

Improving Accessibility at Town Hall

Program: Enabling Accessibility Fund

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2013, Richmond Hill received financial assistance from Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund to improve accessibility at its municipal offices.

Richmond Hill's Accessibility Plan commits to improving opportunities for individuals with disabilities and describes the Town's role in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to participation at its municipal buildings and throughout the community. Older facilities were often built with limited accessibility amenities, and in 2009 Richmond Hill conducted an accessibility audit to identify barriers. The barriers identified at the municipal offices were seen as a priority to remove because of the number of people that depend upon Town services offered at the facility, such as property tax, water bill and parking ticket payments; issuance of marriage licenses; and registration for programs.

According to Richmond Hill's Accessibility Plan, 1 in 7 residents are affected by a disability.

The municipal offices accessibility project includes: adjustments to existing washrooms, relocating defibrillator cabinets, improving signage for assistive hearing devices, and the implementation of an emergency notification system for staff and visitors with hearing impairments. In the washrooms, the project will include the installation of automatic door openers, accessible faucets and soap dispensers, insulation of water and drain lines under vanity counters, and upgrades to stall doors to provide wider access and self-closing capabilities.

As a result of these improvements, Richmond Hill is demonstrating its commitment to removing barriers to effective participation in the community and to improving building functionality. Removing barriers to participation for persons with disabilities removes barriers for everyone.

Project Highlights:

Shared federal and municipal investment in removing barriers to participation in the community.

Upgrades include:

- Making adjustments to existing washrooms that help eliminate physical barriers
- Upgrading public safety equipment to increase accessibility
- Improving awareness and communication of accessibility devices that are available at Town Hall

Renovations and additions will reduce barriers to services and provide a more accessible environment.



“ We continue to move towards building and fostering a more inclusive community for all those that access our facilities, programs and services. ”

Mayor Dave Barrow



Richmond Hill, where people come together to build our community.

PROJECT FACTS	
Project Budget:	\$71 384.64
Government of Canada Contribution:	\$42 830.64
Completion Date:	March 2015

PROJECT BENEFITS

Retrofitting Richmond Hill’s municipal offices benefits all citizens as we make our facilities, information, and services easier for everyone to access:

Remove Barriers to Participation

Removing physical barriers to participation will allow more individuals the opportunity to be included in community activity and fulfill the *Accessibility Plan’s* commitment to provide public services in an accessible manner.

Municipal Leadership

Through the *Accessibility Plan* and accessibility upgrade initiatives, Richmond Hill continues to play its part in demonstrating the importance of a barrier-free community. Richmond Hill is taking steps to continue to identify and remove barriers to persons with disabilities to ensure that all services are accessible to staff and residents and to comply with legislative requirements.



The pathway to accessibility is an opportunity to serve as a municipal role model and to make choices that benefit the whole community.

Accessibility Audit

- The goal of the 2009 Accessibility Audit was to strategically plan for barrier removal as mandated in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).
- Applied a universal approach to identifying barriers, recognizing needs of people of all ages and abilities throughout different stages of life, including permanent, temporary, and invisible disabilities.
- Common barriers identified were often present at older facilities, where there was limited or no accessibility provision included in the original design. For some locations accessibility provisions exist, but are considered outdated by today’s standards.



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