

# Markham's Accessibility Report Card

2015 - 2019



Access <sup>for</sup>  
Everyone

## Visible & Invisible



Everyone is impacted by disability. You could be living with one, know someone who is impacted by a disability, or you may acquire a disability as you age.

In 2012, approximately 14 per cent of Canadians over the age of 15 —3.8 million individuals—reported having a disability that limited their daily activities. In Ontario, almost 15.5 per cent of the population over the age of 15 self-identified as a person living with a disability. It is estimated that 149,500 York Region residents over the age of 15 are currently living with a disability as well (York Region 2015-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan).

Not all disabilities are visible. Barriers can exist for people who:

- Require a wheeled device, cane or walker
- Do not see or hear fully
- Have learning, intellectual or mental disabilities
- Deal with chronic conditions such as arthritis



For all of us, supporting a more accessible community is the right thing to do.

The City of Markham is committed to ensuring that residents of all abilities have equal access to municipal services and exceptional customer experiences. Council and City staff work together to continually improve the accessibility of our community, ensuring residents of all abilities experience the same quality of life.

***Building Markham's Future Together: 2015-2019 Strategic Plan supports the implementation of the Diversity Action Plan through its goal for an Engaged, Diverse and Thriving City.***

## It's the Law

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, which requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025.

To help public, private and non-profit organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, the *AODA* contains accessibility standards in the following areas:

- Customer service
- Information and communications
- Employment

- Transportation
- Built environment



### **Who does the AODA impact?**

The *AODA* immediately impacts those with restrictions due to age, mental, physical or intellectual disabilities; however, the standards outlined in the *AODA* will affect everyone in one way or another. For example, a sliding door designed for persons with disabilities could also benefit a parent pushing a stroller or someone with their hands full. At some point in time, everyone will require assistance due to a temporary or permanent disability.

**Planning for today ensures a better tomorrow for all.**

## **Leading the Way**

Markham is continuously removing accessibility barriers and recently retrofitted all of its public facilities with new accessibility features, and is committed to citizen inclusion in design, customer service, community engagement and the public realm. Even before the implementation of the *AODA*, Markham was a leader in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and continues to make great strides.

The City routinely conducts training with Members of Council, staff, volunteers and suppliers to meet or exceed the standards set out in the *AODA*. This training includes:

- **New Employee Orientation**  
Half-day session offered ten times a year
- **Diversity & Inclusion Training**  
Half-day session offered quarterly for staff  
NEW! Training for resident advisory committees
- **Online eLearning courses**  
E.g. Accessible Customer Service, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Training and Core Corporate Policies Training which covers respect in the workplace, the Ontario Human Rights Code and substance abuse

Markham also hosts a variety of staff Lunch & Learns that educate participants about different aspects of accessibility and diversity. These learning opportunities include topics such as:

- Mental health
- Deaf culture
- Autism
- Languages from around the world

# Markham's Diversity Action Plan



The City is focused on enhancing diversity and inclusion through its internationally-recognized Diversity Action Plan - *Everyone Welcome*. This plan was created in consultation with community groups, staff and various specialists. It features stories about the history of Markham, interviews with residents, information about the businesses that have moved to Markham and 68 recommendations that provide a strategic direction for the City. The cover page of this document is embossed with Braille and the inner-front cover displays the word 'welcome' in several languages to reflect the City's commitment to inclusion.

## Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

### Markham's Diversity Statement:

*"The City of Markham's approach to diversity & inclusion includes being committed to building a welcoming, cohesive community that supports dignity, fairness and respectful treatment, fosters productive conversations and invites diverse perspectives and participation."*

The above statement originates from one of the 68 recommendations in the City's Diversity Action Plan. It will be used as a guiding principle in all the City's day-to-day functions, including its internal and external interactions.

All City staff are required to participate in Diversity and Inclusion Training within their first year of employment. In 2015, Markham began training resident committees so those representing the City would understand its commitment to inclusion and appropriate customer service training. As of January 2016, the Race Relations Committee, Accessibility Committee and Youth Council have all received training.

## Accessibility Award

In 2011, Markham received recognition under the Excellence Canada – Ontario Accessibility Awards program for meeting and exceeding the requirements of the AODA.

## Diversity in Governance Award

In 2013 the City of Markham received the Diversity in Governance award from the Maytree Foundation. Markham City Council adopted a new Board & Committee Appointment policy in support of Markham's commitment to diverse representation on its Boards /Committees. The policy introduced a voluntary diversity survey that applicants were encouraged to complete to measure the diversity of Markham's Boards /Committees and a term limit was added to promote greater turnover of members to allow greater access across the City. Markham was

proud to see that more than 80% of those who applied were comfortable self identifying as a member of a diverse community.

## Advisory Committee on Accessibility

The Markham Advisory Committee on Accessibility advises Committee and Council on improving opportunities for persons with disabilities and reducing and/or eliminating accessibility barriers for all residents. Members of the advisory committee host Markham's annual Accessibility Fair where members of the community can learn about products, programs and services of interest to people with disabilities and their friends and family. The committee also actively works with City staff on site reviews and it supports the Markham Board of Trade's Annual Business Awards nominations where accessible businesses in Markham are eligible to be recognized.

### Committee Meetings

3rd Wednesday of every month  
*Except July and August*  
Markham Civic Centre  
101 Town Centre Blvd.  
Starting at 3:30 p.m.

### Other diversity-focused Committees:

- Race Relations Committee
- Markham Mayor's Youth Council
- Seniors Committee



In 2014, the City of Markham's Accessibility Committee Co-chair, Kristen Hayes, was recognized for her work in helping create a more accessible community by receiving the Citizenship Award from the Abilities Awards.

## Leadership in Diversity and Media Reporting



In 2012, Markham hosted a ground-breaking forum on Diversity in the Media in collaboration with CivicAction and a prestigious panel of journalists and media executives. The one-day forum, hosted by now Toronto Mayor John Tory of CivcAction, was designed to bring perspectives forward on the fair and equitable representation of visible minorities in news reporting. The session was live-streamed online for those that could not attend.

## Markham Hosts Inaugural Event for York Region's *Let's Talk Inclusion* Initiative



On May 4, 2015, the Regional Municipality of York launched the *Let's Talk Inclusion* initiative at the Markham Civic Centre, in partnership with the Community Partnership Council and the Municipal Multi-Cultural Reference Group. Markham and its diversity-focused committees are

proud to have played a key role in supporting this multi-phase initiative and to have set the standard for all the seminars that followed.

The *Let's Talk Inclusion* initiative will help shape the *York Region Diversity and Inclusion Charter* that will express a vision for creating a community that strives for equity and embraces, respects and values diversity.

## Markham Civic Centre Parking Lot Enhancements

The City performed major improvements to the Markham Civic Centre parking lot in advance of the 2015 Pan Am / Parapan Am Games to increase safety, accessibility and functionality for visitors and residents. Accessibility improvements include:

- Relocated islands and driveway entrances to provide individually dedicated access for vehicles and pedestrian crossings
- Textured pedestrian crossings marked with patterned concrete for improved accessibility and to signal drivers to slow down
- Urban Braille inlaid in sidewalks
- Increased number of accessibility spots close to the building

The City consulted with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility during the planning phases to ensure accessibility standards were met and exceeded. During construction, frequent updates were provided to City staff and the public.

## Programming for Everyone

The City offers high-quality programming to residents of all ages and abilities. To ensure residents with disabilities have access to the same quality programming, Markham offers several adapted programs and workshops to meet their requirements or can make adaptations to non-specialized recreation programs. Some of the City's adapted programs include:

- Art Therapy
- Adapted Aquatics
- Drama
- Healthy Cooking
- Relationship Course
- Music Therapy
- Adapted Social Skills to Independent Living
- Self Defense



At the City of Markham's summer camps, one-on-one support with trained inclusion councilors is available for campers who need assistance. This includes full support for adapted games and feeding, changing and behavior management, if required.

## Facilities Fit for All



Incorporating accessibility features is a requirement by the City of Markham in public spaces for all new construction and renovations, or buildings that are leased and/or operated by the City. Markham also actively encourages organizations throughout the City to adopt accessible design standards. This reflects Markham's commitment to addressing the needs of our diverse users, including those with or without disabilities to ensure holistic inclusivity.

**Since 2012, Markham has invested approximately \$600,000 in accessibility retrofits to its facilities**

### **Markham Pan Am Centre**

As the host venue for Para Table Tennis at the 2015 Parapan Am Games, this premiere athletic training facility was designed to exceed accessibility guidelines. It's accessibility features include:

- Accessible washrooms
- Accessible changing areas for both pool and gymnasium areas
- Designated accessible seating in the pool and gymnasium spectator viewing areas
- 21 accessible parking spaces
- Wide hallways
- Sliding front entrance doors





- Automatic doors for all rooms
- Two portable accessibility lifts to enter and exit the pool
- Accommodations for para-swimmers for swim meets with its scoring and timing system
- Accommodations for accessibility needs for various equipment in the Happy Life Fitness Centre
- Lowered front reception desk

### **Cornell Community Centre & Library**

This 154,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility opened its doors to the public in December 2012 and received more than 850,000 visits in 2015. The most unique aspect of Cornell Community Centre and Library is that it is attached to the Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). During the planning phases for this facility, MSH and the City of Markham worked diligently to ensure the connected buildings would promote innovative programs to help bridge the gap between treatment and recovery.



In November 2015, the City and MSH launched the Breathe Better program. This new and unique OHIP-covered program provides free exercise classes to help seniors in the community who are at-risk or suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) stay healthy, active and independent.



Another unique feature of this facility is the Multi-Sensory Room. This space is a gentle introduction to relaxation, and provides a quiet corner to manage stress. It's a safe, non-threatening and non-clinical environment often used by the hospital for their Mental Health Outpatient Program. The Multi-Sensory Room environment is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.

### **Council Chamber Retrofits**

Accessibility equipment for those who are hearing and visually impaired have recently been installed to encourage community engagement for residents of all abilities. Accessibility upgrades to Council Chamber include:

- Wireless headphones for increased audio
- A station for visually impaired individuals to see what is being presented
- Podiums that can be lowered
- Hand rail extensions and safety upgrades at interior stairs and ramps that include non-slip, colour contrasting nosing strips and tactile walking surface indicators

### **Main Street Markham Reconstruction**

The reconstruction of Main Street Markham from Highway 407 to Major Mackenzie Drive was a key strategic priority for the City. In transforming the area from a vehicular-dominated street to one that better supports commercial activities and pedestrian traffic, improving accessibility was front of mind. The City ensured that accessibility spots were easy to locate, urban Braille was inlaid in sidewalks and sidewalk heights were adjusted where appropriate.



### **Flato Markham Theatre**

Spectators of all abilities are invited to enjoy eclectic and electrifying performances at this world-class venue. Recently, assisted hearing devices and accessibility seating were installed so no one misses out!

### **Markham Public Libraries**

All Markham's library branches are equipped with large print and audio book collections for visually impaired visitors. The City's Chief Librarian also sits on the Steering Committee for the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA). As a member of the CELA, Markham Public Library is able to provide readers with access to CNIB book collections in a variety of accessible formats.

## **Designing of Public Spaces**

The City's Public Realm Strategy is a plan to ensure that all who live, work and play in Markham share ownership and responsibility, and aspire to create and maintain our great public spaces, while being mindful of the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines.

The City of Markham proactively applies the Accessibility Design Guidelines on all development applications, particularly for new construction and/or redevelopment projects through site plans, subdivision plans, landscape plans, parks planning, and design processes. Markham also actively encourages accessible design standards be implemented by private sector organizations within the City.



## Cadet Program for Teens with Special Needs



Markham Fire & Emergency Services (MFES) started the first Cadet Program in Ontario for students with special needs. This program allows participants who would not be able to be hired by the fire department to experience all aspects of the work they do. The Cadets spend one day a week for an entire school semester learning all roles within the fire service. They are exposed to valuable job-related skills and information such as the reporting structure, professionalism, public speaking, teamwork and punctuality. These skills will be transferable to any other career path they may choose. The intent of the program is not to focus on the fire service and how to put out a fire. The program focuses on all the soft skills associated with a work placement. The program was designed to provide an experience that would be beneficial to each Cadet for the rest of their lives.

## Fire Safety Videos in American Sign Language

A smoke alarm, carbon monoxide alarm, fire extinguisher or home escape plan could save your life. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on traditional equipment or the traditional means of communicating important fire safety information. By expanding the City's fire safety video language library to include American Sign Language (ASL), Markham will continue to strive to better serve its community.

**The City's fire safety videos are offered in eight languages: Cantonese, English, Farsi, Greek, Tamil, Turkish, Russian and now American Sign Language.**

## Accessible Municipal Services

The City provides thousands of high-quality services to the community and is continuously removing barriers to those with disabilities. City staff, Members of Council, committee

members and volunteers are all trained on how to provide accessible customer service to ensure the City of Markham meets the varying needs of its customers.

Markham is making municipal services accessible by providing:

- eAccessibility software on the City's website for those who have trouble typing, moving a mouse or reading
- Users from different cultural backgrounds with the opportunity to translate the City's website content using the Google Translate tool
- Municipal services in-person, by telephone or by email with extended service hours on Thursdays
- Telephone services in over 176 languages through Markham's Language Line
- Public documents in alternate formats upon request
- Assisted Waste and Recycling Collection Services for those with temporary and permanent disabilities



## Markham Board of Trade's Accessible Business Award



As a result of the recommendation of Markham's Advisory Committee on Accessibility, the City has partnered with the Markham Board of Trade (MBT) to offer a new category in the MBT Business Excellence Awards program. The Accessibility Award recognizes businesses that demonstrate exemplary leadership in making facilities and services increasingly accessible to all employees, customers and suppliers. Recipients are announced at MBT's annual awards gala in November.

## Opening Doors for All

Markham is committed to ensuring that all residents have full and equal access to its facilities, services and information. Accessibility makes it possible for people of all abilities to take advantage of what Markham has to offer. It means removing barriers that could stand in the way of using public buildings and outdoor facilities. It means respecting the needs of our diverse population and communicating in appropriate ways. And it means serving everyone's needs with openness, dignity and courtesy.

## Markham's Accessibility Compliance Status

Requirement	Compliance Date	Status
Submit Customer Service Standard Report	2010	Complete
Comply with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A.	2014	Complete
Submit Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Compliance Reports	2015	Complete
Provide documents in accessible formats upon request	2015	Complete
Create Public Realm Strategy that takes into account Markham's Accessibility Design Guidelines	2016	Complete
<p>Create Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Policy with procedures that address employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example: Recruitment, assessment and candidate selection</li> <li>• Return to work and redeployment</li> </ul>	2016	Complete
<p>Continue research with regional contacts and accessibility committees concerning accessible transportation for Markham</p> <p>The City has recommended the creation of a Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) that will be made up of all Vehicles for Hire stakeholders, as well as Council representation. TAC will look at a number of issues, including accessible on-demand taxis.</p>	2017	In progress
Comply with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Level AA	2021	Upcoming

## Accessibility Documents Available Online:

- Customer Service Accessibility Report
- *Access for Everyone* – Markham's Accessibility Strategy
- Accessible Customer Service Guidelines
- Accessible Customer Service Policy
- Accessible Design Guidelines
- Diversity Action Plan – *Everyone Welcome*

# Accessibility Matters

## It's everyone's responsibility

Questions or Concerns?

customerservice@markham.ca | 905-477-5530

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### Markham information in many languages

Information Markham en plusieurs langues

ਮਾਰਖਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ

Informazioni su Markham in molte lingue

萬錦市以多種語言發佈的信息

اطلاعات مارکھام به زبانهای مختلف

அநேக மொழிகளில் மார்க்கம் செய்தி

بہت ساری زبانوں میں مارکھم کی معلومات

Information available in alternate formats upon request.

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Markham is continually updating multi-year plans to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities through the implementation of the AODA and Markham's Diversity Action Plan – Everyone Welcome.

markham.ca

