

# Mission: Inclusion

## Appendix A 2024 Status Update

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# ★ 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:

	Description	2024 Action
1.	Identification of accessibility barriers and implementation of solutions to prevent and remove them throughout the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ongoing</i></li> </ul>
2.	Staff training on new policies & legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing DEI, customer service and accessibility training provided to all new-hires as part of on-boarding/orientation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HR strategy will review timelines for refresh/renewal training offerings for existing staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.	Ongoing policy, programming, and legislative reviews to identify and remove barriers, using a Diversity & Inclusion lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and AAC participated in the following consultations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation: Improving accessible Built Environment Standards</li> <li>▪ Consultation: Initial Recommended changes to Customer Service Standards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4.	New and refreshed corporate policies and directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new Accessible Document Standards policy to identify roles, responsibilities and expectations of staff in the development of accessible documents for internal and external use.</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
5.	New and existing accessibility tools and resources incorporated into daily practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff participated in Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training (Fall 2024), which supports greater awareness of invisible disabilities during in-person customer service interactions.</li> </ul>

## ● 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:

	Description	2024 Action
6.	Explore new partnerships to support diverse and inclusive recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in DDSB Internationally Trained Professional Internship Program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This is a Federal Government program designed to assist internationally trained professionals who are newcomers to Canada to gain Canadian experience through an 8-week internship program</li> <li>▪ HR participated in the program and our HR intern was successful in securing a professional HR position at the end of their internship</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Signed an Employer Partner Agreement with CNIB (Come to Work Program) in February 2024 (HR &amp; Corporate Services)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Come to Work is CNIB's flagship employment program which connects Canadians with sight loss seeking work to employers who want to discover the full potential of Canada's talent</li> <li>▪ Come to Work educates partners about blindness etiquette and hiring practices to break down barriers and build more accessible workplaces</li> <li>▪ HR Generalist share job postings with CNIB's Outreach Coordinator</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Partnered with Ontario Shores Supportive Employment Program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are part of the Ontario Shores database of employers where they review our job postings and see if there are any of their clients that match our posting qualifications and support their clients through the application</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>process when applying for positions with the Town (they help them to apply and help to prepare them for interviews)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Their goal is to help their clients transition into permanent positions and reintegrate back into the workplace</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring a partnership with Pathways 2 Employment with the Abilities Centre (HR &amp; Corporate Services) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This program is geared to supporting individuals with disabilities in developing and/or enhancing job readiness skills to gain meaningful employment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collaborating with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to create a 15-week paid Internship Program in each department that will be aimed at offering underrepresented professionals who identify as Black, Indigenous, a Person of Colour, new immigrants, member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and people with differing abilities an opportunity to enhance their job readiness and marketability (still to be formalized and rolled out – work in progress)</li> <li>• Seeking opportunities to work with the Welcome Centre to provide our job postings</li> </ul>
7.	Performance commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Services Team attended the Durham Accessibility Conference (May 22, 2024)</li> <li>• HR Generalists are trained in accessibility considerations</li> <li>• As part of the onboarding process, all new hires receive Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion Corporate Training, Respectful Workplace Training, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Training and Health &amp; Safety Training/Orientation</li> <li>• Hiring Managers received education on the Psychology of Cognitive Bias Training on June 18, 2024 as part of the implementation of the anonymized screening process to explain the importance and benefits of having a bias free selection process to promote a diverse workforce</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
8.	Individual employee accommodation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR continues to work with and educate managers and supervisors and staff on required accommodation within the workplace without barriers</li> <li>• Ongoing implementation of early and safe return to work plans implemented to accommodate injured/ill employees for work related and non-work-related medical conditions without barriers</li> <li>• Continuous improvement of new employee/returning employee Health Safety and Wellness new Training/Orientation thereby eliminating barriers in their job success</li> <li>• Implementation of “Use of Naloxone Kits Policy and Program” as well as Naloxone staff training in July 2023, to raise awareness and provide guidelines for the administration of naloxone by Town of Ajax staff in case of an opioid overdose emergency for the health and safety of staff and patrons without barriers</li> <li>• Implementation of fully accessible 2024 Wellness challenge/initiative “Walk your Way to Wellness” yielding a very high participation rate without barriers</li> <li>• Ongoing implementation of Wellness Calendar monthly updates 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 physical and mental health, fostering safe and supportive work culture without barriers</li> <li>• Continuing to provide employees with ergonomic assessments and implement 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</li> <li>• Employees are provided with external training to secure alternative position on a permanent basis to accommodate mental health condition/restrictions without barriers and within permanent medical restrictions fostering a safe</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>return to work without barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work by the Wellness Working Committee with full participation/representation of all TOA departments to focus on mental health wellbeing initiatives/programs/services thereby working towards full participation of persons with physical and psychological disabilities</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Implementation of pilot Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) “Not Myself Management Program” and training in July 2024 thereby increasing mental health awareness and understanding fostering safe and support work culture without barriers</li> <li>• Ongoing quarterly meetings with Benefit Provider (Sunlife) in an effort to reduce barriers for employees off on LTD for a safe and timely return to work without barriers and interruption of LTD benefits, programs and services</li> <li>• On a case-by-case basis, continue to promote psychotherapy benefits 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 as well as EFAP services. fostering a safe and supportive work culture without barriers</li> <li>• Health and safety training sessions for approximately 300 employees; sessions included topics of <i>Employee Workplace Emergency Response Planning</i>, <i>Early and Safe Return to Work/Accommodations</i>, <i>Employee and family assistance program</i>, <i>Incident reporting</i>, <i>Worker, Supervisor and Employer Rights and Duties</i>, <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act/Regulations</i>, awareness on other Health and Safety partners in Ontario i.e., MLITSD, PSHSA, IHSA and WSIB etc.</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide expanded Sunlife plan to cover comprehensive health and dental care for temporary employees with contracts for 1 year or greater. As of the end of June 2024, 25 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.</li> <li>• Due to a plan amendment, the OMERS pension plan has been expanded to cover all non-full-time employees on a voluntary basis. As of the end of June 2024, 152 non-full-time employees have enrolled in coverage. This allows additional employees to take part who would otherwise not be eligible, providing a much-needed retirement savings option.</li> <li>• Continue to offer free gym membership program with the Ajax Community Centres that was expanded to cover all PT employees who were previously not eligible.</li> <li>• Continue to work with IT to provide Part-Time employees 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.</li> </ul>
9.	Accessible human resource practices: recruitment, interview, growth & development, redeployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Services continues to ensure that job postings are written in plain language and include accessibility features like screen reader compatibility. Job postings on the careers site are in HTML format with screen reader compatibility.</li> <li>• Candidates are advised that accommodations in the recruitment process are available upon notifying HR Services. The ability to request accommodation in the recruitment or onboarding process is outlined on job posting documents, interview/assessment emails, in the offer letters and on the career's web page.</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation is offered to individuals during any stage of the recruitment process and may include ASL translators, support workers, accessible locations, testing/assessment modifications.</li> <li>• Interview questions are given to candidates during the interview process so they can follow along as the interview questions are asked.</li> <li>• HR Services works with Hiring Managers and employees to determine accommodation needs to ensure a safe work environment in collaboration with Health &amp; Safety.</li> <li>• HR Services reviews accessibility features as a consideration when acquiring/implementing new software.</li> <li>• Implementation of Anonymized Applicant Screening that went live on June 24, 2024 – the screening technology redacts identifiable characteristics from a candidate’s application as a means to eliminate any unconscious or inherent biases in the recruitment process. The core objective is to select the most qualified candidates based on skills and qualifications irrespective of their background.</li> </ul>
10.	Ontario Human Rights Code training for all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included as part of general accessibility and inclusion training provided to all new staff.</li> </ul>
11.	New HRMS Human Resources Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AODA considerations included in RFP process and WORKDAY project implementation plan</li> </ul>

# + 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:**

	Description	2024 Action
12.	Provision of accessible, quality customer service in response to the diverse needs of the Town of Ajax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Customer Service standards reviewed as part of the implementation of the Customer Service Strategy. In doing so, the Accessible Customer Service section of the past document will become its own policy. The Legislative Specialist reviewed and provided direction on the content within the new document.</li> <li>• On October 23, 2024 a Customer Service information event was held for all Town of Ajax staff. A presentation on the “Hidden Disability Sunflower program” was included in the event.</li> <li>• The Town became the first municipality in Durham Region to join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. Participation in the program helps individuals with invisible disabilities to voluntarily wear the Sunflower symbol to subtly indicate they may require extra assistance, patience or time. Staff participated in awareness training. Staff and a representative from the Accessibility Advisory Committee participated in promotional communications for the initiative.</li> </ul>

<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p>Diverse programming and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-Pens were added to the Ajax Public Library circulating collection on September 25, 2023. C-Pens are adaptive technology to help with reading and comprehension for customers with reading disabilities, learning English, and encourages learning/reading independence.</li> <li>• Decodable books were added to the Ajax Public Library circulating collection on September 25, 2023. Decodable books are simple books that contain words made of letter-sounds, spelling and morphological patterns that readers are specifically taught (such as prefixes and suffixes). They often contain a high percentage of words in which the letters represent their most common sounds. Decodable books help children develop the ability to recognize words quickly and independently, which leads to reading success.</li> <li>• In partnership with Town of Ajax, the Library acted as a pick-up location for Treat Accessibility signs in October 2023. Treat Accessibly, in partnership with Canadian Tire, REMAX and Kinder, asks residents to make trick-or-treating accessible and inclusive for everybody and post a sign to let everyone know that their home offers that option.</li> <li>• Ajax Public Library completed Outdoor Literacy Project with Abilities Centre: Outdoor Explorers: 2023-2024: Abilities Centre staff lead monthly inclusive monthly activities for families outside Main Branch and in the Audley Reading Garden.</li> <li>• Ajax Public Library Completed 3D Printer program with 3D programs to young adult using new accessibility devices using EAF Grant: Accessibility 3D Printer Desk + Mouse + keyboard (Summer 2023)</li> <li>• Ajax Public Library Coordinator of Marketing &amp; Communications attended InDesign Accessible Documents training, provided by the Region of Durham, to build and design documents and publications with accessibility features and supports embedded (January 25, 2024).</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ajax Public Library AODA Customer Service Standards Refresher Training (94 staff members)</li> <li>• Makerspace aims to offer “make your own accessibility devices” (whisper phones, doorknob handles, light switch aides). (October 2024)</li> <li>• Ajax Public Library opened Grandview Kids Express Service point location. (Fall 2024)</li> <li>• Aquatics Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) Breaking Barriers in Swimming Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In collaboration with Ajax Aquatic Club (AAC) &amp; Inclusion in Canadian Sports Network (ICSN) approximately 24 BIPOC youth between the ages of 7 to 12 participated in an Olympic Athlete lead event focusing on making swimming accessible to underrepresented youth. Swimmers then received the opportunity to participate in 8 free swimming lessons run by TOA &amp; AAC staff over the summer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Increase in Adapted Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ With the increase in staffing resources TOA Aquatics has prioritized an increase in the number of Adapted classes offered each session.</li> <li>○ Re-introduction of Adapted Adult program</li> <li>○ These lessons are offered in a 1 to 1 and lesson places are curtailed to the specific needs of the participant.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Increase in Ladies Only Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Ladies Only Classes have been added to accommodate the high program demands.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Inclusive Active Living Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revitalized fitness classes two per week for St. Andrew’s older adults</li> <li>▪ Free Chair Yoga at the Ajax Library – 28 registered</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Older Adult Programming (55+)</li> </ul>
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	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2023/2024 continued to offer our traditional in-person programming and events (Arts &amp; Culture, Dance, General Interest, Sports (pickleball))</li> <li>▪ Continue to offer our Senior Centre Without Walls program. This program supports isolated seniors and is funded by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. Approximately 36 individuals participate on a weekly basis via phone/zoom.</li> <li>▪ Partnered with Ajax Seniors Club to offer monthly Lunch and Learns at the Pickering Village location. Topics include Estate Planning, Tax Credits, Frauds &amp; Scams, etc.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All 55+ events were well received in 2023 and 2024 - Spring Fling Dance (sold out in 2023 &amp; 2024), Seniors BBQ (approximately 500 in attendance in both 2023 &amp; 2024), 55+ Wellness and Information Fair (Fall 2024).</li> <li>▪ Due to the success of our events; we added an additional Fall Dance to support social engagement with seniors in 2024 (which also sold out).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion Support Staff Training 2023/2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitated training for 20+ Inclusion Support Staff</li> <li>▪ Internal Training - Sample of topics reviewed: Working with communication disorders/utilizing accessible communication tools, Autism 101, Social Development and Bridging, Accessible Equipment and Resources, and more.</li> <li>▪ Guest Speaker: Grandview Children’s Centre – Sample of topics reviewed: Providing Personal Care to Persons with Disabilities with Safety and Dignity, and Physical Lifts and Transfers training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Camps/Playground Program Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2023 Guest Speaker Training: Centre for Accessible Sport &amp; Play.</li> <li>▪ Provided training for 80+ summer staff on program adaptations and provided additional tools to support inclusion through play.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion Services and Programming</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided Inclusion Support Services during Winter, Spring, and Fall in 2023 and 2024 Over 50 participants were supported by Inclusion Support Staff in registered Recreation Programs in 2023. Approximately 60 participants were served by Inclusion Support Staff in registered Recreation Programs in 2024.</li> <li>▪ Provided opportunities for residents to register for Inclusion Support Enhanced Staffing options over the span of 9 weeks in the Summers of 2023 and 2024. 126 registrations in Inclusion Support Services during Summer 2023 and 136 registrations in Summer 2024.</li> <li>▪ Designated multiple opportunities for Inclusion Support Enhanced Staffing options at seasonal (Winter, Spring, Fall) Drop-in Recreation Programs. Programs offering drop-in style enhanced staffing included: Friday Night Fun – Preschool, Friday Night Fun – Children, Youth Rooms and Multisensory Cart.</li> <li>▪ Began working with Centre for Accessible Sport and Play and Grandview Children’s Centre to build a program development plan between Grandview and TOA with a goal to use a co-design process to create high quality, high impact recreation programming for children with disabilities in rehabilitation and/or community programs. Project to be extended with a focus on a registered program that uses the Multisensory Cart and other sensory equipment for social recreation programming.</li> <li>▪ 2023/2024 - Continued relationships with Grandview Children’s Centre, Special Olympics Durham, and Community Living. These partnerships provide space to the organizations to run specialized recreation and therapeutic programming for children, youth, and adults with disabilities.</li> <li>▪ 2023 - Started a new partnership with Autism Home Base. Organization was provided space in the McLean Community Centre to run specialized programming for Youth/Adults with Autism.</li> <li>▪ 2024 – Began new relationship with Sunrise Developmental Support Services. Providing space in the McLean Community Centre to run specialized recreation programming for adults with disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Community Recreation Coordinator of Inclusion Services continued to sit on Municipal A&amp;I Committee as an acting member. Members provide and receive updates on industry trends and standards of best practice.</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>Guest Speakers train and educate members on current initiatives and organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs for a Variety of Abilities, and Behaviour Management Through a Disability Lens.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ajax Markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ After a successful trial period of “Mini Market” events in 2023, the Festivals and Events Team took over the delivery of the Ajax Markets, expanding the program from 3 events in 2023 to a weekly event from the first week of June to the first week of October (18 events). The markets occur weekly on the same day every week to provide stability for patrons. The timing for the markets were purposely planned from 2 to 7 p.m. to meet the needs of Ajax’s bedroom community as well other commuters travelling through Ajax during the evening commute home. Located at the Ajax Community Centre, the markets are strategically placed close to the downtown core and a number of high occupancy residential buildings, providing a market opportunity close to people’s residence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Festivals and Events Team continued to provide a number of programming options and enhancements for 2023 and 2024. This included providing facilities for breast feeding, and child and adult changing stations at all larger outdoor events. Staff continued to provide Sensory Zones at all larger events and expanded the space footprint due to popular reception. A Sensory Zone was also added to the 2023 New Year’s Eve event and will be included in the 2024 events as well.</li> <li>▪ Shuttle bus services, including having accessible shuttles available if needed, were added to the 2024 Ajax Winterfest event due to a significant spike in event attendance in 2023.</li> <li>▪ Diverse programming in 2024 included: Black History Month and Chinese New Year programming at Ajax Winterfest; Steel Pan performances, a Bob Marley tribute as event headliner, and Tulip the Therapy Horse for Canada Day; and booths focused on accessibility, active transportation, and age-friendly Ajax at Pumpkinville.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Francis Centre Programming The St. Francis Centre presented a number of programming options during the 2023-2024 Season to meet the needs of our diverse community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Family programming included 3 shows, one focused on being true to oneself and supporting each other, one on the Carnival Experience of Cuba and Brazil, and one on the music and dances from countries visited by the great medieval traveller Ibn Battuta, which included Morocco, Greece, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and China.</li> <li>▪ TIFF films presented during the 2023-2024 season showcased various diverse themes including mental health, Indigenous history, ethno-cultural stories, Black history, the LGBTQ2S+ community, and older adults. These same themes are featured in the line-up of TIFF Films for the 2024-2025 Season as well.</li> <li>▪ Recreation &amp; Culture partnered with the Ajax Public Library and BlackLit Durham for the 2023-2024 Season to present 5 events showcasing, highlighting, amplifying, and celebrating Black Canadian literature and literary voices.</li> <li>▪ Recreation &amp; Culture continued to partner with Corporate Services to present a film for National AccessAbility Awareness Week in 2024 and will do so again in 2025. The two departments will also co-present a film for International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2024.</li> <li>▪ In 2023, Recreation Programs and Active Living partnered with Culture &amp; Events to rebrand and bring back the Youth Talent Showcase to the St. Francis Centre. Ajax on Stage took a break in 2022 and returned in 2023 rebranded as Ajax Superstar, providing opportunities for our diverse youth community to showcase a variety of cultural performances including vocal and instrumental music, dance, spoken word, etc. The re-brand proved successful and rejuvenated interest from local youth to showcase their talent with 11 acts in 2023 and 17 in 2024.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Partnered with the Region of Durham to provide recreational opportunities to refugee/asylum seekers who arrived in Ajax. Assisted with creating and issuing Fair+ Passes to the refugee/asylum seekers. The passes allowed</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>the holder free access to public swims in our pools for 60 days – 61 passes were issued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnered with Ajax Public Library to provide 5 swim/skate passes for the public to check out to access drop-in recreation programs. The customer (up to 5 people in a family) would have 7 consecutive days of free access to drop-in swimming and skating at the Ajax Community Centre, Audley Recreation Centre, McLean Community Centre and Ajax Memorial Pool.</li> <li>• Partnership with Alzheimer Society of Durham Region: Operated a four-week art therapy program Nov./Dec. 2023; added Minds in Motion program to Summer 2024</li> <li>• 55+ Spotlight Speaker Series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offered a nine-part series of educational workshops on a variety of topics and issues impacting older adults and seniors.</li> <li>▪ Workshops focused on three pillars: financial literacy &amp; security, personal safety &amp; protection, and planning for the future.</li> <li>▪ Engaged 361 participants through the workshops</li> </ul> </li> <li>• National AccessAbility Week Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2024 events and activities planned and facilitated with Accessibility Advisory Committee Members included: a community flag raising, ‘What does Accessibility Mean to you?’ art contest (in partnership with the Ajax Public Library, film screening of ‘Pick of the Litter’ (in partnership with St. Francis Centre) which included guest speakers from Lions Foundation who spoke about guide dogs and service animals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International Day of Persons with Disabilities Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hosted a community film screening of ‘A New Story’ three-part documentary short film series highlighting the lives of three individuals living with intellectual disabilities. Event was planned in partnership with the Ajax Public Library, DEI and Accessibility staff, and the St. Francis</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		Centre. Event included a Q&A with individuals featured in the films as well as the filmmaker, Rob Viscardis.
14.	Ongoing outreach and consultation with persons with disabilities, the public and AAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In May 2024, the Town of Ajax, in partnership with Region of Durham, hosted the Durham Region 2023 Ontario Paraspport Games legacy tree planting in honour of the games' participants. The planting provided accessibility accommodations for participants including accessible parking, barrier-free washrooms, specialized all terrain wheelchairs, and an outdoor mobility mat leading to the planting site.</li> <li>• AAC provided letters of support for several federal and provincial grant applications submitted by the Town for projects including accessibility considerations</li> </ul>
15.	Provision of accessible feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town's feedback methods include phone, email, online (via website, social media, IMO), in person, mail, and through customer feedback forms in Town facilities</li> </ul>
16.	Accessibility-related information made widely available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Ajax Corporate social media channels continue to only use graphics and videos that meet AODA standards (closed captioning on all videos, appropriate text size, accessible colour palettes etc.)</li> <li>• Continuing to increase use of descriptive text for images across platforms</li> <li>• Ensuring closed captioning on YouTube videos are accessible for screen readers</li> <li>• Continuing to increase use of QR codes on printed materials size as postcards, flyers and posters. QR code software was purchased 2022 (Scanova)</li> <li>• How-to videos created to date: How to add your event to the Town calendar, How to add a calendar event to your personal calendar, How to apply for waterfront parking permit, What's my ward? (how to find your ward for the 2022 election), Am I on the voters' list? (how to determine if you are on the</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>voters' list for the 2022 election and what to do if not)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New podcast "TOA Talks" launched December 2023 providing an alternative way to learn about Town-initiatives with an audio-first approach. Season one has reached close to 1000 listens, Season 2 launched in 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ accessible version with closed captioning for those who may be hard of hearing is available on the Town's YouTube channels for every episode.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
17.	Accessible procurement criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible technology checklist and accessible document standards guide are available resources for staff and vendors.</li> </ul>

# ▲ 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:**

	Description	2024 Action
18.	Provision of Town of Ajax information and communications in accessible and alternate formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Currently developing a process to ensure all future PDFs uploaded to the Town’s website meet accessibility needs prior to be uploaded.</li> <li>▪ Currently developing a process to ensure all current PDFs on the Town’s website meet accessibility needs. Once updated, these PDFs will be re-uploaded to the website within ten days.</li> <li>▪ The Digital Communications Officer will circulate a monthly report of non-compliant accessible documents posted online to applicable departmental Accessible Document Liaisons for remediation.</li> <li>▪ Accessible Document Liaisons are being implemented from departments to work with PDF remediation. Each department will assign at least 1 liaison to work with the Digital Communications Officer.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Two new social media accounts have come online this term – Ajax Advantage Instagram and Ajax Fire Instagram.</li>   <li>• Communications Coordinator provided training to staff responsible for the new accounts, including type of imagery/video that align with our corporate standards, how to add descriptive text, how to link posts to more information, how to clearly and concise write captioning</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ActiveAjax Community Recreation Digital Guide – continue to work towards producing a fully accessible document for web and print. Digital Recreation Guide – Technology &amp; Innovation and Recreation staff continue to work on this project. Plan to go out to tender by the end of the summer/early Fall.</li> <li>• ActiveAjax Older Adult Supplement – This Recreation program supplement provides residents aged 55+ a guide custom tailored to their demographic who may have limited access to our other channels of marketing and complies with accessibility standards. Three guides are published: Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter.</li> <li>• Printed materials produced by Recreation &amp; Culture adhere to AODA standards and printed posters feature an increased font size to better meet a minimum six-foot viewing distance.</li> <li>• Social media videos produced by Recreation &amp; Culture that feature people speaking include captioning.</li> <li>• Printed flyers and guides produced by Recreation &amp; Culture include QR codes to be screen reader compatible (e.g. Youth Week flyer, Aging Well Month flyer, desk handouts for registration, 55+ Community Recreation Guide, etc.)</li> <li>• Outgoing Recreation &amp; Culture eBlasts and eNewsletters have been migrated to the Constant Contact email distribution platform to provide better accessibility, navigation and metrics tracking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All communications adhere to the Canadian Press Style Guide and align with corporate standards (e.g. Town of Ajax Visual Identity &amp; Brand Guidelines) to continue to provide consistent messaging.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
19.	Accessible intranet, internet sites and applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DMS Website policy updated 2024</li> <li>• SharePoint OLA intranet site launched in 2024 providing increased accessibility of formatting and layout</li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
20.	Staff knowledge and training on assistive technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not yet initiated</i></li> </ul>
21.	2026 Municipal and School Board Election Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not yet initiated</i></li> </ul>
22.	Increase awareness of Town of Ajax accessibility and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement team works with Town's Accessibility Coordinator for relevant staff broadcasts (such as Accessibility Week) and social media content (Accessibility week activities, days of significance)</li> <li>• Communications and Engagement collaborated with Town's Active Transportation Coordinator on social media and video campaign for a Driver's Awareness Campaign Centering Pedestrians with Disabilities. Five videos have been created and published.</li> <li>• Recreation &amp; Culture is ensuring facility rental resources (documentation, website content etc.) include accessibility-related features and information and are AODA compliant.</li> </ul>
23.	Alternative communications methods; TextNET, language line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will explore remote ASL interpretation options via Language Line in 2025</li> </ul>
24.	Communications and information material availability in accessible and alternative formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion of existing documents into digitally accessible forms for completion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sediment and Erosion control permit application June 2024, Planning Policy and Research (P&amp;D) released 8 Technical Reports and a Draft Zoning By-law Amendment for the Zoning Our Future project. The Technical Reports are accessible/screen reader compatible. Parking standards in the new Zoning By-law will reflect AODA requirements.</li> <li>▪ February 2024, Development Approvals released a revised Town of Ajax Site Plan Technical Guidelines which incorporates accessibility-related design standards and guidelines.</li> <li>▪ Optimize technology to automate Recreation &amp; Culture registration/application processes (online registration and membership forms, automate the way in which we receive required documentation,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<p>digital signatures, QR codes etc.) offering alternative information and registration/membership application methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Services administrative staff completed “Introduction to Accessible Forms” workshop for creating accessible PDFs and are in the process of updating all Building Services forms to comply with AODA requirements for accessibility and screen reader compatibility.</li> <li>• Planning &amp; Development Services are in the process of developing and implementing a portal that will enable the public to submit development and building permit applications online.</li> </ul>
25.	Accessibility kiosk features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAP on Point-of-Sale pin pads installed in 3 community centres, outdoor pool and St. Francis Centre to assist with contactless payment methods.</li> </ul>
26.	Accessible Document Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible Document Standards project was presented at SMT on June 19 and received approval to bring in the Abilities Centre to facilitate accessible document training for Town of Ajax staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over 300 staff trained in accessible document standards and basic PDF remediation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
27.	Fire Prevention Education for Vulnerable Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Preparedness workshop presented to Village Seniors Club (May 2024)</li> <li>• Emergency Contacts resource created to assist with identifying who to call in the event of a Town emergency.</li> </ul>
28.	Photo Repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications launched Photoshelter - the Town's Digital Asset Management (DAM) system. With the need to have more Ajax photos in our marketing materials, this resource allows staff access to high-quality photos that best represent the Town.</li> </ul>

## ◆ 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:

	Description	2024 Action
29.	Support accessible regional transit planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DRT regularly provides updates to bi-monthly regional accessibility coordinators meetings</li> </ul>
30.	Durham Regional Transit Accessible Bus stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ongoing consultation with DRT</i></li> </ul>
31.	Ongoing discussion and consultation regarding the proportion of municipal accessible taxicabs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint-municipal survey launched (Fall 2024) to identify concerns with decreased levels of service in accessing Accessible Taxicabs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipalities are discussing opportunities to develop a reciprocal agreement between municipal licensing bodies that would allow accessible taxis only to cross licensing boundaries to pick-up fares.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
32.	Expand the power Up, Ajax! Mobility Device Charging Station Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024-25 EnAbling Change Grant submitted for ACCESSability Business Core Essentials (ABC Essentials) Program. The program aims to offer a series of eight interactive workshops focused on creating age-friendly, accessible and inclusive businesses. Power Up, Ajax will be a component of this program. Although funding application was not successful, staff will look to engage the Ajax Business Community in participation of Power Up, Ajax! Mobility device charging station program for phase 2 in a scaled version of the ABC Essentials program (Target 2025-2026)</li> </ul>
33.	Promote safe and accessible active transportation and pedestrian connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared E-scooter and E-bike Pilot Program: In developing the Shared E-scooter and E-bike Pilot Program, staff engaged people with disabilities in the following ways:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented to AAC and Age-Friendly Committee</li> <li>Included a presentation by CNIB at the E-scooter and E-bike Symposium and demonstration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Surveyed the public with an optional demographic question on disability to assess analyze specific concerns from people with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Transportation in partnership with CNIB implemented 6 pop-up booths encouraging safer behaviours among people using e-scooters and e-bikes on the Town’s trails and multi-use paths. The pop-up booths served to create a culture of respect among people using e-scooters</li> <li>• Transportation and Communications will soon launch a video campaign sharing safety tips for sharing paths with pedestrians with disabilities. The campaign includes two people with sight loss and a person with strabismus, hydrocephalus, and autism who uses a service dog.</li> <li>• Transportation Demand Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2023, the Town completed the Transportation Demand Management Update which included updated bicycle parking design guidelines providing guidance for accommodating adaptive bicycles for people with disabilities. These guidelines can be found in Appendix B at <a href="http://www.ajax.ca/tdm">www.ajax.ca/tdm</a></li> <li>▪ The Driver Awareness Campaign centering Pedestrians with Disabilities can be found at <a href="http://ajax.ca/DriveSafe4Accessibility">ajax.ca/DriveSafe4Accessibility</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
34.	Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff continue to monitor development of best practices and guidelines for accessible electric vehicle charging stations. Currently there are no legislated requirements.</li> </ul>

## ♥ 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:

	Description	2024 Action
35.	Greater accessibility into, within, out of and around Town of Ajax facilities, parks, trails and public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans Examination and Building Inspection staff continue to ensure that buildings are designed and constructed to satisfy the barrier free accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code.</li> <li>• Brave Sensors installed in single unit washrooms at the Ajax Public Library Main Branch in spring 2023. Brave Sensors are reverse motion detectors that will send an alert if no motion is detected in a washroom to help identify medical emergencies faster.</li> <li>• Accessibility considerations incorporated into the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cricket Field</li> <li>▪ Daste Parkette</li> <li>▪ ARC Fairgrounds</li> <li>▪ Exeter Park</li> <li>▪ North Cricket Facilities</li> <li>▪ Meadows North Park</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Grant funding was approved by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility for the 2024-25 Inclusive Community Grant. Lift &amp; transfer equipment is currently being procured for the Audley Recreation Centre and Memorial Outdoor Pool changerooms.</li> </ul>
36.	New Town of Ajax facility construction and future renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ajax Public Library Makerspace opened in Fall 2023 with the following accessible features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 accessible workspaces with height-adjustable tables,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 accessible staff station</li> <li>▪ 1 media lab control booth.</li> <li>▪ Both entrances into the makerspace (from library branch and MCC) also have automatic door openers, as does the door entry into the media lab.</li>   <li>• Main Library Customer Service Desk Modifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The intent of this project is to modify the existing customer service desk to allow for an AODA compliant means of egress on the north side of the service desk, which will allow staff to access the main library.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• MCC Community Room 2 Renovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A full retrofit of Community Room 2 at the McLean Community Centre, which includes the removal of the interior walls to create a more open concept, accessible space that will be available for rentals and permits.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Accommodation Strategy Phase 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These projects include the modernization of the existing workstation areas to a mix of dedicated workstations for staff at the office full-time and hoteling workstations that are non-dedicated for staff that are working a mix of in the office and at home.</li> <li>▪ The new workstations will be outfitted with adjustable height sit stand workstations, dual monitors, mute rooms, and noise dampening technology, which will assist in meeting AODA requirements.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Town Hall Entrance Door Replacement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The scope of work consists of the removal and replacement of the existing door systems at Town Hall including the existing south side glazed entrance. The design is to include the use of accessible doors and door operators to meet the latest edition of the Ontario Building Code. Door systems to be replaced include the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heritage Square to Lobby Doors</li> <li>○ Library Admin Door</li> <li>○ Parking Lot to Lobby Doors</li> <li>○ Planning and Development Door</li> <li>○ Council Doors – North and South Side</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emergency Exit Doors</li> </ul>
37.	<p>Consideration for accessibility improvements during maintenance and repairs to facilities, trails, parks and public spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Asset Management Summer Students undertook assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ municipal trails to AODA standards (width of opening, width of trail, head room, construction material, average running slope, maximum running slope, maximum cross slope, signage exists)</li> <li>▪ assessing walkways to AODA standards (width of opening, width of trail, construction material, average running slope, maximum running slope, maximum cross slope)</li> <li>▪ noting any trails or walkways that start at a boundary curb – not accessible</li> <li>▪ AODA assessment of ramps, boardwalks, beach access routes</li> <li>▪ noting any parks where there is a drop-off from the walkway/curbing to the surface of the playground</li> <li>▪ assessment of eating areas – to ensure the tables are accessible in terms of travelling to them as well as the tables have been designed with accessibility needs, for example, wheelchairs can fit under the tables</li> <li>▪ stairs meet AODA accessibility standards</li> <li>▪ audible traffic signals meet AODA requirements</li> <li>▪ accessible parking spaces – ensuring Ajax meets the AODA requirements of Type A and Type B accessible parking spaces for all of our municipal parking lots</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 2024 Road Resurfacing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove and replace existing asphalt including removal and replacement of various sections of concrete curb &amp; gutter. Upgrading sidewalk approaches for compliance with AODA including curb depressions, ramps, tactile plates etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pickering Beach Road from Emperor Street to Dreyer Drive</li> <li>○ Brockman Crescent</li> <li>○ Tipton Crescent</li> <li>○ Hobson Avenue</li> <li>○ Bowers Court</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Description	2024 Action
38.	Installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible pedestrian signals are installed at intersections. The scope of work includes curb depressions, tactile plates, accessible push buttons, and audible and visual pedestrian countdown signals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Harwood Ave &amp; Mandrake St</li> <li>▪ Harwood Ave &amp; Doric St</li> <li>▪ Harwood Ave &amp; Kerrison Dr</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Currently the Region is completing the detailed design with construction anticipated for 2025.</p>
39.	Complete a scan of on/off-street municipal accessible parking spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See Item 37.</i></li> </ul>
40.	Sidewalk accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of sidewalk conditions conducted by Operations and Environmental Services staff</li> <li>• By-law Services actively responds to complaints of vehicles parked over sidewalks, impeding barrier-free pedestrian connectivity</li> </ul>
41.	Site Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Approvals (Planning &amp; Development) continues to integrate an accessibility technical review in the processing of all pre-consultation applications and development applications.</li> <li>• Accessibility Advisory Committee subcommittee continues to meet bi-weekly to review applications for proposed development and provides comments alongside staff regarding accessibility compliance.</li> </ul>
42.	StopGap Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility Advisory Committee has identified exploration of this initiative as a 2025 Work Plan item. StopGap provides temporary ramp access to one-step properties that would otherwise create physical barriers to access for individuals with disabilities, including those who utilize mobility devices.</li> </ul>