



2019 – 2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan
“One of Ontario’s Leading Communities in Accessibility”



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Municipality Participating in this Plan

Municipality

This plan has been prepared for the Corporation of the City of Barrie.

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Population

155,102

Municipal Highlights – Barrie’s History

The City of Barrie, is one of Canada’s fastest growing and most prosperous municipalities. Its sense of community has been preserved despite its rapid growth.

Barrie is a vibrant and rapidly growing community over 150 000 with rich and dynamic cultural pursuits. Population projections indicate that approximately 160,000 people will reside in Barrie by the year 2021. A safe and friendly community, the City of Barrie is in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada – all on beautiful Kempenfelt Bay.

The tremendous advantages associated with the City’s location have been the primary reasons behind the City’s rapid growth and economic development. Strategically located in the midst of Ontario’s recreational heartland and an hour’s drive from Toronto, Barrie offers the best of both worlds. The City is far enough away from the metropolitan area to enjoy a high level of economic aggregation; yet close enough to realize the benefits of the economic growth of the Greater Toronto Area.

Organization of the Corporation of the City of Barrie

The City of Barrie is organized into two (2) divisions, three (3) strategic portfolios and twenty-one (21) functional departments.

Chief Administrative Officer's Department

The Chief Administrative Officer is appointed by City Council. The Chief Administrative Officer directs and coordinates the general management of business affairs of the Corporation, in accordance with the by-laws, policies and plans established and approved by City Council, to ensure the delivery of high quality services and facilities which preserve or enhance the social, economic and physical well-being of the community at best value for the citizens of Barrie.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer to ensure that innovative programs and services are developed and implemented to meet the ever-changing needs of the community, while ensuring fiscal responsibility, and the added responsibilities municipalities are faced with.

The Chief Administrative Officer is also responsible for ensuring that Council directives are coordinated between departments and relevant agencies while ensuring that the operations within the organization are conducted within the framework of the values and goals of the Corporation.

The Chief Administrative Officer's Department's responsibilities also include the Internal Audit Department and the Legal Department.

In addition, the Chief Administrative Officer links with other government agencies, federal, provincial and municipal; to provide Council with the necessary comprehensive information they require for developing plans and policies.

Under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, each General Manager is responsible for managing their respective area:

Community and Corporate Services Division

The General Manager of the Community and Corporate Services Division's responsibilities include the Finance Department, Legislative and Court Services Department, the Facilities Department, Barrie Fire and Emergency Services Department, and the Recreation Department.

Infrastructure and Growth Management Division

The General Manager of the Infrastructure and Growth Management Division's responsibilities include the Environmental Services Department, The Roads, Parks and Fleet Department, the Planning Department, the Engineering Department.

Access Barrie Portfolio

The Access Barrie team is comprised of the Customer Service or Service Barrie Department, the Marketing & Communications Department and the Transit & Parking Department. This strategic portfolio reflects the importance and the need for the City to champion customer service and to align this service with marketing and communications.

Invest Barrie Portfolio

The Invest Barrie Portfolio was created in response to the need for the City of Barrie to bring together several city departments to provide a more comprehensive approach to investment in our city. Invest Barrie will work to achieve this through several goals, such as the development of a diversified economy, the positioning of culture as a key driver of the creative economy and the recognition and promotion of Downtown Barrie as the heart of the City's economic and cultural life. The Invest Barrie team is comprised of staff and leadership in the areas of Business Development, Culture and City Centre Revitalization.

Innovate Barrie Portfolio

The Innovate Barrie team is comprised of the Human Resources Department, and the Information Technology and Process Improvement Department. The Innovate Barrie Portfolio reflects the importance and the need for the City to champion and become a leader in innovation, aligning people, process and technology with the City's Strategic Plan.

Partnerships

The Barrie Police Service (BPS) is a member agency covered by the City of Barrie's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. BPS and the City of Barrie staff will continue to work in partnership to address issues of accessibility. The Barrie Police Service is committed to following the intent of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) to improve opportunities and service for people with disabilities. To this end, members of the Barrie Police Service understand the importance of responsive public services that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and will continue to develop strategies and programs that facilitate access to policing services.

Services Not Delivered by the City of Barrie

Although the City of Barrie is a single-tier municipality, there are certain services for which the Corporation of the County of Simcoe is responsible. The County of Simcoe delivers these services on behalf of the City of Barrie. Specifically, the County of Simcoe is responsible for:

- Ontario Works
- Land Ambulance and Emergency Planning
- Social Housing
- Homes for the Aged
- Children's Services
- Health Unit Services

As required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the County of Simcoe will prepare its own Accessibility Plan covering those services delivered by the County.

City Of Barrie's Response to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Per the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, all municipalities with a population greater than 10,000 must have an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to provide advice and consultation on accessibility matters to staff and City Council. In September, 2001, Barrie City Council adopted Resolution 01-G-343 approving the creation of an Accessibility Advisory Committee composed of six members from Barrie representing persons with disabilities, and one member of City Council.

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA 2005) received Royal Assent and is now law. The AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) came into effect in 2013 and sets requirements in the areas of: Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Public Spaces. The IASR requires provincial and municipal governments to work with the community and the private and public sectors to work towards ensuring that Ontario is fully accessible by 2025. The City of Barrie is committed to accessibility and the tenets of the AODA. With the help of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the City is actively working to remove barriers to persons with disabilities.

City of Barrie Accessibility Advisory Committee

On December 2, 2002 City Council adopted resolution 02-G-707 adopting the terms of reference for the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The following members have been appointed by Council for a term ending November 14, 2022:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Term</u>
Robert Thomson	Council Rep.	November 30, 2018
Robb Meier	Chair	November 30, 2018
Catherine Kenwell	Vice Chair	November 30, 2018
Louise Pope	Citizen Rep.	November 30, 2018
Tom Lowry	Citizen Rep.	November 30, 2018
Doug Taylor	Citizen Rep.	November 30, 2018
Heather Morgan	Citizen Rep.	November 30, 2018

Message on Behalf of the City of Barrie Accessibility Advisory Committee

Mayor and Members of Council,

The Accessibility Advisory Committee for the City of Barrie would like to take this opportunity in to convey its appreciation to Mayor Lehman, Council and City Staff for their support and assistance to improve accessibility in the City of Barrie. We look forward to continuing to assist Council in the implementation of their Strategic Priorities, while continuing to ensure that the City of Barrie is an Accessible, Age-Friendly Community.

The past five years has been a very exciting and productive time for the Accessibility Advisory Committee. City Council and Staff have been very proactive in implementing various standards and regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) with the support and guidance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC has worked hard to engage community stakeholders, staff and members of Council on issues impacting the accessibility of City of Barrie processes, policies, programs, facilities and public spaces. It is the AAC's hope that this positive community, staff and Council engagement continues as they work to provide advice and guidance on accessibility matters from 2019 to 2024.

I am pleased to report that Mayor Lehman, Council and City of Barrie Staff have made great strides in making our community barrier free to all its residents and continue to be a glowing example of how Municipalities can work hand in hand with their Accessibility Advisory Committees. The AAC has had the pleasure of working closely with Mayor Lehman, Council and City Staff in raising awareness regarding the need to maintain accessibility in the design of all public spaces and we look forward to this continued collaboration.

The close collaboration with the city will ensure that our new five (5) year Multi-year Accessibility Plan and subsequent updates, will be a stepping stone to the goal of making Barrie a community that all persons regardless of their ability or age, will live, play and contribute to our beautiful water front community.

Sincerely,
Doug Taylor
Citizen Rep of AAC 2018-2022
Chair of AAC 2014-2018

Terms of Reference

1. Reporting Structure:

In accordance with the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law, the Accessibility Advisory Committee is an advisory Committee authorized by City Council. The Committee has been established by City Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. The Committee shall report to City Council through the Finance and Corporate Services Committee. Decisions of the Committee are not final until approved by City Council unless delegated authority is granted by Council.

2. Mandate

The goal of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to champion issues related to the provision of an accessible community on behalf of all of Barrie's citizens.

1. Objectives

The objectives of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be established by the Committee at the beginning of the term. The objectives for the 2019 to 2024 term are as follows:

- Advise City Council each year about the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan as required by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises that Council intends to purchase, construct, significantly renovate or lease.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility of new developments for which site plans are being reviewed by the municipality pursuant to section 41 of the Planning Act.
- Research and make recommendations to City Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities within the City of Barrie.
- Educate City Council and the general public of the responsibility, benefits and means of having a consumer-friendly community inclusive to age and ability.
- Promote the voluntary provision of inclusive access to buildings, services, communications and activities within the City of Barrie, and recognize those businesses and services that are consumer-friendly.

2. Composition

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be composed of one member of Council and 6 citizen representatives. Pursuant to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act a majority of the members of the committee shall include persons with disabilities.

All Committee members shall be selected by City Council. If a Committee member is unable to complete the term as set out in Section 5 below, a new Committee member will be selected by City Council.

3. Term

Council members shall be appointed for two years. Citizen members shall be appointed for a term that coincides with the term of Council, expiring on November 30 of the year in which a municipal election is held unless provided by a resolution of City Council.

A member may resign from the Committee at any time by advising of this intention in writing to the Chair of the Committee.

A Committee member may be re-appointed by City Council for an additional term(s).

4. Frequency of Meetings

Committee meetings shall generally be scheduled once per month or may be scheduled at the call of the chair.

All meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law and the Municipal Act. A meeting of the Committee may only be closed to the public, if the subject matter being considered meets the criteria established in Section 239 of the Municipal Act. The following are currently included as subject matters in Section 239 that may be discussed during a closed meeting:

- a) The security of the property of the City;
- b) Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including City employees;
- c) A proposed or pending acquisition or disposal of land by the City;

- d) Labour relations or employee negotiations;
- e) Litigations or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the City;
- f) Advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;
- g) A matter in respect of which the Committee or Council may hold a closed meeting under another Act.

5. Selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair (if necessary) shall be selected by the Committee at the first meeting.

6. Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair shall preside over the meetings of the Committee and assist the Committee in reaching consensus on fundamental policy issues of concern to the Committee.

The Vice-Chair shall assume the authority and perform all the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Committee Members shall:

- a) Attend and actively participate in all meetings;
- b) Work with other members to attempt to reach consensus on decisions before the Committee; and
- c) Adhere to these terms of reference, the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law, Purchasing By-law, the Council/Committee Code of Conduct and any other by-laws, policies or procedures that apply to Committee members.

8. Rules Governing the Proceedings of Committees

The business of advisory committees shall be conducted in accordance with the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law.

9. Quorum

In accordance with the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law a quorum shall be a majority of the Committee Members.

If the quorum for a Committee is not present within thirty (30) minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Committee Secretary shall record the names present and the meeting shall stand adjourned until the next scheduled meeting.

10. Voting

In accordance with the City of Barrie's Procedural By-law, when an issue arises, the Committee will attempt to reach a consensus on how the Committee should resolve the issue.

A question before the Committee will be put to a vote and each Committee Member will be entitled to one vote.

A motion shall be deemed to be carried when a majority of the members present and voting have expressed agreement with the question. Consequently, on a tie vote, the motion is lost.

11. Resources

Primary Staff

The staff resource for the Committee is the Accessibility Co-coordinator. A Committee Secretary is provided by the City Clerk's Office. The Committee Secretary works with the Committee to co-ordinate the proceedings of the Committee, including the taking of minutes, the distribution of minutes and agendas and the general administrative coordination of meetings.

Advisory Staff

Staff shall provide advisory support to the Committee, including background information, resources and advice to Committee members to assist them in their role.

From time to time, the Committee may request the advice or participation (non-voting) of individuals or organizations/City Committees with a particular area of expertise. The Committee Secretary will coordinate, through consultation with the Chair, the request made by the Committee.

12. Application of the Code of Conduct

The Committee shall, at all times follow the policies and procedures set out in the City of Barrie's Council/Committee Code of Conduct.

13. Budget

The Committee is authorized to expend funds within its budget allocation approved by City Council, where such expenditure is in accordance with the City of Barrie's Purchasing By-law. The committee must authorize any expenditure through a majority vote and such approval of an expenditure and the name of the individual and/or company receiving payment shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The Committee at no time may exceed its annual budget without formal application to, and authorization by City Council. Neither the Committee nor any member thereof shall pledge the credit of the City in any matter whatsoever.

14. Other

From time to time members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee may be requested to provide assistance or offer advice regarding city projects. Committee members must keep in mind that while the committee on which they serve has specific goals and objectives, the Committee's function is advisory in nature and the final decision on recommendations made by the Committee rests with City Council. Council's responsibility is to the broad public good and, as such, Council may take into account other matters beyond those considered by the Committee when making its final decision on the matter.

Looking Back: 2013 – 2018 Barrie Multi-year Accessibility Plan

The AODA's accessibility standards establish rules and timelines and businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to effectively identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

The City of Barrie's first Multi-year accessibility plan was approved by Council and introduced in 2013. This first Multi-year accessibility plan laid the groundwork for how the City would meet the obligations set out in the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

Extensive work has been carried out to ensure that the City of Barrie is in compliance with the AODA's General Requirements and each of the five standards outlined in the IASR. The City of Barrie met all of its accessibility compliance targets from 2013 through 2018, and we are working steadily to meet subsequent accessibility compliance requirements by or in advance of our compliance deadlines.

General Requirement Successes:

- The City of Barrie's first Multi-year Accessibility Plan and Multi-year Accessibility Plan for Transit was introduced.
- The City of Barrie included accessibility criteria into the purchase or acquisition of goods and services, updating our municipal Purchasing By-law to reflect this requirement.
- All municipal employees, summer students and volunteers were trained by the January 1, 2014 timeline, on the requirements of the IASR and the relevant portions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This requirement is ongoing and forms part of the list of mandated training that must be completed when starting work for the City of Barrie and has been incorporated into new employee orientation training.

Customer Service Standard Successes:

- The City of Barrie and Barrie Police Services agreed upon accessibility reporting on BPS compliance with the AODA's Customer Service Standard as well as BPS's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) compliance requirements.
- The City of Barrie introduced an Accessible Customer Service Policy in 2009 in advance of the AODA's Customer Service Standard coming into effect in 2010, which outlines the City's commitment to the provision of accessible customer services for persons with disabilities. Most recently, the City of Barrie has established a unique customer service hub called Service Barrie, to provide timely, accessible and Age-Friendly, customer service to all of our Barrie residents.

- City of Barrie staff, volunteers and those who provide service on the City's behalf were trained on the Accessible Customer Service Standard. The requirement is ongoing and forms part of the new employee orientation training.

Information and Communications Standard Successes:

- The City of Barrie's emergency management program was reviewed and its process assessed to ensure compliance with the AODA.
- The City's Communications and Marketing Staff incorporated the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines into the Corporations' Communications Guidelines to ensure that documents and media produced by the City of Barrie are accessible to as many people as possible.
- Notification of all public meetings, and each webpage of the City's website were updated with messaging to advise community members that alternate formats and communication supports are available upon request.
- The City's website was equipped with BrowseAloud, a text-to-speech web-based screen reader, for community members to download for free, to use while navigating through the City's website. BrowseAloud is assistive technology software that adds text-to-speech functionality to websites. This system allows members of our community who are visually impaired to access the City's website, utilizing the built in text-to-speech function regardless of the computer they access our website on.
- The City of Barrie is committed to ensure our website is accessible for persons with disabilities. The City met its compliance requirement to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014 and we are continually working to meet the second part of the compliance requirement, which ensures that any new websites must conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 2021. WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted web accessibility standard developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (WC3), an international team of experts. WCAG sets guidelines for organizations to make their websites more accessible.

Employment Standard Successes:

- A new accommodation for persons with disabilities policy was introduced in 2012 and implemented in 2013. The policy outlines the City of Barrie's commitment to the accommodation of persons with disabilities throughout their employment cycle.
- All of the City's Human Resources Policies were reviewed for accessibility considerations, ensuring that the City's policies do not create barriers to accessibility.
- In order to make the City of Barrie's employment practices more accessible, applicants are made aware of the availability of accommodations. The City of Barrie's recruitment process invites individuals of all abilities to apply to City of Barrie job openings and advises of the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment process.
- Documented individual accommodation plans for employees, including individualized workplace emergency response information were developed and all employees were advised of their availability through an internal communications campaign.
- The City obtained two evacuation chairs, to assist individuals in mobility devices who do not want to Shelter-in-Place in the event of an emergency.

Accessible Transportation Standard Successes:

To meet the requirements under the AODA's Accessible Transportation Standard, extensive work was carried out within Barrie Transit and the City's Contracted Transit Provider in order to meet all of the City's accessible transportation compliance requirements from 2013 to 2018. Our Accessible Transportation successes include:

- Updates to emergency preparedness and response policies.
- Categories of eligibility for specialized transit were revised as per the AODA requirements.
- Application forms and processes were updated.
- A process allowing for individuals to use a combination of Barrie Specialized Transit and Conventional Transit was established.
- Booking hours for Specialized Transit were extended to align with Barrie Conventional Transit Hours.
- All Barrie Transit vehicles are accessible – we have 48 full sized conventional buses that are fully accessible, and 16 specialized transit buses that are accessible.
- From 2015, staff have worked to improve the accessibility of our 736 bus stops. 63% of our transit stops are currently accessible and staff are committed to working to increase this every year until we reach full accessibility.

- Improved travel planning technology was implemented, allowing community transit riders to get real time live bus information via their computer before leaving their homes. The My-ride online tool also allows community members to get up to the minute bus arrival time information from their cell phone through calling or texting.
- In 2017, Gas tax dollars were provided to the municipality by the Federal government to improve transit infrastructure as well as to increase the number of accessible buses in our fleet.

Design of Public Spaces Standard Successes:

- Accessibility requirements for the Design of Public Spaces Standard came into effect on January 1, 2016 and include:
 - Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes
 - Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas
 - Outdoor Play spaces
 - Exterior Paths of Travel
 - Accessible Parking
 - Obtaining Services (service counters and fixed queuing zones)

In advance of the Design of Public Spaces Standard coming into effect, the City's AAC and staff requested that Council support a motion requiring all new and redeveloped community playgrounds or play spaces in the City of Barrie include accessibility features and considerations as outlined in Annex H., "Children's play spaces and equipment that are accessible to persons with disabilities" of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

- The City received the E.A. Danby Award in 2015 for its innovative design in implementing accessibility legislation in the Every Kid's a Hero Adventure Playground located at Sunnidale Park. Together with a generous donation from the Barrie Professional Fire Fighters Association (BPFPA), and grant money from the Federal Government's Enabling Accessibility Funding, the City of Barrie was able to work with the City's AAC and community stakeholders to create a unique, inclusive community playground in Barrie.

- Since the exceptional work that was completed to facilitate the Sunnidale Playground, the City and the City's AAC have worked to ensure that each subsequent community playground that the City has worked to redevelop, is unique and provides an inclusive play experience. Since 2013, the following Barrie playgrounds have been redeveloped for accessibility and now offer inclusive play spaces and play opportunities:
 - Ferndale Park
 - Sunnidale Park
 - Lampman Lane Park
 - Holly Community Park
 - Shear Park
 - Lennox Park
 - Queens Park
 - Centennial Beach Park
- Accessible washroom renovations at municipal park washrooms including, Queen's Park and Kempenfelt Park.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Successes 2013-2018:

As part of its commitment to creating an exciting, caring and progressive community, the Accessibility Advisory Committee implements initiatives and goals to eliminate barriers to improve and maintain the City of Barrie as an Accessible Community. The following are highlights of some of the initiatives undertaken by the City with assistance or feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to make Barrie a more accessible community.

- Consultation on accessibility of the Sunnidale Every Kid's a Hero Inclusive Play Space, including the recommendation to include a metal slide in the play area to support and encourage play by children with cochlear implants (plastic slides create static that interferes with the cochlear implant device).
- Consultation on first Floor City Hall renovations – City Hall underwent a series of renovations on its first floor to create a customer service hub called, Service Barrie. AAC members worked with staff and contractors to ensure that all decisions made to create this space were as inclusive as possible, maximizing accessibility and independence.
- The AAC helped sponsor a Universal Design Forum held at Georgian College on May 14, 2014.
- Quarterly review of site plans.
- Consultation on Lakeshore drive and Centennial Beach improvements for accessibility.
- Consultation with staff from the Planning Department on City's Affordable Housing Strategy.

- AAC provided support to staff and then newly developed Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) for the City's Age-Friendly Community Planning grant application submission and Age-Friendly Community Plan.
- Provided regular consultation to Barrie Transit on Conventional Transit and Specialized Transit issues.
- AAC provided consultation and support to staff for the Enabling Accessibility Grant (EAF) for accessibility renovations to Shear Park – the City's grant application was successful and the City was awarded \$50,000 to go towards increasing the accessibility of Shear Park in Barrie's Allandale Neighbourhood.
- Hosted Pancake Breakfast and Open House with support from Cravings Fine Food and Catering in May 2015 and May 2016 in recognition of National Access Awareness Week.
- AAC worked with Culture Department to advocate for increase in number of available accessible parking spaces during Barrie summer events.
- AAC Members participated in the 10th anniversary celebrations of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), sponsored by Province, in June 2015.
- Provided consultation and feedback on Heritage Trail signage project.
- Consultation on City facility renovations for City Hall Council Chambers and City Hall first floor washrooms.
- Consultation on scent and chemical use policy and signage for East Bayfield Community Centre.
- Consultation on accessible on-street parking along Lakeshore Drive.
- Provide \$2,000 sponsorship for the creation of the Artists Without Barriers Award category to be included in the Barrie Arts Award – first award was provided on November 15, 2017.
- Created an internal recognition certificate to recognize and promote Business Accessibility in Barrie through the Business Accessibility Awards – first recognition certificates were provided to six local businesses on November 6, 2017.

Moving Forward: The Barrie Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2019-2024

The City of Barrie is working to create a more inclusive, Age-Friendly and Accessible Community through proactively identifying, preventing and or removing barriers to accessibility. The community is growing and the City's Multi-year Accessibility Plan aims to be responsive to this growth by supporting community development and intensification. Our City's diversity will become one of our greatest strengths and the City of Barrie Multi-year Accessibility Plan will help us break down barriers to participation for all community members.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), people with disabilities experience more significant barriers to participation – barriers that are physical as in the design of public spaces, technological as in absence of assistive devices, and attitudinal in the form of prejudice or negative attitudes towards disability.

Persons with disabilities frequently encounter barriers including, but not limited to the following:

- **Attitudinal barriers** are the most basic and may contribute to other barriers. Attitudinal barriers are exhibited as personal attitudes, feelings and behaviours and negatively impact how we interact with persons with disabilities.
- **Communication barriers** are experienced by people who have disabilities that impact their hearing, seeing, speaking, reading, writing and understanding. Lack of available communication supports is also considered a barrier.
- **Physical barriers** include the physical design of spaces and places, making it difficult or impossible for persons with disabilities to move or access spaces.
- **Organizational/Systemic barriers** include policies, procedures and programs that may discriminate, exclude or prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating.
- **Social barriers** are related to social determinants of health that can contribute to decreased functioning among older adults and persons with disabilities, including but not limited to; social isolation, unemployment or under-employment, and living in poverty.
- **Technological barriers** include poor technologies or systems that prevent people with disabilities from accessing information.
- **Transportation barriers** are due to a lack of affordable accessible transportation options which interferes with a person's ability to become and remain independent within the community of their choice.

By removing barriers for persons with disabilities, we are removing barriers for everyone.

Community Consultation – Building Barrie

The City of Barrie's 2019-2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan was developed with extensive community engagement and consultation, including persons with disabilities, youth and older adults. The City of Barrie is growing with an expected 210,000 people calling Barrie home by 2031. How we prepare to meet this growth will have lasting effects on Barrie's future.

As a complement to the in-person workshops, and collecting feedback from members of the public while attending the Accessibility Advisory Committee's monthly meetings, BuildingBarrie.ca has assisted us with our community consultation for our Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

The Feedback from BuildingBarrie.ca has helped us set priorities and goals for the City's 2019-2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. Specifically, the feedback from the Accessibility Survey and Opportunity Map has helped to guide our plan to further break down barriers to accessibility; provide persons of all abilities access to our programs, services, and facilities; and ensure continued compliance with the AODA.

We Hear What You Said!

Through the consultation process, we heard our community members tell us about a variety of accessibility concerns and barriers that they face. We are committed to investigating and or implementing the recommendations that we received from our consultation process. We heard what our community members said and we will work to better address these accessibility issues. The following list includes some, but not all of the recommendations that we received:

- Improve Transit customer service;
- Provide training to Transit Operators on accessibility, disability sensitivity and providing wheelchair users assistance with wheelchair restraint systems;
- Ensure auditory and visual messages are displayed at all times on transit buses to announce stops and other critical information;
- Address the long wait times for specialized transit – if there are not enough drivers, hire more specialized transit drivers;
- Better and more frequent Barrie transit connections to GO station. Commuters in Barrie want a more efficient system for using public transit to connect to the GO trains and GO buses to commute to the GTA for employment;
- Change Transit signs! Transit signs are small and not easily seen by transit riders and/or pedestrians. Make transit signage larger and more clearly visible;
- Improve scheduling process for Specialized transit;
- More Specialized Transit vehicles and more drivers for our community;

- Specialized Transit scheduling files need to include more personalized information about riders and their unique needs to ensure the riders receive the assistance they need when utilizing Transit;
- Please update Transit application and Transit policies;
- Provide more evening accessible Transit opportunities;
- Keep accessibility information updated on City's website;
- Ensure that there are plain-text alternatives for documents and other information available online on City's website;
- Ensure documents and other information on City's website is screen-reader compatible;
- Create more speech-to-text opportunities for City information and services for community members who are Deaf;
- Ensure that there is convenience phone access for City's accessible information for community members who do not have a computer;
- Add more detailed information about the City's accessible play spaces and parks on City of Barrie website;
- Use GIS mapping to map accessible playgrounds, parks, washrooms, and other accessible amenities;
- Create clear wayfinding signage for City facilities and City parks and play spaces;
- Create more opportunities for community to engage with the City through online survey opportunities like this – use BuildingBarrie.ca for continual accessibility updates and engagement;
- More advance notice of public engagement opportunities as well as community events;
- Create off-leash opportunities for dogs at waterfront;
- Create an off-leash dog park for service dogs;
- Advocate for more affordable housing options that are fully accessible; and
- Create service and facility changes that will allow for members of the public to access needed Library services without having to walk long distances to reach librarian assistance at Barrie Public Library.

Priorities to be Addressed: 2019 – 2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan

Based on the feedback we have received through our consultation process, our priorities for our 2019-2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be to ensure our City's continued compliance with provincial accessibility regulations, as well as: improving our accessible customer service, developing better information and communication strategies, improving our accessible transportation services, and breaking down barriers to accessibility in and around our community's public spaces.

The City of Barrie will continue to ensure that our policies, programs, services, facilities and public spaces are easy to navigate and that our customers are given options. We know we have improvements to make; however, it is important that persons of all abilities are able to access our programs, services, facilities and spaces without encountering barriers and we are dedicated to removing barriers to participation for all members of our community. Some of the improvements and goals we will work on making in the period of 2019-2024 will be:

General Accessibility Goals:

- Create an Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy to ensure efficient compliance of accessibility regulations, and to provide corporate consistency in the provision of and communication of all of the City's accessibility requirements.

Customer Service Goals:

- Update to the City's Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- Update Accessible Customer Service Training program and facilitate Accessible Customer Service refresher training to staff and volunteers.
- Audit the City's feedback processes for accessibility.
- Work with our external stakeholder organizations like the SCI Ontario, CNIB, Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka, Simcoe Community Service, the Brain Injury Society of Simcoe Muskoka and area, as well as the Canadian Hearing Society and others, to ensure that our customer service options are meeting the needs of stakeholder groups.
- Create more frequent public engagement opportunities through BuildingBarrie.ca
- Increasing self-serve options for City services, including online options for residents to perform tasks themselves through use of various technologies.

Information and Communication:

- Audit the City's communication mechanisms to ensure our process and methods are accessible.
- Work towards accessible Website and Web Content compliance. The City will continue to work to ensure that all its websites, web platforms and website

content meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA by January 2021.

Accessible Transportation:

- Work with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and community stakeholders to ensure that the City's Transit vision and strategic plan, continues to address and reflect the needs of community members with disabilities.
- Grow the City's Express Transit service to better meet the unique needs of seniors and persons with disabilities within our community.
- Work with stakeholders to create a community bus program in Barrie.
- Create innovative in person and virtual travel training programs for seniors, high-school students, and persons with disabilities.
- Improve Specialized Transit Scheduling and technology.
- Improved Specialized Transit on-demand.

Accessible Public Spaces:

- Audit the City's playground/play spaces, and public parks with Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).
- Create an accessible playground/play spaces policy.
- Make information about the City's accessible playground/play spaces, and other accessible amenities such as, accessible park washrooms, available online through GIS mapping.
- Enhance wayfinding signage strategy for accessibility; including improved signage throughout City of Barrie facilities, parks and play spaces.
- Work with community stakeholders to create better access to local businesses through initiatives such as StopGap
- Work with Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to ensure accessibility considerations are included in the update to the City's Urban Design Guidelines and the City's Official Plan.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The 2019-2024 City of Barrie Multi-year Accessibility Plan provides an update on activities that were undertaken between 2013 – 2018, in addition to planning for Barrie’s accessible future. Our community consultation process has helped guide the development of this Multi-year Accessibility Plan and created a firm vision moving forward to improve the accessibility of all our programs, policies, services and facilities. The City of Barrie has strengthened its commitment to increased accessibility and will continue to improve and make strides to achieve its accessibility goals.

Get Involved

The next five years will be an exciting time for improvements to the accessibility of the City of Barrie, where more and more improvements will be introduced and barriers to accessibility removed.

As we make these improvements, and seek the solutions to some of the problems that persons with disabilities living in or visiting Barrie continue to face, we want you to help us. We have already received some great feedback from the community to help us develop this document. Now, we want to hear from the community about its experiences and ideas for how we can further enhance the accessibility of City of Barrie programs, services and facilities beyond 2024.

Please contact our Accessibility Coordinator, Cheryl Dillon, by e-mailing her at: cdillon@barrie.ca or by calling: (705)739-4220 Ext. 5237.

For More Information

For more information please visit the [City of Barrie Website](#)