



Halton Region Accessibility Plan 2024-2028



If you require this document in an alternate format, please email accesshalton@halton.ca or call 311.

Halton Region Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Regional Municipality of Halton recognizes the diverse needs of residents and works to provide services that are accessible to everyone.

Halton Region is committed to:

- removing barriers to meet the needs of people with disabilities with respect to Regional programs, services, and facilities; and,
- meeting the objectives and requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards.

Halton Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2024-2028

The development of accessibility plans is required by Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards. This document is Halton Region's third multi-year accessibility plan and sets out how Halton Region will address compliance obligations under Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards for the years 2024 to 2028. It also highlights additional initiatives and projects that Halton Region will undertake to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities when accessing Regional programs, services, and facilities. This information is set out in Table 2 of this document.

As required, annual progress updates on the activities identified in this document will be developed. This document and annual updates will be posted to Halton Region's website and will be provided in alternate formats, upon request.

This document also provides information on accessibility-related activities undertaken or ongoing during 2022-2023. They include actions that Halton Region has taken that are specifically focused on meeting compliance obligations in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards in addition to Halton-led initiatives and projects, not directly related to compliance but which improve the accessibility of Regional programs and services. Also included are initiatives such as the Halton Region Community Investment Fund that, although not exclusively focused on accessibility, have provided funding to community organizations that support people with disabilities. This information is set out in Table 1 of this document.

Set out below is information regarding the status of federal and provincial accessibility legislation.

Federal Accessibility Legislation

The *Accessible Canada Act* came into force in 2019. Its goal is to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The *Accessible Canada Act* identifies seven priority areas:

- Employment
- Built Environment
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Communication other than Information and Communication Technologies
- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- Transportation

The *Accessible Canada Act* applies to federally regulated sectors such as banking, telecommunications, transportation industries and the federal civil service. There are 12 standards being developed under the *Accessible Canada Act*. Although it is unlikely that the federal standards will impact the municipal sector directly, Halton Region staff will continue to monitor their development and report back to Council as required.

Provincial Accessibility Requirements

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* aims to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, and premises by January 1, 2025. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requires the establishment of accessibility advisory committees, the filing of accessibility reports and the development and implementation of accessibility standards. Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, includes accessibility standards with

specific requirements in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Design of Public Spaces/Built Environment
- Employment
- Information and Communications
- Transportation (as Halton Region is not a provider of public transit, these requirements do not apply to the Region)

Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requires that Halton Region establish an accessibility advisory committee to provide advice on the prevention and removal of barriers to people with disabilities with respect to Regional services, programs and facilities.

Halton's Accessibility Advisory Committee was appointed by Regional Council following the 2022 municipal election and includes a member of Regional Council, Halton residents and a member of the Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee. Since its establishment, Halton's Accessibility Advisory Committee has provided input on a number of Halton Region initiatives and projects. The Committee is a key resource and contributor to Halton Region's continuing work on identifying and removing barriers and promoting accessibility. As with other Regional citizen advisory committees, the current Accessibility Advisory Committee will be in place until the next municipal election.

Next Steps

Halton Region staff will continue to address compliance, reporting and consultation requirements identified in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards. Additional initiatives will also be undertaken to improve the accessibility of Halton Region programs and services. A copy of this document will be posted on Halton Region's website and will be made available in alternate formats, upon request.

Table 1- Accessibility Updates 2022-2023

Compliance requirement activities and other actions undertaken to support accessibility

Activity	Actions
<p>Ongoing Compliance with the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> and Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards</p>	<p>General Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility training provided to new staff as part of the onboarding process. • Halton Region Accessibility Policy updated and posted on halton.ca and included in onboarding training. • Procurement documents amended to clarify and strengthen accessibility-related language. <p>Customer Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility procedures and related resources to support staff in providing accessible customer service including assisting people who require an assistive device, service animal or support person developed and are available to staff. <p>Design of Public Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design specifications related to accessible pedestrian signals, tactile walking surface indicators and curb ramps incorporated into Halton Region road projects. <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region’s employment pages include information for applicants who require a disability-related accommodation to participate in a recruitment process. • Accommodation planning and other supports to employees with disabilities provided, as required. <p>Information and Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the public encouraged to provide feedback in ways that work for them. • Documents and information provided in alternate formats or through communication supports, as required. • Members of the public encouraged to advise of disability-related accommodation needs when attending or participating in Halton Region events or meetings. • Ongoing work toward ensuring Halton Region’s websites and web content align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA standards, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring, assessment, and revision of web content to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA standards;

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Compliance requirement activities and other actions undertaken to support accessibility

Activity	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remediation of publicly available content on halton.ca; and, ▪ Training and templates to support content creators with generating accessible web content and documents.
<p>Compliance Reporting to the Provincial Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region’s 2023 Accessibility Compliance report completed and submitted to the Provincial Government in December 2023.
<p>Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee provided input on a number of projects and initiatives including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solid Waste Management Strategy; ▪ District 1- Halton Regional Police Services Building; ▪ Seniors Assisted Living Rental Apartments/Seniors Community Wellness Hub, 263 Kerr Street, Oakville; ▪ Seniors Housing Project -1258 Rebecca Steet, Oakville (January 2024); ▪ Update to Halton Region’s accessibility resources for staff; and, ▪ Update to Halton Region’s Emergency Preparedness Information for People with Disabilities. • Establishment of the 2023- 2026 Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee following the 2022 municipal election.
<p>COVID Immunization Supports</p>	<p>COVID Clinic Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification on Halton Region website that accommodations are available for people with disabilities at Halton Region immunization clinics. • Assistive devices were made available. • Personal Support Workers available on site during certain times frames to support clients with mobility issues. • Remote American Sign Language interpretation provided at clinics, as needed. • In-home vaccinations provided to people that were unable to leave their homes.

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Compliance requirement activities and other actions undertaken to support accessibility

Activity	Actions
<p>Community Safety and Well-Being in Halton: A Plan for Collaboration and Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the ongoing implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, Action Tables were identified to investigate issues, develop solutions, and carry out local strategies to address a number of objectives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring supportive housing options for adults with complex service needs including adults with a dual diagnosis of a developmental disability and mental health issue; ▪ Optimizing access to centralized crisis mental health services for Halton residents; ▪ Supporting children and youth with a dual diagnosis of a developmental disability and mental health issue; and, ▪ Enhancing access to mental health supports for children and youth.
<p>Employment & Social Services – Employment Resource Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region’s Employment Resource Centre continued to offer a number of features to assist job seekers who may have a disability including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjustable workstations to accommodate mobility devices; ▪ Zoom text magnifier; and, ▪ Assisted support for people with hearing or visual loss.
<p>Employment & Social Services - Mental Health Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Halton continued to offer supports to individuals with mental health disabilities that may present barriers to employment. • The supports include vocational/cognitive assessments, developing case plans based on employment goals, and referrals to community mental health programs.

Table 1- Accessibility Updates 2022-2023

Compliance requirement activities and other actions undertaken to support accessibility

Activity	Actions
<p>Halton Region Community Investment Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23 Halton made a number of investments in programs and services to support vulnerable populations including people with disabilities. The Halton Region Community Investment Fund funded a number of initiatives delivered through organizations including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf ▪ Maternal Mind Matters ▪ The Cedarbrook Society (operating as The Darling Home for Kids) ▪ Brain Injury Association of Peel and Halton ▪ Community Living Oakville ▪ Community Living North Halton ▪ Hope Place Centres ▪ Learning Disabilities Association of Halton ▪ STRIDE ▪ Tetra Society ▪ The Canadian National Institute for the Blind
<p>Halton Accessibility Repair Program – Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/2023, funding to eligible homeowners for home modifications needed to improve accessibility and independent living (e.g., stair lifts, walk-in showers, grab bars, ramps) was provided through Halton Accessibility Repair Program. • Funding was made available on a first come, first served basis through a dedicated application process.
<p>Network, Information Sharing and Learning Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region staff continued to participate in the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals, an information-sharing network with representatives from more than 200 organizations, including municipalities, hospitals, school boards, universities and colleges, and police services.

Table 2 - Compliance Activities 2024-2028

Activities and actions Halton Region will take to address compliance requirements in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards

Requirements	Actions
<p>General Requirements</p> <p>Develop accessibility policies</p> <p>Annual updates on 2024-2028 accessibility plan</p> <p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing accessibility policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> or Ontario Regulation 191/11-Integrated Accessibility Standards. Annual progress reports to be developed and posted on Halton Region’s website. New staff to continue to receive training as part of the onboarding process. Training materials and resources for staff and volunteers to be updated, as required.
<p>Customer Service Standards</p> <p>Use of service animals and support person</p> <p>Notice of temporary disruptions</p> <p>Training for staff</p> <p>Feedback process</p> <p>Format of documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures relating to accessible customer service (e.g., notification of service disruptions, accessible feedback, provision of accessible formats/communication supports, support persons) will be reviewed and updated, as required. Accessibility training module and supporting resources including information relating to accessible customer service and regulatory requirements will be reviewed and updated, as required. Halton Region’s website to continue to provide public notification that accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request. Halton Region’s website to continue to include information for individuals requiring an alternate format or communication support to provide feedback. Halton Region event and meeting notices to continue to include wording asking residents to advise if they require a disability-related accommodation. Investigate and implement short message service (text messaging) and chat technologies to support customer service.
<p>Design of Public Spaces Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design of Public Spaces Standards requirements to continue to be incorporated into the design of construction/renovation projects. Engineering and Construction Division to continue to incorporate requirements relating to accessible pedestrian

Table 2 - Compliance Activities 2024-2028

Activities and actions Halton Region will take to address compliance requirements in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards

Requirements	Actions
<p>Technical and consultation requirements related to the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recreational trails and beach access routes • outdoor public use eating areas • outdoor play spaces • exterior paths of travel • accessible parking • service counters, queuing areas • maintenance procedures 	<p>signals, tactile walking surface indicators and curb ramps at intersections under Halton Region’s jurisdiction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An audit of Halton Region facilities to review their conformance with Design of Public Spaces Standards will be undertaken. <p>Maintenance Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure on service disruption notification is in place and includes direction to staff on actions to take for planned and unplanned disruptions to Halton Region services. Procedure to be reviewed and updated. • Communication regarding planned and unplanned disruptions to continue to be provided through a number of methods. • Regular site inspections are undertaken on the following elements situated on Halton Region property and repairs are done as soon as practicable. These elements are maintained as part of Halton Region service contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor public eating areas ▪ Exterior paths of travel ▪ Off-street parking • Outdoor play spaces at Halton Community Housing Corporation sites are inspected daily by maintenance staff. • Outdoor play spaces at Halton Region’s childcare centres property are inspected daily. They are inspected and certified annually and maintained as part of a playground inspection and repair service contract.
<p>Employment Standards</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>Accessible formats and communication supports for employees</p> <p>Workplace emergency response information</p> <p>Documented individual accommodation plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region’s Employment Opportunities pages and job postings will continue to include wording advising that disability related accommodations are available. • Interview candidates will continue to be advised that disability-related accommodations are available. • Offer of Employment letters will continue to include wording advising that Halton Region will provide disability-related accommodation. • Accessible formats and communication supports will continue to be provided to employees, as required.

Table 2 - Compliance Activities 2024-2028

Activities and actions Halton Region will take to address compliance requirements in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards

Requirements	Actions
<p>Return to work process</p> <p>Performance management, career development and redeployment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process in place to provide employees, upon request, with workplace emergency response information and plan. Existing process will reviewed and updated, as required. • Disability Management Policy/Work Accommodation Procedure in place. Return-to-work process will be reviewed, and updated, as required. • Policies and procedures related to accessible employment (Disability Management, Work Accommodation, Return-to-Work) will be reviewed and updated, as required.
<p>Information and Communications Standards</p> <p>Accessible formats and communication supports</p> <p>Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information</p> <p>Accessible websites and web content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents will continue to be provided in alternate formats, upon request. • Emergency procedures, plans, public safety information to be provided in alternate formats or with appropriate communication supports, upon request. • Work will continue toward achieving Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA conformance for Halton Region websites and web content.
<p>Ongoing Consultation with the Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional staff will continue to consult and seek the input of the Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee on construction and renovations projects, new leases, and other projects and initiatives, as appropriate.

Table 2 – Additional Activities to Support Accessibility

Additional actions and initiatives that support people with disabilities

<p>Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and information on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in consultation with the Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.
<p>Training and Awareness Activities for Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region staff will continue to participate in training and awareness activities, as appropriate.

Table 2 – Additional Activities to Support Accessibility

Additional actions and initiatives that support people with disabilities

Monitoring Changes to Provincial Accessibility Legislation and the Development of Standards under the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halton Region staff will continue to monitor changes to provincial accessibility legislation and the development of regulations and standards under the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> to determine potential impacts on the municipal sector and Halton Region programs and services.
Ongoing Corporate Projects and Initiatives that Support People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Safety and Well-Being in Halton: A Plan for Collaboration and Action, Halton Accessibility Repair Program, Halton Region Community Investment Fund.