



The Regional Municipality of Durham 2019 Accessibility Report

Update to the 2018 Accessibility Report



Table of Contents

Celebrating access and ability in our communities.....	3
Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee	4
Durham Region Accessibility Report 2019	5
Statement of Organizational Commitment	5
Region of Durham’s 2019 highlights.....	6
Helping our Community	7
Continuous improvements throughout the organization	8
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 compliance timelines	9
Celebrating Progress.....	10
2019 Award Recipients.....	10
National Access Awareness Week 2019	11
Contact Information	12

Celebrating access and ability in our communities

Finding innovative ways to help eliminate obstacles is a path we can travel together. It's amazing what we can achieve by adopting a certain mindset; looking at the community through an accessibility-based lens.

Enhancing the lives of our citizens—regardless of their abilities—is paramount.

When we make communications, services and facilities more accessible, we promote diversity and inclusion and we showcase our dedication to continuous improvement. It's a process strengthened by the invaluable advice from our Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). We are so grateful for their input and encouragement.

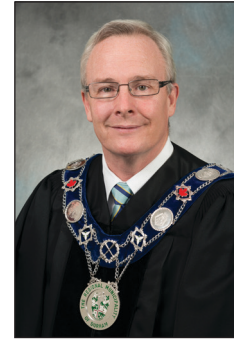
In 2019, our organization enhanced communications, undertook process reviews, and enhanced partnerships to further strengthen our dedication to accessibility. It was a collaborative effort that allowed us to:

- Introduce new and innovative learning resources for our accessible documents.
- Place a stronger focus on barrier-free public reports, forms, web pages and publications.
- Introduce mandatory open captioning for video messages.
- Provide better access to employees via our redeveloped intranet.

It was also a milestone year for us, as Durham Region proudly hosted the 2019 Para Sport Games. This event—which welcomed about 300 athletes in various sporting events—allowed us to showcase our inclusive and accessible community and highlight how we preserve dignity and independence for individuals of all abilities.

It was incredible to see our strong community spirit in action. People came together to support these athletes and brought the Games to life.

Let's continue moving forward on this path by offering equal access and opportunity. Living in an inclusive and accessible environment means working together to ensure dignity and independence for individuals of all abilities.



John Henry

Regional Chair and CEO

Elaine Baxter-Trahair

Chief Administrative Officer

Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides valuable feedback and advice to Durham Regional Council and employees. Ontario's accessibility laws require municipalities with more than 10,000 people to form an AAC. The committee advises Regional Council about accessibility plans and standards; reviews site plans and drawings; and performs other functions, as specified in the regulations. Most members must be people with disabilities, come from various backgrounds, and represent an area municipality.

We thank the members of our Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee for their commitment and knowledge sharing.



A vertical banner for the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). At the top left is the Durham Region logo. To its right, the text reads "Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)". Below this is a green oval containing the letters "AAC" in white. Underneath is the heading "What We Do" in blue. Three blue ovals are arranged in a triangle, containing the text: "Accessibility Planning" (top), "Advise Regional Council" (bottom left), and "Educate and Support Regional Staff" (bottom right). Below these is a green horizontal bar with the text "Destination Accessible 2025". The bottom section of the banner features three images: a white accessible bus, a glass award trophy labeled "Accessibility Award 2015", and a person walking a dog on a paved path. At the very bottom, there is a logo for "Accessibility Information" (a stylized 'A' with a wheelchair symbol) and the text "Find us online at www.durham.ca/accessibility".

Durham Region Accessibility Report 2019

Durham Region believes in building communities where every person can fully participate.

The Regional Municipality of Durham 2019 Accessibility Report is our annual update, a chance to identify how we continue to improve accessibility in our community by implementing the standards and timelines outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The Region of Durham is committed to creating programs, services and facilities that people of all abilities can access. Accessibility benefits everyone. Creating welcoming and inclusive communities - where every person who lives, works and plays, can fully participate - makes good sense for all of us. This philosophy is supported in our Strategic Plan, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and our Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan.

To review the Regional Municipality of Durham 2016-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and previous Accessibility Reports, please visit durham.ca/accessibilityreports.



Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Region of Durham is committed to ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities throughout its goods, services, employment and facilities as outlined in the Accessibility Policy. Accessibility shall be addressed in a manner that:

- Upholds the principles of dignity and independence.
- Strives to provide integrated services.
- Provides equal opportunity.

Region of Durham's 2019 highlights

2019 Ontario Parasport Games

From February 8 to 10, 2019, Durham Region welcomed nearly 500 participants—including 300 athletes and hundreds of visiting family and friends—to the Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games.

The Games featured competition and medal ceremonies in 11 sports at eight venues across the Region; an opening night dinner; memorable Opening Ceremony; and a celebration dinner. Leading up to the Games, the event was promoted at community events. There was also a 100-Day Countdown that engaged local schools and the broader community.



The event was led by the Region of Durham's sport tourism program, Sport Durham. A Games Organizing Committee (GOC) was established to collaborate with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries team and Provincial Sport Organizations to plan and deliver the Games. During the Games weekend, over 300 volunteers from Durham Region and beyond helped to bring the Games to life.

Durham Region's inclusive values were furthered by the Games. More people and businesses became aware of what it means to provide inclusive, accessible and welcoming places and experiences to individuals of all abilities. And, the Games legacy fund of \$111,900 will support initiatives to expand and enhance parasport opportunities, awareness, participation and experience in Durham Region.

My Durham Water

Durham Region launched My Durham Water in December 2019. This state-of-the-art water billing system will be phased in across the region.



It's a new portal which provides more accessible options that allow residents to:

- View billing information online.
- Receive bills online through paperless e-billing.
- Choose from multiple payment options, including e-payments.
- Enter meter readings online.
- Communicate with the Region through multiple channels, such as secure email.
- Access the Region's website for rates and other information.



Donate a smartphone.
Change the life of someone who's blind.



Every eligible smartphone donation receives a tax receipt.

Phone It Forward is a program from the CNIB Foundation, supporting Canadians with sight loss for more than 100 years.

Visit phoneitforward.ca or call 1-833-554-5020 to donate your phone.



Helping our Community

In 2019, the CAO's Office worked with Corporate Services-Information Technology's (CS-IT) Telecommunications and Infrastructure teams on a new initiative to donate previously used Region of Durham smartphones to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) Phone it Forward program. Through this program, donated devices are reset in a secure manner, loaded with accessible apps and donated to people with vision loss.

Thank you to everyone involved for making a difference in our community!

Update on Accessible Pedestrian Signals

In 2019, the Region installed accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at 18 locations, bringing our total number of signalized intersections equipped with APS to 139.

There have been operational improvements made to our APS system. Instead of needing to push and hold an APS for five seconds to receive the audible sounds, the Region revised its policy to implement a three second press and hold time. This change was implemented after dialogue with visually impaired residents of Durham indicated that the longer press and hold time was making it difficult to activate the devices. In 2019, 42 locations were updated to reflect this positive change in operation. These updates continued in 2020.

In 2019, the Region also continued to update signalized intersections with a new pedestrian timing methodology. The new methodology aims to provide positive guidance for pedestrians by displaying a countdown timer to show how much time is left to cross the road. When the flashing hand is displayed, or the clearance tone is heard, it is recommended that pedestrians wait until the next cycle to ensure there is enough time to cross.



Recognizing Bell Let's Talk Day

In partnership with the Region's Health, Safety and Wellness Division, the CAO's Office organized a lunch and learn session for staff to recognize Bell Let's Talk Day. Regional employees were invited to listen and learn from keynote speaker Daniel Cullen, a homelessness community advocate who shared his journey entitled: 8,000 Days Homeless.

Continuous improvements throughout the organization

Internal

- Accessible templates continue to be created based on department/division needs.
- Improving on our internal processes to create better efficiencies and improve accessibility for staff, which will ultimately benefit our residents.
- Certificates are presented to Regional employees who incorporate, champion and share accessibility best practices in their work.
- Training sessions are held for staff who are responsible for posting information on durham.ca.
- The redevelopment of the Region's internal website was designed with accessibility in mind, consistent with Durham's external website – durham.ca.
- Accessibility audits of the Region's facilities are scheduled on a regular basis.
- Accessibility awareness training sessions are planned throughout the organization.

External

- All videos produced by the Region of Durham now have open captioning. Captions are permanently visible on the video or stream and do not require special functionality for media players or streaming platforms to be displayed.
- Improved customer service and accessibility were achieved by reducing the number of contact phone numbers for public health programs and services.
- Installing accessible service counters continues in many areas with public access.
- Continuously improving accessibility of the forms on durham.ca.
- Counter-loop systems have been installed for the hearing impaired.
- A tablet was installed for court users to pay tickets, look up cases or set early resolution proceedings during business hours and after hours.
- Continuous learning opportunities were provided to staff about accessibility/disability related topics to increase their knowledge and understanding. For International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Chris Power, a 16-year Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces Military Police, spoke to staff about his journey. Once on the brink of suicide, Chris now focuses on helping professionals shift their energy from stress and survival to peace and purpose. As the founder of Family for Life, Chris provides support to a community of veterans and first responders.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 compliance timelines

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) became law in 2005. Under the Act, organizations must meet the requirements of the AODA in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service. The summary below highlights the AODA requirements that are now part of Durham Region's day-to-day operations.

2010-2017 Requirements 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
- ✓ 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

2018

No new requirements

2019

No new requirements

Future Requirements 2021

Websites must conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level 2.0 AA

WCAG is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities.

Celebrating Progress

The Region of Durham's Accessibility Awards allow the organization to celebrate the importance of accessibility. They honour community leadership in breaking down barriers by acknowledging individuals, services and/or businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to accessibility.

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.

2019 Award Recipients

Town of Ajax – Jolie Cafe

Township of Brock – The Beaverton Town Hall Players

Municipality of Clarington – Brianna's Sweet Treats

Region of Durham – Patricia Rundle

City of Oshawa – The LivingRoom Community Art Studio

City of Pickering – Team Frozen Foods

Town of Whitby – Durham Escape Room



National Access Awareness Week



National Access Awareness Week 2019

National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) aims to bring together—in a spirit of partnership—people with disabilities, the organizations that serve them, businesses, labour and governments to effect meaningful changes in the daily lives of people with disabilities.

It is a week for Canadians to promote inclusion and accessibility in our communities and workplaces; a chance to celebrate our progress and recognize that many barriers must still be overcome.

We need to be proactive and change the way we think, talk and act about barriers to participation and accessibility. An inclusive Canada is one where all Canadians can participate and have an equal opportunity to succeed in their workplaces and communities.

Increased inclusion of persons with disabilities has positive economic and social benefits for the individuals, businesses, the economy, and society in general.

At the Region of Durham, we strive to understand the service needs of customers of all abilities and educate staff on how to provide excellent service. Gaining and sharing this knowledge with our colleagues is important to us.

Durham Region celebrates NAAW each year, in late May and runs for the week. Staff participated in Lunch and Learn sessions on topics such as guide dogs, therapy dogs and Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) Phone It Forward program.

Contact Information

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the Regional Municipality of Durham 2019 Accessibility Report.

Janet Traer, Accessibility Coordinator

By mail:

The Regional Municipality of Durham
605 Rossland Road East
Post Office Box 623
Whitby, Ontario
L1N 6A3

By phone:

905-668-7711 extension 2009
Or 1-800-372-1102

By email:

accessibility@durham.ca



The Regional Municipality of Durham

605 Rossland Rd. E., Whitby, Ontario L1N 6A3
905-668-7711 or 1-800-372-1102
durham.ca

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

