



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Finance and Administration Committee  
From: Chief Administrative Officer  
Report: #2025-A-2  
Date: May 13, 2025

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**Subject:**

The Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan

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**Recommendation:**

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That the CAO's Report # 2025-A-2 be received for information as the Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2024 Annual Report.
  - B) That the Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2025 Workplan be approved.
  - C) That the Regional Municipality of Durham Accessibility Advisory Committee's revised Terms of Reference be approved.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan to the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In June 2005, the Ontario Legislature passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA builds on the previous Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and both acts are still in effect.

2.2 Municipalities are required to have AACs which advise Council by:

- a. Providing advice on the preparation of accessibility reports and plans required under the AODA.
- b. Advising Council on the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards.
- c. Reviewing site plans and drawings for buildings and facilities.

2.3 In addition, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) the AAC is active in the following areas:

- a. Committee Education
- b. Communication and outreach

2.4 The ToR also requires that the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer prepare an annual report to Committee and Council.

**3. Durham Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee**

3.1 Legislation stipulates that AACs must ensure most of its members are persons with disabilities. Ten community members plus one Regional Councilor comprise the AAC.

3.2 It is recommended that the ToR also reflect that efforts should be made to ensure representation from youth with disabilities (individuals aged 18 to 29), where possible.

**4. Durham Region AAC 2024 Achievements**

4.1 Events:

- a. Durham AAC Awards - Each year Accessibility Awards are presented to champions within the region. These awards acknowledge a person, business or organization that has made considerable effort to incorporate accessibility into their operations or everyday life. Nominations are sought from each of the eight area municipalities. In 2024, awards were presented to nine winners from across Durham (Attachment #3).
- b. Flag Raising and Panel discussion in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities for Durham Region Employees – Held in the Council Chambers and moderated by Dr. Meghann Lloyd PhD, Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) member. Panel constituted of Wayne Henshaw CNIB and AAC member, Kelly Murphy Region of Durham employee, Ryan Hatton Region of Durham employee and Samantha Tzambazis Professional Artist. This event was well attended by staff and AAC members.
- c. AAC member Dr. Meghann Lloyd represented the AAC in the panel discussion as part of the North Durham Building Business Forum held on October 18, 2024.

#### 4.2 Education: Presentations to AAC throughout 2024

- a. Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB): Get on Board Report: Results from Accessible Transit Campaign Fall 2023 - Neisha Mitchell, Program, Advocacy & Accessible Community Engagement Lead
- b. Developing Durham Region's 2025 Strategic Plan - Andrea Smith, Manager Strategic Planning
- c. Durham Transit Update – Bill Holmes, General Manager Durham Region Transit
- d. Project Search Internship, Project Search Interns
- e. Lakeshore East Go Train Extension to Bowmanville- Heather Finlay, Manager Transit Oriented Development
- f. Durham Region Equity Audit: Summary Report - Patricia Hines, Manager of DEI
- g. Region of Durham Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy. - Anu Sharma, Policy Advisor, DEI

#### 4.3 Other Achievements:

- a. AAC Member Dr. Meghann Lloyd presented to staff on Neurodiversity
- b. Collaborated on a new nomination process for award winners following industry best practices for the Durham Annual AAC Awards.
- c. Education Committee –planned a forum in October in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness month to bring together employers and businesses to listen, collaborate and learn from those who have hired individuals with disabilities.
- d. Site plan Committee - developed a plan to recognize Durham businesses who have accessibility features.
- e. Continued involvement in Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) by having two AAC members attend TAC meetings and provide valuable feedback and insights to improve the accessibility.
- f. Recommendations that AAC committee should include a youth voice.
- g. Motion to council on Accessibility considerations in design of Stations for the Lakeshore East Go Train Extension to Bowmanville.

### 5. 2025 Workplan for the Durham Region AAC

5.1 An AAC Workplan (Attachment #1) is developed annually to outline the scope and activities of the AAC. It includes necessary activities for meeting requirements of both the ODA and AODA. The workplan includes:

- a. Providing advice and reviewing annually, the Accessibility Report created by the staff liaison in the CAO's office.
- b. Reviewing site plans for new builds and extensive renovations to existing buildings that the Region owns and/or operates to ensure accessibility has been incorporated in the design.

- c. Forming of subcommittees in the areas of site plan review, traffic/road improvements, accessibility awards, equitable employment, education and communication and ad hoc committees as required throughout the year.
- d. Education development continues throughout the year, as required, for AAC members, Councillors, and staff. Education sessions take place when changes to the AODA standards occur, by agencies who serve the disability community and by staff who present initiatives from departments where feedback from this committee is required.
- e. Communicating work the AAC does annually to Regional Council and staff through AAC minutes of meetings, the staff e-newsletter, newspaper articles, social media messaging when appropriate, and meetings with other AACs within the Region.
- f. Presentation of Durham AAC Accessibility Awards annually to recognize individuals, services and/or businesses that have championed, achieved and/or embraced accessibility in each of our local area municipalities.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

### **a. Connected and Vibrant Communities**

- C1. Align Regional infrastructure and asset management with projected growth, climate impacts, and community needs.
- C2. Enable a full range of housing options, including housing that is affordable and close to transit.
- C3. Improve public transit system connectivity, reliability, and competitiveness.
- C4. Improve road safety, including the expansion and connection of active transportation networks to enhance the range of safe mobility options.
- C5. Improve digital connectivity and multi-channel access to information, resources, and service navigation.
- C6. Continue to revitalize and transform downtowns into hubs of economic, social, and cultural connection.
- C7. Create accessible, lively, and culturally welcoming public spaces, including opportunities to access nature.

### **b. Strong Relationships**

- S1. Enhance inclusive opportunities for community engagement and meaningful collaboration.
- S2. Build and strengthen respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
- S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.

- S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

6.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. People: Making the Region of Durham a great place to work, attracting, and retaining talent.
- b. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.
- c. Technology: Keeping pace with technological change to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 The AAC will continue to meet legislative obligations of both the ODA and AODA. Activities and consultation with staff will be important elements of their work. Their expertise, experience and dedication are of great value to the accessibility work undertaken at the Region of Durham. Advice given to Regional Council and staff will continue to be an integral piece to the Region's identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility

7.2 For additional information, contact: Natalie Dash. Accessibility Coordinator, at 905-668-7711, extension 2009.

## 8. Attachments:

Attachment #1: Accessibility Advisory Committee Workplan

Attachment #2: Accessibility Advisory Committee Revised Terms of Reference

Attachment #3: Durham AAC Award Winners 2024

Prepared by: Natalie Dash. Accessibility Coordinator at 905-668-7711, extension 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Workplan 2025

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
Facilities and site plan review	<p>Reviewing site plans for new builds and extensive renovations to existing buildings that the Region owns and/or operates to ensure accessibility has been incorporated in the design.</p> <p>Provide resources for businesses to improve accessibility.</p>	<p>Referenced Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility Advisory committee.</p> <p><a href="#">The committee's role and responsibilities   Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility advisory committee   ontario.ca</a></p>	Year round
Outreach and Communications	<p>Presentation of Durham AAC Accessibility Awards annually to recognize individuals, services and/or businesses that have championed, achieved and/or embraced accessibility in each of our local area municipalities.</p>	Referenced Durham Regional AAC Workplan 2025	September 2025
Advice and Feedback	<p>Provide feedback on how to best to implement the province's accessibility standards as it applies to the Region of Durham.</p> <p>Support and provide feedback for local municipalities' accessibility compliance reports.</p> <p>Provide feedback and recommendations on accessible design criteria in terms of any Region project proposals/strategy.</p> <p>Initiatives, projects, or reviews related to accessibility such as LEAD or Equity Audit.</p>	<p>Referenced Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees: Learn how municipalities must work with their accessibility advisory committees to identify and break down barriers for people with disabilities in their communities</p> <p><a href="#">Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees   ontario.ca</a></p>	Year round

Attachment #1 to Report # 2025-A-2

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
Education and development Subcommittee	Education development continues throughout the year, as required, for AAC members, residents and staff. Education sessions take place when changes to the AODA standards occur, by agencies who serve the disability community and by staff who present initiatives from departments where feedback from this committee is required.	Referenced Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees: Learn how municipalities must work with their accessibility advisory committees to identify and break down barriers for people with disabilities in their communities <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/municipal-accessibility-advisory-committees">Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees   ontario.ca</a>	Year round
Subcommittees	Forming of subcommittees in the areas of site plan review, traffic/road improvements, accessibility awards, equitable employment, education, communication, and ad hoc committees as required throughout the year. For example, when new AODA compliance directives are issued, a subcommittee of AAC will be formed to advise on The Region's response to those new measures.	Referenced Guide to serving on a municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.  <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/the-committee's-role-and-responsibilities-guide-to-serving-on-a-municipal-accessibility-advisory-committee">The committee's role and responsibilities   Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility advisory committee   ontario.ca</a>	Ongoing
Accessibility Report	Providing input and review of the annual Accessibility Report created by the staff liaison in the DEI Division.	Referenced Durham Regional AAC Workplan 2025	Annually

Attachment #1 to Report # 2025-A-2

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
Advocacy	<p>Advocate for changes to policies, procedures and systems that will increase accessibility and inclusion in the Region of Durham.</p> <p>Collaborative efforts between the regional AAC and local municipal AAC's regarding scope of areas that we advise/consult.</p>	<p>Ensure alignment with AODA, Accessible Canada Act, and Durham Region Multi-year Accessibility Plan</p>	As needed





## **Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee**

### **Terms of Reference**

November 2023

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide advice to Regional Council on the preparation, implementation and review of its annual accessibility plan and other accessibility related issues within the Region to reduce and prevent barriers to inclusion and promote full participation for all Durham Region residents and visitors.

#### **2. Mandate**

- 2.1 The Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a volunteer Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA 2001) and these Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference provide for the AAC to advise and assist the Region in the development of an annual accessibility plan(s), Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for the AAC to be proactive and advise on matters identified on its own initiative, provided it satisfies the requirements under the ODA 2001.
- 2.3 Issues, barriers and concerns faced by people with disabilities may be referred to the AAC from Regional Council. The AAC will report to Regional Council through the Finance and Administration Committee, under the purview of the Chief Administrative Officer, on substantive matters as determined by the requirements of the ODA 2001, and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

#### **3. Scope of activities**

- 3.1 The scope of the AAC will include the following activities:
  - a) participating in the annual development of the Region's Accessibility Plan(s) which is intended to improve the quality of life for all Regional Residents, including people with disabilities;
  - b) advising the Region on the implementation and effectiveness of its annual Accessibility Plan(s) to ensure that it addresses the identification, removal and prevention of physical and non-physical barriers to people with disabilities in the Regional by-laws, and all its policies, programs, practices and services;

- c) selecting and reviewing in a timely manner the site plans and drawings for new development, described in section 41 of The Planning Act;
- d) Reviewing and monitoring websites, forms, documents and any relevant content produced for public consumption;
- e) reviewing and monitoring existing and proposed procurement policies of the Region for the purpose of providing advice with respect to the accessibility for people with disabilities to the goods or services being procured; and
- f) reviewing access for people with disabilities to buildings, structures and premises (or parts thereof) that the Region purchases, constructs, significantly renovates, leases or funds.
- g) The AAC will also have sub-committees/working groups responsible for specific business areas or projects decided by the committee, such as education and transit.

#### **4. Composition**

- 4.1 The AAC will comprise up to eleven voting members in total. The majority of members shall be people with a disability as defined by the ODA 2001. Voluntary disclosure of a person's social identity, including disability, gender, family status and ethnicity or race is included in the application form. An eleven-person committee may typically be comprised as follows:
- a) At least six members shall be persons with disabilities. These Committee members shall represent diverse identities and different types of visible and invisible disabilities noted in the ODA 2001;
  - b) Five members shall be persons who may not have a disability. These members shall be comprised of:
    - one member of Regional Council,
    - Two resident members of which one member shall be a family member of a disabled person, and
    - two members who are professionals from the stakeholder community.
  - c) Efforts should be made to ensure representation from youth with disabilities (individuals aged 18 to 29), where possible.
- 4.2 Membership shall be a 4-year term corresponding with the term of Regional Council. However, Region of Durham residents are appointed by Regional Council. If a member chooses to resign, the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with Section 5.
- 4.3 At the discretion of the AAC, non-attendance at three consecutive meetings

will be sufficient grounds for replacement. Appointments may be revoked at any time at the discretion of Council.

- 4.4 The AAC shall strive to maintain a high level of relevant technical expertise and competence in disability issues within its membership.
- 4.5 The AAC may establish subcommittees and ad hoc working groups as deemed necessary to address specific issues; noting that secretariat services will not be provided to these teams/groups. These subcommittees/working groups shall draw upon members from the AAC as well as staff support/outside resources as deemed necessary. The Chair of a subcommittee/working group shall be a voting member of the AAC.

The purpose of a subcommittee/working group shall be to make recommendations on a particular issue to the AAC or to assist with the implementation of an assigned project.

## **5. Membership selection**

- 5.1 Durham Region will place an advertisement utilizing a broad range of media including local and community specific media, social media, local municipalities, Regional information kiosks, facilities and community agencies that represent people with disabilities. The advertisement will seek individuals with diverse identities interested in volunteering for appointment to the AAC.
- 5.2 The CAO's office shall contact appropriate agencies and community organizations and invite individuals to volunteer for the AAC. Interested individuals will be required to submit an application form to the Regional Clerk and provide a brief resume outlining their interest and qualifications.
- 5.3 The CAO's office will review the applications received. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by a panel of Regional staff in the CAO's office and will recommend individuals for appointment to the AAC. Members shall be chosen for their special expertise, experience, dedication and commitment to the mandate of the Committee. Preference will be given to people who have lived experience and knowledge of accessibility matters, including accessibility legislation and disability awareness.
- 5.4 All members of the AAC shall be appointed by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.
- 5.5 Regional Council shall appoint a representative to the AAC from the members of the Finance and Administration Committee.
- 5.6 In the case of a vacancy, the approach described in Section 5 will generally be followed.

- 5.7 Any resignations will be submitted to the Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Committee Clerk.

## **6. Officers**

- 6.1 A chair and a vice-chair will be elected annually by the membership of the AAC. The Committee Clerk will chair the inaugural AAC meeting for the voting process.

## **7. Support services**

- 7.1 The Region's CAO's Office liaison or the Accessibility Coordinator shall serve as staff liaison to the AAC. The staff liaison will provide administrative, procedural and technical support to the AAC and will utilize the staff support group noted in Section 7.2 as deemed necessary.
- 7.2 If required, a staff group of accessibility champions/ambassadors/allies will provide support to the AAC on an as needed basis.
- 7.3 The staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator will co-ordinate all requests for advice from the AAC, through meeting agendas. AAC responses to such requests shall be coordinated by the staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator through the Finance and Administration Committee to Regional Council.
- 7.4 The Region will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a budget to cover the operational expenses of the AAC and this budget will be administered by the CAO's office.
- 7.5 The staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator may circulate content to members through alternative means (email or on MS Teams) in order to obtain informal feedback for that particular item, especially those items that are time-sensitive in nature.

## **8. Meetings**

- 8.1 The AAC will meet six times per year (January, March, May, June, September and November) in a hybrid or virtual meeting format using a designated Regional meeting room. The AAC will establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting, taking into account the business needs and the schedule of Regional Committees/Council. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. Accessibility Advisory Meetings shall be scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 3:00pm. This schedule may be reviewed as needed.

- 8.2 Quorum for AAC meetings shall be a majority of the sitting AAC members. The committee shall wait 15 minutes from the scheduled start time for quorum at which point the meeting will be adjourned and/or rescheduled if quorum is not met.
- 8.3 All meetings will be open to the public. As a formal Advisory Committee to the Region, the AAC is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference.
- 8.4 An agenda package, including accessible meeting materials and previous meeting minutes will be shared with the committee members one week in advance of the meeting date.
- 8.5 The Committee may participate in meetings with the Accessibility Advisory Committees (AACs) of surrounding area municipalities at a frequency mutually established by all committees. The purpose of such meetings shall be to share best practices and enhance cross-border collaboration.
- 8.6 Members shall be responsible for reviewing all materials sent by the CAO's Office or Committee Chair and respond in a timely manner to ensure the business of the Committee is not delayed. All communication should always be provided in an accessible format.
- 8.7 Community and organizational members of the AAC will be compensated for their time and work. Each member will be paid \$75.00 per meeting (attendance is a requirement for this compensation) and an hourly rate of \$25.00 for travel time and work outside of the scheduled meetings that has been pre-approved by Durham's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Reimbursement will occur twice a year, in May and in November, up to a maximum of \$600 per member per year.

## **9. Delegations at committee meetings**

- 9.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the AAC as a delegate must submit a request to the staff liaison in the CAO's office/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk, advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak. All requests for delegations must be received at least two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure that the delegation is included in the agenda. Any person wishing to address the AAC as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution.

9.2 Only one spokesperson at a time per group/organization shall be permitted to speak on a matter. Individuals shall be limited to speak for no more than 10 minutes. A five-minute extension to speak may be decided, without debate, by a majority of committee members present.

9.3 Members shall be permitted to ask questions of delegate(s) but shall not make statements to enter into debate with the delegate(s).

## **10. Minutes and agenda**

10.1 The minutes of each AAC meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Council as part of the Council Information Package prepared by the Regional Clerk.

10.2 The AAC agendas will be prepared by the staff liaison/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk, with input from the AAC chair or vice-chair, and AAC members. Agendas will be distributed the week prior to upcoming meetings.

10.3 Staff liaisons and/or those staff and committee members with a forecasted agenda item shall submit agenda content to the staff liaison/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk by no later than noon, two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

## **11. Committee resolutions**

11.1 The AAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are 'carried' if supported by a majority unless otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference or Regional Council Rules of Procedure. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the AAC. The committee shall not reconsider a previous decision, unless directed to so by Council.

## **12. Annual reports and workplan**

12.1 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the AAC for consideration and approval by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council. To avoid duplication, the AAC shall ensure that the workplan is coordinated with other disability initiatives in the Region.

- 12.2 An annual review of the AAC by the Chief Administrative Officer, on behalf of Regional Council, will be completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure continued improvements.

### **13. Rules of Order**

- 13.1 Members are encouraged to ask questions engage in discussion and share feedback following presentations and delegations. The Committee Chair shall maintain order and decorum during the meeting and decide the order of questions.
- 13.2 Members shall indicate to the Chair their desire to speak and wait to be acknowledged by the Chair before speaking.
- 13.3 A conflict of interest may arise for Committee members when their personal business interests conflict with the duties and decisions of the Committee. Municipal conflict of interest requirements as defined by the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act will apply to the Committee.
- 13.4 Members who have declared an interest on any matter may not move, participate in the discussion, or vote on the matter or attempt to influence others on the matter.
- 13.5 Any member asked to speak publicly to an organization or professional association as a member of the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee must notify the CAO's Office liaison or Accessibility Coordinator prior to accepting the request.
- 13.6 Any member who is approached by the media will refer all inquiries to the Region's CAO's Office liaison or Accessibility Coordinator who will defer to the Communications and Engagement department.
- 13.7 Members shall not approach the media on behalf of the Committee. If they are expressing personal views these must be clearly stated as such and that they do not represent the views of the Committee. As active members of the AAC, personal views expressed publicly cannot be contradictory to the mission and mandate of the AAC.
- 13.8 Any member will not use their personal email, social media accounts or other modes of communication to represent the opinions or policies of the Region.

## Durham AAC Award Winners 2024

**Megan Thorpe Ross** – nominated by the City of Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Megan Thorpe Ross has been a respected member of Pickering's Accessibility Advisory Committee (PAAC) since 2018. She advocates for accessibility needs and concerns of Pickering residents to the City Council.

**James Titmarsh** - nominated by the Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee James Titmarsh is an exceptional leader with a passion for accessible sports, particularly sledge hockey. He organized the 2024 National Para Hockey Championships and introduced sitting volleyball at Durham College.

**Canadian Tire Bowmanville** (David Urso, Owner) - nominated by Municipality of Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee Canadian Tire Bowmanville is known for its exceptional service for people with disabilities, ensuring they can access everyday needs with dignity and respect.

**Maggie McCreath** - nominated by the Township of Uxbridge Accessibility Advisory Committee Maggie McCreath is a lifetime volunteer and passionate member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for over 15 years. She established "Operation Warm Hearts" to provide winter clothing to those in need.

**Kathryn Bremner** - nominated by the City of Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee Kathryn Bremner is recognized for developing programs that increase access to recreational activities, funding initiatives for children with disabilities, and advocating for accessibility improvements in Oshawa.

**The Thrift Hub** - nominated by the Township of Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee The Thrift Hub has made its building fully wheelchair accessible by replacing steps and stairs with ramps and ensuring wide aisles for independent shopping.

**Bonnie Blackstock** - nominated by the Township of Scugog Accessibility Advisory Committee Bonnie Blackstock, Manager of Community Support Services with Community Living Durham North, has over 20 years of experience supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and identifying barriers to accessibility.

**Abilities Centre Lead Program** - nominated by the Town of Whitby Accessibility Advisory Committee The LEAD program at Abilities Centre challenges organizational systems to create transformational change for full participation of people with disabilities. It helps organizations enhance accessibility and inclusion.

**Taryn Eickmeier** - nominated by the Region of Durham Accessibility Advisory Committee Dr. Taryn Eickmeier, Executive Lead at Grandview Kids, ensures family-centered rehabilitation services for children and youth with disabilities. She drives change by partnering with families and community agencies to co-design and deliver services.