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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Finance and Administration Committee  
From: Chief Administrative Officer  
Report: #2026-A-8  
Date: April 14, 2026

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**Subject:**

The Regional Municipality of Durham 2025 Accessibility Report

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**Recommendation:**

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to Regional Council:

That the Regional Municipality of Durham 2025 Accessibility Report be received for information.

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the 2025 Accessibility Report to the Finance and Administration Committee.

**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, and both acts are still in effect.

2.2 Provincial and municipal governments and key broader public-sector organizations are required to prepare an annual accessibility status report which outlines what steps have been taken to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities, while meeting the AODA requirements. This Report shows the progress on actions outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, ending 2025. All accessibility reports and plans must be made available to the public.

### **3. Process**

- 3.1 The 2025 Accessibility Report is an annual update on the implementation of standards and timelines outlined in the AODA and the 2022-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The AODA supports the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers throughout the organization's provision of goods and services, facilities and employment.
- 3.2 The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion division, in the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, led the report's development, in consultation with representatives from each regional department, Durham Regional Police Service and the Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### **4. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Connected and Vibrant Communities
- C1. Align Regional infrastructure and asset management with projected growth, climate impacts, and community needs.
  - 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. Healthy People, Caring Communities
- H1. Implement preventive strategies to support community health, including food security.
  - H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.
  - H3. Integrate and co-ordinate service delivery for positive life outcomes, including investments in poverty prevention, housing solutions, and homelessness supports.
  - H4. Support the development of healthy children and youth, including access to affordable and quality child care.

**5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 One received for information by Regional Council, the 2025 Accessibility Report will be posted to the regional website. It should also be noted that the Report will be made available in alternate accessible formats upon request.
- 5.2 For additional information, contact: Allison Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at 905-668-7711, extension 3893.

**6. Attachments**

Attachment #1: The Regional Municipality of Durham 2025 Accessibility Report

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer



# 2025 Durham Region Accessibility Report



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## Land Acknowledgement

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the large Métis communities and growing Inuit communities here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.



# Durham Region Accessibility Report

Durham Region is committed to making our community accessible for everyone. Each year, we review how we've met the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Building Code. But accessibility is more than compliance. It's about creating spaces where everyone feels welcome and included.

We are proud of the progress we have made. Many of our efforts go beyond what the law requires because true accessibility means listening to people with lived experience and taking action that makes a real difference. Our goal is to build mutual respect, full participation and equitable opportunities.

People with disabilities bring valuable skills and perspectives that strengthen our communities. Their voices are essential to building an inclusive future for all. As a region, we have a responsibility to remove barriers, ensure equal access, and be accountable.

As Durham grows, we will keep accessibility and inclusion at the heart of all processes, programs and services. Accessibility is an ongoing journey, and we're committed to learning, listening and improving.

# Shared message from the Regional Chair and CEO and Chief Administrative Officer

As a region, we are proud of the accessibility accomplishments we've achieved and are inspired to keep moving forward. True inclusion begins with listening, challenging assumptions and ensuring our workplaces, services, public spaces, communications and communities welcome everyone. It also means recognizing barriers to accessibility and working together to prevent and remove them.

In 2025, we introduced Durham's new comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. It builds on years of DEI efforts, outlining a roadmap to reduce barriers, strengthen trust and create communities where everyone feels they truly belong.

To create a more inclusive experience for individuals with non-visible disabilities, we expanded the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. Durham Region Transit introduced the program so riders can wear a discreet sunflower pin or lanyard to signal they may need extra time or support. Service Durham adopted the program at all its public-facing counters, helping staff recognize and assist customers wearing the sunflower symbol.

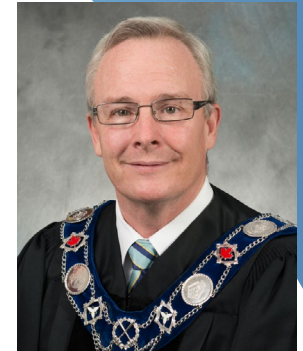
To help close accessibility gaps in employment, the first of its kind, Durham Region Disability Employment Conference was hosted in partnership with the Abilities Centre and showcased inclusive hiring practices, innovative ideas, and opportunities that empower people with disabilities to thrive.

The foundation was laid for the 2026-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility and inclusion across Durham Region with guidance from a steering committee of residents with lived experience, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members and staff.

We celebrate the achievements made over the past year, including the dedication and work of the Region's AAC. Their support, guidance and leadership help shape a more inclusive region, where diversity is championed, and the voices of people with disabilities are amplified.

Each of us plays a role in making Durham Region a safe and welcoming place for everyone. By working together, we help ensure every resident has the opportunity to participate fully in social, economic and cultural life.

We look forward to celebrating even more accessibility achievements in 2026.





## Message from the Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

In 2025, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was engaged in several educational and public awareness events, including the Accessibility Conference, in partnership with Abilities Centre, the Durham Region Accessibility Awards and the Disability Employment Conference. We also participated in several community engagement events like the National AccessAbility Week flag raising at Regional Headquarters, the myDurham 311 Hidden Disabilities Sunflowers Program launch, and the annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities event.

Our committee contributed to the development of the 2026 to 2030 Durham Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and continued to participate in the Durham Transit Advisory (TAC) Committee. We achieved the goals of our 2025 workplan and provided feedback on initiatives across departments.

The AAC has a passion for advocating for accessibility and inclusivity, and we want to make a tangible difference in our community. Being part of the AAC offers an opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals, influence policy, and support initiatives that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities.

It's my pleasure and honour to Chair this Durham Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Sincerely,  
Jim McEwan, Chair of the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

# Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, municipalities are required to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). This committee advises Council on accessibility planning and helps ensure the Region meets its accessibility standards.

The Durham Region AAC:

- Reviews accessibility reports and plans.
- Reviews site plans for new regional buildings and facilities.
- Advises on how to put accessibility standards into action.
- Supports education, communication and outreach about accessibility.

The AAC includes 11 community members who have lived experience with disability, have family members with disabilities, or work in industries which support people with disabilities. There is also one Regional Councillor on the committee.



## Accomplishments in 2025

### Annual Accessibility Awards

The Region presented Accessibility Awards to eight recipients, one from each municipality, who demonstrated leadership in accessibility. For the first time, nominations were accepted from the community, resulting in 29 submissions from across Durham. Visit [durham.ca/accessibility](https://durham.ca/accessibility) for more information about the awards and the list of recipients.





## Annual Accessibility Conference

The AAC was an active participant in the 2025 Accessibility Conference, hosted by Abilities Centre, in partnership with the Region of Durham. The theme was “Fostering an Accessible and Inclusive Durham Region: Employment and Beyond.” The event featured a keynote by Anthony Lue, an engaging panel, break-out sessions and exhibitors, offering perspectives from lived and industry experiences.

## Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

Members participated in the launch of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program in September. The program is offered at all Service Durham public front counters and supports people living with disabilities that are not always visible.



## Durham Region Disability Employment Conference

This event was planned and delivered during National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, in partnership with Ontario Tech University and the Town of Whitby. The day showcased inclusive hiring practices and innovations, an engaging keynote speaker, a panel discussion, breakout sessions and a hiring event. The conference also featured a resource trade show with 22 community vendors who specialize in products and services that support people with disabilities.



## **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

The recognition of this day was planned by the AAC in collaboration with Durham Region Adult Protective Services, Participation House, the A Team from Community Living Durham North and Durham Deaf Services. The disability flag was raised, followed by presentations in Council Chambers with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation under the theme “Innovating for Inclusive Futures.”

## **Educational presentations**

The Committee hosted presentations for its members from Town of Ajax and Durham Region Transit on the launch of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, and from Durham Region Transportation Planning on Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

# Accessibility success highlights 2025

This section highlights the Region's accessibility and inclusion successes by department and, in some cases, by division. Guided by the 2022 to 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP), this report highlights achievements across five key areas:

- Customer service
- Information and communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Public spaces

These accomplishments reflect our ongoing efforts to meet, and exceed, the requirements of the AODA, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.



# Section 1: Customer Service

Customer service is an essential part of our efforts to serve the diverse needs of our community. Teams across the Region have been working diligently to make services easier to use, more accessible and welcoming for everyone.



## Regional Chair's Office

The Regional Chair's Office continues to lead efforts to make the Region of Durham more accessible and inclusive. The Chair and staff actively participate in and support events that raise awareness about disabilities and hidden disabilities. Initiatives supported throughout the year include accessible parking, priority seating and accommodations for people with disabilities, American Sign Language interpreters, live captioning, and other supports that help to ensure everyone can fully participate.

The office ensures all communications, such as letters, proclamations, and documents, are available in accessible formats and multiple languages.

The Regional Chair works closely with partners, such as Durham Region Transit, Metrolinx, GO Transit, and the Toronto Transit Committee (TTC) to improve accessible travel options. The office also oversees accessibility improvements at Regional Headquarters and other Regional sites.

## Communications and Engagement Division

The Communications and Engagement Division creates plain language materials, and helps ensure all engagement opportunities reduce barriers to full participation.

### Accomplishments include:

- Improving the Region's website for easier navigation and accessibility.
- Sharing information in multiple formats.
- Delivering clear, consistent and easy-to-access information.
- Hosting public events in accessible venues with clear wayfinding signage and a variety of participation options.
- Using the Your Voice Durham platform for accessible online engagement.
- Launching the digital screen pilot program at Regional Headquarters, with other Regional locations coming online later in 2026 and 2027.



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2025 to 2029

The Region's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Division operates in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and is made up of four teams: Accessibility; Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB); Durham Local Immigration Partnership (DLIP); and core equity and inclusion program areas.

The 2025 to 2029 DEI Strategy was launched this year. This strategy builds on years of progress toward creating a more inclusive and equitable community. Shaped by input from employees, residents, service providers and Council, the strategy provides a strong, unified framework for meaningful change and actionable objectives.

To learn more, please visit: [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy](#).

## Accessible documents training

More than 400 people were trained in creating accessible documents, including staff from local municipalities and employees of the Region of Durham. This investment reinforces our commitment to equipping staff with the skills needed to prepare documents that meet the accessibility needs of users.

## Education session on hearing loss

In October, a session on hearing loss was offered to Regional staff. The session focused on how to meet the communication needs of people who are deaf and/or hard of hearing.

## Accessible recruitment for refugees

The Durham Local Immigration Partnership (DLIP) team hosted the first refugee hiring event in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The event brought together 17 employers with over 100 available vacancies in an accessible and inclusive environment. A total of 127 refugee candidates participated in interviews on event day. Of those interviewed, 12 refugee candidates received a job offer on the spot, and 101 were retained for the next stage of the recruitment process.



## Compliance Report for the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

As required every two years, the Region's Compliance Report was submitted to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility in Ontario.

The report is posted here [Compliance-Report-2025](#).

## 2026 to 2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In early 2025, Durham Region started planning for the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). A steering committee was formed with volunteers who have lived experience with disabilities, AAC members and staff.

The committee led key steps, including a survey about accessibility needs and gaps that received more than 200 responses from residents. These survey results helped shape focus groups with community partners, where a shared vision for accessibility was developed.

Leadership teams from the Region of Durham and Durham Regional Police Services identified challenges and set priorities to achieve this vision.

The new 2026 to 2030 MYAP released in spring 2026 highlights important initiatives to improve accessibility and inclusion across Durham Region.

## Corporate Services

### Service Durham

As part of the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program](#), public front counter staff at three regional locations have been trained to recognize and support customers wearing a sunflower emblem. The emblem discreetly signals to Durham Region staff that the customer has a non-apparent disability. These disabilities may be temporary, situational or permanent.



## Accomplishments

- The [myDurham311.ca](https://myDurham311.ca) portal was fully refreshed to ensure a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant experience across all devices.
- The phone system menu was redesigned to make calls easier and reduce barriers for all users.
- Front counter staff advanced their ASL skills to Level 5, enabling conversations with clients using ASL.
- Service Durham launched public consultations on accessibility.

## Human Resources

The Human Resources team introduced several initiatives to support employee well-being and accessibility. These include:

- A new Wellness Account, added through the Health Care Spending Account, allowing employees to use current and future funds for wellness options.
- Automation of communications for pregnancy and parental leaves, with templates for other types of leave coming in 2026.
- Creation of an education and experience equivalency table to reduce credential barriers and improve transparency.
- Launch of a psychological safety survey for People Leaders through focus groups and leadership training to identify factors that influence how people feel about their work environment.
- Provision of ergonomic assessments and musculoskeletal disorder prevention training for Long-Term Care (LTC) and Children's Services staff, along with field visits to support accommodations.

- Adoption of the Canadian Standards Association Standard for Workplace Disability Management and updates to related policies

## Information Technology

### Accomplishments

- New and accessible ways for staff to receive help, including new support channels like TechConnect.
- Real-time captioning in Regional Council Chambers through Microsoft Teams, introduced to make meetings more inclusive.
- Creation of a Next Generation 9-1-1 working group to improve emergency communication.
- Launch of an internal Website Audit Project to make regional websites easier to use, more accessible and better organized.

## Legislative Services

### Accomplishments

- Development of accessible documents, corporate training materials and Information Management (IM) support resources.
- Use of feedback from training sessions to improve service to clients.
- Recognition of IM Awareness Month in April 2025, with accessibility considered for both virtual and in-person activities to ensure participants could attend.



## Durham Region Health Department

The Durham Region Health Department is focused on making dental and immunization services easy to access for everyone.

- The team delivered school screenings for more than 47,000 children, provided health education to over 7,000 students, and attended more than 50 community events.
- Families received support to complete Healthy Smiles Ontario applications, making dental care more affordable and accessible.
- An accessibility checklist is completed for all sites where programs and services are offered to identify barriers.
- Translation services are available for clients who require services in multiple languages.

## Social Services

### Housing Services

Housing Services trained myDurham 311 staff on customer service standards and system navigation to meet accessibility requirements. Feedback options were improved so residents can request accessible formats and communication supports.

### Family Services

Services are offered in multiple ways for Outreach, Adult Protective Services, and Older Adult Safety Advisor programs. These include in-office locations (across the region), via phone, by video, and within the community. Clients can also request services online. To improve the experience, we encourage feedback through a Client Feedback Questionnaire; and provide clear information about the complaint process online, in offices, and on the client information sheet.

## Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors

Accessibility has been improved in staff training and orientation. All e-learning modules for staff and volunteers were updated to include closed captions, improved image contrast and narration. Training can be completed in different ways, including in-person workshops and independent learning, with support available when needed.

The orientation process was redesigned to reduce confusion for new staff by offering verbal and written instructions and checking comfort levels. The division also worked with other departments to make essential training easier to access. Staff continued to take Gentle Persuasion Approach (GPA) courses to better support residents with dementia.

## Legal Services

Several improvements were made to enhance accessibility and customer service in Legal Services.

- An obstructed automatic door opener at a client-facing counter was fixed to improve physical access.
- A new program was introduced that allows staff to print pre-filled forms for customers in the waiting room, making service easier for people with literacy or accessibility challenges, while speeding up interactions.
- New Moneris payment terminals were installed at the front counter, offering a user-friendly design that is easier to use.
- Residents can now e-file Part I Provincial Offences Act (POA) tickets, making the appeals process more accessible.

- A new project began in August 2025 with the Durham Community Legal Clinic and POA Courts to provide defendants with barrier-free access to legal resources, helping ensure fair and efficient resolutions to legal issues.

## Community Growth and Economic Development

In Community Growth, the Planner of the Week program helps residents who call 311 by connecting them directly with the right planner who can provide accurate information and services, making it easier for people to get the help they need.

The team is committed to making services and processes more accessible and inclusive. This includes creating accessible Council and Committee reports and responding to accessibility-related inquiries, such as those about the Bowmanville GO East Extension.

The Innovation team integrates equity and inclusion into its design and customer service work by using co-creation and collaboration with staff and community members. Workshops are designed to accommodate all abilities and learning styles, offering multiple ways to participate so everyone can contribute. Through co-design, people with diverse needs help shape solutions that meet accessibility requirements. Feedback, including voluntary demographic and inclusion data, is collected throughout the process to identify ways to improve support. Another example is the collaboration between the Environment & Climate team and the Durham Region Health Department to develop a proposal for a heat-health

vulnerability mapping tool for Durham Region. This mapping tool would support targeted, evidence-informed interventions to reduce the impacts of extreme heat on people's health, especially for people who are at increased risk due to multiple intersecting issues and systemic barriers.

## Durham Region Police Service (DRPS)

Front-line officers use the Languages in Motion service to access on-demand interpreters in more than 200 spoken languages and American Sign Language (ASL), helping people receive support in real time.

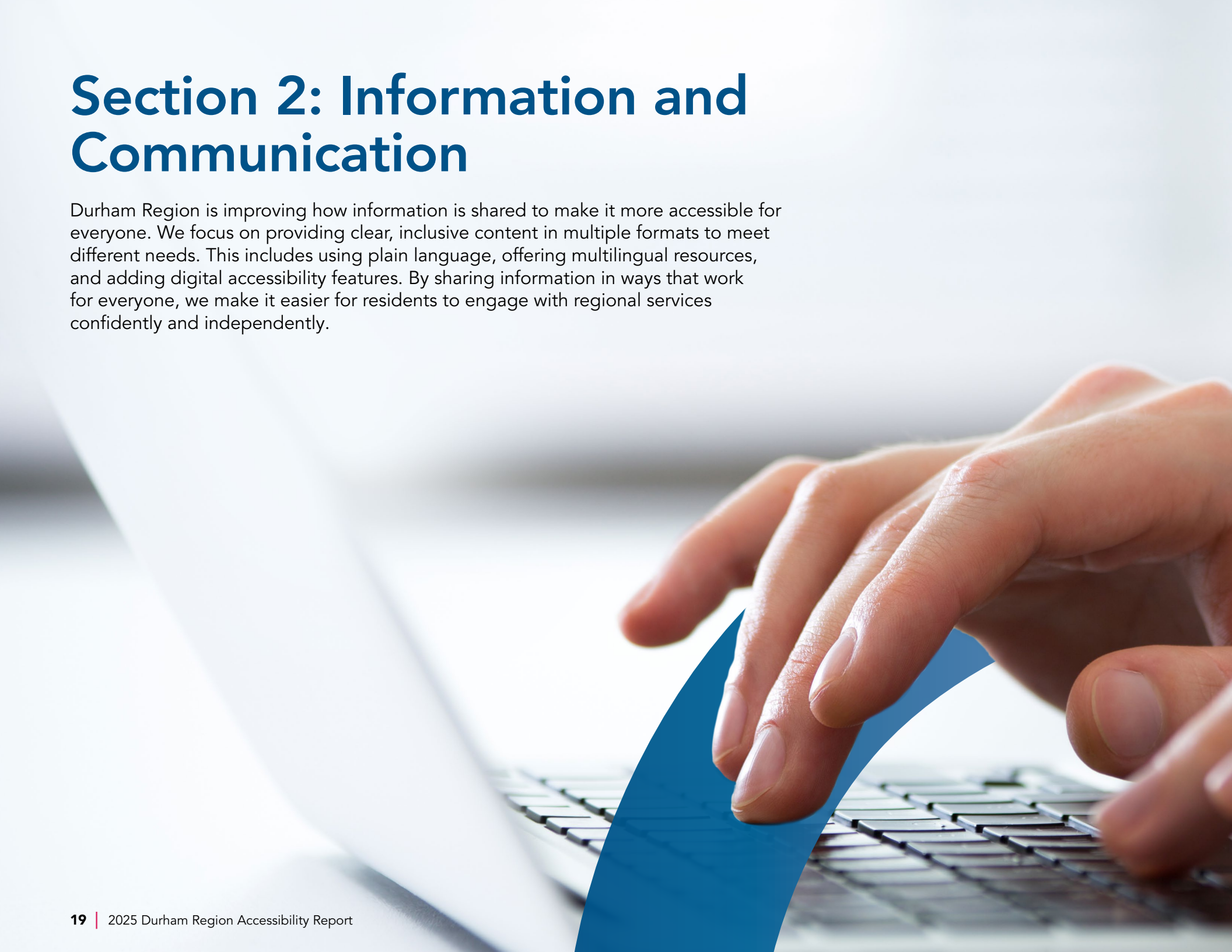
DRPS continues to partner with Durham Deaf Services (DDS) on initiatives, such as fraud-prevention seminars and Youth in Policing training, which includes Deaf culture and aging. These initiatives help ensure services better reflect the needs of Deaf community members. Staff have guidance on how to communicate with a Deaf person, including a short ASL video ("I am Deaf") and interactive ASL cards available digitally and in print.

Hearing loop systems are now installed at every division, allowing clear audio to stream directly to Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids. DRPS maintains collaboration with the Canadian Hearing Society through Older Adult Support Investigative Services to improve accessible service for older adults who are Deaf or hard of hearing.



# Section 2: Information and Communication

Durham Region is improving how information is shared to make it more accessible for everyone. We focus on providing clear, inclusive content in multiple formats to meet different needs. This includes using plain language, offering multilingual resources, and adding digital accessibility features. By sharing information in ways that work for everyone, we make it easier for residents to engage with regional services confidently and independently.



# Highlights

## Communications and Engagement Division

- The Communications and Engagement Division led a major website audit to simplify content and ensure compliance with WCAG AA standards.
- Dedicated staff lead accessibility projects and ensure campaigns and events are inclusive.
- Departments used web, social media, print, and phone to share emergency notices and service updates in accessible formats.
- Social Services expanded online access to housing forms and notices.
- Legal Services introduced modernized payment systems and e-filing for POA tickets.

## Corporate Services

### Human Resources

- Standardized email templates with accessible attachments were created for common pension and benefit inquiries.
- Communication plans for the updated Scent-Safe Workplace Policy and new Accommodation Policy were shared through multiple channels.
- A fillable, accessible Accommodation Request Form and detailed question-and-answer resources were developed to support staff.
- In 2025, we started sharing interview questions 30 minutes in advance of interviews.

- Updated Accessibility and Accommodation policies are now part of the onboarding process, along with micro-sessions on creating accessible documents.
- A neurodivergence-themed podcast was shared with staff to raise awareness of different learning styles.

## Information Technology

An internal Equity Audit dashboard was created, and the West Nile Virus Surveillance application was upgraded.

## Legislative Services Division (Information Management)

Internal postings, job aids, and training materials were reviewed to ensure they meet accessibility standards, and broken links on related web pages were fixed.

Course materials were provided in accessible formats, and Program Assistants were trained to create accessible documents.

## Service Durham

MyDurham 311 offers a single point of contact and shares information through multiple accessible platforms. Staff are trained to use plain, inclusive language and collaborate during emergencies. Service disruptions are posted online, and accessibility statements offering alternate formats are included in external communications.



## Social Services

### Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports

This department has set up formal processes to make sure all new or updated policies are shared in accessible formats. Notices and updates are posted on internal and public platforms with clear instructions for requesting alternative formats.

For initiatives such as the vaccination clinic at Lakeview Manor in Beaverton, tenants were informed through multiple accessible channels, including email, printed posters, signage in common areas, and co-ordination with community program leads. To further improve communication, some buildings now have electronic boards to share notices.

Information is shared with clients in different ways, such as paper, the online MyBenefits account, and office posters, and can be provided in accessible formats, when needed. Updates and changes are communicated quickly and use a variety of methods, so everyone gets the information they need.

### Family Services

Materials are available in hard copy, electronically, and in other accessible formats upon request, with clear contact information provided. Clients can complete forms on an iPad during in-person visits, and some programs offer large-print documents. Surveys were simplified and offered in multiple formats, including links, QR codes, and paper copies.

A public statement about how personal health information is handled was published online and will also be posted in offices. Client information sheets are being updated to use simpler language. Staff have also received training on creating accessible documents, making improvements like adjusting font colours, based on accessibility best practices.

## Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors

We have updated the Seniors Guide, with the revised version scheduled for printing in January 2026.

A Secured Conversations feature was added to the electronic health record, allowing nurses to securely and confidentially communicate with physicians and nurse practitioners.

## Children's Development and Behavioural Supports

Quality Assurance Guidelines were updated to be accessible and include the use of inclusive language.

Two staff completed training in a parenting program that supports parents with cognitive challenges.

## Durham Region Health Department

Program materials for Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) and Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) are distributed in accessible formats.

Social media campaigns shared over 180,000 copies of oral health information with residents.

An online health history form was created to make access easier for users.

To make health information easy to understand and accessible, the department created a multi-language resource for parents about immunizations. It includes a message in 32 languages about how to call for translation help, if needed.

During measles preparedness efforts, updates were shared through media releases and the website. Clients can now book vaccine appointments online or by phone, and the website is updated regularly with clinic details.

## Community Growth and Economic Development

The Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was involved in shaping the Region's 2025 to 2035 Strategic Plan. All communication materials for the engagement process were reviewed to meet AODA standards, and staff and community members had multiple ways to share feedback. An accessible version of the Strategic Plan is available on the Region's website.

## Durham Region Transit (DRT)

DRT successfully launched and expanded the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, which included accessibility training for all DRT staff, internal and external communications, and a first-in-Ontario public launch event. In recognition of this work, DRT and MiWay (City of Mississauga transit system) received a joint Equity, Diversity and Inclusion award at the Canadian Urban Transit Association's annual conference in November 2025.

## Legal Services

Recruitment and workplace practices were made accessible and inclusive. Job postings and recruitment materials clearly state that accommodations are available. Templates for the new Case Management System were reviewed to meet accessibility standards. Accessible formats are provided for internal and external communications, upon request. Staff are encouraged to join accessibility committees to promote awareness. Support for individual work accommodations are communicated proactively.

## Durham Region Police Service (DRPS)

Corporate Communications has redesigned the DRPS website using a new content management system and a team specially trained in AODA requirements. The site is currently going through an accessibility audit to ensure it meets accessibility standards.

An accessibility widget is also being added, allowing users to translate the website into any language with one selection. The widget includes several tools to help users tailor the site to their needs, such as a screen reader, visual and colour adjustments, keyboard navigation support, a seizure-safe profile, preset accessibility profiles, and a Dyslexia-Friendly Font option.



# Section 3: Employment

The Region of Durham wants to ensure everyone has a fair chance at work. We are committed to hiring and supporting people with disabilities. This means we provide the supports needed during the hiring process and throughout employment. We comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to meet legal requirements and continue improving accessibility. These efforts help create a workplace that values inclusion and diversity, where everyone can contribute and succeed.

Durham Region's 2025 to 2035 Strategic Plan is built on a foundation of People, Processes and Technology. This foundation supports employment goals in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). For People, the goal is to make the Region a great place to work by attracting and keeping talent. The plan includes a staffing strategy focused on health, safety, wellness, skills development, and improving diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Region, in collaboration with Abilities Centre, hosted two interns with developmental disabilities in a customized job placement program. Under the Pathways to Employment program, interns were placed at Fairview Lodge long-term care home, where they developed essential job skills for future employment.





## Highlights

### Accessible recruitment

Departments communicated accommodation availability in job postings and interviews. The Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors Division introduced diversity, equity and inclusion questions into job competition documents. Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports Division (IEHSD) piloted providing interview questions 30 minutes ahead of the interview and continued alignment with the Region's Equity Audit recommendations.

### Workplace accommodations

IEHSD improved fairness and transparency in hiring by removing names from scored documents. Annual stay interviews, which are one-on-one conversations between a people leader and an employee, were conducted to understand what they enjoy about their job and support employee engagement.

## Corporate Services

### Human Resources Division

Job competitions and training spaces were made more accessible. Candidates were given extra time for assessments and interviews, when requested, and could use speech-to-text for documents. Most competitions were held virtually, and on-site testing spaces were wheelchair accessible. New training rooms include accessible furniture, equipment and adjustable lighting. Human Resources attended the Region's Disability Employment Conference in October and provided on-site testing for selected candidates.

Workplace accessibility and accommodation policies were strengthened to support an inclusive, barrier-free environment. Updates include a revised Scent-Safe Workplace Policy, a new Accommodation Policy and Procedure, and an Accommodation Request Form for employees and job candidates. We created a Guide for Accommodating Disabilities and provided education on legal obligations and inclusive practices. Accessibility and accommodation information is included in on-boarding, hiring guides and training programs. Job postings and communications clearly state accommodations are available, and materials can be provided in alternate formats upon

request. Additional training and supports are offered to staff, including programs to help employees access alternate employment opportunities.

## Service Durham

Hiring managers completed advanced training on bias-free and accessible hiring and are progressing through Level 3 of the program. We supported accommodation plans for employees and addressed new requests proactively. Job candidates were given extra time for assessments and interviews when needed, allowed to use speech-to-text, and most competitions were held virtually. On-site testing spaces were wheelchair accessible, and new training rooms include accessible furniture, equipment and adjustable lighting. Project SEARCH interns gained meaningful experience at Service Durham, with one staff member recognized for mentorship. Scheduling and workforce planning were improved to support work-life balance. Equitable hiring practices, guided by the Region's Equity Audit, were consistently applied.

## Durham Region Transit (DRT)

We continue to make recruitment and employment practices accessible and inclusive. Applicants are informed about accommodation options throughout the hiring process, and successful candidates are advised about workplace accommodations. Policies and resources on accommodating employees with disabilities are promoted through on-boarding, training and internal communications. Accessible formats and communication supports are provided when needed, and individual accommodation and emergency plans are documented. Feedback is encouraged to improve accessibility in recruitment.

In 2025, DRT enhanced recruitment practices by sending interview questions to candidates 30 minutes before interviews, posting questions in the chat for easier access, and adding a DEI competency question to ensure alignment with the Region's values.

## Legal Services

We reinforced inclusive hiring and workplace practices by clearly stating accommodation availability in all job postings and recruitment materials. Flexible remote work arrangements were enabled through a hybrid court model, and universal accommodation policies were introduced to reduce stigma and ensure inclusivity. We hosted Project SEARCH placements and job shadowing opportunities for individuals using mobility aids, creating career pathways, and promoting workplace inclusion. Physical accessibility was improved with sit-stand stations in renovated office areas and desk risers in courtrooms. These efforts support skill development, remove employment barriers and demonstrate our commitment to equity and accessibility.

## Durham Region Police Service (DRPS)

DRPS continues to strengthen its commitment to accessibility under the AODA by improving inclusive employment practices. Job postings were made more accessible, alternative application formats were offered and interview accommodations were proactively provided to applicants. DRPS Accessibility Standards Directive was followed across

the Service, and all new employees were required to complete Accessibility Training. Human Resources continued to monitor accessibility laws, regulations and standards to maintain ongoing compliance.

The accommodation request process was streamlined, reducing wait times for ergonomic equipment and assistive supports. Mandatory training on accessibility, disability inclusion and mental health helped build greater awareness among staff. Performance management and development programs were updated to be more accessible, and return-to-work procedures were strengthened with co-ordinated early-intervention supports. Technology systems were upgraded and audited for accessibility, and employee engagement increased through surveys, feedback channels and improvements, such as quiet spaces and ergonomic enhancements.

The Youth in Policing program saw record demand, offering 224 paid employment opportunities for youth in 2025. In addition, the Equity & Inclusion Unit was repositioned under Community Safety and Well-Being and addressed staffing gaps to better support an equitable and inclusive workplace.

A total of 1,435 (95 per cent) civilian staff members completed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Training.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Employee engagement is enhanced through involvement in two groups that champion accessibility throughout the region. The two committees are the Accessibility Ambassadors and the Disabilities Committee.

### Accessibility Ambassadors

This program is for staff who want to help promote accessibility and inclusion in their workplace. Ambassadors act as allies and share ideas to make services and spaces more accessible. The Accessibility Ambassadors lead initiatives, such as:

- Planning and hosting accessibility awareness events for staff.
- Providing feedback on regional projects.
- Leading educational site visits to local organizations, like Abilities Centre, to learn about accessibility innovation and inclusive workplace practices.

### Disabilities Committee

The Disabilities Committee focuses on the needs of employees and clients with disabilities, ensuring diverse voices are included early in planning and decision-making. Members champion the Region's DEI strategy through initiatives, education and awareness activities, and make recommendations for improvements across the Region.





## Section 4: Transportation

The Region is working to make transportation easier and more accessible for everyone. This includes designing spaces and infrastructure that are safe, easy to navigate, and welcoming. We are focused on creating mobility solutions that meet the different needs of our community.

## Accomplishments

- Durham Region Transit (DRT) expanded service to the Township of Brock.
- The Region participated in the One Fare Program (launched February 2024), eliminating double fares when transferring to TTC/Wheel-Trans, which saved customers \$1.4 million in the first year.
- Development on Stations, Terminals, and Hubs Study was completed to guide future accessible transfer locations.
- Service Durham integrated DRT customer service functions into myDurham 311 to streamline access through a single, unified channel.
- Travel Training Program was successfully launched in late 2024 to help customers of all ages and abilities learn how to use DRT.
- Hosted 29 training sessions were held in 2025, including sessions for seniors and newcomers.
- Co-ordinated with the TTC to reduce transfer wait times.
- Specialized and On Demand services were combined into a more equitable, responsive system, with further improvements planned through the Via app.
- DRT partnered with Community Paramedicine to support mobile vaccine clinics and promote transit services.
- Began construction of Ajax Bus Rapid Transit began, with completion expected in 2027.
- We hosted the [DRT Accessibility Forum](#) in January.

## Social Services

### Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports

This team continued to provide clients with the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) concession for reduced bus fares; and educated them on how to extend the concession after six months.

Outreach teams co-ordinated transportation for unsheltered individuals to access shelter, medical care, and community services.

The team expanded availability of transportation funds for clients waiting for Employment Ontario assessments.

They ensured eligible clients receive support for the most suitable transportation option, including On Demand transit or taxi for those medically unable to use conventional DRT buses.

### Housing Services

The Housing Service team continues to work with DRT to ensure tenants with mobility challenges have access to specialized transit. Clinics and outreach programs help clients overcome transportation barriers by offering bus tickets, taxi chits, and mobile clinics in underserved areas.

### Business Services

Emergency Social Services partnered with specialized transportation providers and DRT on bus safety training to support emergency operations.

## Health Department

Locations for programs and services are assessed during planning to ensure access by public transportation.

Staff assist clients facing transportation barriers by providing bus tickets or taxi chits when needed.

The department participated in a mobile clinic to deliver publicly funded vaccines to communities with transportation challenges.

The Oral Health Clinic is located within an area with easy access to public transit, and bus tickets are provided to eligible clients to reduce transportation barriers.

Automatic door openers were installed in staff bathrooms at the Oral Health Clinic.

### Infrastructure Improvements

Event planning incorporates proximity to transit, accessible parking and scheduling considerations for specialized transit users.

Feedback from riders informs ongoing improvements, and outreach efforts include partnerships with community organizations.

Remote work options and hybrid models help reduce transportation barriers for employees.



# Section 5: Public Spaces

Durham Region's 2025 to 2035 Strategic Plan highlights the importance of creating communities where everyone feels included and welcomed. As part of the Connected and Vibrant Communities direction, the Region is committed to making public spaces easier for all people to use.

This means designing parks, walkways, gathering areas and natural spaces that are safe, inclusive and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or background.



## Social Services

### Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports

This team is working to make our offices easier to navigate and more welcoming for everyone. This includes:

- Putting clear signs in every office so clients can easily find service counters. If there is a service disruption, like a temporary closure, extra signs will be posted throughout the building.

Improvements were made to enhance accessibility at 200 John Street in Oshawa.

- The Brave System was installed in the public washroom to ensure quick support for clients who may have medical emergencies.
- The artwork in the office was updated to better reflect the community and create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for both clients and staff.

### Children's Services

Playgrounds at regionally owned buildings were upgraded for easier access and play by removing physical barriers.

### Legal Services

Office spaces have been improved by removing obstacles and adding sit-stand workstations so employees can work more comfortably.

### Housing Services

Accessible paths and features in new site plans and redevelopment projects were included, making future communities easier to navigate. These changes show a strong commitment to creating spaces that everyone can use.



## Corporate Services

The Legislative Services Division has made spaces easier for everyone to access at Regional Headquarters. The front counter and entrance are accessible and are located on the first floor, making it simple for residents to navigate. Staff also keep areas clean and free of obstacles.

The Service Durham Division ensures public counters and visitor spaces meet, and go beyond, accessibility standards. Multi-height counters were installed with the right reach, depth and space for wheelchair access, and queue management was improved using section partitions at Oshawa and Ajax locations, with plans to expand further. To support visitors, wheelchairs are available at Regional Headquarters and signage has been updated to highlight accessibility supports, dementia-friendly spaces, and the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program.

## Durham Region Police Service (DRPS)

DRPS continues to make its public spaces more accessible by ensuring that all new service areas and public counters are designed, built or renovated to meet AODA accessibility requirements. This includes providing barrier-free routes, accessible parking features, and queuing areas that can be used comfortably by all community members. DRPS has also put processes in place to review accessibility at the planning and design stages for all future public-facing spaces. By addressing accessibility early, the Service can identify and remove barriers before construction begins—creating safer and more inclusive environments for everyone.





## Conclusion

In 2025, we turned plans into action—taking meaningful steps to create a community where everyone feels welcome and included. Accessibility matters, because it ensures that all residents, regardless of ability, can fully participate in community life and access the services they need.

Our efforts go beyond meeting accessibility standards. We remain committed to innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026 to 2030) will guide our work to make accessibility a core value across the Region.

## Next Steps

- Action/execute the 2026 to 2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Expand staff training on accessibility.
- Enhance digital accessibility and monitor compliance.
- Strengthen partnerships to improve accessible transportation and public spaces.

# Contact Information

We welcome your feedback on The Regional Municipality of Durham 2025 Accessibility Report. Your input is invaluable in helping us improve our services and accessibility initiatives.

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## By email:

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If you require this information in an alternate accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator by emailing [accessibility@durham.ca](mailto:accessibility@durham.ca) or calling 311 extension 2009.