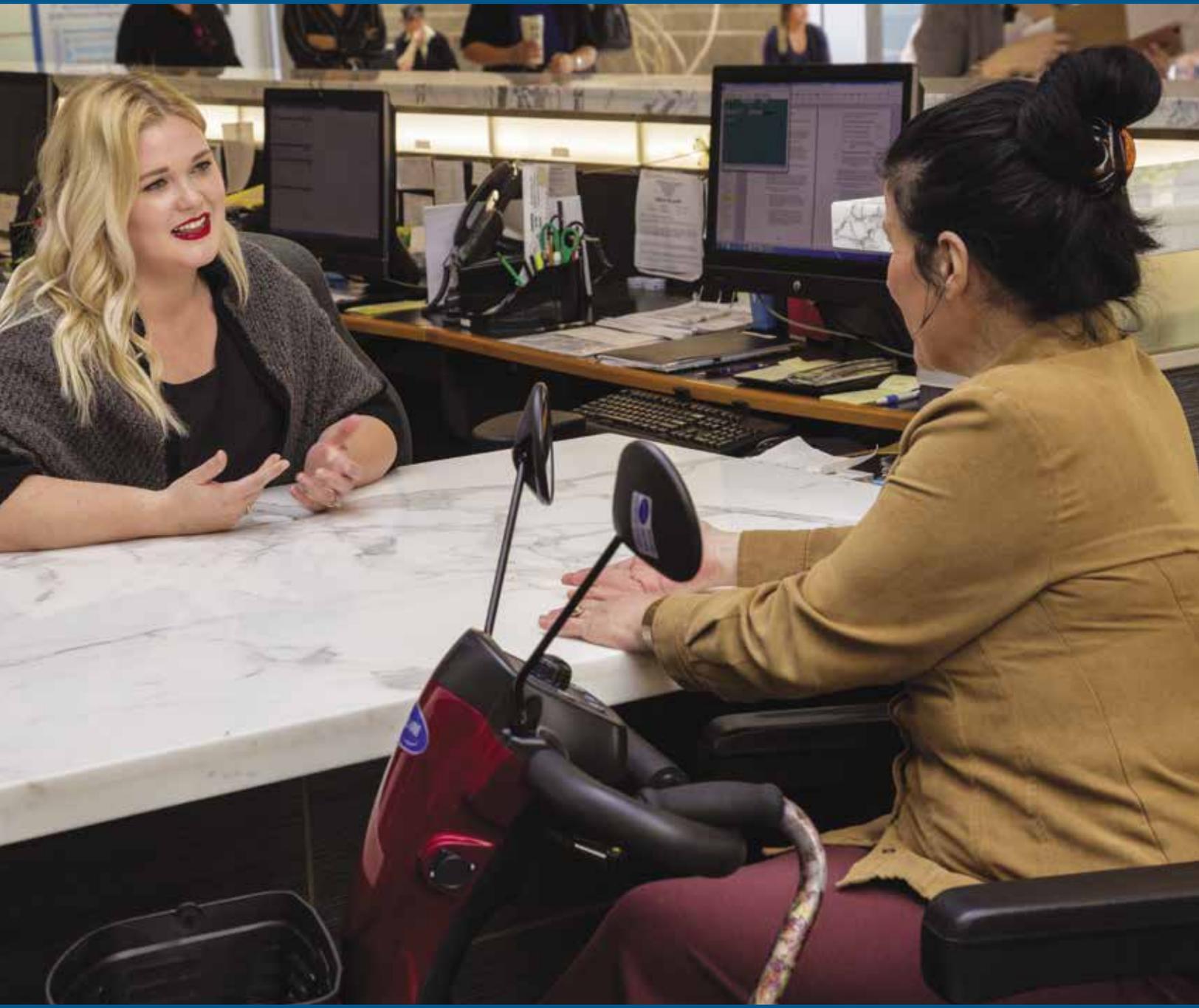




The Regional Municipality of Durham 2017 Accessibility Report



Update to the 2016 Accessibility Report

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at accessibility@durham.ca or **905-668-4113 ext. 2009**.

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Message from the Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer

The Region of Durham strives to be an accessible and inclusive community, valuing the diversity of the residents we serve. Across the Region, we are experiencing impressive growth. Significant residential development is occurring across Durham, and new enterprises are thriving. We continue to invest in the infrastructure and community services that support our economy and quality of life.



Durham Region has embarked on several projects to prepare us for the future. Following the recent refresh of our website, we saw an immediate increase in the number of visits. With features including clear print, clear writing, and accessible design standards, users of all abilities and different kinds of devices now have easier access to information. We are using technology to streamline other aspects of our business. Our Housing division, for example, introduced an online system to match people applying for either rent-geared-to-income or accessible (modified) housing with suitable units—the first of its kind in Canada. The online process allows applicants to take a more active role in selecting the accommodation that is best for them and their families.

By planning for the aging of our population, we have an opportunity to address the overall accessibility of public spaces, buildings, and our local businesses. Through the development of the Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan, we worked with individuals and community organizations to better support residents as they grow older. Our Affordable and Seniors Housing Task Force prepared an action plan to address the need for more affordable rental housing for low-and moderate-income households. Efforts to make housing options affordable and accessible by design ensures that our residents will have a greater choice available over time.

Meanwhile, the Durham Regional Transportation Master Plan (TMP) integrates all forms of transportation, including roads, accessible and affordable public transit, and the cycling and walking trail network. Improving the range of safe and accessible travel options supports social equity, public health, the environment and the livability of communities. Durham Region Transit is adding more routes to provide accessible connections between and within our



communities. New tools such as “Where is my bus?” allow customers to use online, text and voice commands to access real-time bus arrival information to help make public transit stress-free.

Accessibility improvements are also underway at Regional Headquarters. Our Income Support reception and waiting area were renovated, while the Durham Regional Police Service is making new spaces more accessible.

Durham is preparing for complex challenges ahead. We are proud of our progress to date and look forward to further enhancements in the years to come. Whether they are new approaches or technologies, we each have a role to play in working together to develop solutions. Thank you for your interest in this report and for joining us on our accessibility journey.

Yours truly,

Gerri Lynn O'Connor

Gerri Lynn O'Connor
Regional Chair & CEO

Message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides information and insight; offering a glimpse of the world through an accessibility lens.

Since 2002, the AAC has worked towards an accessible and inclusive environment—one that understands different types of disabilities and the barriers that prevent full participation. We advise council, provide feedback, and suggest action items.

We face challenges and changes with diligence and dedication. As a result, our work has addressed barriers in the areas of physical environment, technology, employment, information and communication.

We take this responsibility seriously. Our partnership, with the Region, helps to ensure programs and services are delivered in a way that preserves dignity and independence for all individuals. This is important, because not all disabilities are obvious.

However, the AAC couldn't have reached this point without education. It is our mandate to review site plans and drawings; consider emergency management plans; look at transit policies and procedures; and accept other functions, as requested.

To better understand project needs, we attend presentations and meet with representatives from various agencies. This past year, we learned about several Regional projects: a bus stop signage redesign, accessibility in public housing, Age Friendly Strategy, and other important topics. We were also key advisors for the website redevelopment.

We are humbled that our wide variety of knowledge, expertise and experience is so highly respected. Internally, we shared our knowledge at several lunch-and-learn sessions; highlighting challenges for people with various disabilities. Plus, our National Access Awareness Week sub-committee hosted a mental illness interactive display in the main foyer at Regional Headquarters.

The Annual Joint Forum was a celebration of these successes. We shared this night with representatives of the lower-tier municipal AACs. It was an idea

exchange, a highlight reel, and offered some inspirational moments from our motivational speaker, Tracy Schmitt.

Looking back on all we have done this past year, I see the possibilities and promise in tomorrow. I also look forward to the year ahead. Imagine what we will accomplish together.

Warmest regards,

Mary Sutherland

Mary Sutherland

Chair of the Region of Durham Accessibility Advisory Committee



Back Row: Carla Boose, Janet Traer, Mike Roche, Dawn Campbell, Sarah Sones, Nela Prasad

Front row: Andre O'Bumsawin, Roberta Atkinson, Mary Sutherland

Regional Municipality of Durham 2017 Accessibility Report

Building communities where every person has the opportunity to fully participate is important for ongoing planning. The Regional Municipality of Durham 2017 Accessibility Report is the annual update that identifies the actions taken to continue improving accessibility while following the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

This report outlines an explanation of the legislation followed by the achievements of 2017. Regional Council has approved the strategies and actions in this report. We continue to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities who access our goods, services, programs and facilities.

Legislation

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

In 2001, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (ODA)* was enacted to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. This Act applies to the public sector and led to the Region's accessibility planning process. Since this time, on an annual basis, our organization has been very successful in the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers throughout our departments and services.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* is to address discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario. The Act identifies accessibility standards that are to be implemented and enforced throughout public and private sectors. AODA specifies that accessibility will be addressed in the areas of goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by the year 2025.

Accessibility Standards

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) ONTARIO REGULATION 191/11

- Part I** General
- Part II** Information and Communications
- Part III** Employment
- Part IV** Transportation
 - Part IV.1** Design of Public Spaces
 - Part IV.2** Customer Service

As of July 1, 2016, under the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), five accessibility standards were combined into one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR involves accessibility standards for information and communications; employment; transportation; design of public spaces and customer service. This allows for a phased-in approach to accessibility implementation in these five areas. This is a much more streamlined approach for broader public organizations, such as the Region of Durham.

More information on AODA and accessibility standards can be found on the Region's website at durham.ca and the Ontario Ministry's website of the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade at www.ontario.ca/accessON.

Proposed Federal Accessibility Legislation

The Government of Canada has announced its intention to develop accessibility legislation that would apply to organizations and sectors under federal jurisdiction. Opportunities to provide input online were available. In addition, in-person consultations across Canada began in the fall 2016 and continued until early 2017. The development process included reviewing existing accessibility legislation throughout various Canadian provinces and other jurisdictions. Although it is unlikely that the proposed federal legislation will impact Durham Region, employees will continue to monitor its development and report back to Regional Council as required.

Durham Region and Accessibility

Durham Region

Durham Region is the largest geographical region in the Greater Toronto Area, stretching from Lake Ontario in the south to Lake Simcoe in the north. Covering about 2,537 square kilometres (1,000 square miles), this region offers a mix of urban centres and unique rural settings. According to Statistics Canada, about 673,000 people reside in this community an estimated 70,000 live with a disability.

The Regional Municipality of Durham is governed by a council, consisting of a Regional Chair and 28 elected members. The Regional Chair is the head of Regional Council and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the corporation. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is the most senior employee in the Region of Durham and reports to Regional Council; working in close collaboration with the Regional Chair.

Durham Region is an upper-tier level of government that provides various programs and service to residents. There are eight lower-tier municipalities housed within our region (Brock, Ajax, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby). Each one has representation at Durham Regional Council.

The Region, through various departments, is responsible for the following services:

- Police services and 9-1-1 management.
- Durham Region Transit and Specialized Transit Services.
- Durham Regional Official Plan and implementation.
- Delegated authority for the approval of local municipal official plans and amendments.
- Water supply, treatment, distribution and billing.
- Sewage collection, treatment and billing.
- Main roads, traffic lights and controls.
- Emergency management.
- Borrowing of money for capital expenditures of upper-and lower-tier municipalities.
- Economic development and tourism.

- Public health.
- Emergency medical services.
- Social services, including children's services; long-term care and services for seniors; family services; social housing; and Ontario Works programs.
- Provincial Offences court, prosecution services, administration and collection of fines.
- Solid waste management, diversion, recycling, promotion and education, waste collection, processing and disposal.
- Strategic land use planning, subdivision/condominium approvals and land division consent.
- Property taxation policy.

Accessibility Partnerships

Each of our local municipalities within Durham Region has an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) that reports to its municipal council about accessibility matters. This means that for the entire area (consisting of eight local area municipalities and the Region), there are a total of nine AACs dedicated to improving accessibility in our communities.

The AODA Staff Working Group has representation from each of our departments. Members bring expertise in their respective areas, which adds to the collective knowledge of the organization as accessibility initiatives are implemented.

Co-ordinated by the Region, the nine AACs are brought together to share best practices and information related to accessibility. The Region hosts an annual AAC Joint Forum which is an opportunity for volunteers to network and collaborate on accessibility matters.

The Region's Accessibility Coordinator also belongs to the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP). This network is comprised of accessibility professionals within the broader public sector across Ontario. Its purpose is to share best practices and resources in accessibility.

Accessibility Planning

Since 2003, the Region of Durham reports on accessibility and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers throughout departments and services. This work is done by examining facilities, programs, services, policies and by-laws through the lens of accessibility. The Region is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, play, visit and invest in our region.

With our continued commitment to meet the requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Region of Durham will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports as it relates to information about our regional goods, services or facilities.

This ongoing work has addressed many barriers in the areas of:

- Physical environment
- Technology
- Employment
- Information and communication
- Attitudes

Accessibility planning over the past 12 years is a valuable process for the Region. It allows departments and services to fully examine their environments to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. While reporting on accessibility barriers continues, the continuous implementation of accessibility involves all aspects of the way the Region does business. This will be done through meeting the requirements of AODA with the implementation of accessibility standards.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), multi-year planning has been an essential requirement for our organization. Multi-year planning is not only addressing accessibility barriers but is also ensuring that the Region meets legislative requirements within the identified timelines.

Accessibility planning supports Durham Region's Strategic Plan

The Region uses strategic planning initiatives to create programs and deliver services that meet the needs of our growing population and an increasingly diverse community.

Accessibility planning in Durham includes the requirements of the AODA and supports the Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies. Creating a community that is inclusive and accessible for everyone links with the goals set out in the following Regional strategies and policies:

- The 2015-2019 Strategic Plan – Growing Together, Reaching Further, Aspiring Higher
- Accessibility Policy
- Regional Commitment to Accessibility

The image shows the cover of the Durham Region Strategic Plan for 2015-2019. The title is 'Growing Together, Reaching Further, Aspiring Higher' in white text on a dark blue background. Below the title is the subtitle 'A New Strategic Plan for Durham Region: 2015-2019' in a smaller, light green font. The Durham Region logo is in the top left corner. The cover features a collage of six photographs: a street scene with a 'Duke's' sign, a large modern building with a curved facade, industrial silos, people skiing on a snowy slope, a woman and two children looking at a book, and a landscape view of a field and trees under a sunset sky. At the bottom, there is a white wavy graphic and a small text box.

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at (905) 668-4113 ext. 2009

Awards in Accessibility

The Regional Municipality of Durham recognizes the importance of an accessible community. A key goal in the Durham Region Strategic Plan is to create a caring and fully inclusive environment. By identifying, removing and preventing barriers for individuals living with a disability, all residents have an opportunity to live independently and achieve their goals.

Accessibility awards allow the organization to celebrate the importance of accessibility, and to honour leadership in breaking down barriers.

Each year the Region of Durham honours individuals, services and/or businesses that have improved accessibility in their community.

Nominations for these awards are made by the Accessibility Advisory Committees of municipalities within Durham Region. Thanks to these committees and the various community partners who recommend and support the nominations.



2017 Award Recipients

Each of these 2017 award recipients has succeeded in removing or preventing barriers. Their efforts have helped to ensure that all citizens have access to meaningful involvement and full participation in their community.

Town of Ajax

Heather Steeves is an active member of the Ajax AAC and volunteers within her community. She especially enjoys talking to children at local schools, to help them acquire comfort and respect while interacting with a person with a visible disability.

Township of Brock

The Sunderland Lions Club believes in making their community better for all to enjoy. Their latest initiative was to have a new one-kilometre, four-seasons, paved walking trail in the heart of downtown Sunderland. This trail has allowed people of all ages and abilities to enjoy walking, running or jogging along this safe and accessible trail.

Municipality of Clarington

Walsh's SNUG restaurant is a family owned pub nestled in the heart of Newcastle. Upgrades to the restaurant included an accessible entrance and washroom. They plan to continue to incorporate accessibility in future upgrades.

City of Oshawa

Derek Giberson is a champion of accessibility in all that he is involved with. He volunteers in many initiatives throughout his community with accessibility and inclusiveness at the forefront. He is always looking at how to improve access to services for people with disabilities.

City of Pickering

For the past 10 years, the Pickering Soccer Club has been dedicated to increasing opportunities for children and youth with disabilities, to play soccer and/or becoming a coach or volunteer. This club has focused on developing capacity across Durham Region's soccer community to help create more opportunities for kids with disabilities to play.

Township of Scugog

The Port Perry Smokehouse took the initiative to have their restaurant menu printed in braille and larger print. They also continue to work on the accessibility of their website. These actions have made the customer experience more inclusive.

Township of Uxbridge

The health professionals at Axis Chiropractic are dedicated to helping people of all abilities achieve their health goals. The clinic moved to a more accessible location to ensure people living with a disability could access their services more easily.

Town of Whitby

Stephanie Smith, owner of Haircut Housecalls, provides haircutting services to people who are not able or have difficulty leaving their homes. Providing this service allows persons with disabilities and seniors to access personal services from the comfort and security of their home.

Region of Durham's 2017 report on accessibility

Initiatives throughout the organization

In 2017, The Regional Municipality of Durham completely redesigned and rebuilt its citizen-facing website, durham.ca, to meet Ontario's accessibility standards, streamline content and improve navigation. Every department was involved. To support and guide our staff in this effort, the durham.ca team developed new corporate education resources and training. One of the resources created is a Writing Style Guide to assist staff in writing for the web in accordance with the Region's accessibility standards for the new website.

At an Open Web Education Day, staff shared best practices and personal experiences in web design. At Writing for the Web training, more than 170 employees learned best practices for improving accessibility and readability of web content by using plain language and web page design principles.

Throughout the redesign process, we kept compliance with the AODA and Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA as our key focus. The result is a new website that is citizen centric and mobile friendly.

To ensure that accessibility is maintained as new content is added to the website, staff assisted in developing an Accessible Web Publishing Policy to guide posting of new content to the website. The Region also amended its procurement policies to ensure that vendors contracted by the Region provide reports in an accessible format. Staff continue to work on improving the accessibility of Regional Council and Committee minutes that are posted to the Region's website.

Job applicants are now notified about accommodation for individuals with disabilities throughout the hiring process from submitting the application to the competition phase. In addition, the Region will make every reasonable attempt, to the point of undue hardship, to remove accessibility barriers for an employee with a disability.

When the Income Support Office moved to a new location at 200 John Street in Oshawa, the space was designed and built with accessibility in mind. At

Regional Headquarters, the renovation of the Income Support waiting area also incorporated accessible design features. The Region continues to integrate accessibility improvements into the renovations of Durham Region Local Housing Corporation portfolio, investing more than \$600,000 in accessibility upgrades since 2013.

For all our new construction or renovation projects, the Region integrates accessibility at the project planning stage. Upgrades to signalized intersections are one example. To date, 90 traffic control signal locations have been equipped with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). Eighteen traffic control signal locations were retrofitted in 2017, to include APS with sidewalk improvements, better crosswalk alignment and the installation of tactile plates. More information on the location of accessible crossings in Durham, check the Region's website at <https://www.durham.ca/en/living-here/accessible-pedestrian-crossings.aspx>.



2017 Transportation Requirements

Compliance Actions Completed

The following information highlights actions taken by Durham Region Transit (DRT) to comply with the Transportation requirements that became law on **January 1, 2017**.

Requirement:

Pre-Boarding announcements, Conventional transportation

Action: All DRT vehicles are equipped with an electronic pre-boarding announcement feature. This automated announcement is activated when the vehicle services a designated stop.

The announcement is consistent with the information displayed on the destination sign, which is located on the exterior of the bus.

Requirement:

On-Board announcements

Action: All DRT buses are equipped with on-board audio equipment. The system will automatically announce information about the next stop information, ahead of each one.

Requirement:

Categories of eligibility, specialized services

Action:

As required, DRT has three categories of eligibility to qualify for specialized transit services:

1. **Unconditional Eligibility:** a person with a disability that prevents him or her from using conventional transportation services.
2. **Temporary Eligibility:** a person with a temporary disability that prevents him or her from using conventional transportation services.
3. **Conditional Eligibility:** where environmental or physical barriers limit an individual's ability to consistently use conventional transportation services.

Although DRT has met their legislated requirements, they continue to look for ways to improve and expand their services.

Summary of requirements in effect as of January 1, 2017

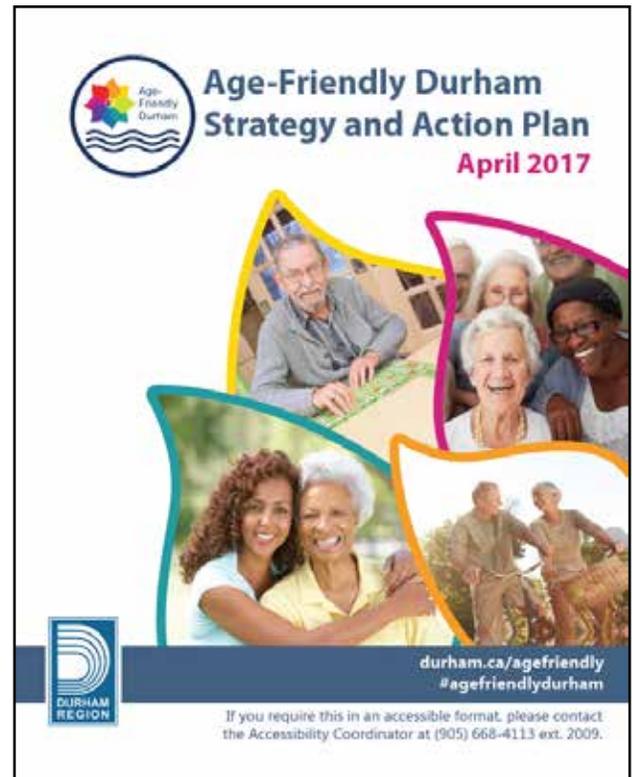
Requirement	Completed
Provide accessible customer service	✓
Provide accessible transportation services	✓
Provide emergency and public safety information in accessible formats	✓
Provide employees with accessible and customized emergency information	✓
Create accessibility policies and a multi-year plan	✓
Buy accessible goods, services or facilities	✓
Include accessibility features in kiosks	✓
Make new websites accessible	✓
Train employees on Ontario's accessibility laws	✓
Make it easy to provide feedback, when asked	✓
Make employment practices accessible	✓
Make public information accessible, when asked	✓
Make new or redeveloped public spaces accessible	✓

Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan 2017

In April 2017, Regional Council endorsed the Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan which sets out 69 recommendations to help make Durham a more accessible and inclusive community for residents of all ages and abilities. Based on the World Health Organization model of age-friendly communities, the plan aims to make improvements in eight priority areas that have an impact on quality of life, particularly as people grow older:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services

Becoming age-friendly is an ongoing process that requires coordinated planning and collaboration. To help achieve our ambitious goals, the Region has established the Durham Council on Aging. Members include representatives from all eight Durham municipalities, community health and social service organizations, public libraries, businesses, and older adult volunteers (who sit as Members-at-Large for a two-year term). An Age-Friendly Staff Working Group has also been established to focus on implementing these recommendations across Regional programs and services.” For more information, please visit Age-Friendly Durham at <https://www.durham.ca/en/living-here/age-friendly-durham.aspx>.



Award for Accessibility

Durham Region received a Municipal Accessibility Award – for extraordinary leadership and exceptional contributions to the advancement of accessibility over the years – from the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA).



AODA Actions Continue

Durham Region continues to carry out the requirements of the AODA and the actions outlined in the Regional Municipality of Durham 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Compliance with the AODA does not end with the annual deadlines but is incorporated into all that is done at the Region of Durham.



Contact Information

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the Regional Municipality of Durham 2017 Accessibility Report.

Janet Traer, Accessibility Coordinator

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