City of Mississauga

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update

If you require this information in an alternate format, please contact the Standards, Training and Compliance team at accessibility.info@mississauga.ca.



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Division: Facilities & Property Management

Department: Corporate Services



Executive Summary

Making our community accessible and inclusive is a priority for the City. Identifying, preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities creates a city that is built for everyone – whether you're pushing a stroller, using a wheelchair, taking a class or visiting a website.

Our community is becoming more diverse and so are the needs and aspirations of our residents. More than 201,000 Mississauga residents has a disability – that's more than a quarter of the population and at some point, most of us will likely face some type of temporary, situational or permanent disability. People with disabilities can face multiple barriers to accessing goods, services, facilities and obtaining gainful employment and the need for accessible services will continue to rise as the population ages. Planning for accessibility helps create a more vibrant city that all residents and visitors can enjoy.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the City of Mississauga is required to develop a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines how the City will meet its obligations under the legislation and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Last year, the City launched it's third multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) and builds on what the City has accomplished since introducing our first multi-year plan in 2012.

The plan is a roadmap to creating a better city for everyone. The goals and the approach laid out in the plan translate into increased opportunities for people with disabilities to access employment and to fully participate in the social, cultural, recreational economic and political life of Mississauga. This is the first annual update to the plan.

This five-year plan is based on best practice research, as well as input from the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), Staff Accessibility Resource Team (StART), people with disabilities, accessibility stakeholders and staff.

This annual status report highlights key areas of progress made in 2023 and is not meant to be an inventory of accomplishments.

The City continues to encourage local businesses and organizations to meet accessibility requirements and prevent and remove barriers, however, the City has no official role in enforcing these requirements. Ensuring these requirements are met is the responsibility of the Government of Ontario.



Mississauga Accessibility Advisory Committee

Celebrating their 20th year of service, the Mississauga Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a citizen committee that acts as an advisory body for Council. Its mandate is to advise on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. City staff works with the AAC to review initiatives and promote awareness about accessibility and celebrate inclusion.

Each member of the AAC is a volunteer with the exception of Council representatives. The majority of AAC members are people with disabilities. The AAC is supported by the Standards, Training and Compliance team and the Clerk's Department.

The AAC's term coincides with Council's term. Following the 2022 Municipal Elections, a new AAC was formed and will work within its mandate until 2026. The AAC members bring a wide range of personal and professional experiences and understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities. They provide invaluable advice as we continue to work toward a barrier-free Mississauga. For more information about the AAC, its initiatives and members, please see the City of Mississauga's AAC page.

In 2023, the AAC and its subcommittees received several presentations and provided feedback on the following key initiatives:

- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028
- 2022 annual status update to the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- MiWay Annual Accessibility Report
- 2023 Accessibility Compliance Update
- 2024 Future Directions Plans for Community Services
- Lakeview Conservation Area Update Public Realm Design
- Phase 2 Micro-mobility Program Development
 - Staff presentations along with deputations from Adaptive and Inclusive Micro-mobility (AIM) and Ride Scooty
- Share Micro-mobility Program Demonstrations Update
- Vision Zero Update: Pedestrian Head Start Signals
- MiWay Bus Stop Standards: Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs)
- Peel Regional Police Chief Resource Council

Additionally, the AAC's Facility Accessibility Design Subcommittee (FADS) met seven times to review capital projects with an emphasis on the built environment. The subcommittee provides feedback to ensure facilities and public spaces are accessible and inclusive. The FADS reviewed the following initiatives in 2023:

Paramount Fine Foods Centre - Main Arena Renovation



- Review of the Proposed Redevelopment of South Common Community Centre and Library Project
- Redevelopment of South Common Community Centre and Library
- Addition and Renovation of Fire Stations 114 and 115
- Addition and Renovation of Fire Stations 102 and 108
- Kinsmen Hall Upgrades
- Gulleden Park Redevelopment
- · Richards Memorial Park Sanitary Station
- Zonta Meadows Park Design
- Mattamy Sports Park Phase 2
- Paul Coffey Park

Accessibility Governance

The Standards, Training & Compliance (STC) team provides policy and strategic advice to City Departments and facilitates compliance with the AODA. The team works with staff to ensure accessibility is incorporated into all proposed initiatives to provide maximum accessibility over minimum compliance. To ensure the City continues to meet or exceed the requirements of the AODA, STC continues to stay informed about legislation and participates in accessibility networks such as the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Taskforce, Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) and the Peel Region accessibility networking group (made up of the region and three local municipalities). Membership in these groups ensures the City is abreast of current developments and other municipal initiatives.

STC continued as the staff liaison to the AAC and facilitator of site plan and municipal project reviews by the FADS Subcommittee.

Staff Accessibility Resource Team

The City's Staff Accessibility Resource Team (StART) is made up of representatives from each division across the organization and meets quarterly. These individuals act as champions and promote awareness of accessibility and inclusion throughout the organization and community. They support accessibility at the City by:

- Ensuring that an accessibility lens is applied to every initiative
- Promoting accessibility awareness throughout the City
- Assisting in the development of the City's annual accessibility status update



Governance and reporting

Key outcomes:

- Clear roles and accountability at all levels of the organization
- Employees are supported to build capacity to deliver on accessibility commitments
- An organization which fosters a culture where everyone feels like they belong, that values and includes employees, residents and visitors with disabilities
- City employees, residents and visitors are aware of available resources and accommodations when accessing City goods, services and facilities

The City continued to build accessibility accountability into all levels of the City, with defined roles and responsibilities. This means that senior leadership in all areas and at all levels of the organization are accountable for advancing accessibility in their areas of responsibility.

- ✓ Continue to implement a corporate accessibility governance structure and accountability framework to oversee the implementation of the MYAP
- ✓ Provide annual status updates on the City's MYAP to both the City's AAC and Council and post on the City's website
- ✓ Promote accessibility awareness within the organization
- ✓ Adopt and implement the Dynamic Symbol of Access at City facilities, where feasible
- Develop, maintain and monitor accessibility guidelines and tools to support implementation and legislative compliance
- Renew and enhance mandatory accessibility training
- Review and update the City's Accessibility Policy in 2024 to be more inclusive and promote the delivery of accessible customer service
- Develop, train staff and implement the use of an Equity Lens to consider equity impacts of all City initiatives
- Ensure City purchases include accessibility design, features and criteria



2023 Key Actions

- Consulted AAC, people with disabilities, stakeholders, staff and the public on the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028
- Launched City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028
- Provided annual status update on the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022 to the City's AAC, outlining the initiatives the City has taken to ensure compliance with the AODA
- Promoted accessibility awareness through hosting and attending multiple events including International Day of Persons with Disabilities and National AccessAbility Week (NAAW)
 - NAAW events included an adaptive Fresh Air Fitness event, Movie Night at Celebration Square with accommodation options (captioning and assistive listening devices) as well as several library workshops on creating accessible documents
- · Developed accessible procurement guidelines
- Conducted accessible virtual meetings for Council and Committees

Equitable Customer Service

Key outcome:

 People of all abilities receive seamless, dignified, and equitable access to services in a timely manner and City staff have access to resources to support accessible customer service

The City continued to be in compliance with the standard and ensuring that City goods and services are accessible for everyone in Mississauga, including people with disabilities.

- ✓ Train staff, Council, volunteers and those who provide goods, services or facilities on the City's behalf on an ongoing basis, as required
- ✓ Explore and implement assistive technologies that provide enhanced accessibility to City programs, services and facilities
- ✓ Expand therapeutic programs across City community centres
- ✓ Evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in City programs
- ✓ Provide notice of service disruptions



- Develop and consult AAC on an Election Accessibility Plan including auditing potential voting locations, ensuring forms and signage are accessible and providing accessible customer service training to election officials
- Create an Accessibility Report, highlighting the accessibility achievements of the 2026 election and demonstrating the City's commitment to ongoing improvements in the future
- Develop and implement strategies to support front-line employees in providing accessible customer service
- Renew and enhance mandatory accessible customer service training
- Develop resources for employees on accessible public engagement and consultations

- Updated grant guideline templates to include accessibility features
- Provided bilingual signage for community and cultural events
- Offered baby tickets in advance of events at Living Arts Centre and waived baby ticket fees to make events more accessible for parents and families
- Provided chairs and seated modifications for attendees during the weekly Fresh Air Fitness series
- Included show advisories on eVenue site for patrons to view before purchasing (includes haze, dry ice, LED/strobe lighting, sudden noises, age recommendations etc.)
- Provided informational pamphlets in different languages to vendors outlining what products are put in garbage vs recycling
- Included accessibility requirements for new public art installations
- Offered Canadian Hearing Services Basic ASL (101) Course to staff to increase communication skills
- Provided training for staff on inclusive physical literacy, which explored the benefit of universally accessible programs and how to develop them
- Offered customers the ability to purchase accessible seats online rather than calling the box office for programs at the Living Arts Centre
- Offered driveway snow windrow clearing program for seniors 65 years and older and people with physical disabilities or medical conditions that are unable to clear the windrow on their own



Digitally-inclusive communications

Key outcomes:

- Residents, visitors and employees of all abilities are provided with equitable access to City information
- City staff have the expertise to develop and provide information in accessible formats

The global pandemic and the need to provide an increased number of services remotely required the City to move more services online. This increased the importance of maintaining the City's accessible website and ensuring the City increases the availability of accessible information for residents, visitors and employees. The City maintains an accessible public facing website – Mississauga.ca – in addition to an accessible internal website platform for employees – Inside Mississauga.

- ✓ Monitor and improve website content for accessibility
- ✓ Provide training to staff on creating accessible documents, as required.
- ✓ Maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities
- ✓ Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports
- ✓ Provide accessible formats and communication supports, upon request
- ✓ Provide emergency information in alternative formats, upon request
- ✓ Maintain an accessible website
- ✓ Review documents and templates to ensure they are accessible
- Implement a digital strategy to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
- Expand website information governance and publishing standards
- Expand digital content offered by City of Mississauga Libraries
- Create and implement the Accessibility Literacy Strategy to build digital accessibility expertise
- Expand accessibility website publishing training and resources, as required
- 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



 Conduct annual reviews of the City's digital strategy and update to reflect current best practices in digital accessibility

- Introduced translation apps on staff phones to assist with communication at events
- Provided communication supports at events in Celebration Square:
 - Displayed closed captioning on movie nights and FIFA soccer games
 - Displayed ASL interpreters are displayed on screens during official ceremonies and large events
 - Provided assistive listening devices upon request
- Included closed captioning for all library videos uploaded to YouTube and other social media platforms
- Converted Camp Staff Manual to accessible format and made available online to staff
- Continued to use Siteimprove, a website scanning tool that can monitor websites for search engine optimization and accessibility issues. Training was provided to staff and website content issues are monitored weekly
- Continued to enhance website navigation with improved descriptive alternative text for logos and identifiers to meet website best practices
- Continued to ensure that web content and print material on MiWay's website are accessible. Activities included:
 - o Adherence to the City's new design principles integrating accessibility
 - Adaptation of the POUR accessibility principles (perceivable, operable, understandable and robust) to ensure language and code are more inclusive to all users
 - Application of a customer lens (focus) on all web content to implement the use of plain language and to optimize for accessibility making it easier for assistive technology users
 - Updated brand guidelines with digital design colours and fonts that adhere to WCAG 2.0 AA standards
- Ensured the Open Data Hub continued to meet accessibility requirements
- Continued to improve online forms and surveys to meet accessibility guidelines
- Incorporated improved image text description in social media
- Updated templates and trained staff to ensure public notices are accessible
- Continued to offer courses on the creating accessible Microsoft Word documents, PowerPoint presentations and converting and remediating PDFs to meet accessibility guidelines



- Created accessible Microsoft Word templates for the creation of the 2024-2027 Business Plan and 2024 Budget
- Implemented digital baby vouchers that can be emailed, eliminating the need to visit the box office
- Added the ability to print LAC Playbills and event tickets at Box Office
- Converted fonts on event confirmation emails to an accessible font
- Revised templates for public art expressions of interests or proposals
- Ensured accessibility considerations were included in the guidelines for requests for proposals for new public art at Burnhamthorpe Community Centre
- Implemented the speech-to-text tool on iPads to communicate with people wearing masks and with people with hearing disabilities
- Continued to digitize history books and local history microform documents allowing users to magnify content and search documents from home
- Expanded accessible technology and equipment including DAISY players and increased the number of library locations with accessible computer stations
- Reviewed Homebound Service and developed plan to expand eligibility and improve mail delivery and pick-up service
- Continued courier deliveries of library material to long-term care homes
- Continued to connect customers with the Centre for Equitable Access (CELA)

Inclusive Employment

Key outcomes:

- Candidates and City staff with disabilities have the support to join, work effectively, experience career growth, and have opportunities for learning, development, and progression
- Ensure equitable, clear and consistent employment and accommodation policies and procedures that seek to remove systemic barriers

The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in Ontario age 25 to 64 is 50% higher than for people without disabilities. To address this, the City strives to show leadership in accessible recruitment and employment.

The goal of employment accommodation is to enable people with disabilities to participate fully in their work environment. The City is currently in the process of implementing 10 recommendations from a third-party review as part of our Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Implementing these recommendations will help the City address systemic employment barriers in the recruitment and succession planning.



2023-2028 Goals

- ✓ Implement a targeted outreach strategy for recruiting people with disabilities by continuing partnerships with Discover Ability and Ready, Willing and Able that support the employment of people with disabilities
- ✓ Implement a hiring manager recruitment course to help reduce bias in the hiring process
- ✓ Develop and implement Job Posting Inclusivity Tool, the Candidate Interview Essentials Checklist and Hiring Manager Interview Guide to ensure recruitment is done through an inclusive lens
- ✓ Prepare individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for City employees with disabilities
- ✓ Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
- ✓ Advise successful applicants about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities
- ✓ Provide accessible formats and/or communication supports to employees with disabilities who require it
- ✓ Offer a return-to-work process for employees with disabilities
- ✓ Regularly review corporate policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the proper support
- Streamline and integrate employment accommodations
- Develop and implement strategies to help with promotion and career development of people with disabilities
- Expand mental health resources and services, including for staff with disabilities
- Foster a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through analysis of the Employee Engagement Survey and the development of action plans

- Continued partnerships with both the Ready, Willing and Able organization and the Discover Ability Network. Both organizations connect employers and people with disabilities seeking employment while providing support and resources throughout the process
- Developed new partnerships with CNIB, Community Living Mississauga and Community Living Burlington. In addition to providing support and resources



- during the employment process, these organizations connect employers with individuals with disabilities seeking employment
- Continued to incorporate the Inclusive Job Posting tool for hiring managers to ensure job postings are inclusive and free from systemic barriers
- Continued to incorporate the Candidate Interview Essential Checklist into the recruitment process. The checklist is intended to prepare candidates for interviews to support their psychological safety
- Continued to apply and build upon the Hiring Manager Interview Guide to conduct inclusive interviews
- Launched the Hiring Manager Recruitment Module which details the phases of recruitment with a focus on ways to reduce biases in the hiring process. All Hiring Managers and City Leaders have completed this module
- Continued to offer the Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Strategy
- Continued to offer the Diversity and Inclusion Fundamentals and Diversity and Inclusion Unconscious Bias courses to all staff

Accessible movement

Key outcomes:

- Improved access to a range of accessible transportation and related services in the City that are accessible, affordable, convenient and safe for people with disabilities
- Increased awareness and integration of accessibility in the City's transportationrelated strategies, planning and policies

Transportation is a vital link for people with disabilities to take part in their communities. It enables participation in education, work, recreation and access to services, like healthcare. The City continues to ensure all vehicles and equipment meet the technical requirements of the regulation and that training is provided to all new staff.

- ✓ Ensure accessibility is considered in the implementation of the City's Micromobility Project
- ✓ Include accessibility considerations in the City's Vision Zero Action Plan
- ✓ Continue to implement accessibility guidelines when building or redesigning parking spaces
- ✓ Procure vehicles and equipment that meet the technical requirements of the regulation



- ✓ Provide training to all new staff
- ✓ Make information about accessible equipment available using multiple formats of communication
- ✓ Monitor taxi owners and operators in Mississauga to ensure they are meeting the requirements of the regulation
- ✓ Continue to integrate accessibility considerations in the design and implementation of the City's Pedestrian Master Pan
- ✓ Continue to fulfill requests for Accessible Pedestrian Signals and install with all new traffic signals and replacements of existing traffic crossing signals
- ✓ Install Tactile Walking Surface Indicators at all corners during state of good repair road rehabilitation projects
- ✓ Continue to integrate accessibility in the implementation of Hurontario Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- ✓ Continue to integrate accessibility considerations in the City's cycling network, including the City's Bicycle Parking Program
- ✓ Continue to integrate accessibility considerations in the standard requirements for temporary construction conditions
- Install new barrier-free enhanced bus shelters at transit stops
- Continue facility, service and operation improvements to enhance the universal design of the transit system
- Continue to research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on the City's streets and sidewalks
- Design and begin construction of the Dundas BRT
- Continue to redesign existing major collectors as a part of the City's Integrated Road Projects that improve road safety and accessibility
- Enhance accessible parking spaces with the addition of an alternate accessible parking space design

- Installed new accessible pedestrian signals at the following locations:
 - Tomken Rd @ Meyerside Dr
 - Mississauga Rd @ Burnhamthorpe Rd W
 - Winston Churchill Blvd @ Tours Rd
- Installed 25 enhanced shelters that meet AODA requirements and are equipped with enclosed heated areas, digital schedule information, wave sensors and digital screens



- Improved accessibility with the installation/restoration of passenger landing pads at 61 bus top locations
- Performed an accessibility review of best practices to update infrastructure standards leading to the upgrade of bus stops, shelters, bus pads and sidewalk connections
- Ensured transit stops remained accessible during construction through the review and installation of temporary platforms at transit stops
- Continued to implement new standard of installing detectable warning surfaces (tactile plates) at the mixing zone of active transportation infrastructures (such as bike lanes, cycle tracks and multi-use trails) with transit stops (pedestrian landing pads and shelters)
- Continued awareness campaign of transit accessibility features to encourage customers to be considerate of others. The campaign uses clear and simple messaging in a friendly and non-judgemental way to educate transit riders about accessibility features, such as priority seating and service animals. It also reminds people that not all disabilities are visible
- Continued fleet improvements with "Smart Rider Lite" buses which offer accessible boarding and increased stability through the elimination of varying slopes that are created when ramps are deployed along uneven road surfaces

The AODA identifies extensive requirements for conventional and specialized transit. The MiWay 2023 Annual Accessibility Report outlines the accomplishments and current initiatives to provide accessible transportation to the community.

Universally-designed facilities and public spaces

Key outcome:

 Improved accessibility of facilities and public spaces by incorporating accessibility into the design of new/redeveloped facilities and public spaces so that residents, visitors and employees of all abilities feel welcome

Accessible public spaces include specific features that make it easier for everyone, including people with disabilities, to use public spaces. The City continued to prioritize retrofitting existing built environment barriers at facilities under the City's management to comply with the City's Facility Accessibility Design Standards, while also incorporating it in all new construction and development projects. The City also maintained accessible elements through monitoring and regularly planned maintenance, notifying the public whenever a temporary service disruption occurred.



2023-2028 Goals

- ✓ Increase the number of accessibility audits for City facilities
- ✓ Continue to renovate and redesign facilities to enhance accessibility features to support access for all
- ✓ Continue to implement accessibility improvements as part of state of good repair capital and maintenance programs
- ✓ Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance of accessible elements
- ✓ Continue to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation
- ✓ Continue to install mobility device charging stations in new and redeveloped public spaces
- ✓ Continue to enhance the accessibility of new and redeveloped playgrounds
- ✓ Consult the Mississauga Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and people
 with disabilities prior to redeveloping or constructing new public spaces under
 this Standard
- ✓ Incorporate public consultations into existing processes wherever possible
- ✓ Meet or exceed the technical requirements of DOPS
- ✓ Increase the number of accessible picnic tables at parks
- ✓ Continue to expand and improve multi-use trails
- Update the Facility Accessibility Design Standards to align with best practices and universal design principles
- Develop Classification System based on accessibility audits to help prioritize and remove existing barriers throughout the city
- Develop training courses to build expertise around universal design for indoor and outdoor spaces

- Performed accessibility audits on City facilities as part of the City's Capital Budget validation process
- Improved accessibility at several City facilities through targeted renovations:
 - Hazel McCallion Central Library
 - Added universal washrooms on three floors and upgraded washrooms featuring contact-free fixtures



- Installed 14 accessible workstations across all floors equipped with assistive technology and height-adjustable desks; added accessible kiosks (self-checkout, automated book return system and hold pickup)
- Added wheelchair spots with companion seats in Noel Ryan Auditorium
- Malton Youth Hub
 - Installed accessible entrances
 - Added accessible washrooms, universal washroom and a barrierfree gender-neutral washroom
 - Installed an elevator and created a barrier-free path of travel
- Tomken Twin Arena
 - Installed automatic sliding doors at main entrance and arena entrances
- Erin Meadows Library
 - Installed automatic door operators on staff doors to ensure access for staff using mobility devices
- Huron Park Recreation Centre
 - Replaced accessible lift in family changeroom at Huron Park Recreation Centre
- Clarke Memorial Hall
 - Replaced sinks and counter tops in both the male and female washrooms to meet accessibility requirements
- Improved accessibility at Vimy Park by adding new accessible walkways and upgrades to existing connections to the cenotaph. Installed new site furnishings such as accessible benches and improved lighting
- Improved accessibility at the Credit Woodlands by adding curb cuts, adjusted sidewalks and installed tactile plates where appropriate as part of a Tactical Urbanism project on the Credit Woodlands. Also added protective barriers to newly created pedestrian spaces
- Enhanced surfacing to meet trail standards of over 35 park trails totalling over 25 km as part of the annual park trail resurfacing program
- Constructed a new all-season accessible washroom at Richard's Memorial Park that includes male and female multi-stall washrooms and a new universal washroom. Additional upgrades include creating a barrier-free path of travel to the washroom
- Developed accessible multi-use trail connection from Second Line West to Derry Road West and provides an accessible connection, from new Second Line on-



- street pedestrian network to Derry Road West multi-use trail, completing a network for the community
- Improved accessibility at five community playgrounds through targeted improvements including accessible swing seats, transfer platforms, engineered wood fibre safety surfacing, paved access route and park benches with armrests on concrete pads
- Installed outdoor fitness equipment at Beechwood Park, including instructional signage, engineered wood mulch safety surfacing, paved trail connections, and ramps at the following locations:
- Upgraded River Grove Park Dog Leash Free Zone, expanding existing area to provide a separate, small accessible large and small dog area with new access gates, sod and mulch

Continuing Progress

As the City of Mississauga continues to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, monitoring and reporting on the progress and results in meeting the plan's commitments are important. Council and the public can track the City's progress through annual status updates and compliance reports to the province every two years. These reports are available on the City's website.

We know that more progress is needed to make the City a more accessible organization that helps people with disabilities participate fully in their life and work. Forging new partnerships and innovative ways of working will enable the City to remove more barriers and continue driving towards becoming a more accessible employer and service provider.