



Nothing About Us Without Us

Hello,

I write to you on behalf of *The Forward Movement*, an advocacy and awareness campaign working to get Ontario to legally adopt the Dynamic Symbol of Access (DSA) as an alternative to the currently used International Symbol of Access (ISA). We are proposing that the Ontario Government amend the Ontario Building Code and Highway Traffic Act to either mandate or (at least) permit the DSA for all new construction and renovation for all future use. To minimize costs incurred with this change, all old signs will be grandfathered in.

The DSA is an improvement to the ISA in two major ways: (i) the person in the new image is more defined than the one in the old image, and (ii) the new image shows movement, a symbolic action that emphasizes differing abilities, and this reframes the way society views and interacts with persons with a disability. The new symbol is also meant to spark conversations that educate Ontarians about the importance of removing barriers—both physical and cultural—to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive for everyone. In an inaccessible world, the ISO serves a purpose of identifying entrances, vehicles, etc that are accessible. We acknowledge that the DSA does not represent everyone who requires accessible infrastructure, but it is a significant improvement. It is also similar enough to the old symbol that people will be able to easily identify accessible infrastructure.

On May 30th, 2017 MPP Bill Walker tabled a resolution at Queen's Park asking the province to vote on our proposed amendments. We have since garnered multi partisan support from several other MPPs. After meeting with both his Honourable David Onley and Provincial Minister for Accessibility Tracy MacCharles, we have been invited to formally present our campaign to the Minister's [Accessibility Standards Advisory Council](#) at their next meeting in September.

We have also been reaching out to municipal governments to pass a resolution asking the province to adopt the dynamic symbol. The City of Stratford, Ontario [recently resolved to adopt the new symbol and they repainted municipally owned parking spots](#). We are scheduled to present our campaign to the accessibility advisory committees of numerous municipalities in the fall. The following cities in Ontario have already adopted the symbol: Stratford, Guelph, Waterloo, Wellington. We are writing to you, the municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, asking you to endorse *The Forward Movement*. "Endorsement" means you satisfy (1.) and (2.) and any other options you feel are appropriate to your municipality:

1. You recommend to your municipal council to pass a resolution adopting the Dynamic Symbol and endorsing our campaign to bring the symbol to Ontario (Further details on these amendments can be found [here](#))
2. You recommended that the wording for your municipality's accessibility guidelines be changed from "(International) Symbol of Access" to "Dynamic Symbol of Access" and that the icon be changed on municipal property over time. It is crucial that you bring this recommendation to city council and that they pass a resolution in support.
3. Repaint municipally owned parking lots (the icon on the pavement in parking lots is not regulated by [provincial laws](#) .) Below are how-to instructions
4. Contact local disability and accessibility organizations and ask that they endorse *The Forward Movement*
5. Allow us to mention your organization's endorsement on the "Endorsements" page of our [website](#) and social media.
6. Write a post expressing your endorsement on your social media and communications platforms

Recently, we have decided to take our campaign federal. We met with Markham-Thornhill Liberal federal Member of Parliament, Mary Ng and Toronto-Spadina Member Adam Vaughan, and NDP Critic for Persons with a Disability Member of Parliament Cheryl Hardcastle. Earlier in the month we met with Minister for Persons with a Disability, Carla Qualtrough's policy advisor. As there was a federal cabinet shake-up and Minister Hehr took over the Ministry, we will look to reconnect in the fall about getting the symbol endorsed on a national level.

We started our efforts seeking endorsements for the new symbol from organizations who work in the accessibility and disability space. See our growing [list of supporters here](#). In addition to their support, we have been running awareness and educational events with these organizations, using the change itself as a medium for education about the importance of physical and social inclusion for all. We did a [community ramp build](#) with [Hand Over Hand](#) and [StopGap Foundation](#) at the Unionville Exotic Car Show, spoke to 250+ people at [CreativeMornings](#) about the power of symbols in combating inequality, work with AccessNow to crowdsource accessibility data, painted the Dynamic Symbol over all the accessible parking spots at [Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab Hospital on August 17th](#).

The Forward Movement is the successor to an established organization called "The Accessible Icon Project", who designed the DSA. The DSA has already been adopted in the following places:

- [the state of New York](#)
- [the state of Connecticut](#)
- [Phoenix, Arizona](#)
- iPhone keyboards

We look forward to working with you toward making a more accessible and inclusive Canada!
We are happy to discuss this further at your convenience.

The Forward Movement

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