



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, May 27, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barrie's Accessibility Advisory Committee marks 20 years of service during National AccessAbility Week

(Barrie, ON) The week of May 30 to June 5, 2021 is National AccessAbility Week and the City of Barrie is also acknowledging a landmark anniversary. This year is the 20th anniversary of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC's mandate is to champion issues related to the provision of an accessible community on behalf of all Barrie citizens.

"Over the last 20 years, Barrie's Accessibility Advisory Committee has made many strides in making our city more inclusive," notes Cheryl Dillon, Disability Management and Accessibility Specialist. "We truly value their insight, experiences and ideas as they support Council's strategic goal of ensuring Barrie offers opportunities for residents of all abilities to be involved in our community."

From 2001 to present day, some of the AAC achievements and highlights over the years include:

- **2001:** The Ontarians with Disabilities Act received Royal Assent and Barrie, like all municipalities in Ontario with populations greater than 10,000, creates its first Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **2002:** The AAC conducts accessibility facility audits of all City facilities. The Committee works with Transit to assess barriers on Transit and BACTS (now Specialized Transit).
- **2004:** Provides feedback to staff on barriers to accessibility in City programs and services.
- **2005:** The Committee provides feedback on design and construction for Holly Recreation Centre.
- **2006:** Barrie Council chambers receives a new audio system which boasts easier viewing of presentations, hearing assist devices and a wheelchair accessible podium. During the municipal election, voting machines have accessible headsets, dial pads and a larger print capability.
- **2007:** The AAC hosts Accessibility Awareness Day at City Hall to demonstrate accessible equipment. The Audible Pedestrian Signal Program expands with signals installed at the Livingstone Street and Bayfield Street intersection, and the Paint the Town Yellow curb identification program begins.
- **2009:** The City's first Accessible Customer Service Policy receives approval, along with staff training on accessible customer service.
- **2011:** City website redesign in accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards.
- **2012:** All City of Barrie buses are fully accessible and an automated next stop call system is implemented.
- **2013:** The City's first Multi-year Accessibility Plan and Multi-year Accessibility Plan for Transit is introduced.
- **2014:** The Committee consults with staff for the design and development of *Every Kid's a Hero Adventure* accessible playground at Sunnidale Park.
- **2016:** BrowseAloud, a text-to-speech web-based screen reader, is added to the City's website.



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- **2017:** The AAC establishes the Accessible Business Recognition Awards to award local businesses making efforts to reduce barriers to accessibility.
- **2019:** Mobi Mats installation at Centennial Beach for increased accessibility. The AAC provides consultation for accessible garden plots in community gardens.
- **2020:** The Committee provides feedback and consultation on updates to the City's draft Official Plan and creation of the City's Urban Design Guidelines to incorporate universal design principles.
- **2021:** The AAC provides feedback and consultation on winter maintenance and accessibility of City walkways.

[National AccessAbility Week](#) takes place in late May each year. It's an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities, and recognize the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces that are actively working to remove barriers. The City of Barrie [proclaims](#) May 30 to June 5 as AccessAbility Week and encourages all residents to support equality of access and opportunity for persons with disabilities.

To learn more about the City's Advisory Committees, including the AAC, visit barrie.ca/committees. Visit the 'Accessibility' tile at barrie.ca/InclusiveCommunity to find out more about accessibility initiatives in the City of Barrie.

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