab survey to establish a grant program aimed at improving accessible taxicab services.
- Work with BWG's Economic Development to increase awareness of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Program.
- Reviewing site plan applications and providing recommendations on accessibility relating to the design of the new proposed BWG Town Hall.

Report of Town achievements, initiatives and ongoing goals

The following items represent the recent achievements and initiatives, which have improved accessibility or removed barriers in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The list is formatted to reflect the commitment of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and core standards of the AODA.

Information and Communications Standards

This standard outlines the requirement for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities. This standard gives all people an equal chance to be active and learn within their communities.

While the Town continues to support the community by offering accessible information in alternate formats and promotes accessible feedback processes within all customer service locations, some of the 2023 achievements include:

- Social media campaigns endorsing an awareness of Easter Seals Red Shirt Day™, AccessAbility Awareness Week, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Awareness Month, World Autism Day, and Epilepsy Awareness (Purple Day), were created and promoted adhering to accessibility guidelines.
- Launch of newly redeveloped Town website. The new site adheres to the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards and the 4 principles of being perceivable, operable, understandable and robust.
- The Town continues to report and continually ensure compliance with the *Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility*.
- When designing publications and documents for the website and for public distribution, the Town of BWG's "Creating Accessible Document Guidelines" have been followed to ensure that font size, colour and graphics are designed with accessibility in mind and created in a way that allows them to be viewed by assistive devices.
- Updated various templates and notices to an accessible format, such as facility booking applications, proclamation and flag raising requests, road occupancy permit applications, and the Community Improvement Plan Program application process.

Employment Standard

The employment standard under the IASR requires organizations like municipalities to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The Town considers the accessibility needs of its employees and provides individual accommodation plans when required.

The Town continues to attract diverse talent by applying an inclusion clause into all recruitment opportunities and processes, while also remaining an active Employer Partner of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI).

The Town is committed to equity in employment and in establishing a qualified workforce that is reflective of the diverse population we serve. We encourage applications from Indigenous peoples, racialized people, persons with disabilities, and those who identify as LGBTQ2S+.

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury is committed to providing accommodations based on any human rights protected grounds and in accordance with the AODA, throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Transportation and Design of Public Spaces Standards

The design of public spaces standard outlines the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for people with disabilities. For transportation, the standard sets out the requirements for transportation services provided. Particularly, features and equipment on vehicles, routes, and services offered must be accessible to people with disabilities.

As per IASR O. Reg 191/11 s. 41 (2), the Accessibility Advisory Committee held a public consultation meeting on October 30, 2023, to seek public feedback for the building and redevelopment of public spaces. This public-driven meeting was advertised on the Town's social media platforms and the local newspaper's website.

Some of the 2023 achievements include:

- The Town's Leisure Centre customer service signs were painted to feature a high-contrast black background, ensuring they are easily readable by all visitors.
- The Leisure Centre completed the marking of yellow hash lines on the pedestrian crosswalk from the parking lot, which delineates the walking path clearly and improves navigational ease for pedestrians and wheeled mobility aids.
- Curb cuts at the Town's Leisure Centre and Library have been painted a vivid yellow, providing a colour contrast and making them more visible for those with low vision
- The Public Library installed their second-floor public catalogue on height-adjustable tables.
- The Bob Fallis Sports Centre installed an automatic door opener for the public washrooms in the lobby.

- The Bob Fallis Sports Centre parking lot was re-paved aiding in the reduction of potential tripping hazards and allowing for a smoother surface for wheeled mobility aids.
- BWG Transit continues to provide conventional bus service with AODA compliant accessible features to ensure all riders have fair and safe access to services within the community and “easyPASS” fares were reduced to \$1.00 per ride.
- BWG Transit is in the midst of the 2031 Transit Plan development. This plan will guide the way transit grows (fleet, facilities, services) in Town and provides improved transit accessibility and access to transit.
- The Town is developing a Traffic Mitigation Strategy (TMS) to help address existing traffic concerns in BWG and support safer and more livable streets for all users. As part of the strategy recommendations are provided for improved active user networks and accessibility.
- The Town’s Transportation Division continues to implement programs for specific roadway improvements such as maintenance, minor reconstruction and surface treatment to ensure the quality, longevity and safety of our roadways. Magani Avenue, Hulst Drive and Gres Court were rehabilitated during 2023.
- The Town’s Capital Projects team continues to incorporate accessible features within road rehabilitation projects. Sidewalks are equipped with tactile plates at intersections and curb ramps to create barrier free platforms for everyone to walk on.
- The 2023 Urban Roads project to rehabilitate roadways, curbs and sidewalks was completed on Miller Park Avenue, Davey Boulevard, Agar Avenue, and part of Melbourne Drive
- As part of the commitment to accessibility, way finding and connectivity, the Town included multi-use pathways, illuminated sidewalks and wayfinding signage to its newly constructed Southwest Arterial Road (SR10) project.
- The Town continues to incorporate accessible features into playgrounds, parks and trail systems. Improvements to accessibility were incorporated into the recently upgraded Joe Magani Park, Legion Park, Taylor Park and Veterans Park. Upgrades included accessible asphalt paths to the bleachers and concrete seating pads for mobility-impaired users at Baseball Diamonds 1, 2 and 3 at Joe Magani Park.
- The Town’s Economic Development Division continued to promote the Commercial Property Accessibility Enhancements Program and the Employment Areas Accessibility Enhancements Program, offered through the Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and the Industrial Areas CIP Program.
- The Clerks Division, in support of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, continues to review site plans for the Community Planning Division. Town Staff continue to provide updates to the AAC as required. The Clerks Division endeavours to ensure that all site plans comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standards, the Town of BWG’s Accessible Parking By-law 2019, IASR O. Reg 191/11, and The Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES).

Priorities moving forward:

- The Public Library has plans to improve wayfinding signage, accessible table awareness, and installation of handrails/grab bars in the men's washrooms.
- Community Services will continue to provide updates to parks and trails. Some anticipated projects will be located at Luxury Park, Bill Marks Trail, the BWG Community Hub, Danube Centre, and the new Outdoor Public Square.
- Phase 2 of the Urban Roads Rehabilitation roadway projects on Luxury Avenue, Kulpin Avenue, Fred Cook Drive, and parts of Collings Avenue and Maplegrove Avenue are projected for 2024.

The Town continues to commit to:

- Conducting sidewalk inspections for safety issues pertaining to the *Municipal Maintenance Standards* (MMS).
- Providing a high level of snow removal service; whereas, arterial, collectors and local roads are sanded and plowed within 6 to 24 hours. Sidewalks around community zones provide a higher priority to facilitate ease of maneuvering with walking problems, wheeled mobility aids, and to ensure ease of access to streets.

Customer Service Standards

The customer service standard under AODA outlines requirements for service providers to make their goods, services, and facilities accessible for customers or patrons with disabilities.

Some of the 2023 achievements include:

- The Town's Recreation department continues to create and promote inclusive recreational opportunities and hired a full-time inclusion coordinator to manage this portfolio.
- During the 2023 summer day camps, dedicated inclusion support facilitators and counselors were available to offer 36 one-to-one inclusion spots for children and youth who may need additional assistance.
- In Spring 2023 the BWG Leisure Centre hosted the first Adapted Recreation Day. Tailored to adults with exceptionalities, this program provided a supportive environment where participants, with an optional support person, engaged in various activities, including fitness, arts, and sports. With the success of this program, it was decided to continue this program on seasonal basis.
- In Fall 2023 the BWG Leisure Centre hosted an Adapted Skate for people with exceptionalities and were able to move forward with procuring an adapted ice sledge, allowing participants to take part in the adult skate programming. Additional Library features include access to cloudLibrary, a database for ebooks and eaudiobooks, which allows borrowers to adjust font size and choose fonts such as OpenDyslexic.

Priorities for 2024/2025

Moving forward into 2024 and 2025, the Town of BWG will continue to review projects and community-based initiatives/programs to ensure compliance with AODA, its regulations, and all other related pieces of legislation. The continued development of resources and training materials for staff, volunteers, contractors, and the public will be reviewed to ensure that accessible formatting is achieved.

The Town's Recreation department will continue to create, expand, and promote inclusive recreational programming opportunities and potential sensory spaces.

The AAC, alongside with Council, Staff and volunteers will continue to champion advocacy and awareness of the inclusion of accessible design and maintaining the focus on removing barriers which may exist in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Conclusion and Feedback

The Town makes every effort to update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as legislation is created or amended but discrepancies may exist until an update can be completed. Details not contained in this Plan may be captured in the Town's Consolidated AODA Policy – CORP-01-003.

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Annual Accessibility Plan Update, and accessibility matters in general. Please contact the Town to express your accessibility-related comments. To request a copy of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan or Annual Status Report in another format, please contact us:

Contact information!

E-mail: accessibility@townofbwg.com

Phone: 905-775-5366

Mail: P.O. Box 100, 100 Dissette Street, Bradford, Ontario L3Z 3G8

Attention: Accessibility Coordinator and Accessibility Advisory Committee c/o Clerks Department.