

Richmond Hill Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2023 Status Report



Update on Actions Taken
January to December 2023

Richmond Hill

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2012-2026 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, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 (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 2023 were:

Councillor Cilevitz (Chair)

Ted Moritsugu

Lopa Banerjee (Vice Chair)

Barry Munro

Sherry Caldwell

Lawerence Raifman

Yuwei Lin

Shahla Yaghoubian

Richmond Hill is grateful for their time, commitment, and expertise in helping the City remove and prevent barriers.



Introduction

Richmond Hill’s 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (“Plan”) was approved by Council in 2023. This Plan was developed in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and outlines our strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities and meet or exceed the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 (“AODA”).

In this first status update to the Plan, we are pleased to highlight the achievements made in 2023 to build an inclusive community in Richmond Hill. These include the completion of several park redesigns with accessible play areas, more inclusive programming and accommodations in recreational services, and expanded employee mental health and wellness programs. More details are provided in the following sections which are based on the five standards under the AODA:

- 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. We also continue to optimize accessibility and inclusion.

Provision of Services

In 2023, Access Richmond Hill continues to provide inclusive services for all. Our practices prioritize providing excellence in customer service by ensuring equitable treatment, respect and acknowledgment of the diverse needs of our community, including individuals with disabilities.





Inclusion Services

The Recreation and Culture Division's Inclusion Services section continues to increase specialized services and programs for individuals of all ages and abilities. Inclusion Services has experienced a significant increase in the number of participants attending recreation and culture programs. In 2023, there were 874 program registrations for individuals with disabilities.

The School Holiday programs continue to be a very popular program for individuals of all abilities. These programs include Summer Camp, Winter Break, March Break and PA Day programs. In 2023, the Camp AdaptAbility program was offered for eight weeks in summer. In the past, this program was only offered for four weeks in summer. Having this program offered for the full summer allowed individuals to attend a camp all summer long that provided additional opportunities for participants. There were 64 registrations in the Camp AdaptAbility program. In addition, the Inclusion Services section supported many children with disabilities who attended inclusive (mainstream) school holiday programs. There was a total of 324 registrations for children with disabilities in these programs.

Adapted Aquatics is an extremely popular program for individuals with disabilities. This individualized aquatic program provides an environment and low staff to participant ratio that is essential for many participants to be successful. The adult Adapted Aquatics program was re-introduced in the Fall of 2023. There was a total of 89 registrations in Adapted Aquatics.

The Inclusion Services section also supports participants who attend seasonal recreation and culture programs. The Recreation and Culture Division offers both adapted and inclusive (mainstream) program options. In 2023, there were 74 registrations in adapted programs and 153 registrations in inclusive (mainstream) programs.

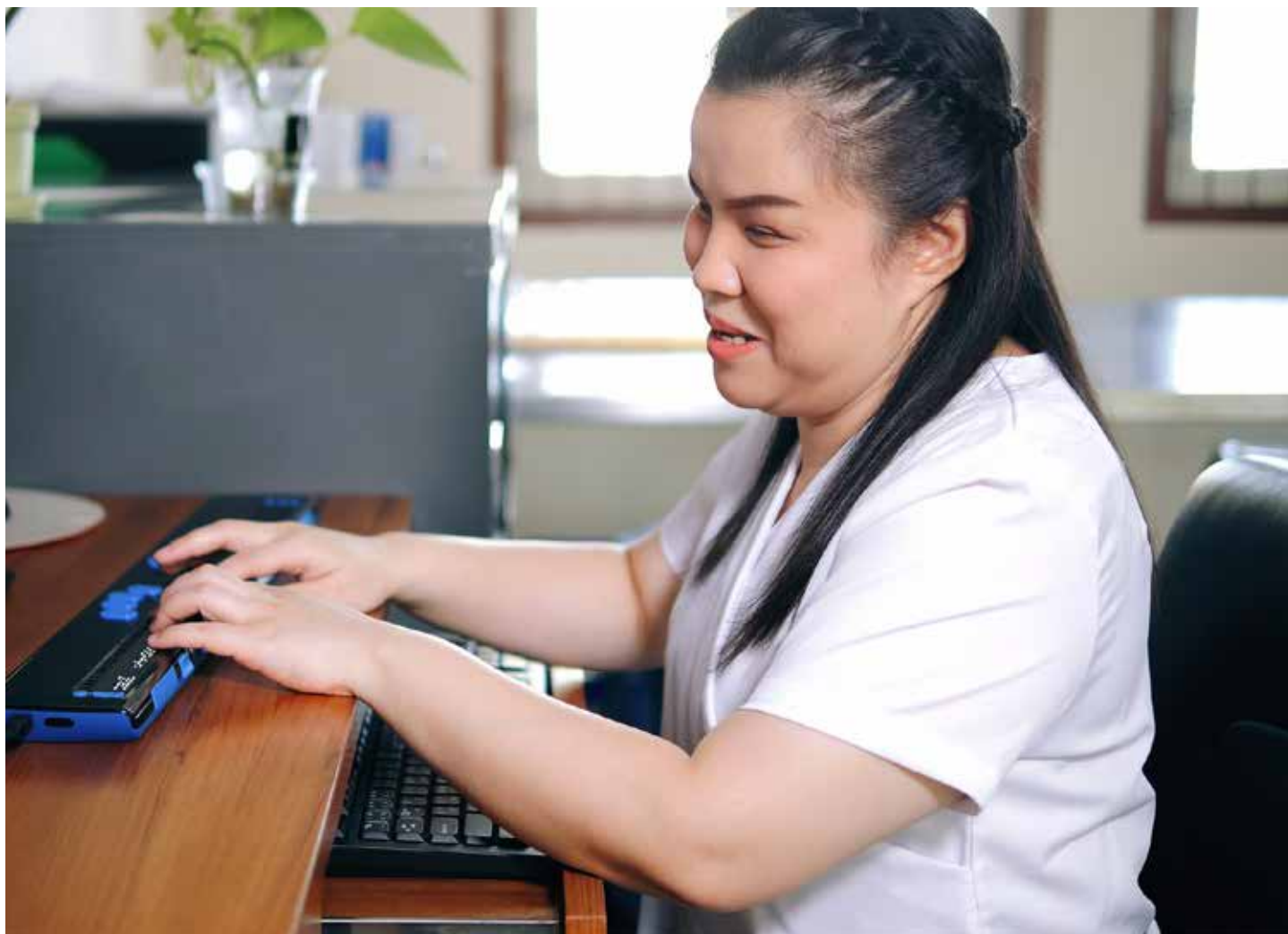
The Inclusion Services section partnered with the Children’s Treatment Network to offer an inclusive information fair on September 23, 2023 at Langstaff Community Centre. This information fair featured 48 exhibitors who provided information to attendees about available programs, services and equipment. This event had 151 attendees.

The Inclusion Services section will continue to develop, deliver and promote inclusive and adapted programs across Richmond Hill to offer opportunities for residents with disabilities.



Providing Clear and Accessible Information

The City continues to provide information that is accessible and usable for all users. Documents posted on our website are accessible and we actively remediate documents and templates to meet accessibility requirements. Regular audits are conducted to assess the accessibility of documents and templates. Multiple mechanisms are included on our website for feedback which are promptly addressed. Finally, any disruption in the availability of services, programs and facilities are communicated through multiple channels, including posters and the City's website along with direct customer outreach in certain cases where temporary disruptions would be known to directly impact specific customers.



Accessible Employment Practices

Richmond Hill aims to remove barriers and discrimination in all aspects of employment, from recruitment, selection and ongoing throughout hiring and training. We are committed to an inclusive and barrier-free process for applicants for employment, and make sure that our workplace is accessible for new and existing employees.

Employee Accommodation Plans

The City has an Employee Accommodation procedure and provides individualized accommodations to staff as needed. Candidates are made aware during the recruitment process that the City will provide accommodations to those that request or require it to ensure equal opportunity. AODA training is integrated into the onboarding process for all new staff

Employee Mental Health and Wellness Programs

The City's Human Resources Department worked throughout 2023 to support work/life balance, stress management and mental health awareness and prevention. They remained active and responsive to the needs of staff with the following initiatives:

- Continued partnership with Employee Wellness Solutions Network that includes:
 - » Wellness Membership Portal
 - » Health Coaching
 - » Family Wellness Webinars
 - » Personal Wellness Assessment
 - » Monthly newsletters and challenges
 - » On-demand Fitness Library, Fitness for All
- Addition of two new fitness spaces at City facilities, exclusive to CRH staff
- Regular updates of intranet wellness resources
- In-person and virtual Health Fair and wellness promotion in October 2023 to promote Healthy Workplace Month
- Introduction of Belonging in the Workplace series for Leaders to enhance a culture of Belonging and psychological safety
- Established a growth and development curriculum to be implemented in 2024 around the focus areas of Customer Service, Mental Health and Leadership Development based on employee feedback

Accessible Design of Public Spaces

Accessibility is incorporated from the design stage right through to construction and renovation of all public spaces. In 2023, several indoor and outdoor spaces were constructed or reconstructed with accessibility a key consideration throughout the projects.

Capital Planning Projects

Richmond Hill is responsible for improving and maintaining existing infrastructure along with integrating accessibility considerations into every stage of its capital planning process. This includes conducting thorough accessibility assessments and consultations during the planning phase to identify potential barriers and prioritize accessibility features.

Accessibility features of the Xpression Condo Community Centre Fit-Out Construction Project:

- The inclusion of a Universal Washroom
- Washrooms that include plumbing fixtures and accessories located per OBC accessibility requirements, barrier-free wall mounted sinks and tilted mirrors to accommodate someone in a wheelchair
- Kitchenette 110 includes a barrier-free sink with knee clearance
- All millwork includes accessible height countertops and AODA compliant cabinet pulls
- Door hardware includes lever door handles, automatic door openers at main entry doors and universal washroom door





Accessibility features of the Bond Lake Arena – Spectator Stand Seating Project:

- Two long six-seating bleacher-type benches placed rink-side to improve accessibility for those who could not use the permanent bleachers. This is a stop-gap measure to accommodate patrons with accessibility needs who wanted to watch programming at the arena ahead of the bleacher re-design project (design to be completed in 2024)

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 prevent tripping hazards.





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 2023, the following projects were completed:

- Richmond Green Playground Improvements
- Dove Park
- Silver Stream Waterplay



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 2023, our accessibility governing documents were regularly reviewed and staff throughout the organization were provided with support in ensuring the accessibility of their services.

Conclusion



City staff, along with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, will continue to work hard on accessibility improvements and incorporate accessible practices particularly in customer service, information provision, employment practices, design of public spaces and general initiatives.

Feedback

Please contact us if you have any inquiries about this report or accessibility matters in general. Help make Richmond Hill more accessible by letting us know about any barriers to accessibility.

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

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RichmondHill.ca/Accessibility

