

Richmond Hill Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Status Report for January to December 2022



Update on Actions Taken
January to December 2022

Richmond Hill

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2018-2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee

Richmond Hill is dedicated to ensuring that our community is accessible in all areas of service provided to the public. The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Council and staff in these efforts and on compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The Committee meets throughout the year to discuss AODA-related issues and general accessibility matters, including the multi-year accessibility plan and status reports.

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2022 were:

Councillor Cilevitz (Chair)	Lisa Rosenberg
Lopa Banerjee (Vice Chair)	Patricia Rybka
Berndardina Bathory	Paul Scotland
Marisol Pestana	Simon Waldman
Paul Edwards	Joseph Frankfort
Kidambi Raj	

Richmond Hill is grateful for their time, commitment and expertise.

Introduction

As part of the City of Richmond Hill's ongoing commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive community, we have completed the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan while remaining flexible and responsive to new accessibility needs and opportunities that have arisen. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlined our strategy to prevent and remove barriers in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as well as strategies for going beyond the AODA and optimizing accessibility.

In 2022, the final year of the plan, we completed and maintained the accessibility work outlined in the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, responded to new accessibility demands, and developed the next stage of Richmond Hill's accessibility planning. This report notes progress made, and is divided into five sections based on Richmond Hill's obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) and the structure of the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Providing Clear and Accessible Information
- Accessible Employment Practices
- Accessible Design of Public Spaces
- General Accessibility Initiatives

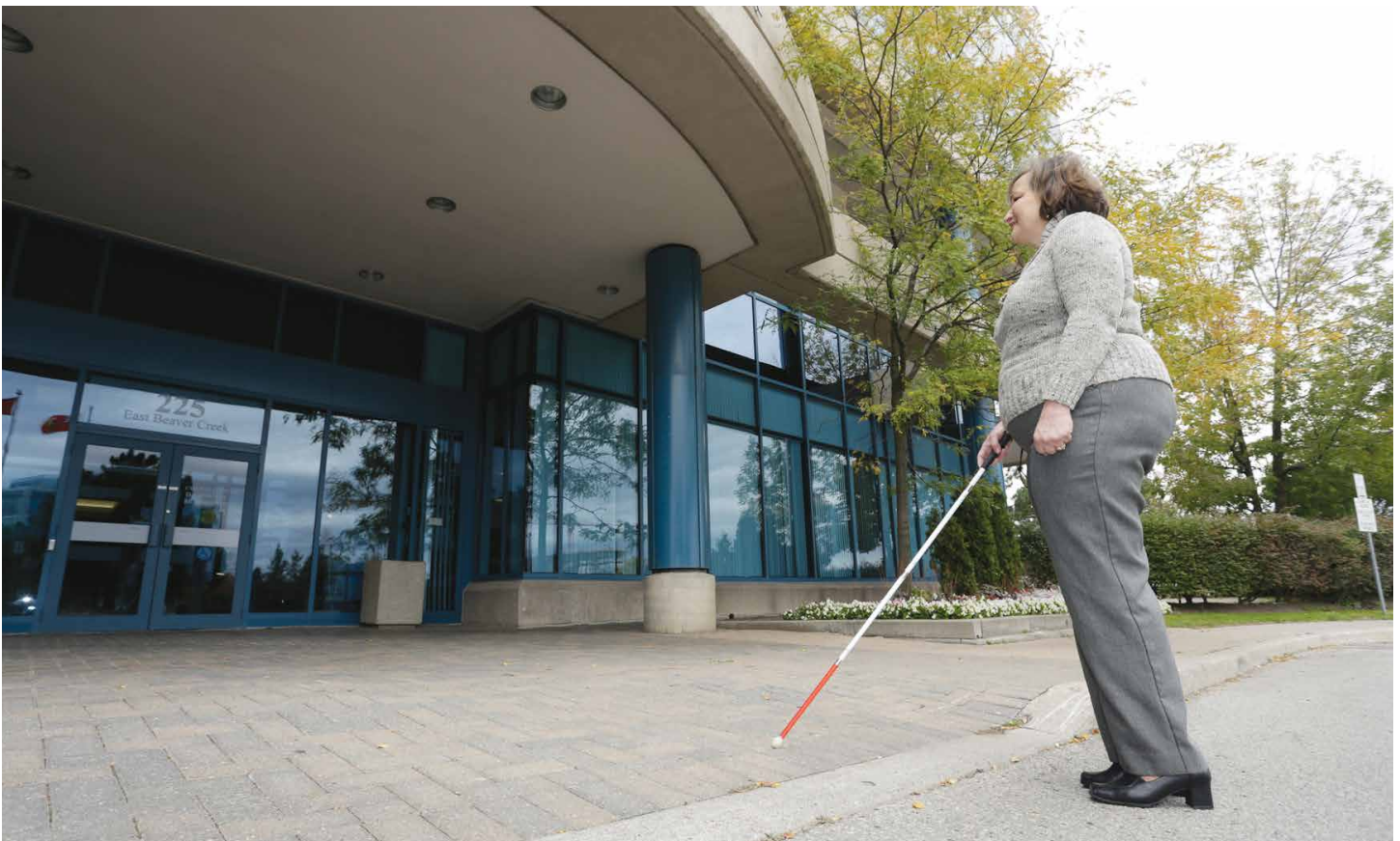


Accessible Customer Service

The AODA sets detailed standards for the provision of accessible customer service. Richmond Hill ensures that it meets or exceeds these standards through our Accessible Customer Service Procedures, and we also continue to optimize accessibility and inclusion. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan included a number of ongoing efforts to make our services better and more accessible.

Provision of Services

Access Richmond Hill is committed to providing customer service in an environment that allows equal access for people with disabilities. We seek feedback on the accessibility of our services through online feedback forms and receiving residents' comments about accessibility on an ongoing basis. While no barriers were identified or brought to staff's attention in 2022, we remain vigilant for any opportunity to improve the quality of service delivered and increase accessibility for the residents and business customers of Richmond Hill.





Inclusion Services

The Recreation and Culture Division, Inclusion Services section, is pleased to be able to offer many different services and programs for individuals with disabilities. Inclusion Services experienced a significant increase in the number of inquiries regarding available programs, services and supports. In 2022, there were 440 inquiries, an increase of 343 inquiries from 2021.

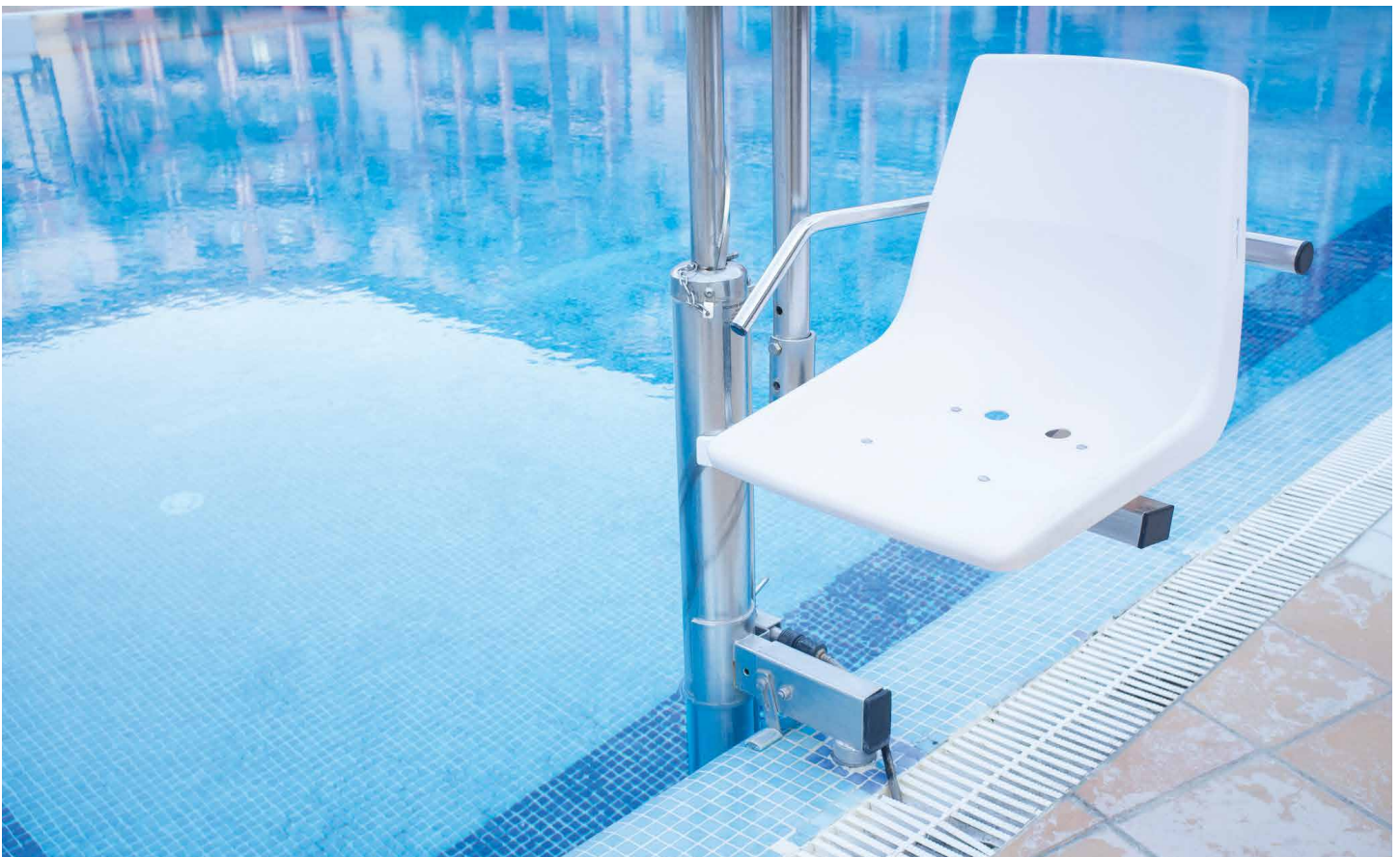
Summer Camp is a very popular program for individuals of all abilities. In 2022, Richmond Hill offered a variety of camp programs. The Inclusion Services team supported 70 participants who attended with 1:1 support and 104 participants who attended with indirect support. The Inclusion Services section was able to re-introduce Camp AdaptAbility, which is a camp specifically designed for teens and young adults with disabilities. This program was offered for 4 weeks and had a total of 35 participants.

The Inclusion Services section provided programming and supports to individuals in various recreation programs during the winter, spring, summer and fall sessions. During these recreation sessions, eight participants attended with 1:1 support and 148 participants attended with indirect support. In addition, Winter Break, March Break and P.A. Day programs are fun opportunities for children. During these school holiday programs, Inclusion Services supported seven participants with 1:1 support and 13 participants with indirect support.

Adapted Aquatics is an extremely popular program for children with disabilities. This individualized aquatic program provides an environment and low staff to participant ratio that is essential for many participants to be successful. In Fall 2022, the Aquatics team re-introduced the Adapted Aquatics program, with a total of 18 participants attending.

Richmond Hill is a member of the Region of York Recreationist (ROYR) Committee. The ROYR Committee hosts annual training for Inclusion Camp Staff every June. This training provides an opportunity for staff to network and learn from subject matter experts in the recreation and inclusion fields. In 2022, Richmond Hill Inclusion Services section was proud to host this training at Langstaff Community Centre, and presented informative sessions for the inclusion camp staff.

With increasing demand for the programs and services offered through Inclusion Services, the team is continuing to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



Accessible Library Services

Richmond Hill Public Library works with the City of Richmond Hill to ensure compliance with all AODA standards and requirements and engages in its own ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility.

Programs

Library services shifted to an in-person focus as COVID restrictions from the province were reduced in 2022.

Highlights related to our programs and events include:

- Hype; demographic: Teens
Focuses on teaching mental health skills
- Get To Know Your City; demographic: Newcomer Adults
Focuses on partnering with City of Richmond Hill and Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP), lets newcomers know the opportunities for them in the City
- Y Digital Series; demographic: Newcomer Adults
Partners with YMCA and LSP, to let newcomer adults know about useful apps
- Tax Clinics; demographic: Adults
Allows free tax clinics for adults with vulnerable incomes

Collections

The Library focused on adding new digital resources to our collections to provide online access to English language learning materials, multilingual eBooks, and digital audiobooks.

We also continued to develop collections in accessible formats and to help facilitate access for customers with print disabilities to accessible formats through Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA).



The following types of resources and services were used to ensure accessibility of the Library's collections:

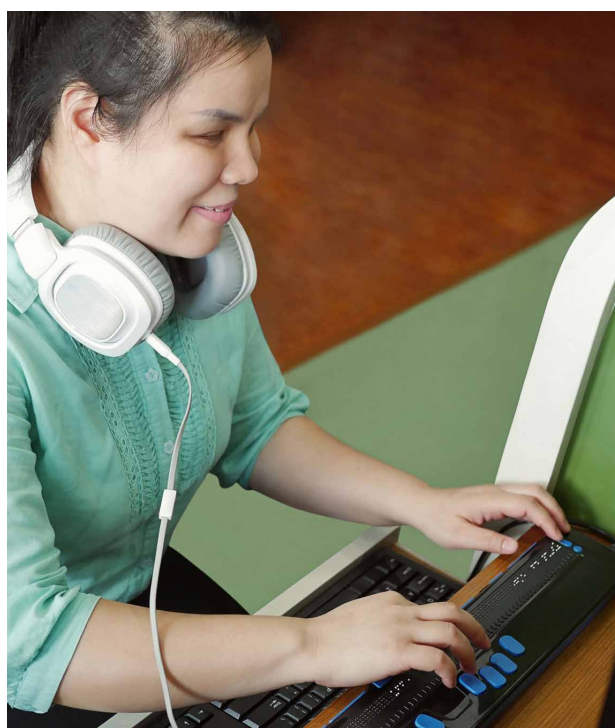
- New online English language learning materials through Road to IELTS
- New collections of eBooks in Chinese, Persian, Russian and Spanish made available through OverDrive
- We continue to purchase items in accessible formats, including: physical large print books, audiobooks on CD, and electronic formats
- We continue to provide assistance in accessing Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) materials for customers with print disabilities

Visiting Library Service

In 2022, over 2,800 items were delivered to 139 homebound customers who cannot visit the library in person due to illness or disability.

Ongoing Initiatives in 2022

- Providing mandatory AODA training to all new employees.
- Requiring vendors to provide proof of AODA compliance to be eligible to participate in the procurement process.
- Providing accessible computer workstations at Central and Richmond Green libraries.
- Providing assistive technology on the Library's website.
- Providing an online chat service option to renew their library cards remotely without the need to come into the Library.
- Facilitating Interlibrary Loan for materials not available in our existing collection.
- Revamping the Library website's user interface and user experience to improve customer satisfaction, usability, and accessibility



Providing Clear and Accessible Information

As we reach the end of the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, all ongoing initiatives related to accessible information are well-established and undergoing continuous monitoring and improvement. Our website, RichmondHill.ca, complies with industry standards for web content accessibility. Additionally, in 2022, staff remediated many historical documents, such as staff reports and Council meeting materials from previous terms of Council, and uploaded them to the website. Staff throughout the organization have been trained on electronic document accessibility and take the necessary steps to ensure that any downloadable documents posted to our sites are fully accessible. Feedback opportunities specific to accessibility continue to be offered online, and the new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aims to improve and expand our efforts to receive and engage with feedback.



Accessible Employment Practices

Since even before the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Richmond Hill has been committed to ensuring an inclusive and barrier-free application process, and making sure that our workplace is accessible for new and existing employees. This includes offering individualized employee accommodation plans to make sure that employees can contribute without barriers, preparing individualized emergency response plans to ensure safety and peace of mind in the workplace, and accommodation throughout the recruitment and onboarding process. These plans and processes have been in place for the duration of the plan, and continue to be offered to ensure accessibility in the workplace.

Employee Mental Health and Wellness Programs

The City's Human Resources Department worked throughout the period of the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to support work/life balance, stress management, and mental health awareness and prevention. In 2022, they remained active and responsive to the needs of staff through initiatives including:

- New partnership with and launch of Employee Wellness Solutions Network that includes:
 - Wellness Membership Portal
 - Health coaching
 - Family wellness webinars
 - Personal wellness assessments
 - Monthly newsletters and challenges
- Expansion of corporate fitness club memberships to part-time staff
- Regular updates of intranet wellness resources
- New yoga virtual fitness class offerings to employees
- In person Health Fair and wellness promotion in October 2022 to promote Healthy Workplace Month
- Launch of Kids Wellness Bursary where employees can nominate their child for subsidy to participate in recreational programs

Accessible Design of Public Spaces

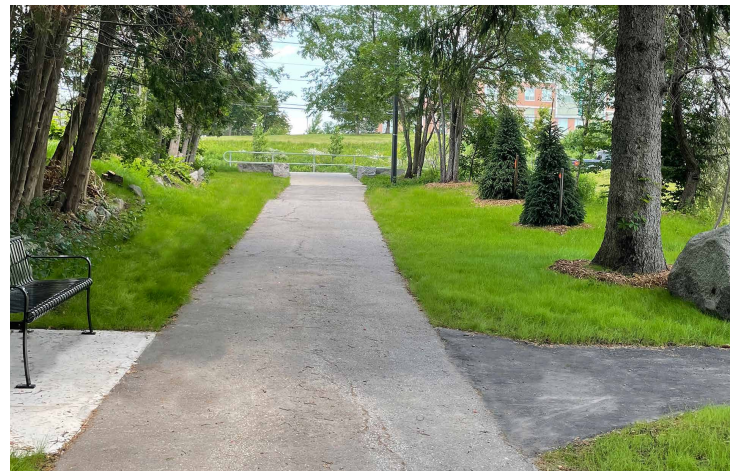
While no projects were specifically scheduled for completion in 2022 under the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, all of our public spaces are designed and constructed with the principle of accessibility at the forefront. In 2022, several outdoor spaces were constructed or reconstructed with accessibility a key consideration throughout the projects.

Walkways and Sidewalks

All walkway and sidewalk projects in Richmond Hill are completed in accordance with AODA standards. This includes meeting or exceeding minimum widths to accommodate wheelchair users, achieving a slope that is high enough to allow drainage but low enough to ensure ease of navigation, and preventing trip hazards.

In 2022, the following projects were completed:

- Debonair Street –Naughton to Canyon Hill
- Mill Street -Pine Trees Court to Sugar Maple Lane (west leg)
- Beresford Drive South and North
- Baif Boulevard -Hillcrest Gate Intersection
- Bayview Avenue -Old Colony Road to Dovetail Drive
- Bethesda Rd -Anchusa Dr to Leslie St
- Briar Nine Trail North Entrance Improvements





Parks and Playgrounds

Richmond Hill parks adhere to AODA standards, and playgrounds specifically adhere to Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Annex H Guidelines. This involves designing parks with features like accessible pathways, surfaces that attenuate impact while allowing children and caregivers with disabilities to navigate the play area, appropriately sized and placed guardrails and handrails, and accessible play equipment.

In 2022, the following projects were completed:

- Great Lands Park (William Duncan Park)
- Fulton Park
- Carrville Park
- Maplewood Park
- Sunnywood Park



General Accessibility Initiatives



The AODA includes general accessibility requirements, such as establishing certain policies and procedures. These requirements are managed on an ongoing basis, alongside efforts to generally identify and remove barriers to accessibility. Throughout the duration of the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, our accessibility governing documents were regularly reviewed and staff throughout the organization were provided with support in ensuring the accessibility of their services.

Municipal Elections

The 2022 Mayoral By-Election and 2022 Municipal Elections were conducted according to detailed accessibility plans, which were developed by the Elections team in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Elections Staff were able to provide individualized advice to residents experiencing difficulty and help them successfully navigate options and vote successfully. Staff identified opportunities for communicating useful information more effectively in future elections. Information on the City's website was provided in accessible formats proactively, and no requests for alternative formats were received.



Locations for voting and candidate nominations were fully accessible. The Elections team inspected each voting location according to detailed accessibility criteria. Election Officials and signage guided voters to the voting location and provided detailed instructions and assistance.

Accessibility was ensured in the voting process by providing internet-voting options that complied with industry standards for web accessibility, physically accessible voting locations that supported support persons and service animals, and a variety of options for contacting the Elections team for individualized assistance. Additionally, on-site voting assistance was provided to several retirement residences and long-term care homes, and facilities under lockdown due to viral outbreaks were supported by working closely with facility staff.

The detailed 2022 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan, 2022 Municipal Elections Accessibility Report, and more information about accessibility in elections is available on the City's Elections Resources web page.

Conclusion



In 2022, Richmond Hill reached the milestone of completing the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The progress achieved and practices integrated into our day-to-day work will form a foundation to continuing to make Richmond Hill more accessible, and we remain committed to sustaining and building on this progress beyond 2022.

Feedback

Please contact us if you have any inquiries about this report or accessibility matters in general. You can help make Richmond Hill more accessible by letting us know if you have identified or experienced a barrier to accessibility.



Please visit RichmondHill.ca/Accessibility or contact us at:

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RichmondHill.ca/Accessibility

