



City of Markham

Accessibility Status Report

2024

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Introduction

The City of Markham is committed to ensuring all residents have full and equal access to its facilities, services and information. Accessibility makes it possible for people of all abilities to take advantage of everything Markham has to offer.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is the provincial law that provides direction for developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards that organizations must follow in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service. These laws and standards strive to make Ontario open to everyone by helping to reduce and remove barriers.

The City promotes accessibility by ensuring compliance with AODA. In 2024, the City approved Markham's 2025 – 2029 Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). The specific initiatives and outcomes outlined in the plan identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers across the organization to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in the City's programs, services, facilities, public spaces, information and communication, and employment. The review and update of the multi-year accessibility plan was completed in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC).

This accessibility status report highlights the actions taken to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in 2024. It also includes actions taken to continue to identify and work on areas where we can improve. This report includes input from City staff and MAAC.

It summarizes compliance outcomes the City continues to perform within the requirements of the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation listed in the chart below. The achievements listed throughout the report show where the City went beyond the minimum requirements in the standards. The establishment of accessibility policies, accessibility plans, procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities and training are being implemented and will be identified in the latest Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Introduction

About the City of Markham

Markham is one of Canada's most diverse cities. We are proud of our rich history and our diversity. Diversity is our collective strength and drives our community's vibrancy, success, and innovation. We have a rich cultural heritage, outstanding community planning services, and a vibrant local environment. More than 370,000 people call Markham home. So do hundreds of corporate head offices and more than one thousand high tech and life science companies.

The City of Markham recognizes that diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility are integral and valuable to the municipality's success and are key strategic priorities. These principles are embedded in our strategic plan [Building Markham's Future Together](#).

We understand that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility look different for everyone. The City of Markham strives to create a workplace and community where everyone feels welcome, has a sense of belonging, and can live the best life possible.

City of Markham Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples and their commitment to stewardship of the land. We acknowledge the communities in circle. The North, West, South and Eastern directions, and Haudenosaunee, Huron- Wendat, Anishnabeg, Seneca, Chippewa, and the Mississauga's of the Credit peoples. We share the responsibility with the caretakers of this land to ensure the dish is never empty and to restore relationships that are based on peace, friendship, and trust. We are committed to reconciliation, partnership and enhanced understanding.

The Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AODA requires municipalities in Ontario with 10,000 or more residents to form an Accessibility Advisory Committee. Our committee members are appointed by City Council. By law, the majority of members must be persons with disabilities. The goal of the Committee is to advise Council about accessibility standards, accessibility reports, accessibility issues relating to site plans, and other matters as requested by Council. The Committee assists staff to identify and remove barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. They share their experiences, informed by lived experiences where possible, to help make things more accessible. This helps improve the social, cultural, and economic well-being of people with disabilities.



The Committee also advocates for accessibility in the community and acts as a key link between the community and the City of Markham.

The City of Markham's Statement of Commitment

Markham is committed to ensuring all residents have full and equal access to its programs, services, facilities and information. Accessibility makes it possible for people of all abilities to take advantage of everything Markham has to offer.

The City of Markham is committed to making its programs, services and facilities accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.

The City takes its obligations under the AODA seriously and commits to meeting the requirements to ensure that City programs, services, and facilities are accessible to all.

Achieve an Accessible Markham

The City wants to continue to foster an inclusive culture where accessibility is embedded into all aspects of civic life, ensuring that all residents, employees, and visitors feel valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully.

To continue to achieve an accessible and inclusive Markham, the City wants to achieve the following objectives:

An inclusive and accessible Markham

Markham will foster an inclusive culture where accessibility is embedded into all aspects of civic life, so that all residents, employees, and visitors feel valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility

We will continuously improve accessibility, set goals, monitor and report on our progress.

Accessibility is part of our work

Tapping into Markham's innovative culture, our staff understand what needs to be done and are supported and empowered to embed accessibility in the work we do every day.



1. Creating an Inclusive Culture

2024 Achievements

- Accessibility and inclusivity are at the heart of our city's vision for the future. This is reflected in our Strategic Plan "[Building Markham's Future Together](#)", the [Diversity Action Plan](#) and our [Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2025 – 2029](#) (MYAP).
- The City of Markham added an Accessibility Specialist to its' staff complement. This position is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reporting on Markham's new MYAP, to ensure we continue to meet all requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and to provide support to Markham's Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- A Staff identity and Inclusion Survey was completed in 2024 asking City of Markham staff to identify themselves according to common dimensions of diversity, including disability. Furthermore, the survey asked respondents about their perception of inclusion within the organization. The results of this survey provided data to be used going forward for evidence-based decision making promoting greater diversity and inclusion at the City for staff, and to support inclusive and accessible services for the community.

2. General Requirements

2024 Achievements

- The City of Markham engaged an external consultancy firm to conduct a comprehensive assessment and update of the Markham's Multi Year Accessibility Plan which received Council approval in December 2024. This 2025 - 2029 Plan will guide 26 actions to meet and sometimes exceed, the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) across the next four years.
- The City completed and posted its' annual AODA status report outlining accessibility achievements in 2023.
- Reviewed and updated mandatory AODA training to ensure all new and existing employees, volunteers, Council and committee members receive training and are knowledgeable about accessibility legislation and how to apply it to the work they do. The training now includes additional, role-specific modules addressing Information & Communications, Employment, Transportation, and Design of Public Spaces.
- Purchased eLearning tool which includes built-in accessibility features such as screen reader support, keyboard navigation, and closed captions to ensure our training is inclusive and accessible for all employees.
- Reviewed and updated service agreement language to ensure vendors provide AODA and Human Rights training to their own employees who provide services to the City of Markham.
- Sought the advice of Markham's Accessibility Advisory Committee at 10 committee meetings in 2024 to inform its programs, services and facilities.

3. Information and Communication

2024 Achievements

- We completed and launched an update to the City's brand and corporate style guidelines. This update incorporated Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act best practices in the brand guidelines, including outlining sans serif fonts, minimum font size, social media graphic best practices, such as limited copy on graphics, and alternative text.
- Included best practices for writing for accessibility and how to format a webpage using headings in the training for the City's new internet content management system.
- Continued review of historical documents on our web pages to identify opportunities for the accessibility remediation project.

4. Employment

2024 Achievements

- All new employees and volunteers are required to complete the mandatory Working Together: Ontario Human Rights and AODA training. Participation is tracked to ensure everyone completes the training.
- Candidates are offered accommodation options during recruitment and onboarding and are available if the need arises anytime during their employment with the City.
- Managers receive bias-free recruitment training.
- Ongoing review and implementation of well-defined Human Resources policies and procedures to support our employees throughout their time as an employee.

5. Transportation

2024 Achievements

- We are committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to reliable and accessible taxicabs. The City of Markham's transportation obligations under the AODA are limited to accessible taxi services. The City has had an Accessible Taxi Policy since 2016. This policy aligns with AODA requirements.
- As part of our ongoing quality assurance activities, we reviewed the City's current approach to meet the AODA's requirements for accessible taxicabs as an action in the City of Markham's 2025- 2029 Multi Year Accessibility Plan.
- As part of the updated 2025 taxi licensing process for new applications and renewals, a mandatory training module has been implemented for all licensees, requiring the completion of training before licenses are issued.
- Given the challenges the entire province is facing in obtaining accessible taxi services, the City of Markham continues to actively monitor solutions and best practices implemented by other municipalities.

6. The Design of Public Spaces

2024 Achievements

- We continually work to meet all accessibility requirements under the Building Code and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation when building and improving our public spaces.
- Our Parks Team regularly holds public open houses to gather input on new park developments and consults with the Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- We are in the process of a four-year project to refurbish 105 existing playgrounds to include AODA requirements. Some improvements include the removal of sand, changes to curbing and the first wheelchair-accessible swing has been installed. All new parks are designed to include AODA requirements.
- In coordination with Markham's Accessibility Advisory Committee, we are working to enhance play spaces within parks by developing an updated Playground Accessibility Checklist. Feedback received will be integrated and used to update the current Checklist for future play space developments.
- During design development of play spaces within parks, we are coordinating with people with lived experience in the community to enhance inclusion in the design process and increase accessibility in the outcome of the over park design.
- We now have a Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee representative on the Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to offer an accessibility lens to their work.

7. Customer Service

2024 Achievements

- In 2024, three new recreation programs for people with developmental disabilities were offered. These included:
 - Adults on the Go!!
A recreation program for adults with developmental disabilities requiring moderate to minimal support with a focus to promote social integration, skill development, physical fitness, and recreational enjoyment. The program features weekly social gatherings, activity-based events like game days, creative arts sessions, as well as special interest groups focused on hobbies like sports, books, and music
 - Nature Explorers
Explores the wonders of nature each week with peers while enjoying the season of summer. Provides an enriching experience designed to ignite the individual's curiosity, foster a deeper connection with nature, and promote physical activity through walking and learning. This program is offered in partnership with Community Living, and
 - Making Cents!
Focus on budgeting, purchasing decisions, and understanding the value of money! Participants learn the basics about numbers, money and making change. This program is also offered in partnership with Community Living.
- To support the growing demand that the Aaniin Fitness Centre was experiencing, the centre underwent an expansion, increasing the overall footprint by 1000 square feet. This added space will support continued growth while maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment. This allows for better access to the accessible equipment in the space (functional trainers, upper arm ergometers, track, cables) allowing individuals with physical and emotional challenges more space to navigate through the area.
- The Markham Pan Am Centre hosted two Para Swim events in 2024. One National and one International. To ensure that para-athletes would have easy access to the water, all Lifeguard staff were retrained on the use of the on-deck transfer lift for athletes requiring support to enter the water. This was very successful with athlete needs being met.

- In 2024, the City of Markham Recreation Services made significant strides in improving accessibility through enhancements to our online program registration and facility booking software, Xplor. One of the key initiatives was transitioning our drop-in program registration process entirely to an online format. This shift was made with accessibility in mind, ensuring that the platform meets AODA compliance standards. This change has significantly improved the customer experience for individuals with disabilities by removing the need to physically line up at our facilities to secure drop-in spaces. The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, with a noticeable increase in the use of online registration for drop-ins. This not only enhances convenience but also supports equitable access to recreation opportunities for all residents.

Next Steps

During 2025, the City of Markham looks forward to advancing accessibility by implementing some of the 26 actions contained in its' 2025 – 2029 Multi Year Accessibility Plan. This Plan was built on feedback from our community, people with disabilities, the Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee and City employees. We will continually track our progress, identify new opportunities to increase accessibility across our programs, services and facilities, while reporting regularly and seeking the advice of the Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee throughout the year. We will keep the public informed of our actions through the posting of Annual Status Reports on our website.

Feedback

The City of Markham welcomes feedback on accessibility, especially from persons with disabilities. Your feedback will help inform our actions taken to create an inclusive community where everyone, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive at the City of Markham.

To request a copy of this status report in an accessible format or with communication supports or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at the City of Markham:

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