

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2) – MARCH 8, 2022

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Distributed February 25, 2022

SC1. Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager,
Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief
Financial Officer, dated February 25, 2022

Subject

2020 and 2021 Annual Accessibility
Status Reports

Distributed March 4, 2022

SC2. Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management, dated
March 4, 2022

Earth Hour and 20-Minute Makeover
Update

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Please note there may be further Communications.



**STAFF COMMUNICATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

DATE: February 25, 2022

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION – March 8, 2022, Committee of the Whole 2020 and 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Reports**

Staff Communication SC1.

Committee of the Whole (2)

March 8, 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Staff Communication is to provide Mayor and Council information regarding the 2020 and 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Reports.

2. Analysis

Ontarians living with disabilities can face multiple barriers to accessing goods, services, facilities, and obtaining gainful employment. The need for accessible services will continue to grow rapidly as the population ages. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), municipalities are legislatively required to create accessible and barrier-free spaces. The introduction of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) in 2011 provided a regulatory roadmap to implementing accessibility in five critical areas of daily life, including customer service, transportation, information and communications, the design of public spaces and employment.

The AODA requires municipalities to create a multi-year accessibility plan to set and achieve accessibility goals and prepare annual status reports on progress made in implementing the multi-year plan and the steps taken to comply with Ontario Regulation 191/11. City's 2019-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan builds on past accomplishments and includes initiatives corresponding to the accessibility standards contained in the IASR. The attached annual reports for 2020 and 2021 highlight ongoing, completed, and in-progress initiatives towards creating a barrier-free environment for all residents, visitors, and employees. The City is required to post the annual status reports on its external website.

For more information, contact Zincia Francis, Zincia Francis, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Approved by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Coroneos", is positioned below the "Approved by" heading.

Michael Coroneos
Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services,
City Treasurer, and Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2020 Annual Accessibility Status Report
2. 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Report



Annual Accessibility Status Report 2020

City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada



Table of Contents

Annual Accessibility Status Report 2020

City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada

02 Introduction

04 COVID-19 Response

05 COVID-19 Assessment Centres

06 2019-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

08 General Accessibility Accomplishments

09 Status of General Accessibility Initiatives

10 Information and Communications Accomplishments

11 Status of Information and Communications Initiatives

14 Customer Service Accomplishments

15 Status of Customer Service Initiatives

16 Employment Accomplishments

17 Status of Employment Initiatives

18 Design of Public Spaces Accomplishments

18 Status of Design of Public Spaces Initiatives

20 Summary of Consultations

20 Next Steps

INTRODUCTION

The barriers and obstacles people with disabilities face are more prevalent due to the environment in which they live in rather than their impairment. These barriers can be prevented, reduced or eliminated.

The inclusivity of citizens with disabilities is a corporate-wide vision shared by Vaughan Council and staff as identified in Vaughan's 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan. The City plays a vital role in ensuring access for residents with disabilities through Vaughan's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The role of the AAC is to advise Council to support the City's work in identifying and

removing barriers to lay the foundation for a barrier-free, inclusive community.

The City of Vaughan provides a number of programs and services for people with disabilities and regularly identifies and creates new opportunities to reflect the diverse and growing program needs of the community. Opportunities for persons with disabilities are vast and include the creative arts, health and wellness, life and social skills, performing arts, sports and leadership programs. The accessibility initiatives outlined demonstrate Vaughan's commitment to being a city where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can thrive.





COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 global pandemic significantly altered the way the City provided service. COVID-19 causes a respiratory (lungs) type infection that is mild in most of the population (approximately 80%) but can be more severe in those who are older adults or those with chronic underlying conditions. The City recognized that persons with disabilities remained at an increased risk of experiencing detrimental impacts from the virus. Having a disability alone may not put people living with disabilities at higher risk for getting COVID-19 or having severe illness if infected with COVID-19; however, some people with disabilities might be at a higher risk of infection or severe illness because of their age, underlying medical conditions or their disability which could put them at greater risk of being exposed and acquiring the infection.

The known underlying health conditions that put one at greater risk for COVID-19 include diabetes, hypertension, asthma, chronic lung disease, severe heart conditions, chronic kidney disease, obesity or a weakened immune system. The following includes some of the other factors that may make a person with a disability more at risk of acquiring COVID-19 or progressing to more severe COVID-19 infection, other than age and underlying chronic conditions:

- The nature of some disabilities may put individuals at a higher risk of infection. For example, people who have difficulties washing their own hands, blind or low-vision Canadians who must physically touch objects for support or to obtain information, and those with trouble understanding and/or following public health guidance on physical distancing may be at higher risk.
- Individuals with disabilities living in long-term residential facilities may face a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to proximity to others in communal living and the need to come in contact with people living outside their accommodation.
- Individuals with disabilities interacting with multiple care providers/supports and friends have an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to increased exposure.
- Visitor and support person restrictions in hospitals, long-term care homes, congregate and individual dwellings help reduce virus transmission but can put persons with disabilities who require assistance communicating their symptoms and personal care choices at risk.

- Social isolation may impact people with disabilities' physical, social, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- Persons with disabilities may face barriers to accessing COVID-19 public communications and response services and programs, particularly where intersecting vulnerabilities are present, e.g. economic, social, language, race, age and gender.
- Treatment of unrelated health conditions may put a person with disabilities at risk if the health care system is overloaded by COVID-19. This could present barriers to health services for persons with disabilities, and would be felt acutely by persons with multiple disabilities.
- The loss of important services and supports provided through community programming, employment, access to therapies and school can also be detrimental to a persons' overall health and well-being, and lead to regression in positive development for some persons with disabilities.

It is very important that those who work and live with those with disabilities are aware of the considerations needed during COVID-19. Adapting and being creative and proactive at this time is essential to ensure the voices of those with disabilities are heard and responded to.

COVID-19 ASSESSMENT CENTRES

The City worked with public health to establish designated COVID-19 assessment centres. The City was mindful of accessibility and accommodating to those with disabilities. This includes accessibility, which means ensuring that those who can come into the centre have access to the facility (e.g. ramps, accessible parking). This also included support persons for individuals with disabilities who may be afraid, anxious and/or have a cognitive/intellectual disability.

The City also pivoted in responding to the pandemic through targeted health, community and social service programs to ensure that people with disabilities can access and benefit from the same goods, services and facilities in an equitable way as others.



2019-2022 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The City developed the 2019-2022 *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (MYAP) in 2020. The four-year plan is built upon the previous MYAP and is organized around the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) standards. The document was developed with advice from people

with disabilities, staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Initiatives in the MYAP fall under three categories: completed, in-progress and ongoing.

The breakdown of the MYAP initiatives by these categories are outlined in the table below.

Area of Focus	Number of Initiatives	Number of Category A Initiatives: Completed	Number of Category B Initiatives: In-Progress	Number of Category B Initiatives: Ongoing
General Accessibility	9	-	-	9
Information and Communication	10	-	5	5
Customer Service	10	1	1	6
Employment	6	1	1	1
Design of Public Spaces	21	3	7	4
TOTAL	54	5	14	35



GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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The City of Vaughan's [commitment to accessibility](#) strives to achieve the requirements outlined by the IASR by continuing to develop, implement and maintain policies and best practices. This

includes updating policies and practices, enhancing the City's capability to support individuals with disabilities, and providing training to staff on the requirements of the standards referred to in the IASR.



STATUS OF GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #1

Ensure training opportunities related to accessibility awareness are available and communicated to department heads so that new and current staff members can attend.

Initiative #2

Continue to ensure that recreational program planning initiatives are reviewed with an accessibility lens and by developing detailed work plans to review activities that address AODA requirements implemented in the past.

Initiative #3

Continue to cross-reference existing programs and processes with new standards to identify potential gaps.

Initiative #4

Continue to develop suggestions and recommendations through consultation with stakeholder groups when comparing standards with existing programs and procedures.

Initiative #5

Present opportunities to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and seek input regarding the availability of related knowledge barriers.

Initiative #6

Seek input from staff who require accessible support in case of emergency.

Initiative #7

Provide training to staff regarding the accessibility standards required under the Regulation and the Human Rights Code.

Initiative #8

Provide employee support by maintaining compliance with the regulation and improving the ability to communicate with and deliver services to persons with disabilities.

Initiative #9

Continue to document individualized accommodation plans through the Early and Safety Return to Work program.



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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The Information and Communications Standards under the IASR requires the City of Vaughan to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes accessible access to public safety information, materials, feedback, communication supports, formats, and website content.

The City of Vaughan, through the Information and Technology Management department, is continually taking steps to make all new websites and content on those sites comply with *World Wide Web Consortium - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG) 2.0, Level A and Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards*.

The City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines these initiatives to support our legislated obligations under the Information and Communication Standard.

- Recreation Services eNewsletter
- Behavioural and geo-targeted mobile ads
- Targeted emails to clients via PerfectMind Online Registration System
- Digital outdoor signs across the city
- Media releases posted on the City's website



STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #10 Considered individual needs of persons with disabilities and proactively provided accessible formats and communication supports or other accommodations to ensure equitable outcomes.

Initiative #11 Consistent messaging was deployed across various print, digital, web and social media channels to maximize reach among residents of all ages and abilities.

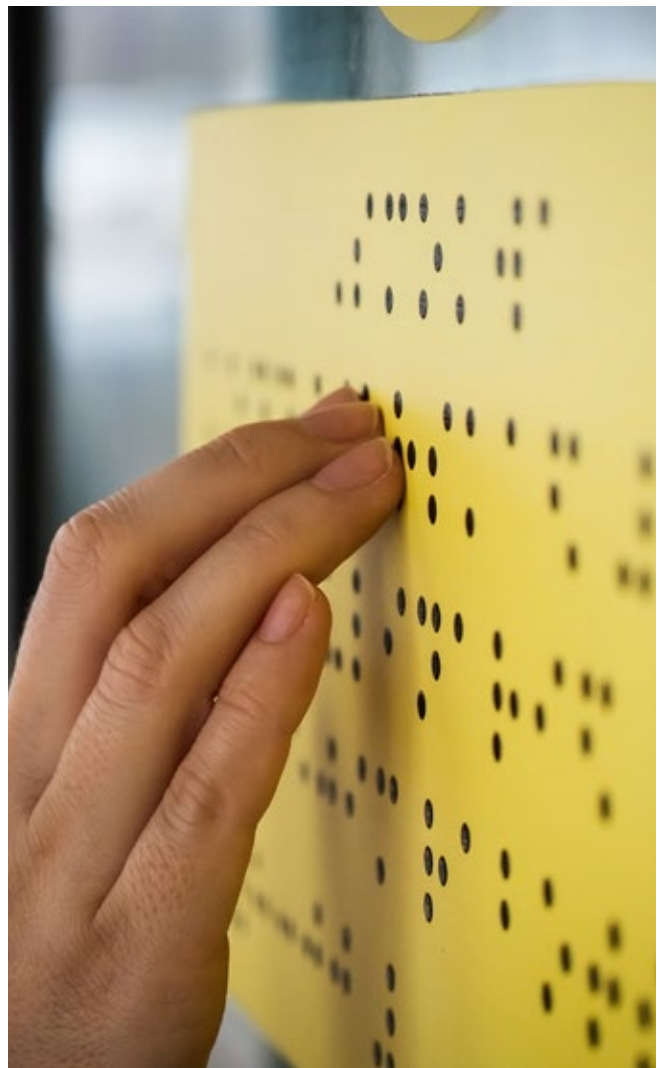
Initiative #12 Signage and posters were developed with enhanced visuals to ensure they are easy to read and be understood by persons with disabilities.

Initiative #13 The City regularly reached out to and communicated with residents who may not have an active online or social media presence by displaying important messaging on mobile signs at major intersections, paid media (e.g., ads on York Region Transit buses, TV ads at Tim Hortons), as well as direct mail (e.g., postcards to Vaughan households and condominiums).

Initiative #14 Recreation Services has worked closely with Corporate and Strategic Communications to ensure consistent messaging was deployed across the City's website, social media and eNews channels, as well as the accounts administered by Mayor and Members of Council.

Initiative #15 The "Participant with Special Needs Information Form" was included in PerfectMind and provided in an alternate format upon request.

Initiative #16 Throughout the pandemic, Recreation Services and Corporate and Strategic Communications worked to ensure



consistent messaging was deployed across the City's website, social media and eNews channels, as well as the accounts administered by Mayor and Members of Council.

Initiative #17 The City also leveraged various digital communication channels to reach residents, including persons with disabilities, which was crucial during recreation facility closures.

- Recreation Services webpages
- Recreation Services social media (Instagram, Facebook and YouTube)
- Recreation eGuide (operates on HTML 5, responsive and disability-friendly)

STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #18 Develop language to be inserted in all department communications/notices. Make public meetings accessible to the public after non-statutory and statutory public meetings by recording audio and/or video and posting podcasts and videos in a convenient location.

Initiative #19 Updating fonts and exploring duplicate publications in large print formats and alternative mediums such as audiotapes and CDs.

Initiative #20 Providing alternative formats (Braille, large print) for all public documentation to enable easier access to enable a greater number of visually impaired to access documentation.

Initiative #21 Accessible Events Checklist is being developed to ensure that events are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Initiative #22 A seasonal eGuide is being developed to be posted online, which is accessible for people with disabilities. The eGuide operates on HTML 5, which is the standard markup language for presenting content on the web. HTML 5 is responsive (i.e., publication loads and scales proportionately to screen regardless of device or browser). HTML 5 is disability-friendly (i.e., certified by WebAIM as 508 and WCAG 2.0 compliant) – user experience is dependent on browser preferences/settings.

STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #23 Enhancing accessibility by striving to update the use of plain language and videos with subtitles on an ongoing basis.

Initiative #24 Continue to ensure residents have improved access to public information on the City of Vaughan's website by providing alternative formats.

Initiative #25 Continue to invest in assistive hearing devices to communicate effectively with customers while addressing their needs.

Initiative #26 Increase community and staff awareness/knowledge through social media and public events (i.e., National Access Awareness Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Canada Day and Concerts in the Park).

Initiative #27 Notices to be large print and may include various font sizes, contrast colours to communicate more effectively with the public.

Initiative #28 Use of accessible, multi-platform communications tactics to convey important messaging to the community regarding recreation programs, services, events and news updates.



CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The accessible customer service standard aims to ensure people with disabilities receive equitable customer service among all staff. The City's [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy](#) details specific requirements regarding the provision of goods and services for persons with disabilities. This includes reviewing policies, practices and procedures, training staff, including temporary, contract

and volunteers, and providing information in an alternate format while implementing a [feedback process](#).

The City's *Accessibility Policy* lays down the foundation for accessible customer service. In addition, all divisions maintain specific customer service standards and may also have additional Accessible Customer Services Standards and guides which are unique to their area.



STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #29 Recreation Services modified existing programs and developed a Virtual Program Strategy for 2020.

Initiative #30 Recreation Services provided modified on-site specialized summer camps and virtual programs and workshops for persons with disabilities, and stayed connected with the community through social media.

Initiative #31 To ensure the safety of staff and participants, Recreation Services developed COVID-19 intake processes and provided one-on-one support staff to support the needs of those individuals with behavioural issues, mental health and personal needs.

Initiative #32 Recreation Services developed Summer Camp COVID-19 Procedures to ensure compliance with the Provincial Health and Safety Guidelines, and provided training to all recreation and facilities staff.

Initiative #33 Recreation Services developed enhanced cleaning procedures in all facilities and during the program delivery, as well as provided enhanced PPE for staff supporting participants with disabilities.

STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #34 Configuring the PerfectMind online registration system that provides online and mobile access to individuals with and without disabilities to book recreation programs.

STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #35 Recreation Services continues to provide modified services in general programs, aquatics, summer camps and fitness, and supports for persons with disabilities

Initiative #36 Recreation Services continues to liaise with external service organizations to provide enhanced funding for access and support of persons with disabilities.

Initiative #37 Strengthen quality assurance protocols and continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

Initiative #38 To ensure success in Service Excellence, Recreation Services continues to incorporate diversity and inclusion considerations that support and promote services for persons with disabilities.

Initiative #39 Continue to deliver awareness programs through the Fitness division to promote healthy and active lifestyle benefits to improve quality of life for people with disabilities: one-on-one consultation, nutrition counselling, specialty classes (e.g., TEAM fitness program, gentle fitness classes)

Initiative #40 Continue to assess the community needs to enhance recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities in all areas. Seasonal program surveys and community engagement and demographic analysis through Enveronics.

EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Employment Standards under the IASR requires that the City of Vaughan support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The City of Vaughan shall consider the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans. The City of Vaughan will take steps to prevent and remove accessibility barriers pertaining to employment through training programs, recruitment strategies and employment opportunities.

The City of Vaughan is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The City promises to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and supporting the goals of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

The City's MYAP outlines these initiatives to support our legislated obligations under the Employment Standards Regulation.





STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #41 Completed the business case to hire a Diversity and Inclusion Officer to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #42 Provided volunteer opportunities through the Expand Pathways partnership program for youth with disabilities to ensure they gain volunteer/work experiences and independence.

Initiative #43 Continue to review new employment standards and revise action plan to ensure Human Resources and the Corporation complies with new standards.

Initiative #44 Continue to review provision of information regarding the availability of accommodation in recruitment.

Initiative #45 Continue to ensure that performance management processes account for accessibility needs.



DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Vaughan recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers, and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. The City of Vaughan is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA).

The *Design of Public Spaces Standards* under the ISAR requires obligated organizations to consult with people with disabilities, accessibility advisory committee members and the public for the following areas: recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, on-street parking spaces.

By making these *Inclusive Design Standards* (IDS) available to all planning, design and development sectors, the City of Vaughan demonstrates its commitment to proactive measures to eliminate and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #46 The City hired consultants to develop the IDS to ensure the design of products and environments is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Initiative #47 Signs, automatic door openers and additional designated accessible parking, universal washrooms and change areas have been installed/upgraded to provide easier direct access to the community centres and activity rooms.

Initiative #48 Installed automatic door openers where necessary for ease of movement when entering and exiting each department.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #49 Implementing a Global Positioning System on all sidewalk units, city facilities and plow trucks to provide immediate information on the status of snow clearing operations by location to enhance winter maintenance.

Initiative #50 Option to check materials independently at express checkouts. Incorporated for new library construction. Voice-activated information retrieval.

Initiative #51 Braille included on directional signage and elevator buttons within Vaughan Public Libraries facilities while continuing to include on all new signage.

Initiative #52 Continue to assist with individual's mobility and alleviate physical/emotional stress of staff by improving their ability to work through the implementation of ergonomic keyboards, mouse, chairs, desks, telephone, storage and files.

Initiative #53 Continue to ensure physical barriers are removed (i.e., storage, photocopiers, printers and recycling bins) while maintaining minimum aisle widths.

Initiative #54 Maintaining a clear path of travel around boardroom tables and at egress points (i.e., chairs, screens, portable presentation equipment).

Initiative #55 Better signage in corridors to increase visual communication and access to reduce directional inquiries. New City Hall has partially addressed this with displays and department signage at counters.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #56 Continue to purchase 17-inch monitors as part of the computer replacement program at Vaughan Public Libraries.

Initiative #57 Enhancing safety for pedestrians with low vision by continuously updating engineering standards and design criteria to include directional lines at new commercial driveways.

Initiative #58 Developing new signage and warning signs at trails, walkways, entrances and stormwater management ponds.

Initiative #59 Continue to increase mobility for people with physical disabilities by continuing to inspect park sidewalks utilizing inspection sheets and schedule repairs under an annual contract.

Initiative #60 Continue to repair/replace sidewalks for safer pedestrian and wheelchair movement.

Initiative #61 Continue with street sweeping and flushing program on a regular basis for safer pedestrian and wheelchair movement, as well as reduced problems resulting from dust.

Initiative #62 Repairing potholes in accordance with the Ministry of Transportation's regulation for safer pedestrian and wheelchair travel.

Initiative #63 Continue to apply dust suppressants seasonally and as required to reduce complaints from residents with allergy/respiratory problems.

Initiative #64 Continue to provide a residential driveway windrow clearing program.

Initiative #65 Identify libraries currently not able to provide barrier-free access to the library; seek funding approval for renovation. New libraries to incorporate accessibility standards to continue to ensure new buildings are accessible.

Initiative #66 Wet Field Policy guidelines have been completed to reflect internal procedures for Parks Operations, which notifies Access Vaughan and Parks and Forestry clerical staff of service disruption so they can address inquiries.

Summary of Consultations

As a municipality with more than 10,000 residents, the City consults with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to establish, review and update the multi-year accessibility plans and to consult when building new trails and outdoor play spaces. In 2020, the City informed or consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on the following:

- Office of the Chief Information Officer provided a presentation titled “Accessibility Perspective (Technology)”
- Director of Facility Management provided a presentation titled “Facility Management – Infrastructure Development”
- Nastaran Saberi and Justin Murfitt, GEOMATE, Westmount Road North, Waterloo, provided a presentation titled “Introduction to AccessMate”
- Director of Corporate and Strategic Communications, the Manager of Marketing and Creative Services and the Communications Advisor (External and Website Content Management) provided a presentation titled “Enhancing the Citizen Experience through Accessibility”
- Philip O’Sullivan, Senior Architect, Senior Associate, Perkins + Will; and Stephanie Payne, Project Manager, The MBTW Group, provided a presentation titled “Carrville Community Centre, Library and District Park”
- Interim Deputy City Manager, Community Services and Director and Chief Licensing Officer, By-law Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services provided a presentation titled “By-law and Compliance”

Next Steps

The City continues to work to achieve a barrier-free city where all residents and visitors feel included. The 2019-2022 *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* will be presented to Council for approval at the beginning of 2021.

For more information on the City of Vaughan’s accessibility plans and initiatives, visit vaughan.ca/accessibility.





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Annual Accessibility Status Report 2021

City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada



Table of Contents

Annual Accessibility Status Report 2021

City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada

02 Introduction

- 02** Accessibility Advisory Committee
- 03** Accessibility Champions Awards
- 03** Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Certification

04 COVID-19 Response

06 2019-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

- 08** General Accessibility Accomplishments
- 09** Status of General Accessibility Initiatives
- 10** Information and Communications Accomplishments
- 11** Status of Information and Communications Initiatives
- 12** Customer Service Accomplishments
- 13** Status of Customer Service Initiatives
- 14** Employment Accomplishments
- 15** Status of Employment Initiatives
- 16** Design of Public Spaces Accomplishments
- 16** Status of Design of Public Spaces Initiatives

17 Summary of Consultations

17 Next Steps

INTRODUCTION

The City of Vaughan is dedicated to fostering an equitable, inclusive and accessible community for all citizens and visitors. As a reflection of this commitment to advancing accessibility, Vaughan Council approved the City's *2019-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (MYAP), which identifies how the City will create a barrier-free community with universal access to its programs, services and facilities.

The City's goal is to create an accessible community by 2025. The MYAP outlines the path to achieving that goal and the various activities and initiatives the City will undertake to support accessibility, including implementing new programs and services, creating accessible play spaces, using accessible technology, implementing accessible employment practices and achieving additional Rick Hansen Gold Accessibility Certifications.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Vaughan's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was established to help guide the City in removing and preventing barriers in policies, practices, programs and services in a way that meets the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The committee assisted in creating Vaughan's MYAP, and helped to identify accessibility opportunities and challenges within the community. All committee meetings are posted to the City's meeting calendar at vaughan.ca.

The inclusivity of citizens with disabilities is a corporate-wide vision shared by Vaughan Council and staff as identified in Vaughan's *2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan*. The City plays an important role in ensuring access for residents with disabilities through the AAC.



ACCESSIBILITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS

Established in 2019 by the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the award recognizes businesses and individuals that foster inclusivity and advance accessibility throughout the city. Vaughan Accessibility Champions can be nominated in four categories – as an individual, a small business with fewer than 20 employees, a medium or large business with 20 or more employees, or an individual with a disability.



RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION GOLD CERTIFICATION

In recognition of the City's efforts toward accessibility, the Rick Hansen Foundation has awarded multiple City facilities with Gold Certification for accessibility. They include Vaughan City Hall, Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service firehalls 7-4 and 7-10, Vaughan Civic Centre Resource Library, and the North Thornhill Community Centre and Pleasant Ridge Library as a combined facility. Various accessibility enhancements, such as automatic door openers, tactile walking surface indicators at stair areas and accessible seating, have contributed to reaching this milestone.

The City has received several awards for its accessibility efforts, including the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Accessibility Award and the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility.

The City of Vaughan provides several programs and services for people with disabilities and regularly identifies and creates new opportunities to reflect the community's diverse and growing program needs. Opportunities for persons with disabilities are vast and include the creative arts, health and wellness, life and social skills, performing arts, sports and leadership programs. These accessibility initiatives demonstrate Vaughan's commitment to being a city where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities thrive.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The City has committed to ensuring that all employees and volunteers receive training related to COVID-19, AODA and accessibility training. In March of 2021, the City of Vaughan partnered with York Region Public Health to operate a mass vaccination clinic at the Maple Community Centre. The City ensured all clinics had:

- wheelchairs available to patrons
- accessible washrooms available for patrons
- COVID-19 screenings available in multiple languages
- interpreters available via a call line for those requiring multi-lingual service
- York Region Public Health nurses to provide in-car vaccines for those unable to exit their vehicle to enter the clinic

The City provided municipal staff from Recreation Services and Vaughan Public Libraries to assist in clinic operations for

non-clinical roles, including check-in, line management, cleaning and disinfecting. Staff assisted in clinic operations from March 2021 to August 2021. At that time, York Region Public Health reduced its footprint within the Maple Community Centre and required fewer staff resources from the City.

The City continued to provide York Region Public Health space for various pop-up clinics throughout 2021 at multiple City of Vaughan facilities. The Maple Community Centre Vaccine Clinic continues to operate. Most recently, in January 2022, Recreation Services has provided assistance with municipal staff for non-clinical roles as the vaccine clinic has ramped up operations and appointments.

For all vaccine clinics operating out of City facilities, the City worked collaboratively to install various ramps to ensure accessible access in and out of the clinic.





2019-2022 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

In 2021, Vaughan Council adopted the *2019-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (MYAP). This four-year plan is organized around the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) legislation and standards, and was developed with advice from people with disabilities, staff and Vaughan's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Initiatives in the MYAP fall under one of two categories:

The breakdown of the MYAP initiatives by these categories are outlined in the table below.

Area of Focus	Number of Initiatives	Number of Category A Initiatives: Completed	Number of Category B Initiatives: In-Progress	Number of Category B Initiatives: Ongoing
General Accessibility	9	-	-	9
Information and Communication	11	2	4	5
Customer Service	10	2	2	6
Employment	6	1	1	4
Design of Public Spaces	21	1	9	11
TOTAL	57	6	16	35



GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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The barriers and obstacles people with disabilities face are more prevalent due to the environment in which they live rather than their disabilities. Obstacles to participation that often stem from the environment can be effectively prevented, reduced or eliminated.

The City of Vaughan's commitment to accessibility strives to achieve the

requirements outlined by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) by continuing to develop, implement and maintain policies and best practices. This includes updating policies and practices, enhancing the City's capability to support individuals with disabilities, and training staff on the requirements of the standards referred to in the IASR.



STATUS OF GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #1

Ensure training opportunities on accessibility awareness are available and communicated to department heads so new and current staff members can attend.

Initiative #2

Continue to ensure recreational program planning initiatives are reviewed with an accessibility lens: by developing detailed work plans to review activities that address AODA requirements which have been implemented in the past.

Initiative #3

Continue to cross-reference existing programs and process with new standards to identify potential gaps.

Initiative #4

Continue to develop suggestions and recommendations through consultation with stakeholder groups when comparing standards with existing programs and procedures.

Initiative #5

Present opportunities to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and seek input regarding the availability of knowledge-related barriers.

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Seek input from staff who require accessible support in case of emergency.

Initiative #7

Provide training to staff regarding the accessibility standards required under the regulation and the Human Rights Code.

Initiative #8

Provide employee support by continuing to maintain compliance with the regulation and improve the ability to communicate with and deliver services to persons with disabilities.

Initiative #9

Continue to document individualized accommodation plans through the Early and Safety Return to Work program.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Information and Communications Standards under the IASR require the City of Vaughan to communicate and provide information in ways accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing accessible access to public safety information, materials, feedback, communication supports, formats and website content.

The City of Vaughan is continually taking steps to make all new websites and content on those sites comply with World Wide Web Consortium – *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG) 2.0, Level A and Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards*.

The City's Recreation Services department continued to create and implement actions to ensure programs, services and facilities were accessible for everyone. The visual design on all digital platforms continued to be created with accessibility in mind – it is clean, includes images and copy, and is sized to be responsive to each platform. The Recreation Services website (including PDFs) incorporates Vaughan's standard accessibility features. This includes:

- **Alt text** – alternative text used to describe text used, button actions or description of visuals represented in an image/graphic
- **Descriptions** – for images, buttons and fields to elaborate its purpose if further clarification is needed
- **Colour contrast checker** – colour contrast is sufficient and not too faint for those who have vision disabilities or are colour blind
- **Links** – are clearly identifiable by providing another visual cue (underline or bold) for ease of scanning a page
- **Tags** – headings and page content are tagged appropriately (titles, paragraph, etc.), organized and meets coding standards for screen readers
- **Font/text size** – formatted so it is readable and can be enlarged or scaled to user preference

STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #10 Accessible Events Checklist was created to ensure events are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Initiative #11 A seasonal eGuide was posted online, which is accessible for people with disabilities. The eGuide operates on HTML 5, which is the standard markup language for presenting content on the web. HTML 5 is responsive (i.e., publication loads and scales proportionately to screen regardless of device or browser). HTML 5 is disability-friendly (i.e., certified by WebAIM as 508 & WCAG 2.0 compliant) – user experience is dependent on browser preferences/settings.

STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #12 Touchscreen computers are currently being integrated at the front service counter to provide various audio/visual options for further accessibility.

Initiative #13 Developing language to be inserted in all department communications/notices. Make public meetings accessible to the public after non-statutory and statutory public meetings by recording audio and/or video, and posting podcasts and videos in a convenient location.

Initiative #14 Updating fonts and exploring duplicate publication in large print formats and alternative mediums, such as on audio tapes and CDs.

Initiative #15 Providing alternative formats (Braille, large print) for all public documentation to enable easier access to enable a greater number of visually impaired to access documentation.

STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #16 Enhancing accessibility by striving to update the use of plain language and videos with subtitles on an ongoing basis.

Initiative #17 Continue to ensure residents have improved access to public information on the City of Vaughan's website by providing alternative formats.

Initiative #18 Continue to invest in assistive hearing devices to communicate effectively with customers while addressing their needs.

Initiative #19 Increase community and staff awareness/knowledge through social media and public events – i.e., National Access Awareness Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Canada Day, and Concerts in the Park.

Initiative #20 Notices to be large print, and may include various font sizes, contrast colours to more effectively communicate with the public.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The accessible customer service standard aims to ensure people with disabilities receive equitable customer service among all staff. The City's [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy](#) details specific requirements regarding the provision of goods and services for persons with disabilities. This includes reviewing policies, practices and procedures, training staff, including temporary, contract

and volunteers, and providing information in an alternate format while implementing a [feedback process](#).

The City's *Accessibility Policy* lays down the foundation for accessible customer service. In addition, all divisions maintain specific customer service standards and may also have additional Accessible Customer Services Standards and guides which are unique to their area.



STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #21 Configured the Perfectmind online registration system that provides online and mobile access to individuals with and without disabilities to book recreation programs.

Initiative #22 Recreation Services developed a Virtual Program Strategy.

STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #23 Implementing best practices of graphic design to increase legibility for individuals with low vision while developing an accessibility promotions plan for communicating library services, audit pages online, and apply improvements to messaging and visibility.

Initiative #24 Installing priority ranking for customers who call back if they are disconnected to improve the ability of customers with disabilities to have inquiries and problems successfully resolved.

STATUS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #25 Recreation Services continues to provide modified services in general programs, aquatics, summer camps and fitness, and supports for persons with disabilities

Initiative #26 Recreation Services continues to liaise with external service organizations to provide enhanced funding for access and support of persons with disabilities.

Initiative #27 Strengthen quality assurance protocols and continue to evaluate City programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated programs.

Initiative #28 To ensure success in Service Excellence, Recreation Services continues to incorporate diversity and inclusion considerations that support and promote services for persons with disabilities.

Initiative #29 Continue to deliver awareness programs through the Fitness division to promote healthy and active lifestyle benefits to improve quality of life for people with disabilities: one-on-one consultation, nutrition counselling, speciality classes (e.g., TEAM fitness program, gentle fitness classes)

Initiative #30 Continue to assess community needs to enhance recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities in all areas. Seasonal program surveys and community engagement and demographic analysis through Enveronics.

EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Employment Standards under the IASR require that the City of Vaughan support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The City of Vaughan considers the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans. The City of Vaughan remains committed to preventing and removing accessibility barriers pertaining to employment through training programs, recruitment strategies and employment opportunities.

The City's MYAP outlines these initiatives to support legislated obligations under the Employment Standards Regulation.



STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #31 Hired Diversity and Inclusion Officer to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #32 Project Search - Employment for Persons with Different Abilities program is in the process of being included as part of the orientation/onboarding program. Pilot Project with York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) to begin September 2022.



STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #33 Provide volunteer opportunities through the Expand Pathways partnership program for youth with disabilities to ensure they gain volunteer/work experiences and independence.

Initiative #34 Continue to review new employment standards and revise action plan to ensure Human Resources and the Corporation complies with new standards.

Initiative #35 Continue to review provision of information regarding the availability of accommodation in recruitment.

Initiative #36 Continue to ensure that performance management processes account for accessibility needs.



DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Vaughan recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers, and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. The City of Vaughan is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA)

The *Design of Public Spaces Standards* under the ISAR requires obligated organizations to consult with people with disabilities, accessibility advisory committee members and the public for the following areas: recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, on-street parking spaces.

By making these *Inclusive Design Standards* (IDS) available to all planning, design and development sectors, the City of Vaughan demonstrates its commitment to proactive measures to eliminate and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: COMPLETED

Initiative #37 The City developed the IDS to ensure the design of products and environments is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: IN-PROGRESS

Initiative #38 Implementing a GPS system on all sidewalk units, city facilities and plow trucks to provide immediate information on the status of snow clearing operations by location to enhance winter maintenance.

Initiative #39 Option to check materials independently at express checkouts. Incorporated for new library construction. Voice-activated information retrieval.

Initiative #40 Braille included on directional signage and elevator buttons within the Vaughan Public Libraries facilities while continuing to include on all new signage.

Initiative #41 Continue to assist with individual's mobility and alleviate physical/emotional stress of staff by improving their ability to work through the implementation of ergonomic keyboards, mouse, chairs, desks, telephones, storage and files.

Initiative #42 Continue to ensure that physical barriers are removed – i.e., storage, photocopiers, printers, recycling bins – while maintaining minimum aisle widths.

Initiative #43 Maintaining clear path of travel around boardroom tables and at egress points (i.e., chairs, screens, portable presentation equipment).

Initiative #44 Include pedestrian countdown timers, audible pedestrian signal features and crosswalk pavement markings at new traffic signals, and retrofit in older areas.

Initiative #45 Better signage in corridors to increase visual communication and access to reduce directional inquiries. New City Hall has partially addressed this with displays and department signage at counters.

Initiative #46 Public consultation, in partnership with Facility Management Services, identified accessibility barriers as part of the revitalization projects at Maple, Garnet A. Williams and North Thornhill community centres, as well as gaps and barriers in the delivery of recreational services to persons with disabilities. Reconfiguration of Maple Community Centre recreational space in progress.

STATUS OF DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES INITIATIVES: ONGOING

Initiative #47 Continue to purchase 17-inch monitors as part of the computer replacement program at Vaughan Public Libraries.

Initiative #48 Enhancing safety for pedestrians with low vision by continuously updating engineering standards and design criteria to include directional lines at new commercial driveways.

Initiative #49 Developing new signage and warning signs at trails, walkways, entrances and stormwater management ponds.

Initiative #50 Continue to increase mobility for people with physical disabilities by continuing to inspect park sidewalks utilizing inspection sheets and schedule repairs under annual contract.

Initiative #51 Continue to repair/replace sidewalks for safer pedestrian and wheelchair movement.

Initiative #52 Continue with street sweeping and flushing program on a regular basis for safer pedestrian and wheelchair movement, as well as reduced problems resulting from dust.

Initiative #53 Repairing potholes in accordance with Ministry of Transportation's regulation for safer pedestrian and wheelchair travel.

Initiative #54 Continue to apply dust suppressants seasonally and as required to reduce complaints from residents with allergy/respiratory problems.

Initiative #55 Continue to provide a residential driveway windrow-clearing program.

Initiative #56 Identify libraries currently not able to provide barrier-free access to library; seek funding approval for renovation. New libraries to incorporate accessibility standards to continue to ensure new buildings are accessible.

Initiative #57 *Wet Field Policy* guidelines have been completed to reflect internal procedures for Parks Operations, which notifies Access Vaughan and Parks and Forestry clerical staff of service disruption so they can address inquiries.

Summary of Consultations

As a municipality with more than 10,000 residents, the City consults with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to establish, review and update the multi-year accessibility plans and to consult when building new trails and outdoor play spaces. In 2021, the City informed or consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on the following:

- Interim Deputy City Manager, Community Services and Director and Chief Licensing Officer, By-law Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services, provided a presentation entitled “By-law and Compliance”.
- Recipients for the 2021 Accessibility Champion Awards were selected by the committee for the following four (4) categories:
 - Individual
 - Small Business (fewer than 20 employees)
 - Medium/Large Business (20 or more employees)
 - Individual with a disability
- Member’s Resolution from Regional Councillor Linda Jackson, Chair, was provided on Treat Accessibly.

Next Steps

As the City approaches the end of the *2019-2022 Multi-year Accessibility Plan*, the City will be evaluating its progress toward a barrier-free City and developing a new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for upcoming term of Council 2022-2026.





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DATE: March 4, 2022

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION
Committee of the Whole (2) – March 8, 2022
Earth Hour and 20-Minute Makeover Update**

**Staff Communication SC2.
Committee of the Whole (2)
March 8, 2022**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Staff Communication is to provide Mayor and Members of Council with information regarding the 2022 Earth Hour and 20-Minute Makeover events.

2. Analysis

2022 Earth Hour

Earth Hour is a global initiative of the World Wildlife Fund that targets energy reduction and climate action. By participating in Earth Hour, the City continues to demonstrate environmental leadership by providing education and awareness to the Vaughan community to encourage behavioral changes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The City of Vaughan has supported Earth Hour for thirteen years by partnering with the Earth Hour Vaughan Committee, which is made up of resident volunteers, to host an annual celebration at Vaughan City Hall. In 2020, in light of precautionary measures surrounding COVID-19 the Earth Hour Vaughan event was cancelled, and in 2021 it transitioned to a virtual event.

The 2022 Earth Hour Vaughan event will be held on Saturday, March 26, 2022, with a combination of virtual and in-person programming. With the understanding that the proposed plan may need to be altered based on updated COVID-19 guidance from City staff and/or York Region Public Health, the following activities have been identified:

1. A nighttime walk starting at 8:30pm, guided by Earth Hour Vaughan Committee members and community volunteers. A walking route has been developed for the communities of Kleinberg, Maple, Thornhill and Woodbridge. Residents will be encouraged to turn off the lights at home, grab flashlights and a warm drink and come out with their household/family unit to complete the walk in their neighbourhood. Participants will be encouraged to follow all COVID-19 guidelines put in place by the City of Vaughan and York Region Public Health.

2. The [Earth Hour Vaughan webpage](#) will host a variety of resources and ways to get involved online, including:
 - A virtual message board where community members can provide live updates of how they are celebrating Earth Hour.
 - A video message from Mayor Bevilacqua.
 - A list of resources on how to improve energy efficiency.
 - Tips on how to celebrate Earth Hour from home.

The Earth Hour Vaughan Committee coordinates all aspects of the event in consultation with City of Vaughan representatives and will be tasked with securing the necessary financial contribution or in-kind support from other community partners to execute the event. City staff will provide assistance with marketing and promotion of the event.

2022 20-Minute Makeover

Every year in April, in honour of Earth Day, residents in Vaughan come together to take part in the City of Vaughan's 20-Minute Makeover litter cleanup. The City of Vaughan has coordinated a 20-Minute Makeover event for the past fifteen years. This annual event encourages participants to enjoy active time outdoors, promotes civic pride and demonstrates community stewardship. Participating in the 20-Minute Makeover is Vaughan's contribution to larger campaigns at a federal and global level to raise environmental awareness, including Pitch-In Canada and Earth Day Canada.

In 2020 and 2021, in light of precautionary measures surrounding COVID-19 the 20-Minute Makeover event was cancelled. The 2022 event is different than in previous years and has been planned to accommodate the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic. From Monday, April 18 until Sunday, April 24, the community will be encouraged to celebrate the beginning of spring by taking 20 minutes to go outside on whichever day – or days – are most convenient, to help clean litter in local outdoor spaces.

Registration will begin on March 15, 2022 via the [20-Minute Makeover webpage](#); staff from the Policy Planning and Special Programs department will administer the event and track the participation rate. Following registration, participants can pick up a clean-up kit, sponsored by GLAD, with bags and gloves from the Joint Operations Centre, or request for the kit to be dropped off at their home. The Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations department will facilitate pick up and drop off of the clean-up kits and collect litter bags generated from the clean-up, deposited at the closest garbage receptacle on City owned land.

Groups can choose to clean-up their own properties or other non-City owned lands, however these groups will be responsible for the proper disposal of the litter.

All City departments will be encouraged to participate in the 20-Minute Makeover event, provided they are able to wear a mask and follow other COVID-19 guidelines while gathering. City staff participation demonstrates leading by example in support of Green Directions Vaughan 2019.

For more information, contact Alanna MacKenzie, Sustainability Coordinator, ex. 8941

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Haiqing Xu', written in a cursive style.

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager
Planning & Growth Management