

Mission: Inclusion

2023-2026

Accessibility Plan

ACCESSIBLE
AJAX 

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A Message from the 2022-2026 Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee

As Members of the 2022-2026 Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee, we are pleased to support the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan - **Mission: Inclusion.**

The plan outlines strategic objectives and actions that will be undertaken over the next several years to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the Town of Ajax and work beyond provincial accessibility compliance. This document is a culmination of contributions from staff, the Committee, and the community at large.

The Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee believes that everyone has the right to feel included, regardless of one's ability, and that all of us must play a part in making sure that Ajax remains an accessible, inclusive and vibrant community in which to live, work, play, and visit.

We are confident that with the ongoing commitment of the Town, community partners, and by working together, Ajax will continue its mission to cultivate accessibility and inclusion for all!

Sincerely,

The 2022-2026 Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee:

**Heather Azzarello
Kailey Danks
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Adrian Lambert
Rosanne Purnwasie
Kathreen Smith
Ray Smith
Councillor Nancy Henry**

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 Town of Ajax's Statement of Commitment:

The Town of Ajax is committed to excellence in service delivery, equitable employment practices, and providing quality services, programs, facilities, and outdoor spaces, that are inclusive to all persons we serve.

The Town will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the prevention and 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, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

◆ Barriers

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to identify, remove and prevent barriers. A barrier is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. There are several other categories of barriers to consider, such as:

- **Environmental Barriers:** features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate entry by a person in a motorized scooter or a doorknob that cannot be operated by a person with limited dexterity.
- **Communication Barriers:** obstacles with processing, transmitting or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read by a person with low-vision or documents not available in alternative formats.
- **Attitudinal Barriers:** prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that all people who are visually impaired can read Braille.
- **Technological Barriers:** when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.
- **Systemic Barriers:** barriers within an organization's policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, listing a driver's licence as an employment qualification for an office position that does not require using a vehicle for work-related purposes may prohibit persons with visual impairments or others who don't drive from applying.



Inclusion is intentional.

It is about identifying and removing barriers so that everyone can participate to the best of their ability.

■ The ‘Mission: Inclusion’ Vision

Accessibility and inclusion are two important concepts that are often discussed in relation to disability. Accessibility and inclusive design both recognize that disability happens at the point of interaction between people and their environment. Accessibility is about making sure that barriers that may prevent people with disabilities from taking part are removed.

Inclusion is about going a step further and ensuring that people with disabilities are included as valuable members in all aspects of society. This includes things like listening to views and opinions and allowing people with disabilities to contribute to planning, decisions and their futures.

Accessibility is about making sure that everyone, regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, or disability, can have an equal opportunity to access services and activities. Accessibility is all about meeting the various needs of individuals to ensure they can access programs, services, information, transportation, employment and physical spaces.

Inclusion is a broader concept than accessibility. It’s not just about making sure that everyone can access society on an equal basis. It’s about actively welcoming and including **everyone** in a way that suits them. Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected and has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

An inclusive environment is one where anyone can participate and contribute without having to change, conform or miss out and feel discriminated against.

It’s important to understand the difference between accessibility and inclusion because creating an accessible world is not enough. We must strive for inclusivity in which everyone has an equal and equitable opportunity to participate and feel valued. That’s why the vision of the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan is “Mission: Inclusion”.



Image Description: Accessibility Plan visioning exercise word cloud - a cluster of words in blue font representing the Plan’s vision. Priority words include community, public, vision, and inclusion.

☀ Planning

The process of planning for accessibility and inclusion is one that is ever evolving. Staff, Council, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee are continually involved in discussions regarding accessibility planning year-round. The Ajax Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides an opportunity to demonstrate the Town's commitment to accessibility, celebrate successes and establish a framework to prioritize and implement accessibility initiatives. Objectives and initiatives identified within the plan are both long and short-term; many are ongoing actions or could require implementation over several years. Regular monitoring and reporting metrics such as key performance indicators (KPIs) are necessary to ensure that relevant initiatives are included in the Plan and that progress is identified.

Statistics project that by 2036, 20% of Canadians will experience some form of disability. As a result, service delivery and programming will need to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community. The Town of Ajax has developed a strong foundation of accessibility planning to remove barriers and ensure real and effective change for people with disabilities and is eager to carry this commitment forward with implementation of the **2023-2026 Accessible Ajax Accessibility Plan – Mission: Inclusion**.

While the focus of the Accessibility in Action Plan is dedicated to implementing the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, the Town of Ajax strives for accessibility achievements beyond compliance. This document details the objectives and action items to be pursued by the Town over the next several years to solidify the Town's commitment to accessibility planning and inclusive service delivery.

For the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to be successful and achieve its objectives, it is necessary for it to be aligned with several other Town of Ajax guiding documents, policies and processes including the **2022-2026 Council Strategic Plan**. A section within this document outlines accessibility and inclusion action items for specific objectives within the **Town of Ajax Council Strategic Plan – Action 26**.



LEAD Program Partnership with the Abilities Centre

To support development of the Mission: Inclusion Accessibility Plan, the Town participated in the Abilities Centre's LEAD Program. LEAD is a system integrated approach that supports organizations to enhance accessibility and inclusion barriers to increase equitable opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in their communities. LEAD (Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery) Canada processes helps organizations to successfully embed accessibility and inclusion strategies across the organization, giving the staff the confidence, and capability to meet the needs of all Canadians.

LEAD challenges organizational systems and processes to create transformational change that enables full and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the communities they live, work and play. This partnership consisted of reviewing key elements of the Town's practices, services and processes for accessibility and inclusion. A LEAD staff team of over 25 individuals representing all Town departments participated in facilitated discussions and assessments. Staff were provided with summary recommendations that helped to guide the development of this plan.

To support the Mission: Inclusion Plan, the Staff LEAD Team will meet regularly to discuss and report on a work plan in support of the goals, objectives and actions identified herein.

Community Consultation

In addition to internal consultation through the LEAD process, ten community information stations were hosted where the public could provide feedback, ask questions, and learn about accessibility and inclusion in Ajax. A community accessibility survey was released to gain insights from residents and visitors to Ajax on priority areas for accessibility and inclusion considerations. Over 1,500 survey responses and comments on the public engagement platform project web page were received, helping to provide valuable perspective and insights that have shaped the development of the Plan.

Accessibility Partnerships in Durham Region & Beyond

Each municipality within Durham Region has its own Accessibility Advisory Committee which reports to their respective municipal Councils on a variety of accessibility matters. In addition to municipal Committees, the Region of Durham has its own Accessibility Advisory Committee, providing for a total of nine committees across Durham that are dedicated to improving accessibility in their communities.

The Region of Durham coordinates regular meetings with local municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Chairs, and municipal staff overseeing the accessibility portfolio, which provide the opportunity to share best practices and information. The Region also hosts an annual joint forum for all Committee Members in Durham. The Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee actively participates in this event that brings together volunteers to network and collaborate on accessibility matters.

Additionally, the Town's Accessibility Coordinator meets regularly with staff counterparts across the Region and province, including the Abilities Centre, and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, to discuss ongoing planning and implementation. The position is also a member of the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), a group comprised primarily of staff responsible for accessibility planning in the public sector. The network provides the opportunity to share accessibility planning resources and information across the province.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

First established in 2002, the Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee is a statutory volunteer committee that acts as an advisory body for Council with a mandate to:

- Make recommendations to staff and Council on the development and implementation of the Town of Ajax Multi-year Accessibility Plan.
- Review and provide feedback relative to accessibility on site plans for Town and municipal buildings/facilities, as well as priority applications identified by the Committee (e.g. seniors residences, schools, etc.).
- Make recommendations to staff and Council on issues relating to customer feedback, Town programs, services, policies and procedures from an accessibility and inclusion lens.
- Monitor the development of accessibility-related legislation and offer feedback on the Town's compliance with provincial accessibility regulations.
- Promote accessibility and inclusion in the Town of Ajax through public outreach, education and special events.

Committee Members bring a wide range of professional and personal lived experiences and perspectives related to the challenges encountered by people with disabilities, providing invaluable advice and support as the Town continues to work towards a barrier-free, inclusive community and are key stakeholders and participants in the review and development of the Accessibility Plan.

Supporting Legislation

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas:

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

The Customer Service Standard became law (Ontario Regulation 429/07) on January 1, 2008. On July 1, 2016, the Government of Ontario made several changes to the Customer Service Standard, which required the Municipality to update its Accessible Customer Service Policy. One important change that occurred during this update was that the Customer Service Standard was moved into the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) law (Ontario Regulation 191/11). As a result of this change, all five standards now reside under one regulation.

The IASR also includes standards for: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. The Design of Public Spaces Standards focus on removing barriers in areas not covered by the Ontario Building Code such as playgrounds, on and off-street parking, recreational trails, and service counters. It applies to new construction or re-construction of existing spaces. Additional standards in the areas of health and education are currently in development.

Ontario Building Code

The *Ontario Building Code* regulates the minimum building standards for the construction of all new buildings and buildings that undergo significant renovation. The Code includes requirements for minimum accessibility within buildings.

The OBC was amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, most new construction and extensive renovations will be subject to updated accessibility requirements. Existing buildings, where no work is planned, are not affected by these new requirements.

💧 Accountability and Communication

Implementation & Reporting

Implementation of identified action items and initiatives are dependent on financial allocation through the Town's budgeting process and will be reflected in departmental budgets and the long-range capital forecast where applicable. The absence of specific timelines within this plan for all action items reflect that the needs of the accessibility community and anti-ableism efforts must be part of a continuous improvement model at the Town of Ajax. While the Town commits to enacting this plan throughout the 4-year period, we recognize that supply chain issues, budget implications, and other extenuating circumstances may impact the ability to deliver on some action items within specific timelines. Meanwhile many other action items are currently already well underway. Staff will continue to report regularly to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Council, the province and the public on implementation progress, including through annual status reports.

The Town will review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan every four years to align with the Council Strategic Plan. 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 the Ajax community change, the plan will be reviewed in consultation with key partners in accessibility such as the Accessibility Advisory Committee, customers, and persons with disabilities as well as the Ajax community.

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 the www.ajax.ca website.

★ Goal 1: Organizational Leadership and Accountability

Objective:

Build an accessibility-confident culture that champions inclusion and eliminates barriers in all aspects of the organization, and where visionary, forward-thinking, passionate leaders consider accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion of people with diverse identities as important parts of the organization and services provided.

Organizational Leadership and Accountability - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
<p>Identification of accessibility barriers & implementation of solutions to prevent and remove them throughout the organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review processes for policy and strategy development and updates, to include internal and external consultations, with disability and other marginalized groups, to identify barriers and solutions. • Collect demographic data of participants in consultations to ensure diverse communities are included. • Continue to implement LEAD recommendations and embed program framework into organizational culture and practices. (e.g. continue meeting with a LEAD staff team twice annually at minimum to discuss access & inclusion challenges and new initiatives)
<p>Staff training on new policies & legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational leaders should periodically reference relevant policies and strategies with their team and explain how they apply to their departmental work. • Include accessibility considerations for persons with disabilities in training delivery. • Provide accessibility training for staff relating to topics such as invisible disabilities, communication disabilities, mental health first aid, inclusion, service animals and physical assistance. • Enhance accessibility & inclusion related training topics and opportunities relating to staff accessibility training
<p>Ongoing policy, programming, and legislative reviews to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments work with Human Resources and Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator to identify policies and strategies that should be part of their annual review.

Description	Action
identify and remove barriers, using a Diversity & Inclusion lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the frequency and process used to review and update policies, ensuring inclusion and accessibility is applied to the policy review.
New and refreshed corporate policies and directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies and strategies cross-reference DEI and accessibility, and intersectionality with disability and ableism are addressed. Review Health and Safety policy and supporting procedures to consider accessibility for persons with disabilities. • Work toward inclusion of DEI and accessibility metrics, quantitative and qualitative, in policies and strategies, and report progress in existing reporting mechanisms. • Develop an internal procedure or add language into an existing procedure that guides staff engagement with the AAC and people with lived experience for projects/policies/services, etc. • Consider conducting an annual/biennial accessibility survey to assess the customer service experience from an accessibility/inclusion perspective and seek feedback on the Accessibility Plan.
New and existing accessibility tools and resources incorporated into daily practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible document, meeting and presentation guidelines for chairpersons and presenters. Include links to relevant policies in Terms of Reference (TORs), Request for Proposals (RFPs), funding agreements and contracts to ensure awareness and implementation of policies by staff and contractors. • Consider implementation of a corporate program to recognize individual/departmental staff achievements in accessibility

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- **Participation in the LEAD Program with Abilities Centre**
 - Partnership with the Abilities Centre to participate in the LEAD (Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery) methodology to help staff to define and embed inclusion and accessibility into strategic planning, daily operations, program environments, and culture.
 - Program was facilitated by Abilities Centre staff and included two (2) half-day conversational assessment sessions and a one-hour disability and inclusion virtual workshop. Staff from across the organization (28) as well as three (3)

representatives from the Accessibility Advisory Committee participated in the program.

- **Staff Training**

- Dementia Friendly Communities Ontario – training for Recreation & Culture customer service representatives, supervisor, and manager. An introduction to the concept and dementia-friendly efforts at the community level – topics include Dementia-friendly interactions, Dementia-friendly spaces and Dementia-friendly policies, practices, and services for organizations. Training to commence Fall/Winter 2023.
- Accessible IT training workshop on accessible emails provided to staff and Recreation Customer Service Representatives in recognition of Global Accessibility Awareness Day

- **Ajax Public Library Staff Training**

- AODA Customer Service Standards Refresher Training (85 staff members)
- Collections staff completed CELA (Centre of Equitable Library Access) training.(3 staff members)
- Community Engagement Team responsible for Storytimes received training on Neuro Diverse Children; provided by Grandview Kids Staff (May 2022; 6 staff)
- Coordinator attended Recruiting and Supporting Employees Who Are Neurodivergent
- Crisis Prevention Intervention Training (1 staff member)
- Health and Safety Certification (1 staff member)
- Naloxone Administration Training (33 staff)
- Positive Space/Gender Equity training (75 staff)
- Staff Inclusion Talk (1 staff member)
- YMCA Youth Training (34 staff members)
- Dementia Friendly Communities hosted by Alzheimer Durham at all staff Town Hall (Fall 2022)
- Mental Health Awareness and De-escalation training provided by Durham Region, Social Services Department (34 staff)
- Attend workshops including the Power of Inclusion: Moving Accessibility from Awareness to Action (Whitby Abilities Centre: 1 staff)

- **Development of Ajax Public Library Policies**

- Dress For Your Day Policy
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Scent Free Policy
- Suspected Opioid Overdose Policy
- Memorandum of Understanding with Grandview Kids that includes training and orientation by Grandview Kids to Library staff on inclusive practices.

- **Awarding Accessibility in the Community**

- Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee participated in nominations for recognition by the Region and Ajax Community Awards for accessibility achievements.
- **Committees & Boards Recruitment and Onboarding**
 - Recruitment and on-boarding of 30 volunteers for Council appointments to committees and boards.
 - Implementation of Council-approved honoraria schedule for advisory committee members to provide equitable compensation for volunteer experience and perspectives.
 - Added voluntary socio-demographic section to application form to gather data on composition of membership.
- **Comprehensive Review of Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**
 - Conducted review of multi-year accessibility plan including community engagement via IMO project page, community survey and community information station pop-ups
 - 1,500+ survey responses received to help guide priority areas for consideration in future planning.
- **Provincial Accessibility Compliance Reporting (2023)**
 - Completion of biennial reporting submitted to Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (December 2023) including updates to the compliance plan re: Web accessibility reviewed by Senior Management Team and Accessibility Advisory Committee

● Goal 2: Inclusive Employment

Objective:

Foster a workplace environment where all employees are empowered and supported to achieve their full potential through implementation of new and improved practices and processes to eliminate and prevent barriers to recruitment, retention, talent support, advancement, and recognition of persons with disabilities within the organization.

Inclusive Employment - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
<p>Explore new partnerships to support diverse and inclusive recruitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage disability organizations for job cross-posting where possible/appropriate. • Explore strategies for diverse recruitment that are inclusive of persons with disabilities. (e.g. explore partnerships with CNIB Come to Work program, Indigenous Works, etc.) • Look for opportunities to post positions on various job boards to draw in a larger applicant pool for full participation of persons with disabilities. • Identify opportunities to participate in Disability Mentoring Day (October).
<p>Performance commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership demonstrate commitment to accessibility and inclusion by participating in related training, encouraging sharing of best practices cross-depts; and by integrating accessibility and inclusion key performance indicators (KPIs) in strategies, workplans and performance reviews
<p>Individual employee accommodation plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR informs and educates hiring managers on accommodation policy and procedures, and where to secure relevant resources. • Provide a safe space to discuss supports needed for best performance, normalizing workplace accommodation/variations.
<p>Accessible human resource practices: recruitment,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to improve job postings by including welcoming statements for marginalized groups, listing of core requirements, flexible application and interview process, accessible on-boarding process and training.

Description	Action
interview, growth & development, redeployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consult staff with disabilities and AAC in identifying barriers, training needs, training content and facilitators with lived experience of disabilities. Educate managers and supervisors on accommodations and benefits of a diverse workforce.
Ontario Human Rights Code training for all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop corporate accessibility training beyond onboarding, ensuring accessible venue, platform, presentation format and content. Ensure training is completed by all staff and indicate accessible features and welcome additional accessibility requests.
New HRMS Human Resources Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider AODA parameters, implications and requirements through the RFP process for the HRMS.

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- Employee Health, Safety & Wellness**
 - Approximately 6 early and safe return to work plans implemented to accommodate injured/ill employees for work related and non-work-related medical conditions.
 - Enhancement of new and returning employee Health, Safety and Wellness Training/Orientation, thereby eliminating barriers in their job success.
 - Implementation of a Scented Products in the Workplace Policy in February 2023, to raise awareness and limit the exposure of scented products and fragrances in the workplace and Town facilities to employees, elected officials, and patrons.
 - Implementation of fully accessible 2023 Wellness challenge/initiative “Walk this Way” yielding a very high participation rate without barriers.
 - Implementation of “Blue Monday” awareness day in January 2023 providing employees with resources/education for ways to take an inventory of their lifestyle habits to see what simple but effective changes they can make to improve their mental health during the winter months fostering safe and supportive work culture without barriers.
 - Continued implementation of ergonomic assessments and workplace accommodation recommendations such as Ergonomic chairs, desk top tools, scheduling modifications etc. allowing staff to stay at work, continue with their medical treatment and perform their regular job duties without barriers.
 - Employee provided with alternative position on a permanent basis to accommodation mental health condition/restrictions without barriers and within perm. medical restrictions fostering a safe and supportive work culture without barriers.

- Ongoing work by the Wellness Working Group Committee with full participation/representation of all Town departments to focus on mental health wellbeing initiatives/programs/services thereby working towards full participation of persons with psychological disabilities.
 - Ongoing promotion of “Not Myself Today” program that aims to help employers and employees enhance mental health in the workplace by increasing awareness and understanding, reducing stigma, and fostering safe and supportive work cultures without barriers.
 - Ongoing quarterly meetings with Benefit Provider to reduce barriers for employees off on Long-term Disability for a safe and timely return to work without barriers and interruption of Long-term Disability benefits, programs and services.
 - Psychotherapy has been added to the Benefit plan at 100% coverage up to \$1,000 per person combined with services of a psychologist, social worker physiotherapist and occupational therapists. fostering a safe and supportive work culture without barriers.
 - Health and safety training sessions for approximately 300 employees; sessions included topics of *Employee Workplace Emergency Response* Planning, Early and Safe Return to Work/Accommodations, Employee and family assistance program, Incident reporting, Worker, Supervisor and Employer Rights and Duties, Occupational Health and Safety Act/Regulations, awareness on other Health and Safety partners in Ontario.
 - The benefits plan has been expanded to cover comprehensive health and dental care for temporary employees with contracts of 1 year or greater. As of the end of June 2023, 19 contract employees have been enrolled in health and dental coverage. By expanding the coverage, many employees who would otherwise not be eligible are able to use their benefits to help look after their mental and physical well-being.
 - The free gym membership program with the Ajax Community Centres has been expanded to cover all Part-Time employees (who were previously not eligible).
 - All Part-Time employees are being provided with Town of Ajax email accounts. This will make wellness communications and Town information more accessible as they can receive information directly from sources rather than having it forwarded to them through supervisors or managers.
- **Recruitment**
 - Notification to applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process (online application, job posting documents, interview/assessment emails and in the offer letters).
 - Offer accommodations to individuals during any stage of the recruitment process (ASL translator, support worker, testing/assessment modification).
 - Determine accommodation needs for new hires to ensure a safe work environment in collaboration with Health & Safety.
 - Include accessibility features as a consideration when acquiring/implementing new software.
 - Implementation of Interviewstream (in progress) – use of this system for the selected Part-Time positions replaces the need for in-person and virtual interviews, and the interview questions are presented in written format, and typically also presented in video format as well (only some of the basic yes/no questions regarding certifications etc. will be written/multiple choice answer only, with no video). Candidates are able to reach out to HR staff if they require any accommodation throughout the process.

- During interviews, candidates are being given written versions of the questions as an alternative format/additional source for them to follow-along to help with clarity of the questions.
- The Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change team hired two (2) Sustainability Interns utilizing the Diversity Internship Program funding stream from the Streamline Development Approvals Fund. The program supports *the diversification of planning/building departments by offering internships to qualified students/new graduates with a focus on people with disabilities, Indigenous, Black, and racialized individuals, and people from diverse ethnic and cultural origins, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.*
- Ajax Public Library hosted Durham College placement student from the Community Integration through Cooperative Education program from January 2023 to April 2023.

✦ Goal 3: Equitable Customer Service

Objective:

Equip staff with knowledge and resources to design and deliver innovative and inclusive programs and services that meet diverse needs.

Equitable Customer Service - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
<p>Provision of accessible, quality customer service in response to the diverse needs of the Town of Ajax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include accessibility considerations in the early stages of program, service, event and project planning and management process, such as budgeting, consultations, information and venue access, customer service training, promotion and on-the-day assistance; track requests for accommodation to guide accessibility budgeting.
<p>Diverse programming and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop diverse programs and services with people with disabilities in mind, consulting them and integrating accessibility best practices from the beginning of program and service development. • Explore opportunities to engage disability groups to lead or co-design programs and services. • Increase accessibility in existing programs, services and events through a variety of methods (e.g. work with event planners and exhibitors/performers to add audio, visual and tactile enhancements). • Ajax Public Library to embark on inclusive literacy program, Outdoor Explorer, with Whitby Abilities Centre: Outdoor Explorers: programs for families celebrating movement (Fall 2023/Winter 2024). • Assess current partnership with Alzheimer Society of Durham Region and investigate the potential for expansion. • Continue to provide Sensory Zones for larger events, and investigate budget opportunities to expand programming in future Operating Budget submissions. • Explore opportunities to include Accessibility and Inclusion Ambassador volunteers at community events. • Staff will investigate the possibility of continuing the EngAGE Arts series for older adults as part of future seasons at the St. Francis Centre.

Description	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and Culture staff will continue to work with staff from Legislative and Information Services to present a free film screenings during National Accessibility Awareness Week in May 2024. • Continue supporting awareness of the Treat Accessibly Halloween initiative.
<p>Ongoing outreach and consultation with persons with disabilities, the public and AAC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult AAC and disability groups and organizations that represent and serve them during the development, planning, assessment, and review process, to gather their input, and explore ways they can be involved, in the planning, promotion and delivery stages. • Engage disability organizations to identify what activities/programs their clients/staff need and can co-design and co-facilitate (E.g. Ajax Public Library knitting program).
<p>Provision of accessible feedback methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there are multiple and accessible feedback mechanisms, including questions on accessibility (e.g. in-person after program/service delivery, surveys, QR codes).
<p>Accessibility-related information made widely available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure website and social media content is accessible for persons with disabilities. • Disseminate information to community groups and organizations, offering alternate formats and approaches. Showcase existing and new accessibility features and initiatives in Ajax. • Consider the creation of “how-to” videos to consistently streamline instructions for common service inquiries (e.g. recreational program registration, parking permit registration, voter registration, etc.).
<p>Accessible procurement criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accessibility and inclusion policy and requirements are included in Request for Proposal (RFP), and bid documents, such as AODA Accessibility Standards (may specify standards applicable to the project), Ontario Human Rights Code and other municipal or provincial regulations. • In the selection process, consider diversity and accessibility contributions as additional assets. • Formalize vendor checklist for accessibility features of software (WCAG 2.0) • Explore creation of a contract checklist to identify and document how accessibility was/was not considered.

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- **Active Living**

- Zumba® - Special Needs currently offered – one class per week, average nine participants per class.
- AquaFit Aqua Wheelchair is available if required – 14-17 classes per week, average 28 participants per class.
- SciFit Cycle – wheelchair accessible, arm and leg independent use option, one cycle at ACC and one at MCC locations
- Community Living Ajax-Pickering-Whitby Memberships – 10 memberships sold to Community Living to be used for their clientele. Memberships are not individual-specific and open to all Clients under Community Living
- Chair Yoga classes added as new programming (fall 2023)

- **Recreation Administration**

- Durham Recreation Program Cards are distributed to customers in an electronic format from the Region of Durham. These cards enable customers to receive a financial subsidy in programs. This process requires customers be present in the centres on registration day to provide digital proof to access services. This creates a barrier for customers to register online on registration days. Town successfully created process to create profile and customer access into ActiveNet registration software for online registration. This provides equal opportunity to individuals and families who are subsidized through the Region access to registration on the same day as everyone (Fall 2023).
- Online and walk-in registration was amalgamated to the same time on registration days to give equal opportunity to those who require in-person registration.
- Language Tags - staff will be given the option to wear an indicator that displays languages they are fluent in so they may be able to assist customers. (target implementation - Fall 2023).

- **Ajax Public Library Programs & Services**

- 2023 Parasport Games” Sensory Support Kit project (Fall 2022/Winter 2023): Coordinated kit purchase for Durham Public Libraries with Autism Canada plus additional inclusionary elements with Grandview Kids
- Enabling Accessibility Fund: Youth Grant: Accessible 3D Printer Desk + Mouse + keyboard: Provide 3D programs to 18 young adults for special needs high school classes using new accessibility devices (Spring 2023)
- Participate in Annual National Accessibility Week initiatives (June 2023)
- Enhanced STEAM Storytime with American Sign Language translation 506 program participants (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
- Hosted 19 Community Living Online workshops for 279 participants (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
- Visiting Library Services: Completed 444 visits to customers at home or in long term care via Visiting Library Services July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023
- Hosted 19 Sensory Storytimes for 104 participants (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
- Received a grant for decodable book collection which resulted in decodable books being added to the collection.
- Completed 3D Printer program with 3D programs to young adult using new accessibility devices using EAF Grant: Accessibility 3D Printer Desk + Mouse + keyboard.

- **Alzheimer Society of Durham Region (ASDR) Partnership**
 - Developed a partnership with ASDR to offer programming at the Ajax Community Centre for persons with dementia and their care partners. Partnership provides in-kind space for ASDR to run community programming.
 - The main office is located in Whitby. Most ASDR programming is provided through the Whitby office. The partnership provides greater access to ASDR programs and services by offering them directly within the Ajax community. Reduces the need for clients and families to have to travel outside of Ajax to access support and services.
 - Minds in Motion: a community-based social and physical activity program that incorporates physical and mental stimulation for people with early to mid-stage Alzheimer's disease or dementia and their care partner. Improves access to community recreational opportunities as many participants attending this program may not be able to participate in general recreational programs offered through the Town; they require specialized programming and support.
 - Care Partner Support Group: operates monthly, program is specifically for care partners. Opportunity to seek resources from ASDR and learn from the experiences of other caregivers, share insights, and social and emotional support.
 - Weekly Office Space: ASDR operates office hours one day a week to meet with clients and families in the Ajax community.

- **EngAGE Arts Ajax Program**
 - In the fall of 2022, staff were notified that they were successful in receiving a Seniors Community Grant for a new initiative – EngAGE Arts Ajax – which aimed to reduce social isolation, improve personal well-being, and increase access to community information among older adult Ajax residents through barrier-free access to arts and cultural experiences. This program would create more than 500 participation opportunities through a series of free, interactive arts & cultural performance experiences and workshops which focused on fostering social connection, creative thought, self-expression, personal development, and mindfulness. Each performance experience would include a Community Information Hub, providing access to information and resources from various senior-serving organizations to learn about volunteer opportunities, recreation & leisure programs, local clubs, and social service programs and supports.
 - EngAGE Arts Ajax was delivered from January to May 2023 and was comprised five (one per month) free, interactive arts & cultural performance experiences/workshops specifically designed for older adults at the St. Francis Centre. The series covered a variety of performance mediums, including visual art, instrumental music, vocal performances, and storytelling, as well as interactive components to foster social connection, creative thought, self-expression, personal development and mindfulness among participants.
 - The five experiences include:
 - Art With a Heart Expressive Arts Workshop: a hands-on interactive session based on mental wellness through a mindful Expressive Arts model. Programming layered different art modalities including music, drawing/painting, and poetry, as well as guided mindfulness exercises.
 - The Knitting Pilgrim: a multidisciplinary theatrical experience that used storytelling, image projection & a one-of-a-kind knitting installation to explore empathy and understanding. Throughout the show, participants were encouraged to grab a ball of yarn and needles from the stage and knit along.

- Eastside Harmony Chorus and Durham Storytellers: Eastside Harmony provided an a capella concert, a vocal performance not often seen in the area, while the Durham Storytellers captivated the audience through the art of oral storytelling.
- Music4Life String Orchestra: this ensemble delivered an interactive and educational string music concert, engaging with the audience to provide information on the repertoire and the musical instruments in the group.
- Paint the Town: a hands-on interactive, guided acrylic painting workshop where participants learned basic painting techniques and skills while recreating a selected art piece. Each participant was able to take home a painting set.
- To make the series as barrier free as possible, all performances were free, transportation was offered if needed, and light/nutritious refreshments were provided.
- Highlights of the program include the following:
 - A total of 332 older adults participated in the 5-event series.
 - Staff worked with 10 different community partners to provide the resources through the Information hub and event programming.
 - 28 volunteers were engaged to assist in delivering the 5-event series.
 - 100% of participants reported the program contributed to their well-being.
 - 77% of participants reported they learned about a new community program.
 - 74% of participants reported they made a new connection.
 - 68 people reported they were new to St. Francis Centre – first time visit.
- **Festivals and Events Sensory Zones**
 - Prior to the pandemic, Sensory Zones were added as a pilot project to the event programming for larger events (i.e. Winterfest, Canada Day, Pumpkinville) as a way to provide a safe space for event participants with sensory sensitivities to participate. The Sensory Zone was a sectioned off area located at a distance from some of the noisier areas of the event, that had its own programming resulting in less crowds, shorter lines, and sensory specific programming. These areas were specifically promoted to families involved in the Town's Inclusion Services program and staff sought feedback from participant families to gain insights into their satisfaction of the Zones.
 - With events moving back to in-person in 2022, staff continued to provide Sensory Zones at Ajax Winterfest, Canada Day and Pumpkinville, providing larger areas to meet popularity and demand.
- **St. Francis Centre Programming**
 - The St. Francis Centre presented a number of programming options in the revised 2022 and the 2022-2023 Season to meet the needs of our diverse community.
 - With the facility being shut down from March 2020 to March 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff were fortunate to be able to reschedule the shows that were cancelled to create a revised 2022 season held from March to June 2022.
 - Staff had surveyed patrons throughout the pandemic period to gain an understanding of their attitudes to coming back to the theatre when safe to do so, as well as the safety protocols that may be put in place upon re-opening.

- The first show of the revised 2022 season was presented free of charge for anyone in the community, regardless of financial situation, to come back to the theatre to attend a cultural event, providing, for some, a much-needed opportunity to connect back to the community. This performance was a “sold out” show with many people thanking staff for presenting the performance free of charge, commenting on how great it was to come back to the theatre to experience live arts and culture.
 - Other diverse shows presented during the 2022-2023 season included “Take Your Power Back”, a multi-disciplinary performance focused on the physical attack on a local woman, leaving her near death, but through the incredible positive outpouring of support from the community, brought her back to health, and “Fernando and his Llama”, a family performance for the deaf and hard of hearing community and their families, supporters, etc. to showcase alternate forms of communication, friendship, and support, while also teaching simple sign language.
 - Programming also included 2 foreign films, (Korean and English, and English, Portuguese, and Tupi-Kawahiva).
 - The season included a number of free or low-cost options as well for the community. Two films were screened free of charge – “Unloved: The Forgotten Children of Huronia” and “Everybody Dance”, which was screened as part of National Accessibility Awareness Week. A new series of events entitled “Friday Night Live!” featured four events designed to provide the community with a low-cost option for fun and entertainment (only \$5 per ticket which included HST). Three of the four events were sold out.
 - St. Francis Centre staff are continuing with the “Friday Night Live!” series in the 2023-2024 Season and are also starting a new series of film screenings that will provide an opportunity for attendees to sing along with popular musical movies (Silver Screen Sing Along). There will be four Friday Night Live events and four Silver Screen Sing Along movies presented in the 2023-2024 season. The cost for both of these events will only be \$5 per ticket, which includes HST. The St. Francis Centre 2023-2024 season will run from September 2023 to June 2024.
- **Inclusion Services Supports & Programming**
 - Able to provide 9 weeks of Inclusion Support during Summer 2022 camp session, which totaled 121 enrollments in enhanced staffing support.
 - Able to provide Inclusion Support during Fall 2022, Winter 2023 and Spring 2023 program sessions, which totaled 50 enrollments in enhanced staffing support.
 - New Multi-Sensory Drop-In Space program featuring a Snoezelen Cart purchased through Enabling Accessibility Fund – Youth Innovation Community Accessibility Stream. The program is free and open to all ages, caregivers must be present.
 - Introduced new MusiCare Therapy contracted service to recreational program offerings started Fall 2022. Offers low ratio Adapted Music Lessons for individuals who want to learn about music.
 - Inclusion Municipal Recreation Resource Committee – Acting member of group – received and provided updates on industry trends and standards.
 - Re-established partnerships with Grandview, Special Olympics and Community Living which allows these organizations space in Town of Ajax facilities to run specialized recreation and therapeutic programming. Returned to facilities in Fall 2022.

- **Older Adult Programming (55+)**
 - Continued offering our traditional in-person programming and events but also facilitated our Senior Centre Without Walls program. This program supports isolated seniors and is funded by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility
 - 55+ events were well received in 2022 as we returned to in-person – Spring Fling Dance, Seniors BBQ, 55+ Wellness and Information Fair
 - Bus Transportation Services returned for seniors to access 55+ events.
 - Aging Well Month (June) provided 12 activities for Older Adults free of charge. Activities included: Art Workshop, Line Dancing, etc.
 - Partnered with Durham Regional Police Services to offer the Older Adult Police Academy to 20 seniors in Ajax and Pickering – topics include frauds and scams, power of attorney, personal safety, etc.

- **National AccessABILITY Week Recognition**
 - Coordination and implementation of community programming in recognition of National AccessABILITY Week 2023 (May 28 – June 3, 2023). Activities included:
 - Flag raising event.
 - Participation in Easter Seals Red Shirt Day
 - Launch of Power Up, Ajax! Mobility Device Charging Station project
 - Community colouring contest
 - ReelAbilities Film Screening of Everybody Dance at the St. Francis Centre

- **Treat Accessibly Initiative**
 - Participation in the Treat Accessibly national initiative to encourage and promote inclusive Halloween trick-or-treating practices.
 - 200 lawn sign displays were distributed across 4 locations (at all three Ajax Public Library Branches and Town Hall)
 - Participated in Pumpkinville event at Greenwood with accessible trick-or-treating station; distributed over 2,000 promotional flyers.
 - Awarded one winner for photo contest encouraging residents to submit photos of accessible, barrier-free trick-or-treat set up.

▲ Goal 4: Inclusive Information and Communications

Objective:

Strive to make information, communications, and technology accessible, responsive, useable, and understandable by all.

Inclusive Information and Communications - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
<p>Provision of Town of Ajax information and communications in accessible and alternate formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff training on creating accessible PDFs, forms, presentations, social media, and videos (with captioning and audio description) • Explore train-the-trainer opportunities. • The Town of Ajax Site Plan Technical Guidelines have been revised to incorporate accessibility-related design standards and guidelines. The Guidelines will also be made accessible/screen reader compatible and posted on the Town’s website by December 2023. • Staff are revising all remaining planning application forms to be accessible/screen reader compatible. Updates to all planning application forms are expected to be completed in Q1 2024. • Staff are working with GIS to develop an on-line mapping tool to provide public access to information on active development applications. It is expected that the mapping tool will go live by Q1 2024. • Zoning By-law Review (Zoning Our Future) – Staff will present the technical reports and draft zoning by-law amendment to Community Affairs and Planning Committee (CAP) and undertake public/stakeholder consultation in Q1 2024. Staff will present the revised/proposed zoning by-law amendment to CAP for endorsement and Council for passing in Q4 2024. • Ensure documents are updated to be accessible in print and online (e.g. engineering standard drawings, Sediment Erosion Control Permit application, Stormwater FAQs document, activeAjax, Community Recreation Guide, etc.). • Leverage the “Constant Contact” email distribution platform to provide better accessibility and navigation of outgoing eBlasts vs. the current method of utilizing Activenet registration software.

Description	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work toward ensuring adherence to appropriate styles and tone when developing content. This is both to align with corporate standards (Policy #072, Section 5, Content Style Guide) and continue to provide consistent messaging for all promotional material. To reinforce best practices, a shared document (e.g. Canadian Press Caps and Spelling) will be available and can be used by staff.
Accessible intranet, internet sites and applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policy and criteria for website platform and content accessibility, based on Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2.0AA or above), and take measures to ensure third-party and internal website developers and content creators follow them. • Explore provision of ASL messaging on website.
Staff knowledge and training on assistive technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform staff on accessibility technology developments and innovations (e.g. applications such as Be My Eyes, AccessNow, and existing accessibility features on M365). • provide ways for staff to share information on accessible technology (e.g. Global Accessibility Awareness Day recognition, AccessibleIT workshops). • Explore a variety of self-service options on website for customer service
2026 Municipal and School Board Election Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous election feedback for accessibility improvements and identify alternative voting methods/considerations, where feasible. • Prepare and implement Election Accessibility Plan with feedback from the public, disability groups and the AAC.
Increase awareness of Town of Ajax accessibility and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a digital resource promoting Town of Ajax accessibility and inclusion supports, as well as community support programs and services. • Participate at community events to promote accessibility awareness. • Learn about services that community agencies provide for people with disabilities. • Host informational displays in Town facilities promoting accessibility awareness. • Prepare social media as well as internal announcements to promote accessibility awareness, days of significance, and Town programs, services, and facilities. • Consider circulation of a quarterly accessibility newsletter/memo for staff.

Description	Action
Alternative communications methods; TextNET, language line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information on language translation applications, including those who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. • Share accessible meeting and presentation guidelines with meeting/committee chairs and presenters, both internal and external.
Communications and information material availability in accessible and alternative formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require vendors, suppliers, and organizational partners to send information and documents in accessible formats, providing accessibility guidelines when necessary.
Accessibility kiosk features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When creating mobile kiosks, consider the placement of kiosks, accessibility of kiosks by touch/tactile markings, sound, speech as well as sight (e.g. voting kiosks, facility information kiosks, etc.).
Accessible Document Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an accessible document process/procedure to ensure that PDFs, WORD documents, RFPs and other internal/external files are accessible. • Provide staff training on the development and remediation of accessible documents for internal/external audiences. • Monitor and report on accessible documents posted to the Town’s website Investigate opportunities to use existing technology for online fillable form functionality and consistency (currently forms are available using multiple applications).
Fire Prevention Education for Vulnerable Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue bi-annual training of social workers and high-rise supervisors’ seminar on Fire Safety. Note: A demographic that is identified as ‘high risk’ is the number of senior residents living in residential high-rise, mid-rise and low-rise buildings that are ambulatory or non-ambulatory. As such, we created a community outreach program that will discuss the realities of living in these buildings in the event that there is a fire emergency. The program is designed to inform the tenants, caregivers and families of these residents. • Identify opportunities to expand delivery of workshop to other community audiences (55+ lunch & learn, Welcome Centre, PROBUS Clubs, Seniors Centres, etc.).
Photo Repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of photos representing people with disabilities for use in corporate print and online materials

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- **Planning & Development**
 - Pre-Consultation Phase 1 & 2 and Zoning Compliance Review application forms have been made accessible/screen reader compatible. The following disclaimer was also added “This content is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting 905-683-4550 or emailing contactus@ajax.ca.”
 - The Town of Ajax Official Plan was updated to be accessible/screen reader compatible.
- **Finance**
 - Staff are working to simplify the information presented in the annual budget to provide better/easier understanding of the budget changes and pressures.
 - Support for e-payments not only from an efficiency perspective but also to assist those who may have mobility issues or challenges getting to Town Hall to make certain payments.
- **Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Older Adults and People with Disabilities**
 - A collaborative event was held in the spring of 2023 involving Corporate Communications, Recreation & Culture, Legislative Services, and Fire Prevention to deliver an in-person workshop on emergency preparedness for caregivers, older adults and persons with disabilities.
- **Recreation & Culture**
 - ActiveAjax Community Recreation Guide – continue to work towards producing a fully accessible document for web and print.
 - ActiveAjax Older Adult Supplement – currently in production with Fall release scheduled. This will provide residents aged 55+ a guide custom tailored to their demographic with limited access to our other channels of marketing and complies with accessibility standards.
 - Making content usable for people with cognitive and learning disabilities. This would be best approached though both messaging and design.
 - Customer Service & Select Facility Signage – template document created for staff to leverage for limited purposes. Design meets all accessible requirements and includes new aspects such as pictograms & simplified messaging.
 - Marketing Collateral (i.e. Ads, Posters, Signs) – continue to pare down our content and present it in a clear & concise manner, while increasing font size to better meet a minimum 6-foot viewing distance.
 - Graphic Artist and Marketing Coordinator received training through the Region of Durham to ensure accessible documents (InDesign). Additional Accessibility training for Marketing Coordinator has been scheduled for Fall 2023 with the Region of Durham
- **QR Code Use for St. Francis Centre and Festivals and Events Promotions**

- Culture and Events staff (Festivals and Events, and St. Francis Centre) and Recreation Administration staff (Marketing and Design) have been working together to make access to events and St. Francis Centre programming much easier for the community through the use of QR codes.
 - QR codes were used on the St. Francis Centre 2022-2023 season guide and show promotions, which lead those that utilized the code, directly to the online ticket purchasing page.
 - A QR code was also used at the St. Francis Centre information booth at the 55+ BBQ and Ajax Canada Day Celebrations for the community to sign up for the St. Francis Centre e-newsletter, keeping them more informed on upcoming shows and events.
 - QR codes were used for Festivals and Events promotions, leading those that utilized the code, directly to the information related to that event, which helped provide direct information on event details (date, time, location), event programming, shuttle bus services (including accessible bus information), etc.
- **Electronic Meeting Participation**
 - Development of Electronic Meeting Participation Policy to formalize responsibilities and expectations of hybrid meeting management.
 - Council Chambers technology upgrades provide for inclusive meeting participation in hybrid format (accommodating in-person and remote participation simultaneously) as well as live streaming of meetings.

◆ Goal 5: Transportation Connectivity

Objective:

Support a safe, connected and accessible multi-modal transportation network, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, active, public and private transportation modes.

Transportation Connectivity - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
Support accessible regional transit planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Durham Region and Durham Region Transit (DRT) on joint consultations with other municipalities and disability groups regarding feedback on services and strategies.
Durham Regional Transit Accessible Bus stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Durham Region and DRT to create pedestrian connections to DRT bus stops. • Provide feedback on design of DRT bus shelters, ensure considerations for obstruction-free design, sufficient turning radius, snow clearing and colour-contrast tactile strips on curb cuts.
Expand the power Up, Ajax! Mobility Device Charging Station Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to increase the availability of charging stations and include the Ajax Business Community, faith-based institutions and community organizations. • Work with Economic Development to roll out phase 2 of Power Up Ajax. Connect with the local business sector to install mobility device charging stations in private businesses, further expanding the network of stations available to the community.
Promote safe and accessible active transportation and pedestrian connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Transportation Coordinator, Legislative Specialist and AAC work together to develop awareness campaigns. • Consult with disability community, older adults and AAC on e-bike/e-scooter pilot program implementation. • Develop or review transportation guidelines, such as one for bicycles and e-scooters, to ensure accessibility- participation of and safety for persons with disabilities.

Description	Action
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate a standard detail for E-Vehicle parking spaces that takes into consideration accessible design features and function.

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- The Ajax Green Standard (AGS)**
 - The AGS contains sustainability criteria for new developments/re-developments in the Town of Ajax. One of the focus criteria is *Pedestrian Friendliness* and *Active Transportation* which identifies mandatory and voluntary standards related to walkability, public space, multi-modal transport, and infrastructure with considerations for individuals with limited mobility or mobility-assisting products like e-scooters. All criteria incorporate AODA standards.
- Power Up Ajax**
 - Received Ontario Inclusive Community Grant funding to install mobility device charging stations at all publicly accessed Town of Ajax facilities and popular outdoor locations.
 - Installed 20 mobility device charging stations across 17 community locations. This includes 14 indoor stations and 6 outdoor stations.
 - Developed hardcopy and online map resources so mobility device users can see where the closest community charging station is located.
- Driver Awareness Campaign: Pedestrians with Disabilities**
 - Development of a series of five videos intended to build a culture of respect among drivers with a collective understanding of the capacities of and barriers encountered by pedestrians with disabilities crossing intersections. Further, this campaign serves to disprove the misconception that people with disabilities cannot benefit from walking (which includes the use of mobility aid devices).
 - The Town of Ajax Driver Awareness Campaign Centering Pedestrians with Disabilities was made possible thanks to funding from the Ontario Community Changemakers Fund—a leadership and micro-grant program powered by 8-80 Cities, funded by Balsam Foundation

♥ Goal 6: Barrier-Free Built Environment & Public Spaces

Objective:

Enhance the accessibility of Town facilities and outdoor spaces through new construction, redesign, retrofit, and maintenance opportunities.

Barrier-Free Built Environment & Public Spaces - Recommended Actions:

Description	Action
<p>Greater accessibility into, within, out of and around Town of Ajax facilities, parks, trails and public spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When preparing budgets, consider upgrade and maintenance costs, such as power door buttons, elevators, charging stations etc. • Consider the provision of honoraria for persons with disabilities consulted in focus groups and audits.
<p>New Town of Ajax facility construction and future renovations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the sustainability and maintenance of accessibility components or features when purchasing or upgrading facilities, including budgeting and planning for pool accessibility upgrades, office area accessibility, Library upgrades and renovations, etc.; budget and plan for pool accessibility upgrades; add office area accessibility, especially the library in the next upgrade and renovation opportunity. • Consideration for development of Town of Ajax Facility Accessibility Design Guidelines and accessible built environment standard requirements
<p>Consideration for accessibility improvements during maintenance and repairs to facilities, trails, parks and public spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to physical and mobility accessibility, consider accessibility for those with hearing, sight and other disabilities. • Ensure staff know emergency procedures, where to access them, and how to assist persons with disabilities in emergency evacuations and lockdowns.
<p>Installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: The Region of Durham maintains the list of locations requested for APS installation. Identified locations in Ajax at signalized intersections would be financed through the municipal budget. • Continue to forward requests received from residents to the Region for tracking and future prioritization.

Description	Action
Complete a scan of on/off-street municipal accessible parking spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review quantity and location of existing spaces and document inventory. Consider requests for additional parking spaces at Town facilities and outdoor spaces, where feasible.
Sidewalk accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider requests to add rest stops/benches along active transportation routes. Continue the promotion of the #RespectTheSpace campaign to encourage residents to avoid parking over sidewalks. Respond to inquiries/complaints regarding uneven sidewalks and snow clearance issues.
Site Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to have the Accessibility coordinator participate in Pre-Consultation application review to provide comments on accessibility compliance, where applicable. Continue to have the AAC site plan review subcommittee review plans for accessibility considerations, where applicable (bi-weekly, when applications have been submitted).
StopGap Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review feasibility of partnership with StopGap temporary ramp program to assist local businesses with eliminating one-step barriers to access.

Recent Achievements (2022-2023):

- Parks Playgrounds & Trails**
 - Betty Bujold Park Retrofit – completed in 2023, includes new accessible playground, accessible walkways, seating, accessible shaded picnic table.
 - St. Andrew’s Playground – completed in 2022, includes new accessible playground, seating area, accessible walkways, accessible shaded picnic table.
 - Playground re-surfacing, various areas throughout town
 - Mulberry Meadows Park – completed in 2023, includes accessible walkways, playground, seating areas with shade shelter, leash free area.
 - St. Andrew’s Community Centre – to be completed in 2023, includes accessible parking, accessible walkways, lighting, pickleball courts.
 - Annandale Trail – design 2023, includes new asphalt paved trail and bridge within Duffins Trail system, north of Bayly St.

- Exeter Park Retrofit – design in 2022, includes new accessible playground, lighting, splashpad, shade structure, leash free area, accessible walkways.
 - St. Catherine of Siena Park Retrofit, includes new accessible playground, lighting, accessible walkways, seating areas.
 - Applecroft Park Trail – replace various damaged paving areas and trip hazards; the outdated aging light poles upgraded to newer ones, equipped with LED lighting for improved illumination.
 - Meadows North Neighbourhood Park – completed end of 2023, includes accessible walkways, playground, seating areas with shade shelter, leash free area.
 - Forest Ridge Park Trail – completed in 2023, replace various damaged paving areas and trip hazards; provide new pathway linking the park to Eagle Ridge Public school.
 - Ravenscroft Road Trail – completed in 2023, provide new accessible multi-use trail from Beverton Cr to Paulynn Park with curb depression and tactile plates by Paulynn Park.
 - Hermitage Park Trail – completed in 2023, replaced various damaged paving areas and trip hazards, new leash-free area.
 - Millers Creek Trail – completed in 2023, replace various damaged paving areas and trip hazards, new leash free areas.
 - Carruthers Creek Trail – completed in 2022, includes re-alignment and reconstruction of a 450-meter section of the multi-use trail between Kerrison Drive and Kingston Road East. The trail was built to all accessibility standards.
- **2022 Road Resurfacing**
 - Remove and replace existing asphalt including removal and replacement of various sections of concrete curb & gutter. Upgrading sidewalk approaches for compliance with AODA including curb depressions, ramps, tactile plates etc.
 - Locations:
 - Brennan Road
 - Daniels Crescent
 - Darbyshire Court
 - Nicholls Court
 - Mcnamara Court
 - Church Street North
- **2023 Road Resurfacing: *status – Construction ongoing***
 - Remove and replace existing asphalt including removal and replacement of various sections of concrete curb & gutter. Upgrading sidewalk approaches for compliance with AODA including curb depressions, ramps, tactile plates etc.
 - Locations:
 - Delaney Drive
 - Ritchie Ave
 - Farrow Cres

- Fitzgerald Dr
 - Varley Dr
 - Rideout St
 - Clark Road
- **Lakefront Bridge 112**
 - Removal and replace existing bridge with a like for like structure, with an addition of increased height for bicyclists' safety and a handrail for accessibility. Location: Waterfront trail West of Veterans Point
 - **Simms Drive Traffic Calming Replacement**
 - Remove and replace existing traffic calming with a uniform sinusoidal speed hump that increases accessibility but rather ultimately motorist and resident safety.
 - **Accessible Pedestrian Signal Installations (2020 - 2022 projects – Construction in 2023)**
 - Retrofit of existing sidewalk at signalized intersections for compliance with ADOA including new sidewalks, curb depressions, ramps, tactile plates, push buttons and dual pedestrian signal heads.
 - Locations:
 - Audley Road & Kerrison Avenue
 - Audley Road & Williamson Drive
 - Church Street & Mill Street
 - Church Street & Lincoln Alexander Public School
 - Church Street & Lincoln Street/Randall Street
 - Fairall Street/Station Street & Dowty Road
 - Harwood Avenue South & Kings Crescent
 - Harwood Avenue South & Emperor Street
 - Harwood Avenue South & Clements Road
 - Harwood Avenue North at Notre Dame Secondary School
 - Harwood Avenue & Biggs Drive
 - Westney Road South & O'Brien Court
 - Pickering Beach Road & Emperor Street/Greenhalf Drive
 - **2023 Concrete Curb & Sidewalk Repairs**
 - Replacement of damaged sidewalks, curbs and/or trip hazards. Replacement at intersections includes tactile plates.
 - Various locations across Town (over 200 locations completed this year including intersections and non-intersection replacement work)

- **Town Hall Parking Lot Improvements**
 - Project includes AODA compliant parking, new accessible sidewalks with curb depressions and tactile plates.
 - Status – Starting September 2023 and completion expected by Spring 2024.

- **25 Mills Street**
 - Completed in 2022 - upgrades were completed to ensure AODA compliance, including the installation of tactile plates and an accessible parking space.

- **Ajax Public Library**
 - All Ajax Public Library branches have a rollator (walker) on-site for available customer use in branch.
 - The main branch has a mobility scooter charger as part of the Town of Ajax’s 2022 Inclusive Community Grant to install 17 mobility device charging stations across the Town.
 - Audley Reading Garden furniture unbolted to enhance flexibility and accessible design.
 - Makerspace (Fall 2023):
 - 5 accessible workspaces with height-adjustable tables, likewise for the 1 staff station
 - 1 media lab control booth.
 - Both entrances into the makerspace (from library branch and MCC) will also have automatic door openers, as will the door entry into the media lab. (Fall 2023)

- **St. Francis Centre Movie Screen (Public Spaces in the Built Environment)**
 - As part of the 2022 Operating Budget submission, Council approved the purchase of a new, large-format movie screen for the St. Francis Centre. Prior to this purchase, staff utilized the white cyc curtain, which was stretched tight, to screen movies on. Curtains are meant to absorb light and as such; the quality and brightness of the projected image/film was not as bright and clear as it should be. The new screen is purposefully made to reflect light which provides a much clearer and brighter image.
 - The screen is large format in that, when pulled down, it takes up a good portion of the proscenium opening of the stage, providing for a larger viewing area for the projection/film.
 - Due to supply issues, the screen was not installed until 2023.

- **Planning & Development**
 - The Town of Ajax Housing Strategy was adopted by Ajax Council. The Housing Strategy presents 30 actions including actions that help facilitate the development of supportive housing, which includes accessible housing.
 - Zoning By-law Review (Zoning Our Future) - Staff continued to prepare technical reports and a draft zoning by-law amendment that will incorporate provisions of the AODA that can be implemented via zoning (e.g., parking standards).
 - Tactile plates are now installed with all new site plan and subdivision developments.
 - Engineering Design Criteria has been made accessible.

► 2022-2026 Ajax Strategic Plan – Action 26: with recommended LEAD actions

The following section of the Plan has applied recommended LEAD considerations to several Supporting Actions identified within the 2022-2026 Ajax Strategic Plan – Action 26.

Connecting our community

1. Increase and amplify creative and innovative opportunities

1.1 Promote creativity, learning and growth in arts and culture

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Arts and Culture Plan	Embed accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion key performance indicators in the Arts and Culture strategy and workplan.	Recreation & Culture	2023
• Ajax Sign at Pat Bayly Square		Recreation & Culture	2023
• St. Francis Centre Promotional Campaign	Ensure campaign incorporates information and communication accessibility features; consult AAC and persons with disabilities in the planning process.	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing
• Local Artist Recognition (Indigenous and Youth)	Include engagement with Indigenous and youth artists with disabilities	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	throughout the planning and promotion process.		
• Engage Arts Program for Seniors	Embed accessibility and inclusion criteria in arts programs for seniors from the planning stage. Consult seniors with disabilities on best practices.	Recreation & Culture	2023
• Enhance Cultural Programming	Embed accessibility in cultural programming; require and support community partners to include accessibility features in their programs	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing

Encourage community pride

2.1 Acknowledge and celebrate our local history and culture

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Archives Expansion and Promotion	Review accessibility standards and best practices for library materials, include accessibility features in expansion and promotion.	Ajax Public Library	Ongoing
• Establish and Cultivate Cultural Group Connections	In building cultural group connections, consider intersectionality by asking about and highlighting their accessibility and inclusionary practices	Recreation & Culture	2024

2.2 Recognize outstanding individuals and groups

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Street Naming By-law Update		Planning & Development	2024
• Commemorative Naming of Municipal Parks and Buildings Policy Update	Consider inclusion of accessibility, diversity and equity and inclusion in policy updates, such as consideration of disability advocates/champions, accessible signage and memorial upgrades.	Operations & Environmental Services	2025
• Annual Library Volunteer Recognition	Commencing in 2023 and ongoing, the Annual Library Volunteer Recognition program recognizes volunteer efforts in accessibility and inclusion, highlighting efforts of volunteer support with the Visiting Library Service	Ajax Public Library	Ongoing
• Ajax Wall of Fame Concept (consider with ACC Renovation Design)	Consider nomination process to include persons with disabilities, and multiple ways the wall can be accessed and experienced	Operations & Environmental Services, Recreation & Culture	2025

2.3 Enhance community engagement opportunities

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Mayor and Council Community BBQ	Look for opportunities to enhance physical, sensory and service accessibility of the BBQ event, check accessibility of the venue, amenities,	CAO	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	seating, and communication system; increase event promotion among disability communities to increase their participation.		
• Outdoor Pop-up Performances	Provide accessibility guidelines and supports to performing groups; to enhance accessibility of events and performances, e.g. accessible viewing platform, seating and path of travel, sound amplification (where necessary), captioning/ASL and audial description supports, quiet areas and sensory kits.	Recreation & Culture	2024
• Town Hall School Tours	Look for opportunities to enhance tour accessibility, both physical and sensory, e.g. instructions and explanations in plain language, using sound amplification; highlight accessibility features of the facilities or services. Tour guide reviews best practices for accessible customer service.	CAO	2024
• Heritage Site Tours (i.e. Spirit Walk & Jane’s Walk)	Similar to school tours, ensure accessibility for all participants, highlight existing accessibility of the site or walk, and include accessibility features and multiple formats in tour promotions. Train tour guides on accessible customer service and use of plain language.	Planning & Development, Recreation & Culture	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festival and Special Events Enhancements 	<p>Similar to Mayor BBQ and outdoor performances, enhance festival and event accessibility, possibly provide accessibility checklist and resource list for festival and event vendors and third-party organizers; promote festivals and events in accessible formats, multiple channels, highlighting accessible features and welcoming accessibility requests. Train staff and volunteers in accessible customer service prior to events.</p>	<p>Recreation & Culture, Operations & Environmental Services</p>	<p>2025</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placemaking Opportunities and Campaigns (consider as part of Arts and Culture Plan) 	<p>Similar to other campaigns, street signs and wall of fame initiative, consider accessibility features, consult AAC and the disability community in the planning process.</p>	<p>Planning & Development, Recreation & Culture</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Gardens Education and Support (i.e. Green Living Days, SNAP, Sustainability Website) 	<p>Ensure accessibility of education content and format, including website accessibility.</p>	<p>Planning & Development, Ajax Public Library, Operations & Environmental Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Improve well-being and quality of life

3.1 Support and promote active and accessible transportation

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Seniors/Youth Busing Program Report	Consult AAC and seniors and youths with disability on accessibility enhancement of the busing program; ensure report is in accessible formats and shared widely with stakeholders, including seniors with disabilities.	Recreation & Culture	2024
• Trail and Bike Connections	Look for opportunities to improve accessibility of trails and bike lanes, safety of connecting points with regards to speed, on and off-boarding from bikes, and interaction of pedestrians and cyclists.	Operations & Environmental Services, Planning & Development	Ongoing
• Sidewalk Infill Program	Consult persons with disabilities in the program planning process.	Operations & Environmental Services	Ongoing
• Pedal Bike Camps Review	Consider accessibility and inclusion in the review process, e.g. collect feedback from past and potential camp participants from marginalized communities.	Recreation & Culture, Planning & Development, Fire & Emergency Services	2024
• Transportation Demand Management Plan	Consult AAC and disability groups to include their voice in the plan. Collect data from Specialized transit to identify need and trends.	Planning & Development	2023
• Bike Repair Stations	Embed accessibility in the design of the repair stations, for a variety of bikes	Planning & Development	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	and users; consult AAC and disability groups.		
• #GetAjaxMoving Diversity Campaign	Engage diverse community groups, including disability groups, rehabilitation, fitness and sports program staff and participants, to ensure maximum diversity and inclusion. Use accessible and multiple formats and channels for campaign information and communication.	Planning & Development, CAO	2023
• Bicycle Friendly Communities Gold Certification Feasibility Study	Include accessibility and safety for all road users and cyclists of all ages and abilities as criteria for the certification.	Planning & Development	2025
• Bike Counters Project	Similar to the bike repair stations, embed accessibility early in the project planning process, including consultation with disability and other marginalized groups.	Planning & Development	2024
• Bike-Share Program	Consider whether the program could include a variety of bicycle types, for cyclists of varying abilities and disabilities, affordable and accessible in location and usability. Consult diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups.	Planning & Development, Ajax Public Library, Recreation & Culture, Operations & Environmental Services	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Scooters and E-Bike Pilot 	Ensure vulnerable groups, sidewalk and other road users are consulted, to explore safety and accessibility solutions in pilots.	Planning & Development, Legislative & Information Services, Operations & Environmental Services	2024

3.2 Provide services and resources to vulnerable and underrepresented communities

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Centre Shower Program 	Explore inclusion of accessible shower facilities, gender-neutral change rooms and shower rooms where available.	Recreation & Culture	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services Access at Libraries 	Share accessibility standards and best practices between social service providers and the library. Share accessibility training and resources.	Ajax Public Library	Ongoing

3.3 Reimagine spaces for social and healthy interactions

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrett Centre Urban Farm Partnership 	Include accessibility and inclusion requirements in memorandum of Understanding or contracts. Strive for equal access to the farm by employees, volunteers and visitors with disabilities, in customer service,	CAO	2023

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	information and communication, and the built environment.		
• Farmers Market Feasibility Study	Consult diverse communities, including disability groups, on venue and information accessibility. In the planning and procurement process, include accessibility standards, awarding points for accessible customer training, accessibility experience and representation of equity-deserving groups.	CAO, Recreation & Culture, Planning & Development	2024
• Leash Free Parks (Design Specifications Review)	Consult stakeholders and users to understand accessibility features.	Operations & Environmental Services	2023
• Outdoor Skating Options Report	Include facilities, amenities, equipment and other supports for persons with disabilities where possible, to ensure seniors, adults and children with disabilities can access the rink as skaters, support persons and observers as equitably as possible.	Operations & Environmental Services	2024
• Youth and Family Activities	Consult youths and families with disabilities and other marginalization to identify needs and design accessible activities.	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing

3.4 Implement positive mental and physical health initiatives

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Support Community-Based Mental Health Initiatives	Take measures to make mental health initiatives accessible for persons with other and dual disabilities, from racialized, newcomer, 2SLGBTQ+, and Indigenous communities, to address intersectionality.	Corporate	Ongoing
• Expansion of Group Fitness Class Programs	Expansion of fitness programs to take into consideration people of different disabilities, ages, race, gender and Indigenous identity, in venue, equipment, training approach and trainer experience in working with people with disabilities.	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing
• Addition of Girls Only Programming (specifically in sport)	Consult and reach out to women, disability, cultural and religious groups to learn what is needed in providing women-only sports activities. Consider the communication strategy when promoting women-only sports, especially with regards to trans-gender persons.	Recreation & Culture	Ongoing

3.5 Invest in partnerships to advance strategic priorities

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Community Sport Affiliation Policy	Consult sports associations for people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities, to embed accessibility and	Recreation & Culture	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	inclusion in the policy. Include procedures or key performance indicators to ensure policy implementation. Share policy widely, both internal and external, and periodically review it with an equity, inclusion and accessibility lens.		
• Ajax Partnership Fund Implementation and Reporting	Track organizations and projects funded by Ajax Partnership Fund, to evaluate accessibility and inclusion impact. Consider ways to strengthen accessibility and inclusion criteria, provide more accessibility supports to applicants, and to engage applicants from under-represented population groups.	CAO	Ongoing
• In-kind Facility and Amenity Rental Policy	Embed diversity, equity, inclusion and social responsibility in rental policy; ensure accessible document, communication, application and payment process.	CAO	2023

Foster a safe and welcoming community

4.1 Increase a sense of safety and security for the community

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Local Community Safety Action Plan	Consult organizations representing or serving vulnerable and marginalized groups, including mental health, addiction, developmental disability,	CAO	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	seniors, racialized, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ groups to gather their input and involve their participation in action plan development and delivery.		
• Encampment Safety and Clearing Protocols Policy	Similar to the local safety action plan, consult vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially users of the encampment, in developing policies and protocols. Ensure accessible information and communication formats are used in the engagement process.	CAO	2023
• Neighbourhood Programs	Collect data to determine neighbourhood demographics and program gaps; conduct neighbourhood consultations and engage them in the development, planning and delivery process.	CAO	Ongoing
• Support Agencies, Community Groups, Service Providers, etc.	Survey agencies, community groups and service providers to identify accessibility gaps and resources. Provide accessibility support or encourage sharing of accessibility resources and best practices. Identify any gaps in supporting agencies and organizations serving or representing disability groups.	Corporate	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Reporting Education 	Ensure accessible and multiple information and communication formats and channels are used.	CAO	2024

4.2 Continue to implement traffic calming initiatives

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Zones Review and Implementation 	Engage vulnerable and marginalized groups in the review process and monitor and evaluate implementation to assess impact on those groups.	Planning & Development	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and Intersection Data Collection 	Consider including in the data collection number and condition of accessible intersections, with audible and tactile signals and curb cuts with colour-contrast tactile strips. Consider safety of interactions between pedestrian and vehicular traffic for continuous improvement and goal setting.	Planning & Development	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Signage Review and Pilot 	Strive to include a range of stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents and neighbourhood representatives, including persons with disabilities, in the review and pilot process.	Planning & Development	2023

4.3 Increase beautification efforts throughout the Town

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Park Waste Collection Review	Similar to other review processes, engage AAC and the disability community in the review process to enhance accessibility.	Operations & Environmental Services	2025
• Two Stream Waste/Recycle Stations at Parks	Consult AAC and the disability community to enhance accessibility of the recycle stations.	Operations & Environmental Services	2023
• Waste Awareness Campaign	Ensure accessible and multiple formats and channels in the campaign. Engage community and disability organizations to share campaign information.	Planning & Development, CAO	2024

5. Champion inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA)

5.1 Continuously improve our IDEA programs

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Anti-Racism Task Force Implementation	Ensure task force implementation considers intersectionality with accessibility, in information, communication, programs and services; as well as diverse representation on the task force.	CAO	2023
• Investigate new Flagpole at Town Hall Complex	Consider raising a flag or recognizing an icon symbolizing disability/accessibility, alongside Indigenous and/or 2SLGBTQ+ flags.	CAO	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Signature Diversity Exchange Campaign	Integrate accessibility/disability in the diversity Xchange campaign, addressing intersectionality.	CAO	2023
• Indigenous Consultation Policy	Ensure engagement of diverse Indigenous groups, including 2-Spirit, disability, mixed-race, age and gender, are explicitly mentioned in the consultation policy and implemented in the process. Include accessible information and communication, venues, online platforms. Consider honorarium, transportation and child-care support for focus group participants.	Corporate	2024
• Abilities Centre's LEAD (Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery) Program	Prioritize LEAD themes and actions and implement them where feasible as part of corporate and department strategy and workplan.	Legislative & Information Services	2024
• Emergency Preparedness Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities	Consult seniors and persons with disabilities and their organizations on best practices.	Legislative & Information Services, Recreation & Culture	2023
• Age-Friendly/Accessibility Resources for Businesses	Consult seniors, persons with disabilities and their organizations, and Chambers of Commerce on accessibility resources and best practices .	Legislative & Information Services, Recreation & Culture	2025

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Awareness of Emergency Preparedness 	Communicate accessible and inclusive emergency procedures, including where to access the policy and procedures, and conduct drills regularly.	Fire & Emergency Services	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Accessibility Standards Update (Ajax CC and St. Andrew's CC) 	Consult accessibility standards being developed by Accessible Canada Act, other municipalities' accessibility standards (Oakville), and conduct audits or consult with persons with disabilities, to update accessibility guidelines, standards and best practices.	Operations & Environmental Services	2024

Growing our Community

1. Embrace dynamic and sustainable growth

1.1 Advance our vision for community growth

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review 	Include diverse community groups in the bylaw review; ensure representation from marginalized groups.	Planning & Development	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Plan Review 	Engage stakeholders in the review process. Indicate which communities have been consulted, their specific input, and which of their recommendations are being implemented, to show accountability.	Planning & Development	2026

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajax GO Station Area Specific Study 	Invite input from disability communities and community organizations, asking specific questions on accessibility of information and communication, and the built environment of the Go Station area.	Planning & Development	2026

1.2 Streamline process and approvals for development

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Online Services (i.e. Mapping Tool & Planning Portal) 	Consider digital accessibility and provide clear instructions on how to use the online tools or offer alternate formats and/or assistance.	Planning & Development, Legislative & Information Services	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Plan Review Technical Guidelines 	If consultation with AAC is part of the process, make sure it is done in the early stages of the design process.	Planning & Development	2023

1.3 Continue the revitalization of downtown

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajax Plaza Redevelopment Masterplan 	Consult AAC and the disability community on enhancing accessibility, in early stages of the redevelopment process.	Planning & Development	2026

1.4 Engage the community on intensification projects

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Communications Strategy for Planning Projects	Use accessible formats and various communication channels.	Planning & Development, CAO	Ongoing

1.5 Improve Road transportation network

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Harwood Avenue North Environmental Assessment, Design & Construction	Consider safety and access for persons with disabilities using the roads in mobility devices or on foot with sensory, cognitive and physical limitations, including during road or sidewalk construction.	Planning & Development, Operations & Environmental Services	2026

1.7 Encourage mixed use development with a focus on affordable, attainable and purpose-built housing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Explore Opportunities with Developers, Not-for-Profits and Other Stakeholders	Include consultation with persons with disabilities and their supporting organizations, to understand the physical accessibility features required for accessible housing beyond the minimum requirements in Ontario Building Code. (Accessible Housing Network).	Planning & Development	Ongoing
• Ajax Housing Strategy and Action Plan	Included an action that through the Town's Official Plan Review to add a policy requiring the submission of an	Planning & Development	2023

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	Affordability and Accessibility analysis as part of a complete application for residential development, which will encourage a range of housing options including those accessible for persons with disabilities.		
• Municipal Housing Pledge	Advocate for more housing options to include accessible housing for persons with disabilities, and affordable housing for low-income groups in future initiatives that deliver housing.	Planning & Development	2023

2. Advance business innovation and investment

2.1 Facilitate business retention and expansion

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Business Retention & Expansion Program Initiation	Include AODA standards and accessibility best practices in the program.	CAO	2024
• Business Engagement Strategy	Include engagement of businesses owned and operated by traditionally marginalized communities.	CAO	2023
• Business Mentor Roster Recruitment	Recruit business mentors of and for persons with disabilities and marginalized identities.	CAO	Ongoing
• Ajax Business Profile Video Series	Include businesses owned and operated by marginalized communities, or those that demonstrate accessibility and inclusion best practices. Ensure	CAO	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	captioning and text or audio description of the videos.		
• Not-For-Profit Business Support Study	Consider gaps and resources for accessibility supports to non-profits.	CAO	2025

2.2 Support adaptation to a changing economy

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Post Secondary Student Business Program	Ensure students with disabilities are part of the participant engagement plan; the instruction of the business program adopts accessible formats and delivery methods; and there is an accessibility component in the business development process, i.e. adherence to AODA standards in the business practice.	CAO	2024

2.3 Promote Ajax as a tourism destination

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Tourism Webpage Update	Continue to work toward website navigation and content accessibility, including tagged image descriptions, videos with captioning and audio or text description.	Planning & Development	2024
• Tourism Revenue Opportunities Report	Consider equitable fee structure, for low income, seniors and support	Planning & Development, Recreation &	2025

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	persons accompanying persons with disabilities.	Culture, Operations & Environmental Services	
• Highlight Diversity in Tourism	Highlight tourist attractions with accessibility features (AccessNow).	Planning & Development, CAO	Ongoing

3. Invest in the changing recreational needs of a growing community

3.1 Initiate designs to modernize and redevelop facilities

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Rotary Park Pavilion Feasibility Study & Improvements	Consider universal design elements and accessibility design.	Operations & Environmental Services, Recreation & Culture	2023
• Library Strategic Master Plan (2023-2028)	Embed accessibility and inclusion key performance indicators, under LEAD themes such as governance, suppliers and partnerships, HR, programs and services, communication and technology, facilities. Engage diverse stakeholders in the strategy development process, including persons with disabilities. Share the Strategic Master Plan widely and on the website.	Ajax Public Library	2023
Ajax Community Centre Renovation Design	Consider universal and accessibility design principles, consult with the AAC and diverse communities on design.	Operations & Environmental Services,	2025

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
		Recreation & Culture	
• Library Makerspace	The Makerspace was designed with automatic door openers on all doors. The space is designed to be flexible for a variety of users which included height adjustable desks and various counter options.	Ajax Public Library	2023
• Existing Fire Facilities Review	Consider accessibility enhancements in facilities, signage and communication systems.	Fire & Emergency Services, Operations & Environmental Services	2025
• Fire Station Location Study	Consider accessibility and universal design in the study.	Fire & Emergency Services	2026
• Assess Opportunities to Expand Parking at Greenwood Conservation Area	Include best practices in accessible parking spaces, in size, location, marking, signs and location and type of payment machines.	Operations & Environmental Services	2024

3.2 Enhance facilities and programming for seniors

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• St. Andrew's Community Centre Feasibility Study	Consider accessibility for diverse disability and community groups in the feasibility study.	Operations & Environmental Services, R&C	2023

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Snow Clearing Assistance Program Review and Report	Involve diverse resident groups in giving feedback on the snow clearing assistance program.	Operations & Environmental Services	2023
• Review of Operating Model for Seniors	Consult seniors and disability groups in the review process. And report back to the people consulted to show what recommendations have been adopted.	Recreation & Culture	2025
• Pickering Village Municipal Complex Master Plan	Include accessibility and DEI key performance indicators in the Master Plan. Share it widely across all departments and externally on the website.	Operations & Environmental Services, R&C, Planning & Development, CAO	2024

3.3 Expand amenities and programs for diverse communities

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Ajax CC Cricket Club House & Field of Play	Ensure facility and communication accessibility, and inclusion of people of all abilities and ages; manage the booking system so that the facility can be used by diverse groups. Encourage the teams/groups to be inclusive in their membership.	Operations & Environmental Services	2024
• New North Cricket Wicket at St. Patrick Park		Operations & Environmental Services	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajax Public Library Grandview Kids branch at the Grandview Children's Centre Ajax 	<p>Ensure facility, communication system and customer service accessibility.</p>	Ajax Public Library	2025

3.4 Construct new parks and public spaces

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajax CC Park Redevelopment (Basketball Courts and Skateboard Park) 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annandale Park and Trail Design 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedar Park Batting Cage 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC,</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	2023

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carruthers Marsh Pavilion Park 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Retrofits (St. Catherine of Siena Park, Lord Elgin Park, Exeter Park, etc.) 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham Meadoway Consultation 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Planning & Development, Operations & Environmental Services	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castlefields Park & Splashpad 	<p>Consider universal and accessibility design in the development, review and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Consider physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Consult AAC, disability sports or recreation groups, and persons with disabilities.</p>	Operations & Environmental Services	2026

Modernizing our Community

1. Lead the green transition

1.1 Take meaningful climate action

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Advocacy 	Ensure information and communication accessibility in the advocacy initiative	Corporate	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Fleet Strategy (including EV Charging Stations) 	Consider the types of charging devices for wheelchair and other mobility and assistive devices.	Operations & Environmental Services	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Response Plan / Extreme Weather Service Alert Process 	Include strategies for communicating and supporting persons with disabilities in the response plan.	Operations & Environmental Services	2024

1.2 Raise awareness of environmentally friendly programs and practices

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Single-Use Plastics Education	Ensure education information and communication is accessible and through multiple channels. Engage disability and community organizations in information dissemination.	Planning & Development	Ongoing
• Pet Waste Diversion in Parks Feasibility Report	Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities is considered in the communication process and the recommended practice.	Planning & Development	2024

1.3 Preserve and enhance green spaces and water quality

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Urban Forest Strategy	Engage diverse stakeholders in the strategy development, including disability and marginalized communities. Share the strategy on the website.	Operations & Environmental Services	2023

2. Rethink the way we communicate

2.1 Implement innovative communication technologies and tools

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Review of Traditional Communications Tools	Consider accessibility and inclusion features of the tools, feedback	CAO	2024

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	mechanism, and their effectiveness based on the responses.		
• Digital Recreation Guide	Ensure accessible navigation, content format, images tagged with text description, videos captioned and described.	Recreation & Culture	2024
• TOA Talks Podcast	Consider how people who are hard-of-hearing and deaf can access the podcast. Consider consulting Durham Deaf Services and Canadian Hearing Services.	CAO	2023
• Online Facility & Outdoor Spaces Booking and Tours	Look for opportunities to improve accessibility in the booking process, including information and communication channels. Gather feedback with questions on accessibility. Consider conducting accessibility testing with end-users with disabilities.	Recreation & Culture, Operations & Environmental Services	2024
• GPS Fleet Dashcam Project (relaunch of Track My Plow App)		Operations & Environmental Services, Legislative & Information Services	2023
• Ajax Website Redesign	Ensure website navigation and content accessibility, reference WCAG2.2AA. Engage staff from across the organization to gather feedback and enlist their participation in	CAO	2025

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	implementing accessible practices going forward.		

3. Equip our workforce for the future

3.1 Prioritize proactive recruitment

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• Investigate Apprenticeship and Intern Programs	communicate accessibility of these programs for persons with disabilities and other marginalization.	CAO	2024
• Recruitment Campaigns and Pilots	Ensure outreach to and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities. Track campaign responses, applications, interviews and hires from under-represented groups.	CAO	Ongoing

3.2 Continue to be an employer of choice

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
• HR Strategy	Include DEI and accessibility key performance indicators in HR process and milestones for diversification and inclusion.	CAO	2025
• DEI Supports and Workforce Census Implementation	Develop a communication strategy to emphasize the importance and benefits of demographic data and staff participation. Include visible and	CAO	Ongoing

Supporting Actions	LEAD Actions	Responsibility	Deadline
	invisible disabilities in data collection. Demonstrate how the data is being used to enhance DEI and accessibility in a timely manner.		
• Corporate Succession Strategy	Develop tactics or initiatives that intentionally engage persons from under-represented groups, including persons with disabilities.	CAO	Ongoing
• Human Resource Management System	Develop accessibility and inclusion criteria to be embedded in the system, such as gender-neutral pronouns, accessible or alternate formats.	CAO, Finance, Legislative & Information Services	2025
• Talent Management Initiatives	Support managers to normalize accommodation discussion in a safe space, to reduce stigma, and to show everyone benefits from flexible workspaces, workplaces, and workhours.	CAO	Ongoing

Maintenance & Service Disruption

Pursuant to Section 80.44 of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, O. Reg. 191/11, in addition to the accessibility plan requirements set out by legislation, the Town of Ajax Multi-year Accessibility Plan includes consideration for:

- Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces; and
- Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this Part are not in working order.

The Town of Ajax has numerous documented processes and procedures that outline levels of service for temporary disruptions, emergency and preventative maintenance. A summary follows below.

Notice of Service Disruption – LIS-WI-022

The Town must provide public notice of any disruption to a Town service/facility, whether scheduled or unexpected, that may be relied on by a person with a disability.

Recreational Trail System Inspections and Maintenance – OPN-WI-409

The documented process and level of service to provide, inspect and maintain a safe, accessible, recreational trail system in the Town.

Sidewalk Maintenance – OPN-WI-319

Operations and Environmental Services are responsible to facilitate periodic inspections in accordance with the frequency required by the Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards latest edition and document deficiencies for repair in accordance with the standards.

Road Maintenance – OPN-OP-303

The Municipal Act dictates an inspection schedule for all municipal roads in accordance with road class and also specifies the minimum response time necessary to rectify a deficiency once it has been identified. The Town's approved level of service meets that which is required under the Municipal Act.

Building Maintenance – Maintenance of Town Facilities – OPN-OP-200

The documented level of service for maintenance tasks or activities that are completed/required to the infrastructure of a facility to conserve as nearly, and as long, as possible the original condition of an asset or resource while compensating for normal wear and tear.

Playground Maintenance and Inspections – OPN-WI-405

The process for conducting inspections of Town playgrounds and play equipment and managing deficiencies and/or repairs.

Pool and Spa Maintenance – REC-WI-003

The Town maintains an optimal pool environment for users of Recreation, Culture & Community Development swimming pools and spas and to ensure compliance with the Ontario Public Pools Regulation (Reg. 565), the Ontario Public Spas Regulation (Reg. 428/05), and the Operating Procedures for Non-Regulated Recreational Water Facilities Guidance Document.

Satellite Washroom Maintenance – OPN-WI-402

The process for identifying the maintenance, inspection and cleaning of washrooms at satellite facilities.

Grounds Maintenance – Town Facilities, Parks and Open Space System- OPN-WI-332

The process identifying all parks and open space areas requiring ground maintenance. Grounds Maintenance refers to the following tasks being performed at each location: cutting and trimming of grass, picking litter (including shrub beds and playgrounds), string trimming, blowing off of hard surfaces, weeding and mulching 'B' and 'C' beds, raking resilient surface in and around playgrounds, emptying full (or near full) garbage cans, reporting vandalism, graffiti, hazardous trees, and/or infrastructure requiring maintenance or additional inspections.

Parks and Open Space Infrastructure Maintenance - OPN-OP-401

The Town of Ajax manages a wide range of outdoor activities involving the overall maintenance of the Town's Parks and Open Space system. Activities involve the maintenance of the following municipal infrastructure: parks, sports fields, trails, playgrounds, urban forest. Based on the range of services delivered to maintain the Town's parks and open space system, several service levels have been established to ensure the consistent and quality delivery of services.

Winter Control - OPN-OP-310

The procedure used to provide winter control services on all Roads, Public Laneways, Sidewalks, Trails, Easements, Parking Lots, School Crossings, under the Town's jurisdiction as well as Town Hall, Ajax Plaza and Ajax GO (enclosed staircase only) in accordance with the minimum maintenance standards of the Municipal Act and other applicable acts and the established Town levels of service.

Feedback

To ensure we are properly monitoring the implementation of the Town's Accessibility Plan 2022-2026, the Town is committed to improving reporting opportunities for residents who would like to inquire about accessibility or make a complaint about inaccessibility. 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 several ways to connect with the Town to share accessibility-related comments:

Have an accessibility question, comment, or concern? Feedback regarding accessibility in the Town of Ajax can be submitted through regular mail, email, telephone, facsimile, or by using the Town's online general [Customer Feedback Form](#), which also is available in hard-copy format at all service counters in Town facilities.

Contact information

Phone:	905-683-4550
NexTalk:	1-866-460-4489
Fax:	905-683-1061
Mail:	Accessible Ajax - Town of Ajax, 65 Harwood Ave. S., Ajax, ON L1S 2H9
Email:	accessibility@ajax.ca

Are you looking for an alternative format or communication support? Please submit your request through the [online Request for Alternate Format/Communication Support form](#), or by any of the contact methods listed above.

**“Accessibility is not a
checkbox.”**

**Accessibility is a mindset
that can lead to a very
powerful sense of inclusion.”**

Maayan Ziv, Founder & CEO of AccessNow

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