



## STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

# Corporate, Finance, and Legislative Standing Committee

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Report to: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors  
From: Emily Funston, Legislative Coordinator, Records & Accessibility  
Standing Committee Date: October 9, 2025  
Report Number: LS-2025-018  
Council Meeting Date: October 29, 2025  
Subject: **2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report**

*If you require this information in an alternate format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at [accessibility@cobourg.ca](mailto:accessibility@cobourg.ca) or at 905-372-4301*

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### 1. Recommendation:

WHEREAS the Committee adopt the following recommendation and refer to Regular Council for final approval.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council accepts this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress report for information purposes.

### 2. Executive Summary:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislation along with the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020-2025) works towards the provincial goal of a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The plan consists of short-, medium- and long-term goals, with many actions running on an ongoing timeline to ensure accessibility in town services, infrastructure, policies, and within the organization.

The town focuses on six (6) areas of improvement: people; policies, procedures, and best practices; communications and technology; transit and transportation; infrastructure and the built environment; training, education and awareness.

As we approach the renewal of the Plan, in 2025 we have been focusing on continuing to accomplish as many of the actions as possible, as well as developing the 2026-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

### **3. Background**

This report provides an update on the actions taken to improve accessibility in the community and outlines the progress made to achieve the objectives outlined in the 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Plan outlines how we will achieve a barrier-free Cobourg and meet requirements under the Act by the end of 2025. This plan and report were made in conjunction with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Acts, 2005 (AODA).

There are three (3) core systems in place to ensure that goals of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are being met.

#### **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The provincially mandated AAC committee provides recommendations to council and their initiatives related to accessibility.

- The role of the AAC is to provide sound advice and recommendations to the Cobourg Municipal Council on matters relating to the goal of ensuring that individuals with disabilities shall be assured access to basic services available in the community
- Benefits of lived experience feedback includes:
  - Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people.
  - People who have been closest to the problem have the most experience with it, can elevate real concerns, devise the most pointed solutions, and engage community support.
  - Leads to equitable workplace, quality improvement, staff development and community engagement

#### **Feedback and Reporting System**

The town invites the public to provide feedback regarding accessibility of our goods, services, and facilities through an online form, mail, email, phone, or in-person.

## **Town Hall's Commitment**

By working with the Legislative Services department and the Legislative Coordinator – Records and Accessibility, the Town creates a holistic and collaborative approach to accessibility.

## **4. Discussion:**

### **2024 Achievements and Progress**

A variety of steps were undertaken in 2024 to improve accessibility in the Town. Key accomplishments include:

- **Downtown Accessibility:** Snow clearing throughout the Downtown Business Improvement Area was undertaken, as well as work to ensure level interlocking brick on the sidewalks, contributing to the creation of an inclusive and accessible urban environment.
- **National Accessibility Awareness Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities:** Social media campaigns shared accessibility information and engaged the community.
- **Accessible Public Transportation**
  - Staff attended a workshop for local employers to raise awareness about public transit options, and strides that have been made to increase the convenience of our public transit.
  - A pilot project was undertaken to test the feasibility of a Limited Fixed Route transit service, which provided accessible bus service to stops selected in consideration of ridership data, location popularity, accessibility, and community feedback.
- **Capital Projects:** Capital projects to enhance accessibility, included:
  - Council Meeting Chambers: Furniture and display upgrades, with a cost of \$30,000, created a more accessible space for members of Council and Committees. The upgrades include desks with an accessible seating range to accommodate those who may be using accessible devices, and improve accessibility and use of the space as a whole.
- **Snow Removal Program Consideration:** Options for a snow removal program supporting seniors and individuals living with disabilities were considered, and investigation is ongoing.

In alignment with the Ontario government commitments to ensure accessibility in the Province and aspiring to be leaders in Accessibility and Equity, the Legislative Services department at the Town of Cobourg has initiated accessibility initiatives for the 2025-2026 period.

## 2025 Next Steps

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue to uphold duties mandated by the AODA, including advising Council on accessibility standards, reviewing site plans, and fulfilling other functions specified in the Regulations.

In 2025, many of the next steps and initiatives from 2024 will continue in an ongoing manner.

- **Accessible Taxicab Incentives:** Explore options to encourage accessible taxicabs in the Town of Cobourg.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Continue to use the National Accessibility Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities campaigns to foster increased awareness and understanding.
- **Continuous Consultation on Capital Projects:** Continue to engage in consultations related to capital projects, including beach access, facility upgrades, new build proposals, and the Emergency Plan for the Town of Cobourg.
- **Downtown Accessibility:** Continue providing input on accessibility concerning the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA), contributing to the creation of an inclusive and accessible urban environment.
- **Policy Enhancements:** Continue to revise existing policies, and create new policies and procedures, to incorporate inclusive language and reflect diverse needs.
- **Implementation of Accessible Standards Guide:** Implement the Town of Cobourg Accessible Standards Guide, integrating policies that support the incorporation of best practices in accessibility.
- **Community Feedback Procedures:** Continue to review and consider new procedures for feedback from the community on inclusivity and accessibility.
- **2026-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:** The 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is set to conclude on December 31st, 2025. The Town of Cobourg will collaboratively develop the 2026-2030 Plan in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, people with disabilities, members of the public, and staff. This Plan will build upon the achievements of the previous period, serving as a roadmap for continued compliance with the AODA. The town is dedicated to actively removing barriers and enhancing accessibility for individuals with various disabilities, contributing to the creation of an inclusive and accessible community.

## 5. Financial Impact and Budget

As of the date this report was written, \$10,100.20 was spent on accessibility-based services and infrastructure in the 2023-2024 term, excluding capital budget projects.

## 6. Relationship to Council's Strategic Plan Priorities 2023 to 2027 and beyond:

### Thriving Community

Improving accessibility helps create a thriving community where all people can easily access services and amenities. By enabling everyone to participate, community wellbeing is fostered, and everyone can more fully enjoy their community.

### Service Excellence

Providing services that are accessible is an essential component of service excellence. By listening to residents and taking action to improve accessibility and meet the goals outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, service is improved, and the Town becomes more inclusive, equitable, and accessible.

### Sustainability

Creating spaces that are accessible, and continuously improving public spaces to be more accessible, helps make Cobourg a vibrant and appealing destination. Taking action to improve accessibility contributes to social well-being and supports the needs of current and future generations.

## 7. Public Engagement:

Feedback and motions received from the provincially mandated Accessibility Advisory Committee, as well as feedback from the community, contributes to accessibility and inclusiveness in the Town of Cobourg.

Suggestions and feedback on accessibility are welcomed, and can be submitted through the [accessibility@cobourg.ca](mailto:accessibility@cobourg.ca) email, by phone, in-person, or by reporting it on the Town web site.

## 8. Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020-2025

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report.docx
Attachments:	Attachment 1 - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020-2025.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 30, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Brent Larmer - Sep 29, 2025 - 8:58 AM**

**Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 30, 2025 - 9:38 AM**