

People & Equity Division

City of Toronto

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Annual Status Report

2021



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Introduction

Toronto is Canada's largest city and one of the most diverse cities around the world. We serve an ever-changing population, including more than 476,900 seniors¹ and 495,500 people with disabilities (1 in 5 people)².

The City of Toronto is committed to building an inclusive society by providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to the City's services. The [2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) (MYAP) outlines our goals and initiatives and reaffirms our [commitment](#) to help advance an equitable and inclusive society. While the MYAP includes initiatives that help maintain and monitor compliance, it also promotes accessibility by design³ and goes beyond legislative requirements.

This status report has been prepared by the City's Accessibility Unit, People and Equity Division which supports City divisions in meeting our commitments and legislative obligations under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) and the [Integrated Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#). The 2021 Status Report highlights key actions taken from January 1st to December 31st, 2021 to implement the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The appendices found at the end of this report include highlights of work performed in 2021, which support the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. These highlights are not exhaustive, but have been included to illustrate examples of how the City has improved accessibility and supported people with disabilities during 2021 and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To request this report in an alternate format, please contact accessibility@toronto.ca or phone 416-338-2632.

¹ Statistic Canada – 2021 Census of Population Table 98-10-0021-0

² Statistic Canada - 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, Catalogue Number 89-654-X

³ Accessibility by design is understood in this document as intentionally incorporating accessibility into all planning, programming and delivery of goods, services and facilities.

Executive Summary

Toronto City Council adopted the City's 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) in December 2019. This 5-year plan is organized around the AODA standards and was developed with advice from people with disabilities, staff, and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC).

Initiatives in the MYAP fall under one of two categories:

- **Category A:** Recurring initiatives that are intended to be completed annually or as needed, or
- **Category B:** Projects which have distinct completion dates and which may be in-progress, completed, or outstanding at the time of reporting.

The table below breaks the 63 MYAP initiatives into Categories A and B

MYAP Area of Focus	Total # of Initiatives	# of Category A Initiatives (Recurring)	# of Category B Initiatives (One-time Project)
General Accessibility	10	8	2
Training	6	6	0
Procurement	7	5	2
Information & Communication	10	7	3
Customer Service	7	3	4
Employment	8	6	2
Transportation	9	6	3
Built Environment & Public Spaces	6	5	1
Total	63	46	17

The City of Toronto has made significant progress in the first two years of our five-year plan, while continuing to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the first year of the Plan, work was performed on 60 of 63 (95%) initiatives. At the end of 2021, its second year, only one initiative remains outstanding. All others are either complete or in progress.

By the end of 2021, 62 of the 63 (98%) MYAP initiatives had either been completed or were in progress as outlined in the table below.

MYAP Area of Focus	# of Initiatives	Category A Initiatives: Completed	Category B Initiatives: Completed	Category B Initiatives: In-progress	Category B Initiatives: Outstanding
General Accessibility	10	8	-	2	-
Training	6	6	-	-	-
Procurement	7	5	-	2	-
Information & Communication	10	7	2	1	-
Customer Service	7	3	1	2	1
Employment	8	6	-	2	-
Transportation	9	6	2	1	-
Built Environment & Public Spaces	6	5	1	-	-
Total	63	46	6	10	1

COVID-19 Response

In 2021, the COVID-19 global pandemic continued to impact City operations and services. As such, this status report includes highlights of work done to modify our services and programs while supporting the needs of people with disabilities during the second year of the pandemic.

In response to public health guidance, many City services were temporarily closed when required and staff continued to be redeployed to essential areas supporting the COVID response. The City continued to adapt and modernize so that residents had access to the supports and services they needed. Staff within the City's Accessibility Unit continued to support City divisions to ensure new services and programs align with the guiding principles and goals outlined in the MYAP.

Throughout the pandemic, the City has recognized that there have been unintended and disproportionate consequences for Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities. In particular, many inequities faced by the disability community have been exacerbated due to COVID-19 including unemployment, food insecurity, housing instability, and lack of medical supports including those associated with mental health. Additionally, people with disabilities have faced unique challenges and have been negatively impacted due to:

- Heightened susceptibility to contracting COVID-19 due to congregate living situations, and/or underlying medical conditions,
- Risks of more acute infections and increased fatality rates,
- Loss of supports, services, and supplies necessary to maintain positive health outcomes,
- Longer isolation times due to underlying medical conditions,
- Inaccessible public health information, and
- New disability-related barriers especially in service delivery (e.g. addition of Plexiglas barriers, use of face coverings, new queuing systems, changes to wayfinding or configuration of spaces, etc.)^{4,5}.

Many of the City's actions over the past two years have recognized the importance of embedding equity into programs, services, and recovery plans, and while intentional effort is still needed to apply a disability lens to improve outcomes for people with disabilities, there has been much progress. As a result, the importance of the City's commitment to removing systemic barriers and ensuring Torontonians have equitable opportunities to participate and thrive is clearer now than ever before.

⁴ [World Health Organization: Disability Considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak - March 2020](#)

⁵ [Government of Canada: COVID-19 and People with Disabilities in Canada - June 2021](#)

Progress to Date

1) General Accessibility

The general requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) require the City to have accessibility policies, a statement of commitment, and a multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP). The City has met these requirements and has a strong policy framework including:

- The [Statement of Commitment to Creating an Accessible City](#), adopted by City Council in August 2009.
- The [City of Toronto Corporate Accessibility Policy](#), adopted by City Council in June 2018.

The City's MYAP lays out an additional 10 general accessibility initiatives supporting the framework set by our policies and public commitment. These focus on accessible meetings and events, public consultations, governance, and resources to support staff. By the end of 2021, all initiatives were either completed or in-progress. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix A](#).

Status of General Accessibility Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #3. Develop, maintain and monitor accessibility guidelines and tools to support implementation and AODA compliance assurance.
- Initiative #4. Provide status updates on the City's MYAP to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee on an annual basis and ensure updates are posted on the City's website.
- Initiative #5. Promote accessibility awareness within the organization and the communities we serve through education and awareness campaigns.
- Initiative #6. Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.
- Initiative #7. Engage and consult with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and disability communities in Toronto to advance accessibility.
- Initiative #8. Engage and seek advice from City Divisional Program Advisory Bodies (PABs) on advancing accessibility and inclusion, such as:
 - The Accessibility Advisory Panel for Transportation Services
 - The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Community Disability Steering Committee
 - The Elections Accessibility Outreach Network
 - The Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

- Initiative #9. Embed accessibility into the Toronto Seniors Strategy as work proceeds on accessible and age-friendly commitments and recommendations.
- Initiative #10. Embed and train staff on the use of the Equity Lens Tool to consider equity impacts of all new planning, projects, policies and initiatives.

In-progress

- Initiative #1. Establish a corporate Accessibility Governance structure and Accountability Framework to oversee the implementation of the multi-year plan (MYAP).
- Initiative #2. Develop relevant divisional implementation plans which will include detailed deliverables and timelines.

2) Training

The City of Toronto is required to provide training on the IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code to all of its employees, volunteers and persons who participate in developing City policies, or who provide services or goods on behalf of the City of Toronto.

The City has committed to going beyond the minimum training requirements of the AODA through six MYAP initiatives. These initiatives support the development of knowledge and skills across the organization to deliver equitable programs and services to people with disabilities. All six recurring training initiatives were completed in 2021. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix B](#).

Status of Training Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #11. Ensure all employees and volunteers continue to complete mandatory AODA and accessibility training appropriate to the person's role as soon as possible.
- Initiative #12. Enhance leadership knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with City policies, Human Rights legislation, AODA and related legislation.
- Initiative #13. Record and track employee learning and development activities specifically related to AODA and accessibility requirements.
- Initiative #14. Ensure that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are developed and delivered in accessible formats.
- Initiative #15. Develop the Toronto for All education program to help City employees understand human rights obligations, unconscious bias, and power and privilege to promote equitable outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Initiative #16. Apply an equity and accessibility analysis to all organizational learning and development activities.

3) Procurement

Under the IASR, the City must incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.

The City's Purchasing & Materials Management Division and the Accessibility Unit have developed, and continue to promote, several accessibility resources and guides for City staff. These resources are posted on the City's intranet and include:

- Accessibility Language for Procurement Documentation,
- Guidelines: Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement,
- Checklist: Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement.

In addition, the City's Purchase Goods and Service System has a broadcast banner upon login that provides rotating AODA awareness statements and a help menu which includes AODA procurement instructions.

Under the City's [Purchasing Policies](#), vendors are required to complete AODA and accessible customer service training, and to provide a [declaration of compliance with Anti-Discrimination Legislation](#) stating they uphold obligations under provincial and federal legislation, such as the Ontario Human Rights Code, the AODA, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Employment Standards Act, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The MYAP includes seven initiatives to help ensure accessibility criteria continue to be embedded in procurement activities. By the end of 2021, procurement initiatives were either in-progress or completed. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix C](#).

Status of Procurement Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #17. Ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities.
- Initiative #18. Provide tools and resources to assist City employees in meeting accessibility obligations in procurement, such as training, templates, sample language, and guidelines that embed accessibility considerations at all stages of procurement.
- Initiative #21. Include provisions for vendor accessible customer service training requirements and a declaration of compliance with Anti-Harassment / Discrimination Legislation and City policy for all City procurement contracts.
- Initiative #22. Work with vendors and community partners to meet or exceed accessibility requirements.
- Initiative #23. Apply the City's Social Procurement Policy and practices.

In-progress

- Initiative #19. Review and update resources and tools for accessible procurement to ensure that current best practices and technologies are considered.
- Initiative #20. Ensure an accessibility analysis of all projects and purchases before funding is requested.

4) Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standards under the IASR require the City to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes ensuring that our website, applications and web content comply with specific Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

In 2021, the City's Technology Services Division continued to have a dedicated digital AODA Compliance Team which worked closely with partners across the organization to ensure the City's website, web content and applications (including third-party sites and applications) met or exceeded AODA standards. As part of their work, the AODA Compliance Team established the City's Digital Accessibility Standard, guidelines, and training resources for web developers and content creators.

The City's Multi-year Accessibility Plan outlines ten initiatives to improve accessibility of our information and communications. By the end of 2021, all initiatives were completed or in-progress. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix D](#).

Status of Information & Communication Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #24. Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Initiative #25. Ensure that any process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports.
- Initiative #26. Ensure that City employees understand the accommodation request process, including the requirement to arrange for accessible formats and communication supports, and the requirement to consult with the person making the request to determine suitable accessible formats or communication support.
- Initiative #28. Develop and implement accessible information, communication and technology guidelines and standards to ensure the City is providing clear, accessible, appropriate and timely information and communication.
- Initiative #29. Conduct annual reviews of the City of Toronto Digital Accessibility Principles and Guidelines and update to reflect current best practices in digital accessibility.

- Initiative #30. Ensure that the City's websites (including web content) and web applications incorporate the foundations of the City of Toronto Digital Accessibility Standard.
- Initiative #31. Regularly review compliance and usability best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility in information, communications and technology based on broader accessibility sector advancements and legislated requirements.
- Initiative #32. Develop and implement a process to review and assess requests for exceptions based on practicability and risk management as part of the City of Toronto Digital Accessibility Standard.
- Initiative #33. Evaluate and remediate City website content and ensure that it meets or exceeds accessibility compliance requirements by providing the appropriate frameworks, tools, guidelines and training for use by all City Divisions.

In-progress

- Initiative #27. Research and develop a streamlined process for City employees to access American Sign Language (ASL), Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) and other accessibility services and supports to provide equitable access to City employees, residents and visitors with disabilities.

5) Customer Service

The City of Toronto is committed to customer service excellence. The IASR requires the City to provide accessible services for people with disabilities and to have policies and procedures in place to support accessible customer service. The [City's Accessibility Policy](#) lays the foundation for accessible customer service at the City. In addition, all divisions maintain specific customer service standards and may have unique service standards and guides. For example, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division maintains an additional [Accessible Customer Service Guide](#) which is publicly available.

The public may seek information on City services or provide feedback to the City via 311 at any time. 311 accepts requests through multiple channels such as phone / TTY, online form, email, mobile phone applications and Twitter. Specific to accessibility-related feedback, residents are encouraged to complete the City's [online Accessibility Complaints Form](#). Accessible formats and communication supports are also available upon request. Staff, volunteers, visitors and residents can also submit City-related [accommodation and human rights concerns](#) to the City's Human Rights Office by phone, email, or via a confidential [secure online complaint form](#).

The City's MYAP includes seven initiatives to support accessible customer service at the City. By the end of 2021, four initiatives were completed, two initiatives were in progress and one initiative remained outstanding. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix E](#).

Status of Customer Service Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #34. Embed and strengthen the focus on accessibility within the Customer Service Centre of Excellence.
- Initiative #36. Work with the Elections Accessibility Outreach Network to improve the accessibility of election services through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.
- Initiative #37. Develop a comprehensive Accessibility Plan for municipal elections based on learnings from Election Accessibility Reports and consultation with the Elections Accessibility Outreach Network.
- Initiative #38. Evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

In-progress

- Initiative #39. Embed an equity analysis within customer service processes at the City through the Fair Outcomes project.
- Initiative #40. Formalize and implement accessible public consultation requirements to ensure all consultation activities are accessible and inclusive.

Outstanding

- Initiative #35. Review the "Guide to Good Practice" accessible customer service guidelines and update to reflect the highest standards in accessible customer service.

6) Employment

The Employment Standards under the IASR require that the City supports the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The City has developed several [employment policies](#) to support equity in our employment practices including:

- [Corporate Accessibility Policy](#),
- [Accommodation Policy](#),
- [Employment Equity Policy](#),
- [Human Rights Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy](#).

These policies work together to support barrier-free employment including recruitment, employment, career progression and performance management.

The City of Toronto is committed to fostering a positive and progressive workforce and promoting diversity at all levels within the organization to reflect the residents we serve. Job applicants can request accommodation related to protected grounds of the Human Rights Code at any stage of the City's hiring process, i.e. application, interview and placement.

The City's MYAP includes eight initiatives to support equitable employment processes at the City. By the end of 2021, all initiatives were completed or in-progress. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix F](#).

Status of Employment Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #43. Embed an equity analysis into all recruitment processes to remove any unintended accessibility barriers.
- Initiative #44. Review people service policies and procedures to identify, prevent and remove barriers to employment and development opportunities. This review will also serve to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation.
- Initiative #45. Prepare individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for City employees with disabilities.
- Initiative #46. Foster a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through analysis of the Employee Engagement Survey and the development of action plans in partnership with Communities of Inclusion, including the Employee Disability Network.
- Initiative #47. Conduct an employment equity survey (Count Yourself In: Workforce Survey) to inform workforce planning priorities through data-informed decision making.
- Initiative #48. Support the Employee Disability Network (EDN) to promote professional development opportunities for employees with disabilities.

In-progress

- Initiative #41. Develop and implement an employment strategy for equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities.
- Initiative #42. Develop a targeted outreach strategy for recruiting people with disabilities and ensuring an application process that is barrier-free. This will include increased partnership and outreach with organizations and agencies that support the development and employment of people with disabilities.

7) Transportation

The Transportation Standards under the IASR outline requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation. These are applicable to the Toronto Island Ferry, the design of bus stops and shelters, and licensing of vehicles-for-hire (taxicabs and private transportation companies).

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) manages conventional and specialized transportation services, and maintains their own policies and plans.⁶

As part of its commitment to increasing accessibility and usability of all City sidewalks and roadways beyond the requirements of the Transportation Standard and the Design of Public Spaces Standards (below), the City developed the [Complete Streets Guidelines](#) which builds on many of the City's existing policies and guidelines and draws on previous successful streetscape projects.

The City's MYAP includes nine initiatives to support safe and accessible transportation and mobility within the City. By the end of 2021, eight initiatives were completed and one was in-progress. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix G](#).

Status of Transportation Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #49. Implement a Vehicle-for Hire Accessibility Fund Program to help offset the higher cost of providing wheelchair accessible service, funded through a regulatory charge on members of the industry that do not provide this service.
- Initiative #50. Integrate accessibility considerations in the application of Toronto On-Street Bikeway Design Guide by consulting with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public, and by incorporating best practices.
- Initiative #51. Research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on the City's streets and sidewalks.
- Initiative #53. Include accessibility considerations and implications in the City's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan by consulting with the community and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Initiative #54. Ensure public transportation equipment purchased, including Toronto Island ferries, will meet or exceed all provincial and federal legislated requirements for accessibility.
- Initiative #55. Conduct a review of snow clearing policies, practices and procedures using an accessibility and equity analysis and develop a strategy to reduce barriers that significantly limit the mobility of people with disabilities.
- Initiative #56. Fulfill requests for [Accessible Pedestrian Signals \(APS\)](#), and install APS with all new traffic signals and replacements of existing traffic signals.
- Initiative #57. Install Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI) at all corners during state of good repair road rehabilitation projects.

⁶ The Toronto Transit Commission maintains an independent multi-year plan and reports directly to the Province of Ontario on AODA compliance. Visit the [TTC's Accessibility webpage](#) for details.

In-progress

- Initiative #52. Prepare the City of Toronto for automated vehicles, ensuring accessibility considerations are incorporated in the earliest planning stages. This includes consultation with Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure an accessibility analysis is applied to future policies and plans.

8) Built Environment & Design of Public Spaces

The City of Toronto recognizes that built environment barriers can prevent people with disabilities from freely and independently participating in our society. The Design of Public Spaces Standards under the IASR require that newly-constructed or redeveloped public spaces are accessible. We strive to proactively increase the accessibility of our facilities, public spaces and workspaces by going above minimum standards where possible. This is achieved through the use of mandatory accessibility design guidelines such as the [Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines \(TADG\)](#) and the [Complete Streets Guidelines](#).

Based on the principles of respect, dignity and inclusion, the TADG is a key component of the City's Multi-year Accessibility Plan and [Corporate Accessibility Policy](#). TADG is aligned with the [City's Statement of Commitment to Creating an Accessible City](#) and the [City's Official Plan](#), which states that "a key city-building principle is that public buildings, parks and open spaces should be open and accessible to all members of the public."

The City's MYAP includes six initiatives to help support access into and around City facilities and public spaces. By the end of 2021, all initiatives were completed. Examples of work completed under these initiatives are highlighted in [Appendix H](#).

Status of Built Environment & Public Spaces Initiatives

Completed

- Initiative #58. Maintain and update the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines.
- Initiative #59. Prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply with the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG).
- Initiative #60. Implement accessibility improvements as part of State of Good Repair AODA Capital programs.
- Initiative #61. Ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated into Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines through best practice research and in consultation with people with disabilities and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Initiative #62. Maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance of accessible elements.
- Initiative #63. Respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.

Conclusion

The City of Toronto is committed to providing an accessible environment in which people with disabilities can access City services, programs, facilities and public spaces with dignity and independence. As we work towards these goals, we will continue to meet our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and look for ways to go above minimum compliance. Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) is the City's five-year playbook to guide us as we move beyond minimum compliance to a culture which embraces accessibility by design.

We are making great progress in delivering on our commitments. In the first year of the 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, work was performed on 60 of the 63 initiatives (95%). At the end of its second year, only one initiative remains outstanding. All others are either complete or in progress.

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact City services and reinforce many existing disability-related inequities. We are dedicated to advancing an equitable and inclusive society and will continue to examine new and existing barriers so that we can adapt and re-focus our efforts where needed to support our residents, visitors, volunteers, and employees.

Status reports on the City's MYAP will continue to be posted annually.

For inquiries about this plan or to request an alternate format, please contact

accessibility@toronto.ca or phone us at 416-338-2632.

Appendix A: General Accessibility Highlights

1) Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC)

The City's [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#) provides advice to City Council on the elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities in public life including City programs, services and facilities. The majority of members on the committee are persons with lived experience of disability and meetings are accessible, with live captioning, and close captioned recordings are available for viewing afterwards via the City's YouTube channel.

In 2021, TAAC continued to provide a critical lens into various City programs and services, including the City's COVID-19 response and possible impacts on the disability community. Key consultations in 2021 included:

- Overnight Snow Clearing on Commercial Properties,
- CaféTO 2021 and 2022,
- ActiveTO Midtown Temporary Complete Street Pilot,
- Electric Kick-Scooters (E-scooters),
- 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy,
- Response to Safe Outdoor Programming and Updated Communication Methods,
- Customer Experience Transformation - Accessibility in Customer Service,
- Response to COVID-19,
- Accessibility Task Force on COVID 19 Vaccines - Overview and Recommendations,
- Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines and Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines,
- Impacts on Access and Accessibility to Waiting Areas at City Hall,
- Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines,
- Helping People Experiencing Homelessness from Equity-Seeking Groups to Access Supportive Housing,
- Protecting Vulnerable Persons and Reducing Homelessness,
- Improving Accessibility in Remote Meetings,
- Review of Parking and Accessible Parking Requirements for New Developments,
- Digital Infrastructure Plan and Accessibility Considerations,
- Employment Accessibility at the City of Toronto,
- Our Plan Toronto - Municipal Comprehensive Review,
- Automated Micro-Utility Devices,
- Cycling and Accessibility - 2021 Upgrades and 2022 Goals,
- RapidTO - Bus and Streetcar Priority,
- Accessibility Impacts on The Closure of Essential Bus Stops in Our Communities,
- Accessible Sidewalks and the Supreme Court Decision.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #7. Continue to engage and consult with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and disability communities in Toronto to advance accessibility.

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

2) Program Advisory Bodies

Public engagement is one way the City builds relationships and invites participation in governance and decision-making. The City engages citizens through several channels including specific Program Advisory Bodies that help advance accessibility in City programs and services. Examples of active Program Advisory Bodies in 2021 include:

2.1 Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines

In March 2021, the City established a new [Accessibility Task Force \(ATF\) on COVID-19 Vaccines](#) to provide advice on enhanced support and access to the COVID-19 vaccine for people with disabilities. The ATF was created as part of the City of Toronto's COVID-19 Immunization Task Force outreach efforts and TO Supports: Targeted Equity Action Plan, and is a collaboration between the City and community partners. The ATF built on the City's work to support access to vaccines for persons with disabilities through a \$125,000 grant to the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, which was [announced on March 31, 2021](#).

Accessibility Task Force objectives in 2021 included:

- Making recommendations to effectively close equity gaps in current vaccine planning and increase vaccination rates among people with disabilities and their caregivers.
- Sharing knowledge about COVID-19 infection risks and measures that reduce risks.
- Enhancing COVID-19 testing and safety practices across disability communities.
- Identifying, reviewing and addressing concerns with COVID-19 vaccines and barriers to accessing the vaccine.

The task force, along with several community organizations, co-hosted a series of virtual town hall meetings for the disability community and provided the following recommendations:

- Immediately prioritize people with disabilities who rely on daily service provision or who reside in congregate care settings in the vaccine roll-out; and
- Work with supportive housing and developmental service providers to immediately establish priority days for client vaccine bookings, identify mobile/outreach teams, and provide vaccines directly to qualified agencies.

Accessibility Task Force members presented these recommendations to the Ontario Health Teams Engagement Leads to help strengthen accessibility needs at clinics offered by health partners and hospitals.

For information on vaccine clinics for people with disabilities, see [Accessible and Supportive COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery](#).

2.2 Community Disability Steering Committee

In 2021, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) Division continued to host a Community Disability Steering Committee. This committee provides feedback on program and service enhancements with respect to community recreation. Members have a range of lived disability experience. In 2021, the Committee was consulted on:

- The reopening of Community Recreation programs when COVID-19 public health restrictions were lifted to ensure programming responded to the diverse needs of Adapted and Inclusive program users.
- Ways to make information and park and ravine activities more accessible.
- Two capital planning projects: the Western North York Community Recreation Centre, and the Toronto Island Park Masterplan.

2.3 Elections Accessibility Outreach Network

In 2021, the City Clerk's Office continued to review and update the City's [Election Accessibility Plan](#) and host the Elections Accessibility Outreach Network (AON) to help plan barrier-free elections for the City, including the 2021 Ward 22 Scarborough-Agincourt by-election and upcoming 2022 municipal election.

For the Ward 22 by-election, information on accessible voting options for people with disabilities was posted to the City of Toronto [Elections webpage](#). All voting locations were inspected in advance to identify potential barriers and confirm accessible elements. Accessible Voter Assist Terminals were installed at two voting sites. These terminals enable voters with disabilities to mark their ballot privately and independently.

Accessibility Officers and Customer Service Officers were available at all sites and clear masks were provided for key event staff in order to reduce communication barriers with those who have hearing disabilities.

Training materials used in the 2021 Ward 22 by-election and those being prepared for the 2022 municipal election address the AODA, the Municipal Elections Act, The Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Blind Person's Rights Act as they relate to people with disabilities. Training materials also include accessible customer service, tips for serving people with disabilities and accessible options for voters who require assistance.

2.4 Accessible Housing Advisory Groups

In 2021, the City's Housing Secretariat convened two new housing advisory groups:

- The Accessible Housing Working Group for the City's [Housing Now](#) Action Plan, an initiative to convert City-owned sites to affordable housing. The working group is made

up of disability-serving organizations, City staff, and the development industry. Their focus is to advise on the accessibility of Housing Now projects.

- The Tenant Advisory Committee works with City staff to develop annual work plans to advance the protection of affordable rental housing and tenancies in Toronto. It will also provide advice and feedback on policy and program development aimed at preserving affordable and accessible housing in Toronto.

For more information on accessible housing initiatives in 2021, see [Affordable Housing](#).

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #7. Continue to engage and seek advice from City Divisional Program Advisory Bodies (PABs) on advancing accessibility and inclusion.

Initiative #6. Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.

Initiative #36. Continue to work with the Elections Accessibility Outreach Network to improve accessibility of election services through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Initiative #37. Develop a comprehensive Accessibility Plan for municipal elections based on learnings from Election Accessibility Reports and consultation with the Elections Accessibility Outreach Network.

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

3) Events and Ceremonies

The City of Toronto strives to ensure City-hosted events and ceremonies are accessible to people with disabilities. This has included both in-person celebrations held prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual ceremonies held since it began.

In 2021, the City continued to provide up-to-date information on [How to Participate in Virtual City Events](#) including updated instructions for those who use screen reader technology. A new training video on the [Accessibility Features](#) within the City's virtual conferencing software was also posted publicly. A few examples of events and ceremonies held in 2021 are highlighted below.

3.1 Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards

In 2021, after a pause in 2020, the City reconvened its annual Access, Equity and Human Rights (AEHR) Awards. The awards recognize people, organizations or programs that have created a more equitable city by advancing reconciliation and justice, addressing discrimination, and working to eliminate barriers to equality. Award recipients were honoured in a virtual ceremony on International Human Rights Day.

The 2021 Disability Access Award was awarded to Tangled Art + Disability: A Toronto-based, globally recognized and disability-led non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing opportunities for artists with disabilities.

For more information including recipient biographies, visit [Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards](#) or [watch the ceremony](#) on the City's YouTube Channel.

3.2 International Day for Persons with Disabilities

In recognition of the International Day of People with Disabilities on December 3, the City of Toronto and Toronto Public Library co-presented a virtual public event to celebrate the stories, lived experiences and inclusion of people with disabilities by showcasing their contribution to the arts.

Speakers included:

- **Amanda Leduc** - Author of "The Centaur's Wife", "The Miracle of Ordinary Men" and the non-fiction book, "Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space", which was shortlisted for the 2020 Governor General's Award in Nonfiction and longlisted for the 2020 Barbellion Prize.
- **Vivian Chong** - Creator, producer, and performer of The Sunglasses Monologue and author of the graphic novel, "Dancing after TEN", which was shortlisted for the Toronto Book Award, listed as one of the best books in NPR top 200 and recommended by The New York Times. As a drummer, Vivian has also performed in Season 2 of the Apple TV series "See" and was featured in the documentary "Ripples" for Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) in 2021.
- **Ophira Calof** - Multi-award-winning writer and performer with credits including Generally Hospital, Literally Titanium, TallBoyz (CBC) and more. Ophira also works as a curator and producer with projects including "COVID-19 through a Disability Lens: Storytelling and Filmmaking Project", and Myseum Toronto's "Making Space: Stories of Disabled Youth in the GTA Past and Present".
- **Dis/Play** –A multi-media art piece with contributions from over 50 artists with disabilities, curated by Ophira Calof and created in partnership with the ReelAbilities Film Festival of Toronto as part of ArtWorxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021-2022. The art piece was projected onto building exteriors at several locations in Toronto throughout November 2021.
- **Marjorie Chan** - Artistic Director of Theatre Passe Muraille (TPM), Canada's original alternative theatre company, which strives to articulate a distinct Canadian voice that reflects the complexity of our intercultural society.
- **Toronto Public Library (TPL)** – The TPL provides free and equitable access to library services to meet the changing needs of the people of Toronto. TPL is home to the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities, a reference collection of books from around the world for and about children and teens with disabilities. For more information about accessibility at the Library visit: [Accessibility: Toronto Public Library](#).

3.3 Cultural Hotspots Program

In 2021, the City's Signature and SPARK Projects enabled local arts and community-based organizations to partner with the City of Toronto in order to celebrate arts, culture and community in spaces outside the downtown core. These projects were free to the public and provided new opportunities to engage equity-deserving residents in the arts while also celebrating local creativity and culture through workshops, activities, events and other initiatives. The examples below showcases a few projects held in 2021:

- **[Deaf Interiors](#)** - A multidisciplinary, online exhibition presenting six Deaf artists whose featured work is the culmination of a three-month online incubator. In response to the world health crisis and the social distancing measures that exacerbate feelings of isolation, artists gathered online to share stories, generate ideas and create work that demonstrates the interior world of Deaf culture, activism and human connection. Lead partners: [Tangled Art and Disability](#) and Creative Users Projects.
- **Here I Am: PhotoVoice Project** - A photography workshop, offered in partnership with Arts Etobicoke for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disabilities. The project invited participants and family members to collaborate on developing imagery that explores the themes of identity, family and community as it relates to living with a disability. Lead partner: [Project Kids and Cameras](#) and Arts Etobicoke.
- **Old Mother Tongue** - a short film with a Deaf cast that explores cultural identity in modern-day Deaf society, making connections to periods in Deaf history that have strong cultural relevance today. Through the story of a Deaf businessman torn between his identities in the hearing and Deaf worlds, filmmaker Mark Trifunovic shows how language and culture are forces that can connect communities across generations, and how they are preserved through storytelling. Lead partner: C-A-Mcorder Productions.

This work supports MYAP outcomes and initiatives:

- Outcome #1 An organization which fosters a culture of equity and inclusion, that values and includes employees, residents and visitors with disabilities.
- Initiative #5 Promote accessibility awareness within the organization as well as all the communities we serve through education and awareness campaigns.
- Initiative #6. Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.

4) COVID Supports

In 2021, the City's [TOSupports: COVID-19 Equity Action Plan](#) and [TOSupports: COVID-19 Investment Fund](#), along with partner agencies, continued to provide community support in priority areas including food access, wellness, social connection, housing/homelessness and income support. The following actions were taken to support seniors and people with disabilities in 2021:

- The Property Tax Increase Cancellation program and Property Tax Increase Deferral Program deferred property tax increases for 1,274 low-income seniors and people with disabilities.
- The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program served approximately 2,300 clients, and the Supportive Housing Program, served over 450 clients, to provide supports needed for seniors to age in place, particularly low-income seniors.
- In-person adult day programs were resumed after having been provided virtually over an 18-month COVID-19 closure.
- 1,000 Meals on Wheels were prepared weekly for delivery by community agencies.
- The Toronto Renovates program helped 26 low-income seniors make repairs and accessibility modifications in their homes that are critical to supporting them age in place.
- The Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines advised on the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines including accessible transportation options, focused accessible and supportive clinics, mobile clinics, as well as home vaccinations.

In addition to the TOSupports Program, recreation facilities were made available to people with disabilities who required physical therapy during public health restrictions and closures, including the use of fitness, weight rooms and pools. Accessible community centres were also made available for COVID-19 testing clinics and food distribution.

Information about [COVID-19: Supports](#) and [COVID-19: Community Supports](#) including information on mental health resources, tax relief, rental and income supports, food and housing access, internet access and specific supports for seniors and people with disabilities have been made available on the City's internet.

For information on COVID-19 vaccines see [Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines](#) and [Accessible and Supportive Vaccine Delivery](#).

This work supports MYAP outcomes:

- Outcome #1. An organization which fosters a culture of equity and inclusion, that values and includes employees, residents and visitors with disabilities.
- Outcome #2. City employees, residents and visitors are aware of resources and can easily utilize accommodation and accessibility services when accessing City goods, services and facilities.
- Outcome #13. People with disabilities receive City goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives.

Appendix B: Training Highlights

1) New Mandatory AODA Training

From June to November 2021, staff within the People and Equity Division developed and implemented an intensive awareness campaign to promote the City's new Accessibility 101 course. The course, which was made mandatory for all staff in 2021, covers concepts of disability, accessibility and obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. It also includes practical considerations for providing service to people with different disabilities. Learning objectives include:

- Key concepts related to equity, inclusion, and the social model of disability including types of barriers and accommodations,
- Responsibilities under Ontario laws and City policies related to accessibility,
- Customer service requirements when providing service to people with disabilities.

At the end of the 6-month awareness campaign approximately 26,400 staff (87%) had completed the new training course.

Supplemental courses will be introduced that build on these learning concepts under the Toronto for All Training Curriculum, an education initiative for all City staff that will help build and maintain an equitable and inclusive workplace to better serve our city's diverse communities. The City ensures courses are accessible by following an Accessible E-learning Framework which starts with ensuring content follows Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and takes into account various user-centered design principles.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

- Initiative #11. Ensure all employees and volunteers continue to complete mandatory AODA and accessibility training appropriate to the person's role as soon as possible and in a variety of formats.
- Initiative #12. Enhance leadership knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with City Policies, Human Rights legislation, AODA and other related legislation.
- Initiative #13. Continue to record and track employee learning and development activities specifically related to AODA and accessibility requirements.
- Initiative #14. Ensure that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are developed and delivered in accessible formats.
- Initiative #15. Continue the development of Toronto for All education program to help City employees understand human rights obligations, unconscious bias, and power and privilege to promote equitable outcomes for people with disabilities.

2) Training for Web Contributors

In 2021, the City's Strategic Public and Employee Communications (SPEC) Team along with Technology Services revised the City's Web Application User Interface Standard and developed a new resources page outlining reasons to avoid PDFs. In addition, the SPEC team

trained its first wave of social media account owners, leads, and moderators on the City's new social media management tool. Training sessions were mandatory for all staff using the tool. Digital Communications worked with the software vendor to ensure training content included meeting and exceeding accessibility standards. Topics included best practices for writing alternative text and including captions on all video content.

The SPEC Digital team supports a community of 275 web contributors across 36 divisions and regularly reviews training material for divisional web editors, publishers and social media account owners to reflect new learnings and best practices in digital accessibility. Compliance reminders, information on new tools, best practices as well as new training material are made available on the Digital Services Intranet hub and communicated out regularly.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #31. Regularly review compliance and usability best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility in information, communications and technology based on broader accessibility sector advancements and legislated requirements.

3) Creating Accessible Training Videos

With the onset of the pandemic, many City divisions began moving training courses online, which involved the creation of recorded video content. While content on the City's online learning platform already followed an accessible e-learning framework, Technology Services created e-learning courses to support training developers in creating video content. By the end of 2021, two courses were available for staff including:

- "Creating Accessible Training Videos for Software Courses" which educates staff on how to create accessible content for a video, and
- "Rapid Development of Accessible Online Courses" which educates staff on a technical level how to create accessible e-learning content.

This project has set the foundation for future training and supports the organization with designing/developing digital training material which is accessible by design.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #14. Ensure that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are developed and delivered in accessible formats.

Initiative #31. Regularly review compliance and usability best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility in information, communications and technology based on broader accessibility sector advancements and legislated requirements.

Appendix C: Procurement Highlights

1) Applying an Equity Lens in the City's Budget

The City's Equity Lens tool was a mandatory part of the 2021 Equity Responsive Budgeting process led by the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division (SDFA) in collaboration with Financial Planning and People and Equity Divisions. The Equity Responsive Budgeting process ensures that all City divisions perform an equity analysis of changes to their operating budgets to inform decision making on service reductions, efficiencies (modernizations etc.) and new/expansion of existing programs, services, or user fees at the City.

The Tool can be used by staff to help identify and address barriers that may be experienced by Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities when accessing City programs, services and facilities. The tool creates an Equity Impact Statement which is required on all significant policy and strategic reports going to Council, including strategic plans and policies that impact the public.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #10. Continue to embed and train staff on the use of the Equity Lens Tool to consider equity impacts of all new planning, projects, policies and initiatives.

Initiative #20. Ensure an accessibility analysis of all projects and purchases before funding is requested.

2) Capital Accessibility Upgrades Program

In 2021, the City's Corporate Real Estate Management Division (CREM) continued to oversee an Accessibility Upgrades Program to proactively identify and remove barriers at hundreds of City-owned and operated facilities. The costs for the planned accessibility upgrades are estimated to be \$200 million by the end of 2025, with a total of \$28 million spent in 2021. At the end of 2021, the City had 176 active projects under the Accessibility Upgrades Program including:

- 29 buildings in the initiation phase,
- 74 buildings in the design phase,
- 17 buildings in the procurement phase, and
- 56 buildings in the construction phase.

Buildings under the program include civic centers, community centers, shelters, fire halls, offices, and other city-owned facilities. Building upgrades will comply with several City of Toronto guidelines including the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG).

For more information on the design of city facilities see [Design Guidelines](#).

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #17. Continue to ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities.

Initiative #59. Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply with the TADG.

Initiative #60. Continue to implement accessibility improvements as part of State of Good Repair AODA Capital programs.

3) New/Renovated Shelters and Condition Assessments

In 2021, as part of City Council direction to expand the number of permanent shelter beds, the City of Toronto opened new and/or renovated shelters at:

- [101 Placer Court](#),
- [YWCA Davenport](#),
- [4117 Lawrence Avenue East](#), and
- [Fatima House - 1059 College Street](#).

The facilities provide critical emergency shelter and support services to people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. Services for residents include the development of housing plans, navigation to health supports, crisis management, trauma informed care, harm reduction and day-to-day support. In addition to beds, the shelters have dedicated spaces for health care as well as community space for programming, events, workshops and volunteer engagement. The new and renovated shelter sites are designed to be accessible, (e.g. exterior ramps, automated door operators, barrier-free showers, washrooms and service counters, etc.) in alignment with the [City of Toronto Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines](#), launched in January 2021.

In 2021, the City's Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) also secured a consultant to complete Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) at 71 shelter sites. These assessments will include lessons learned during COVID-19, including proper infection prevention and control measures and accessibility. The results of the BCAs will determine and flag State of Good Repair upgrades to highlight potential accessibility improvements.

For more information please visit [New Shelter Locations - City of Toronto](#).

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #17. Continue to ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities.

Initiative #59. Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply with the TADG.

Initiative #60. Continue to implement accessibility improvements as part of State of Good Repair AODA Capital programs.

Appendix D: Information & Communication Highlights

1) Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework (DISF)

At the end of 2021, the City finalized a framework that will standardize and create an integrated approach to the City's Digital Infrastructure. The framework includes principles and priorities that reflect feedback gathered from two phases of community consultation and stakeholder engagement.

The first guiding principle in the DISF is Equity and Inclusion. Equity in digital infrastructure is vital as access to digital tools and services is directly linked to life opportunities, well-being and freedom. The benefits of digitization have not been equally distributed and particular communities continue to experience disproportionate barriers to access and participation which has led to a digital divide. The City recognizes that striving for equity in the digital realm requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate barriers.

Under the principle of Equity and Inclusion, the City's vision is that digital infrastructure will be used to create and sustain equity, inclusion, accessibility, and human rights in its operations and outcomes. Digital Infrastructure will be flexible, adaptable and human-centered, responding to the needs of all Torontonians, including Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving groups. Under this work in 2021, the City also started drafting a new Digital Equity Policy which will be finalized in the next year.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #28. Develop and implement accessible information, communication and technology guidelines and standards to ensure the City is providing clear, accessible, appropriate and timely information and communication.

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

2) New Online Services

2.1 Outdoor Community Pool Bookings & Accommodations

During the 2021 summer season, the City of Toronto launched a new online reservation system to reserve 45-minute swim sessions in advance. The City recognizes that swimming is an important form of recreation and provides necessary physical therapy for people with disabilities. The new booking system meant that residents could travel to pools (for example, via Wheel-Trans) knowing they could use it without having to wait in long line-ups during COVID restrictions. For those without internet access, a select number of spots at each location were left open for drop-ins. Residents with disabilities could call the Adapted and Inclusive Recreation Hotline to request additional accommodations or to book a spot during heat alert after-hours operations.

Ten indoor recreation centres (including fitness/weight rooms and pools) also remained open for those needing physical therapy during COVID-19 closures in 2021.

For more information on Accessible recreation, please visit [Accessible Recreation - City of Toronto](#).

2.2 Adapted and Inclusive Virtual Programming during COVID-19

During 2021, the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division created safe at-home adapted and inclusive recreation programming in response to suspended delivery of in-person programming for most of 2020 and 2021.

The City's Adapted and Inclusive Recreation Services are designed for people with disabilities and are continually being assessed for improved service delivery. During 2021, options included specialized programs that provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to join virtual recreational activities, arts and dance programs, youth drop-in programs etc. A total of 339 clients registered for the fall 2021 Adapted and Inclusive virtual programming, many of which were new to the Parks, Forestry and Recreation's Adaptive and Inclusive programming and had not been previously engaged through in-person programs. These registration numbers demonstrate the success of the new programming. As a result, the City aims to continue providing virtual recreation options utilizing a hybrid model for program delivery.

2.3 Online Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Applications

In 2021, a new online Choice-Based Housing Access Model was created that applies a modernized and client-centred approach to allocating [rent-geared-to-income](#) (subsidized housing) within Toronto. Priority access is given to individuals experiencing homelessness. Applicants can indicate their accessibility and accommodation needs in their application and are matched with accessible units when available. In creating the new Access Model, staff consulted with accessibility experts and housing providers to ensure the new application system was accessible and includes appropriate information on the accessibility of units. Residents who do not have access to online services can continue to call 311, the Application Support Centre, or Central Intake as well as visit-in-person [Housing Help Centres](#) or speak to housing councillors in City shelters.

For more information on affordable housing see [Affordable and Supportive Housing](#) .

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

3) Accessible Information during COVID-19

The City of Toronto is committed to sharing timely and accurate information with all Torontonians through a variety of methods. We recognize that people living with disabilities have faced many challenges when accessing critical information during the pandemic. Below

are some examples of how the City made emergency response information accessible in 2021.

3.1 Public Health Videos and Vaccine Engagement

In 2021, the City used several new and improved ways to communicate information about the pandemic and vaccine availability to residents. Public health resources included multilingual posters, questionnaires, and videos about staying safe during COVID-19. For example, [13 COVID-19 prevention videos](#) were created in American Sign Language and made available on Toronto Public Health's YouTube Channel.

In addition to promoting public health information, the City used a community-based outreach strategy to raise awareness on vaccine availability and address vaccine hesitancy. Using an equity lens approach, the strategy was comprised of accessible videos, promotional flyers, webinars, town halls (virtual and telephone), and weekly e-blasts, as well as outreach through an innovative [Community Ambassadors Program](#). As part of the "It's Your Turn" and "Let's Get TO Vaccinated" campaigns, [COVID-19 Vaccination Videos](#) were produced in various languages, including in American Sign Language (ASL). Information shared through the channels above covered access to supports, vaccine eligibility, accessibility of clinics including mobile and supportive vaccine clinics, and vaccine access to homebound individuals. The outreach strategy also provided the opportunity to address misinformation and public concerns over COVID-19 vaccines. In total, communications were sent to 130 community agencies and more than 700 Community Ambassadors.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccination clinics see [Accessible and Supportive Vaccine Delivery](#).

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

- Initiative #5. Promote accessibility awareness within the organization as well as all the communities we serve through education and awareness campaigns.
- Initiative #6. Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.

Appendix E: Customer Service Highlights

1) Data for Equity Strategy

In 2021, the City launched a new Data for Equity Strategy. [Approved by City Council](#) in November 2020, the Strategy is the first of its kind at the municipal level internationally. The Strategy supports City divisions in collecting disaggregated data to inform equitable program planning and service delivery so that it is inclusive and responsive all Torontonians, but particularly those who are Indigenous, Black or part of equity-deserving communities. As part of its launch, a dedicated Data for Equity Unit was successfully established to oversee implementation of the plan and a working group was created to standardize demographic questions for use in city surveys. New Data for Equity Guidelines were also created for staff to provide guidance on why, when and how to collect and manage socio-demographic data in a consistent manner. Examples of divisional work which considered the Data for Equity Strategy in 2021 include:

- Social Development, Finance & Administration funded research to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities in the City of Toronto, and
- Toronto Public Health made progress on collecting disaggregated data related to COVID-19 (infections, vaccines rates etc.) which has included working with partners to collect data retrospectively.

Research projects such as these will provide the City with information and recommendations to enhance programs and initiatives impacting people with disabilities in the future.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

2) Accessible and Supportive COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery

2.1 Supportive Vaccine Clinics for People with Disabilities

In response to recommendations made by the Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines in 2021, Toronto Public Health scheduled 14 targeted immunization clinics for people with disabilities. While all City run clinics offered accommodations, accessible parking, ramps, elevators and on-site wheelchairs, the targeted clinics offered additional supports and accommodations including:

- American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf interpreters,
- Personal attendant support from March of Dimes and Reena,
- Designated areas for those who are unable to wear a mask inside the clinic,
- Private rooms for those who needed privacy, support, or to lie down, and

- Large, open recovery areas that allowed individuals to safely move around during the 15 minute wait (rather than being restricted to sitting in one place).

The new approach for disability-specific clinics went over and above what was offered by the provincial vaccine booking system by including a space for residents to indicate accommodation needs. Training materials provided to Toronto Public Health staff and community ambassadors attending the clinics included tips for inclusive and accessible service, accessibility audit checklists, and how to work with clients with accommodation requirements.

To further ensure residents had access to City-run vaccination clinics, the City worked with Wheel-Trans to ensure their clients had information needed to register for a vaccine clinic. Toronto Public Health also held approximately 70 on-site clinics with community organizations.

2.2 Vaccine Equity Transportation Plan & Homebound Clients

In 2021, the City announced a new [Vaccine Equity Transportation Plan](#), a multi-faceted plan to ensure vulnerable residents and seniors have access to vaccinations by removing barriers to transportation and making it easier to travel to clinics. The City worked with multiple partners including Toronto Ride, iRide, Scarborough Ride, Ontario Health Partners, Uber Canada, and the TTC to help transport vulnerable residents to and from vaccination appointments. The pilot started in March for seniors 75+ and then extended to include people with disabilities, all seniors and those who have underlying conditions which make them at greater risk from COVID-19 and/or are unable to safely access public transportation.

For those receiving Home and Community Care Support Services and who could not travel to vaccination clinics, Toronto Paramedic Services provided in-home vaccinations.

Through the [Homebound Vaccinations program](#):

- 5417 unique homebound clients received COVID-19 vaccinations,
- 656 homebound clients received influenza vaccinations, and
- 223 homebound clients were tested for COVID-19.

The [Toronto Seniors Helpline online chat](#) (or phone, 416-217-2077) was made available to support homebound adults and seniors to determine eligibility for an in-home COVID-19 vaccination. The helpline also assists those who are able to leave their homes with information regarding transportation options or with booking an appointment at a City-run immunization clinic.

2.3 Mobile Vaccine Delivery

In 2021, the City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health and Team Toronto strived to make getting vaccines as easy as possible by running mobile clinics in the community. The data-driven approach brought vaccines to residents in areas and settings that have low vaccination coverage and/or a high risk of contracting COVID-19, for example in shelters, residential retirement homes, and community organizations.

The addition of clinics run by Team Toronto healthcare partners allowed Toronto Public Health the additional capacity to host up to 200 mobile clinics each week. Locations which had the greatest need for vaccine coverage were determined in consultation with vaccination partners and guided by vaccine coverage data alongside input from provincial and local community partners. Community settings, organizations and workplaces were also encouraged to request a mobile vaccination clinic site via [COVID-19: How to Get Vaccinated](#).

This work supports the following MYAP outcomes and initiatives:

- Outcome #1. An organization which fosters a culture of equity and inclusion, that values and includes employees, residents and visitors with disabilities.
- Outcome #2. City employees, residents and visitors are aware of resources and can easily utilize accommodation and accessibility services when accessing City goods, services and facilities.
- Outcome #13. People with disabilities receive City goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives.
- Initiative #5. Promote accessibility within the organization and/or in the communities we serve through educational and awareness campaigns.
- Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

Appendix F: Employment Highlights

1) Diverse and Inclusive Hiring

In 2021, the City's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Team underwent transformation to better support inclusive hiring practices at the City. The Team focuses on fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce that can effectively meet the present and future social and service needs of Toronto. The Team helps to ensure that Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups are meaningfully engaged and are able to contribute to their fullest potential at all levels of the organization. As part of transformation in 2021, the Team hired a dedicated Accessibility Talent Specialist whose primary role is to co-ordinate and lead Talent Recruitment and Retention for persons with disabilities. In 2021, the expanded team:

- Continued to develop and test a community outreach/engagement model to build our reputation as an employer of choice and to target talent from the community,
- Completed a pilot for neurodiverse recruitment and started building a larger neurodiversity talent program to create employment opportunities for candidates on the Autism Spectrum,
- Engaged with Accessibility Offices on university campuses to attract students with disabilities into a variety of the City's student internship/youth programs to enhance work experiences and build strong resumes for the future,
- Coached recruiters on accommodation tools and resources to support candidates throughout the recruitment process, and
- Partnered with the Toronto Public Library on a panel discussion during National Disability Employment Awareness month on digital accessibility in the workplace, with the aim to raise disability employment awareness to internal staff.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #41. Develop and implement an employment strategy for equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities.

Initiative #42. Develop a targeted outreach strategy for recruiting people with disabilities and ensuring an application process that is barrier-free. This will include increased partnership and outreach with organizations and agencies that support the development and employment of people with disabilities.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #46. Foster a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through analysis of the Employee Engagement Survey and the development of action plans in partnership with Communities of Inclusion, including the Employee Disability Network.

Initiative #47. Continue to conduct an employment equity survey – Count Yourself In – to inform workforce planning priorities through data-informed decision making.

2) Employee Disability Network

The City continues to support several staff Communities of Inclusion including the Employee Disability Network (EDN). The EDN is a membership-driven staff network committed to promoting inclusion and accessibility in the workplace by supporting and nurturing the professional development of employees with disabilities through activities that foster a sense of belonging and empowerment.

In 2021, EDN held a City-wide Town Hall and two workshops recognizing City staff with disabilities and their daily, valued contributions to the Toronto Public Service. The events, held during National AccessAbility Week (NAAW), featured addresses from Mayor Tory and award-winning Canadian athlete and motivation speaker Unstoppable Tracy Schmidt. Workshops covered topics such as overcoming judgement, how to deal with uncertainty and learning how to self-advocate for change. NAAW was also publicly recognized by Mayor John Tory in a virtual [Proclamation](#) on the City's YouTube channel.

This work supports MYAP initiative:

Initiative #48. Support the Employee Disability Network (EDN) to promote professional development opportunities for employees with disabilities.

Appendix G: Transportation Highlights

1) Evaluation of Electric Kick-Scooters (E-scooters)

In 2021, the [use of e-scooters](#) in public spaces was prohibited in the City of Toronto due to concerns about street litter, pedestrian safety, accessibility, and enforcement. Illegal sidewalk riding with e-scooters poses a risk (not limited) to older adults, people using mobility equipment or assistive devices, and pedestrians who are blind or have low vision. City staff continue to research enforcement and liability impacts of e-scooters in public areas, including what changes or solutions are necessary to address accessibility and insurance issues. The City engaged several disability stakeholders including the CNIB, March of Dimes, ARCH Disability Law Centre, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, Guide Dog Users of Canada, and others. Consultations concluded that:

- Technologies are still emerging and not yet adequate,
- Not enough City resource are available for enforcement,
- There is not enough accessible sidewalk space in general, and
- Inadequate infrastructure should be priority (e.g. more public transit, bike lanes/lane space).

An update on the research was presented at the February 2021 Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting where the Committee affirmed that it does not support the use of e-scooters in Toronto, including any pilot project. Following TAAC recommendations, City Council declined the option to participate in an e-scooter pilot in 2021 and requested that Transport Canada regulate harmonized micromobility vehicle safety, standards, testing and labelling, as well as conduct robust consultation with key stakeholders on universal accessibility, active transportation and road safety. City Council further requested the Toronto Police Services Board and City staff consult with accessibility stakeholders to:

- Develop a public education campaign to effectively convey the existing By-laws on the prohibition of e-scooter use on sidewalks and public spaces, and
- Actively scale up City-wide enforcement of the By-law prohibiting use of e-scooters on sidewalks and public spaces.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #51. Continue to research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on the City's streets and sidewalks.

2) Automated Shuttle Pilot

The City of Toronto has been a national leader in the planning for autonomous vehicles. In the fall of 2021, Transportation Services, TTC, and Metrolinx conducted an on-road pilot for a new automated shuttle to provide a first-mile/last-mile service between the West Rouge neighbourhood in Scarborough and Rouge Hill GO Station.

The pilot was the culmination of research and preparation by project partners to learn more about the future of automated shuttles in Toronto and the potential benefits of neighbourhood-based service for residents and transit riders. Accessibility criteria were an essential part of the procurement expectations. Overall, accessibility for the trial fell into 4 main categories:

1) Shuttle Vehicle Accessibility Features:

- Ramp to facilitate boarding for passengers using mobility devices and others for whom the step to the shuttle poses a barrier.
- On-board securements for one wheelchair or mobility device.
- Digital and audible announcements both inside and outside the shuttle to indicate route name, upcoming stops and reminders about masks, seatbelts and smoking.
- Braille indicators on door opening buttons.
- Priority seating clearly identified within the shuttle.

2) Route Selection and Stop Design:

- New asphalt platforms/stop pads at each selected stop location with a continuous connection to adjacent sidewalk.
- New temporary curbs constructed where they did not previously exist, to ensure a tactile distinction between stop pad and road.
- Sufficient platform size to enable full deployment of the ramp, with room to disembark and turn to traverse in either direction.
- Smooth, level connections of platforms to adjacent sidewalks.
- Pedestrian enhancements at the intersection of Lawrence Ave East and Rouge Hills Drive to enable safer movement from the shuttle stops to Rouge National Urban Park.

3) Service Design and Operator Training:

- Operating Procedures from Vendor (AutoGuardian) addressed safe operation of the vehicle as well as customer service.
- Shuttle operator trainees received Serving Passengers with Disabilities training materials from the TTC and an in-person "lived experience" training session with members of TTC's Advisory Committee for Accessible Transit.

4) On-line Accessibility:

- Project information was provided through the City of Toronto website which is compliant with AODA requirements.
- All shuttle schedules were available online in accessible PDF format.
- A booking service was developed to address public health concerns related to COVID-19 and to enable contacting customers in the event of service disruption.
- Accessible format for emails and text messages to confirm bookings and provide reminders.

Gaps and lessons learned about accessibility for automated vehicle micro transit were documented throughout the pilot and will be incorporated into future work by City of Toronto, TTC and Metrolinx.

The City, TTC and Metrolinx remain committed to finding innovative, accessible and sustainable transit solutions, including automated vehicle technology, to fulfill the future transportation needs of Torontonians. For more information on the automated shuttle please visit [About the Shuttle Vehicle – City of Toronto](#).

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #51. Continue to research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on the City's streets and sidewalks (Transportation Services).

Initiative #52. Prepare the City of Toronto for automated vehicles, ensuring accessibility considerations are incorporated in the earliest planning stages. This includes consultation with Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure an accessibility analysis is applied to future policies and plans (Transportation Services).

3) Increased Snow Clearing

In June of 2021, Toronto City Council approved the expansion of the City's [mechanical sidewalk winter maintenance trial](#) to help improve safety, provide more equitable snow clearing service to more areas, and support improved accessibility when it snows. Toronto is now the third major winter city in North America to employ a city-wide mechanical sidewalk snow clearing program.

In the 2020-2021 winter season, the City mechanically cleared approximately 85% of public sidewalks. In the 2021-2022 season, approximately 98% of sidewalks were cleared using a combination of contracted equipment and new, smaller plows operated by City staff. Due to sidewalk obstructions and narrow spaces, the remaining 2% of public sidewalks was manually cleared. Overall, the expansion resulted in 103,000 additional homes across the city receiving mechanical sidewalk snow clearing services.

During 2021, the City also continued to offer [sidewalk clearing services for seniors and people with disabilities](#) upon request.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #51. Continue to research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on the City's streets and sidewalks.

Initiative #55. Conduct a review of snow clearing policies, practices and procedures using an accessibility and equity analysis and develop a strategy to reduce barriers that significantly limit the mobility of people with disabilities.

Appendix H: Built Environment Highlights

1) Updated Design Guidelines

1.1 Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG)

The [Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines](#) (TADG) is a design reference document available to all sectors to help work towards making Toronto a barrier-free community. Based on the human rights principles of respect, dignity and inclusion, it brings together barrier-free requirements found under the Ontario Building Code, the Design of Public Spaces Standards of the AODA, stakeholder feedback, and industry best practices that go above minimum legislated requirements. TADG is a key component of the City's Accessibility Plan and sets the foundation for the City's multi-year implementation strategy to make City facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

As part of the work of updating the TADG, Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) conducted an extensive consultation process with internal and external stakeholders, including City divisions, members of the public, service organizations, and individuals representing the disability community. Feedback from these consultations will continue to shape the TADG as a living document, with a formal review and update of the document to be scheduled at regular intervals.

In November 2021, Toronto City Council adopted the updated Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines and directed all City Divisions to use the TADG, as the mandatory accessibility requirements guiding all new construction and renovation of City owned or leased facilities and public spaces.

1.2 Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines (SDG)

In January 2021, the City's Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) launched new [Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines \(SDG\)](#) which lay out best practices in the design of new permanent shelters in Toronto as well as major renovations of existing shelters. They ensure shelters are designed to respond to evolving needs of those experiencing homelessness, including ensuring adequate accessibility. The development of the Guidelines included extensive consultation with Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities including youth, 2SLGBTQ+ and people with disabilities who experience homelessness. Consultation and feedback on the document occurred over a period of 2 years from 2018 to 2020 and included feedback from the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC).

The SDGs is a living document that is updated annually with regular feedback from TAAC and other stakeholders. The SDG will be updated as the overarching Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines and other legislative requirements change.

Additional focus groups with the accessibility community are planned in the first half of 2022. The public can also send feedback on the SDG to ShelterDesignGuidelines@toronto.ca.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

- Initiative #58. Continue to maintain and update the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG).
- Initiative #59. Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply with the TADG.
- Initiative #60. Continue to implement accessibility improvements as part of State of Good Repair AODA Capital programs.
- Initiative #61. Ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated into Shelter Design Guidelines through best practice research and consultation with people with disabilities and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (Shelter, Support & Housing Administration).

2) Affordable and Supportive Housing

In 2021, the City's Street Needs Assessment (SNA) collected critical data to understand the impact of the pandemic on homelessness and the service needs of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. Overall a total of 2,629 surveys were collected, representing a response rate of 45% of eligible individuals from participating sites. 76% of all respondents reported having one or more health challenges and the majority (51%) reported having two or more health challenges. Respondents who were experiencing chronic homeless (i.e., homeless for six or more months in the past year) were six times more likely to report two or more health challenges than respondents who have been homeless for less than six months (43% versus 7%).

The [HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan](#) is one effort to support those experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity by increasing the supply of affordable housing across the City. The Plan sets the foundation for a shift away from providing costly emergency services towards sustainable housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. The plan uses an intersectional approach and takes into consideration the needs of equity-deserving groups by investing in affordable housing which includes accessible and supportive options.

In 2021, City Council approved an additional [COVID-19 Housing and Homelessness Response Plan](#) to accelerate the delivery of new affordable and supportive housing and as of November, there were a total of 109 City-led or City-supported development projects which will deliver an estimated 19,000 new affordable and supportive homes across the city over the next five to seven years.

As part of the procurement agreement, affordable housing providers must follow the Housing Secretariat's Affordable Rental Housing Design Guidelines, which include accessibility and universal design criteria that is above the Ontario Building Code standards. All new housing projects include at least 20% accessible units (exterior ramps, automated doors, accessible kitchens, barrier-free bathrooms and showers).

Various accessible and affordable housing initiatives were launched in 2021 including, but not limited to:

2.1 New Supportive Housing

In May 2021 City Council voted to move forward with the first two supportive housing initiatives at 222 Spadina Avenue and 877 Yonge Street, funded jointly by the City and the federal government through Canada's Rapid Housing Initiative, which will provide 334 homes with support services. In June 2021, the City announced an additional complex at 292-296 Parliament Street dedicated to women, Indigenous residents, seniors, people with disabilities and others at risk of homelessness. By the end of the year, units at the Parliament Street location provided housing for 24 people with more planned for 2022.

All housing complexes include communal areas and program space, and provide wraparound programs and services that are tailored to the needs of each resident, including 24/7 support. These projects follow the successful modernization model at 389 Church Street which opened its doors to new residents in February 2021 following an extensive modernization of the building that created 120 self-contained affordable homes with support services for women and gender-diverse individuals.

Supportive housing, which has traditionally been a provincial responsibility, provides a combination of deeply affordable housing and onsite support services that enable people to live as independently as possible. This positively contributes towards creating more equitable, inclusive communities by helping people who have mental health and/or physical disabilities improve their housing, health and socio-economic outcomes. Examples of on-site supports include personal care, case management, counselling, life skills training, and medication reminders.

Videos describing [What is supportive housing?](#) and [What does modular supportive housing look like?](#) have been made available on the City's YouTube channel. For additional information on the accessibility of these housing initiatives see [Accessible Housing Advisory Groups](#).

2.2 New Modular Housing

By June 2021, the City along with its partners opened its first two modular buildings at 3221 Dovercourt Road and 11 Macey Avenue. The buildings include a total of 100 supportive units, 25% of which are accessible. Tenants of these new homes pay either 30% of their income or the shelter allowance portion of the Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program. Similar to other supportive housing initiatives, support services are provided onsite on a 24/7 basis to assist with housing stability, eviction prevention, food security, personal recovery relating to mental health and substance use challenges, as well as connections to primary care.

By the end of 2021, steps were taken to advance five additional modular housing projects at 150 Dunn Avenue, 175 Cummer Avenue, 7 Glamorgan Avenue, 2626 Kingston Road and the corner of Trenton and Cedarvale Avenues. The City also secured additional funding for projects beyond 2021 and identified additional supportive housing opportunities that can provide a wider range of support services. In selecting sites for the modular housing, the City and CreateTO evaluated criteria such as (but not limited to) demand for affordable housing, local infrastructure, access to public transit, and access to health and other community services.

More information on homelessness and affordable housing are available through the City's [Street Needs Assessment](#), [HousingTO Action Plan](#) and the [HousingTO 2020-2021 Progress Report](#).

This work supports MYAP initiative:

Initiative #38. Continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City operated programs.

3) Wheel-Trans Drop off & Waiting Area at City Hall

In February of 2021, staff from the City's Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) division held two public consultation meetings to discuss projects impacting visitor access and accessibility at Toronto City Hall. Invitations were sent to forty-four community groups, the City of Toronto Employee Disability Network (EDN), and the chair of the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC). During the consultations, Corporate Security presented the layout of the Hagerman Street entrance into City Hall including security features, the Wheel-Trans Waiting Room and an artistic rendering of new optical turnstiles. Consultation resulted in ten recommendations which CREM has either acted on or is incorporating in planned renovations to City Hall. Examples of upgrades include:

- Installing brighter lighting outside the Hagerman entrance to increase visibility.
- Installing clear signage around the entrance to make the entrance more noticeable.
- Relocating the intercom and the automated door paddle to a pedestal.
- Replacing old security intercoms with video intercoms. The video intercom will provide the public with a direct video and voice connection to the security desk.
- Installing a heater in the Wheel-Trans waiting room.
- Installing a video monitor and a video intercom inside the Wheel-Trans waiting room. The video shows a live image of the Wheel Trans pick up location.
- Installing decals on all turnstile panels and doors to make them more visible.
- Updating turnstile design to include tactile features on each turnstile ramp.
- Ensuring the turnstile base walls are at least one inch in height so they are cane detectable.
- Installing tactile indicators in front of the turnstiles so they are cane detectable.

This work supports MYAP initiatives:

Initiative #59. Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply with the TADG.

Initiative #60. Continue to implement accessibility improvements as part of State of Good Repair AODA Capital programs.