

# **Response to the initial recommendations of the Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee**

(IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)

City of Ottawa

August 2024

## **Introduction**

By way of introduction, my name is Caitlin Salter MacDonald and I am the City Clerk of the City of Ottawa. Under the Delegation of Authority By-law (No. 2024-265), Ottawa City Council has delegated to me the authority to execute and file with the designated Provincial authority all accessibility reports and other information required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. In this instance, I am pleased to submit comments on the initial recommendations of the Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee (SDC). These comments have been prepared in consultation with dozens of colleagues across the City of Ottawa's 12 administrative departments over the last several weeks. Please note that, while we use the term "the City" in several places throughout this document, the professional opinions expressed are those of City staff, and should not necessarily be construed as those of Ottawa's City Council.

The City is committed to continuously adapt and improve its policies, practices, and requirements to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the built environment. Clear standards allow residents and employees to request and/or access accessible outdoor and indoor public spaces and other supports to enhance both their everyday experiences and their productivity. To ensure an inclusive society, people with disabilities must be able to participate fully and equally in the creation and use of barrier-free accessible designs and spaces.

The City of Ottawa's Accessibility Design Standards (ADS) go beyond what is required by legislation, including the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard. Any changes to the DOPS will be reflected in future updates to the City's ADS.

As previously shared in correspondence with the Province, the City of Ottawa has recently faced challenges in the interpretation of Sections 80.23, 80.26 and 80.27 of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) regarding the requirements set out in the DOPS.

Specifically, it is difficult to classify various construction programs as either maintenance or redevelopment within the definitions currently provided under the DOPS. A full assessment of the scope of all City construction programs was conducted with support from the Accessibility Office and Legal Services to ensure programs meet the legislation; however, there are difficulties in determining the scope of individual projects given the current definitions. The City fully supports the SDC's recommendations to improve and clarify definitions under the Standard.

Overall, the City of Ottawa supports the offered changes in objective of the Standard, as this simplified version may provide greater clarity to organizations and the public.

The City fully supports the development of training and resources to support organizations who are obligated under the Standard. The City also supports the recommendations which would increase enforcement of this Standard, as feedback consistently demonstrates this is lacking.

The City also fully supports discussion among Provincial Ministries to align requirements for the built environment, such as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for requirements related to site plan reviews by Accessibility Advisory Committees, and the Ministry of Transportation for matters related to bridge accessibility.

The City has also noted instances where the proposed changes would cause budgetary and constructability concerns. We encourage the Province to consider funding opportunities for organizations, including municipalities, to implement legislative changes that increase accessibility.

City staff have also provided their additional feedback on the 127 recommendations below:

## **Recommendation 1: Long-term objectives of the design of public spaces standards**

**Concur.** The City supports the long-term objectives of the DOPS Standard. This will provide greater understanding and direction to the Standard itself.

## **Recommendation 2: Align definitions of major/extensive renovations**

**Concur.** The City supports aligning definitions of major and extensive renovations. This will clarify project classifications as to when and how the DOPS applies.

## **Recommendation 3: Municipal site plan accessibility strategy**

**Concur.** The City supports the municipal site plan accessibility strategy. It will provide better guidance regarding accessibility requirements in site plans. We recommend that the Province own and offer the training to applicable staff of obligated organizations. The Province should also clarify what constitutes an “Accessibility Specialist,” and specify the required content and terms of reference for a comprehensive accessibility report.

With changes to the site plan application and pre-consultation phase, the Province should clarify which site plans need to be reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The City encourages discussions between the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to define AAC responsibilities more clearly.

## **Recommendation 4: Site plan reviews by Accessibility Advisory Committees**

**Concur.** The City supports the site plan reviews conducted by Accessibility Advisory Committees (AAC). Like the training developed and provided by the Province for staff of obligated organizations, the Province should develop training for AAC members to review site plans from an accessibility perspective. Consideration should be given to the role of AAC’s, especially given that these are volunteer members of the public and recent changes to the site plan application process have reduced review time.

## **Recommendation 5: Mandatory accessibility training for officials/inspectors**

**Concur.** While the City supports mandatory accessibility training for officials/inspectors, it is important that the accessibility standards outlined in the Ontario Building Code

(OBC) and the DOPS be enforceable by Provincial authorities with applicable penalties when a non-compliance is reported.

Further, staff recommend training be expanded to include all who must apply the DOPS Standard, including but not limited to, roadway designers, architects and designers of interior spaces, and consultants.

### **Recommendation 6: Authoritative guidance materials for officials/inspectors**

**Concur.** The City supports the development of authoritative guidance materials for officials/inspectors and suggest that the Ontario Building Officials Association would be a suitable platform for developing these materials.

### **Recommendation 7: Authoritative guidance for Ontario Building Code and design of public spaces enforcement**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 8: Maximum length and rise of ramps**

**Disagree.** While the City supports the additional level of accessibility these ramp measurements would provide, achieving this in certain environments, such as outdoor environments, would be exceedingly difficult. Space constraints do not always permit elevators in an exterior environment, specifically in municipal parks, and installing elevators in many spaces is not feasible. There is also concern with the proposed measurements as they would effectively double the run for a ramp, which would create design issues where space constraints already exist. Providing a slightly higher ramp would be a better solution.

Further, staff are concerned that the implementation of ramps and elevators as outlined in this recommendation would be cost prohibitive if required in all public spaces.

While this may be considered as a best practice where feasible, and while staff agree with the intent of the recommendation, based on the concerns above, the City does not support this recommendation as it is currently written.

### **Recommendation 9: Multiple switchbacks and widths of ramps**

**Disagree.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation but recognizes that space constraints of a site may not allow for two-way traffic. We suggest that this recommendation be considered as a best practice rather than a strict requirement.

## **Recommendation 10: Bilingual signage**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation and is already complying with it as part of our Bilingualism Policy, with the support of the City's French Language Services. We believe that there is value in having this as an enforceable requirement under the OBC. Further consultation with other municipalities and obligated organizations is also recommended.

## **Recommendation 11: Adoption of Unified English Braille (UEB) and Code Braille Français Uniformisé (CBFU)**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Under the City's Accessibility Design Standards, UEB is already included on City of Ottawa facility signage, where required. Additionally, under the City of Ottawa's Bilingualism Policy, and with the support of the City's French Language Services, CBFU is also already included on our facility signage, where required.

## **Recommendation 12: Definitions**

**Concur.** The City supports aligning definitions across relevant legislation to clarify project classifications and the application of the DOPS Standard.

## **Recommendation 13: Expand definitions section**

**Concur.** The City supports providing additional technical definitions. This will clarify project classifications as to when and how the DOPS Standard applies. Suggested definitions for the glossary should include Pedestrian Cross-Overs (PXO), All-Way Stops, Uncontrolled Crossings, and Multi-Use Pathways, among others.

## **Recommendation 14: Definition of redevelopment**

**Disagree.** While the City does support providing a clearer definition of the term "redevelopment," this recommendation would need to align with Recommendation 2: align definitions of major/extensive renovations. The term "material alteration" may be broader than "redevelopment" and could require significant resources to update affected areas. If adopted, the City proposes sharing the definition of "material alteration" for public feedback before implementation.

## **Recommendation 15: Amended definitions for trails and sidewalks**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation. It would provide improved clarity on the difference between a recreational trail and a sidewalk, as well as when the

required accessibility features are required for each (e.g. slope). City Staff recommend replacing “commuting” with “transportation” to align with commonly used terminology.

Additionally, the Province should provide further clarity regarding the purpose of a recreational trail vs. a sidewalk or multi-use pathway. The City would also like some flexibility when planning the redevelopment of these spaces, based on existing site constraints.

## **Recommendation 16: Consultation**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation. Having consistent guidelines on how to consult with people with disabilities, instead of setting it as a standard, provides flexibility on how and when obligated organizations can consult. While the City of Ottawa does conduct consultations on a regular basis, including targeted consultations with persons with disabilities, we know this is an area with which many other public sector organizations struggle.

Additionally, the Province should provide guidelines that recognizes the complexity and unique dynamics of public consultation. These guidelines should also explain how to incorporate public feedback meaningfully and suggest ways to communicate effectively when feedback cannot be implemented.

## **Recommendation 17: Definition of rest area**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation as rest areas can include other accessible facilities, and not just benches. Additionally, the City recommends that the Province include accommodation requests in the recommendation’s objectives, as community feedback and needs should influence the types of rest areas provided.

## **Recommendation 18: Distances between rest areas**

**Disagree.** This recommendation requirement is too prescriptive for the City to support it. Requiring a bench every 30 metres on all exterior paths of travel is not practical, nor is there necessarily a cost benefit given minimal pedestrian volume of a current space. Additionally, requiring a mix of benches complicates maintenance and contradicts efforts to maintain consistency in the public realm. However, it should be noted that the City does include accessible benches that permit transferring from a mobility device in City parks, upon request.

The City recommends removing the requirement for a mix of benches and the rigid 30 metres spacing requirement, and instead broadening the definition of seating for rest areas to include informal seating (i.e. materials other than benches), as well as allowing

for flexible design of the spaces based on location, other neighbouring amenities (i.e. bus stops, parks, etc.), the type and intent of the path of travel, and pedestrian volumes.

### **Recommendation 19: Definition of firm and stable**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should also provide guidelines to include examples of acceptable materials, as well as measurable requirements of these materials.

### **Recommendation 20: Passing areas along trails and access routes**

**Concur.** The City supports creating guidelines for best practices on where and when passing areas should be included.

### **Recommendation 21: Trails and route widths**

**Disagree.** The City does not support this recommendation. The prescriptive requirements for the width of recreational trails would be significantly higher than existing requirements.

Further, City staff question the rationale for the recommended width of bi-directional trails as this conflicts with other Provincial guidance. As such, the City recommends current Provincial guidance align with any proposed changes to trails and route widths within the DOPS, as they already take into consideration all aspects of pedestrian movements along such facilities.

### **Recommendation 22: General requirement public use eating areas**

**Disagree.** While the City is supportive of providing accessible eating areas in public spaces, the recommendations, as listed, are too restrictive. In Ottawa, most tables under existing gazebos would not comply, and providing a 2-metre clearance on all sides of the eating area would be particularly challenging in many park scenarios. Instead, the City would support requiring an accessible path of travel to an accessible eating area.

The City is in support of other elements included in the recommendation, including providing a variety of accessible benches and seating to accommodate persons with a variety of disabilities, as well as ensuring obligated organizations monitor these spaces to ensure that the accessibility of outdoor eating areas is maintained, and that other amenities, such as garbage and recycling facilities, be included on an accessible path of travel.

### **Recommendation 23: Extending requirements of public use eating areas to small organizations**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 24: Authoritative guidance for outdoor play spaces**

**Concur.** The City supports the recommendation that authoritative guidance would be helpful, but seeks clarification on how it would differ from the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) Annex 'H,' which addresses outdoor play space accessibility.

### **Recommendation 25: Improving accessibility design requirements for outdoor play spaces**

**Concur.** The City supports the recommendation to increase accessibility for outdoor play spaces, but seeks clarification on how these requirements would supplement or differ from CSA's Annex "H."

### **Recommendation 26: Dog off-leash areas**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation but requests flexibility in implementation, noting that not all dog off-leash areas have associated parking lots or paved paths. The City recommends that the Province require an accessible path of travel to the dog off-leash area as the minimum standard, which should also be maintained in the winter.

### **Recommendation 27: Expand requirements to small organizations**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation for more universal application across the Province.

### **Recommendation 28: Wider exterior paths of travel**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The City is already providing a minimum 1.8 metre width path of travel, based on the requirements of the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Design Standards.

### **Recommendation 29: Consideration of bridges as paths of travel**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation as we have experienced challenges related to pedestrian accessibility across our bridges in Ottawa. However, the City also recognizes that this recommendation would need to align with Bridge Code considerations, as prescribed by the Ministry of Transportation.



### **Recommendation 30: Requirement to build sidewalks on existing streets or as part of redevelopment**

**Disagree.** Current City of Ottawa policies support the provision of accessible pedestrian facilities on City streets. However, current City policies also recognize that retrofitting pedestrian facilities on all roads is not feasible across Ottawa, such as in rural areas, or where there are existing site constraints including right-of-way availability, stormwater management, and mature trees. As such, the City does not support this recommendation as it is contradictory to current City policies, including its Transportation Master Plan.

Guidance from the Province should recognize different approaches are necessary for new roads, and that different contexts and constraints when retrofitting existing roads should equally be considered, including alternative road designs that prioritize vulnerable road users that may not have a separate pedestrian facility.

The Province should also provide a clear definition of a “sidewalk” versus a “path of travel” and should ensure a comprehensive list of exceptions is provided where municipalities would be allowed to include only one accessible path of travel on one side of the street.

### **Recommendation 31: Pathways to accessible areas**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation to have a continuous, firm, and stable surface to all accessible areas. As included in Recommendation 19, a comprehensive definition of “firm and stable” should be provided, as well as include a list of acceptable materials as examples.

### **Recommendation 32: Temporary obstructions to exterior paths of travel**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation, but the Province should provide guidelines that staff and/or contractors can use when setting up temporary obstructions that includes clear instructions on how to ensure an accessible path of travel, including how and where to install portable ramps and accessible washrooms during temporary disruptions, where applicable.

Additionally, these guidelines should include how and when municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees and persons with disabilities should be consulted regarding projects that require long-term obstructions to paths of travel, since timing, site constraints and health and safety considerations may impact project delivery.

### **Recommendation 33: Infrastructure objects may reduce accessibility**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 34: Wider allowances for gates and entryways**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation, as this is consistent or a slight improvement from the City's current requirements in the Accessibility Design Standards.

### **Recommendation 35: Technical requirements for portable ramps**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation, particularly the recommendation for the Province to provide guidance to help municipalities develop specifications and suitable products concerning obtaining and constructing portable ramps. This would eliminate many barriers that currently exist to access inaccessible businesses or services.

### **Recommendation 36: Visual and tactile identification of bike paths**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation but would also encourage consideration for including delineation infrastructure between cycling and pedestrian facilities, such as half-height curbs or tactile delineator plates, as well as consideration for transition between shared and dedicated facilities (i.e. a multi-use pathway that transitions to a sidewalk and cycle track). Consistent definitions for bike lanes, bike paths, cycle tracks, and multi-use pathways are also needed, as noted in previous recommendations.

Further, this recommendation refers to visual identification of biking infrastructure, but does not clarify what this requirement may be. Again, clear specifications would be required.

### **Recommendation 37: Accessible pedestrian signals (APS)**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation and would encourage the Province to provide guidelines or examples of APS pole configurations based on various sidewalks widths (e.g. 1.8 metres vs 3.0 metres), design requirements (e.g. cycling facilities at a protected intersection), and other site constraints (e.g. a retaining wall).

City staff also recommend that the position of APS poles should allow for flexibility, without a specific distance provided, and instead encourage municipalities to install them with as many accessibility features as possible, including a straight path of travel,

while also including other considerations like width allowances for winter maintenance vehicles.

Additionally, City staff recommend that the Province consider whether signalized intersections in rural areas require APS' where pedestrian facilities do not exist. A list of exceptions for APS installations, such as this, should be developed.

### **Recommendation 38: Lighting requirements**

**Disagree.** The City does not support the prescribed lighting requirements as identified in this recommendation as they are impractical and contradictory to industry standards. However, the City would support the Province's development of clear lighting guidance that includes all necessary conditions to achieve accessible pathway lighting, such as proximity to public transit, shortcuts, and high pedestrian volume pathways, among others.

### **Recommendation 39: Signage requirements**

**Disagree.** The City finds this recommendation unnecessary and onerous for most wayfinding signage. However, we encourage including additional signage considerations (e.g. QR codes, braille) as best practices. These should be outlined in guidelines developed by the Province.

### **Recommendation 40: Tactile walking surface indicators**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation but the Province should clarify where specifically Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI's) would be required (e.g. TWSI's should not be included at curb cuts at the end of driveways). Examples should be provided for a variety of situations and sites where TWSI's are and are not required, including addressing requirements where cycling facilities and bus stops meet.

### **Recommendation 41: Amend standards for stairs and ramps**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Many of the recommendations are already included in the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Design Standards (ADS).

### **Recommendation 42: Requirement for rest areas**

**Disagree.** The City does not support this recommendation. It would be overly onerous to consult on each individual project involving rest areas. Instead, the City recommends the Province develop guidelines, created in consultation with persons with disabilities,

on best practices for rest area placement. Once developed, the City would implement these requirements in its ADS.

### **Recommendation 43: Outdoor washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 44: Outdoor changerooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation and recommends the inclusion of adult change tables in outdoor changerooms to be added as a best practice. This could be included in guidelines, as developed by the Province.

### **Recommendation 45: Mobility device charging stations**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 46: Accessibility of parking pay stations**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation. However, the Province should provide guidance on when physical payment kiosks are required, to ensure the payment process is equitable for those without mobile devices, and when “mobile only zones” are acceptable. The City understands that is not always feasible to provide a physical payment kiosk in all parking locations but wants to ensure equitable access to all.

### **Recommendation 47: Authoritative guidance on accessible parking**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation as there is still much confusion, primarily in the private sector, regarding accessible parking requirements under the DOPS and how it applies to privately-owned parking lots. Additionally, any changes proposed by the Province regarding authoritative guidance on accessible parking would equally need to ensure municipalities were given enough time to update applicable parking by-laws.

### **Recommendation 48: Changing parking requirements to type A spaces only**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation but the Province should clarify that it is intended for newly constructed or redeveloped spaces only.

## **Recommendation 49: Clarify application of standards for off-street parking**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation but the Province should clarify the definitions of a “public” versus a “private” facility, since there is still much confusion regarding privately-owned parking lots.

City staff have had many discussions with developers of multi-unit residences who do not believe they are obligated under the AODA’s requirements to include accessible parking spaces, as they believe their parking lots are “private,” even though they intend to include visitor parking spaces.

## **Recommendation 50: Parking lot path of travel**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should include a definition of an “accessible path of travel,” as provided for previous recommendations.

## **Recommendation 51: Requirements for on-street parking**

**Concur.** Overall, City staff support this recommendation and encourage the Province to provide these technical guidelines to municipalities to ensure consistency in the provision of on-street accessible parking. These guidelines should include considerations, such as the requirement of spaces to include curb cuts and Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI’s), location placement of accessible spaces, maximum time allotted to park in these spaces, and how many accessible spaces throughout a municipality should be provided.

Additionally, direction should be provided to define “upon request, where practical,” as interpretation of this could be overly broad.

However, requiring an access aisle on both sides of the vehicle would be exceedingly difficult to include in constrained corridors and as such, should equally be a consideration outlined in these guidelines.

Changes to existing on-street parking would also need to consider other factors that may also increase accessibility of the space, such as adding a bus stop or widening a sidewalk, which could be included in these guidelines.

The City consistently receives feedback from its Accessibility Advisory Committee and residents regarding the availability of on-street parking and as such we believe that these changes would satisfy these concerns.

## **Recommendation 52: Increased parking requirements**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 53: Enhanced parking requirements for specific sectors**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 54: Maintenance requirements for accessible parking**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation. The Province should also provide further guidance when entire parking lots must be shut down or restricted from use due to emergency situations. As such, further context should be provided to clarify that priority maintenance for accessible parking spaces will be provided when a parking lot is shut down or restricted, where practicable.

## **Recommendation 55: Firm and stable materials for parking lots**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation and, as included in Recommendation 19, a comprehensive definition of “firm and stable” must be provided, as well as a list of acceptable materials as examples.

## **Recommendation 56: Parking ratios across multiple parking sites**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation as this would address feedback we receive regularly from Ottawa residents regarding lack of enough accessible parking spaces where needed. However, the City recommends the Province provide clear definitions and consistent terminology, including “barrier-free” and “accessible path of travel.”

Additionally, City staff remarked that the current recommendation regarding multilevel parking lots requiring accessible parking spaces to be “on the ground or entrance level” is not always possible. As such, it is recommended that this only be a best practice, and not a rigid requirement.

## **Recommendation 57: Connecting parking access aisles to sidewalks**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation, but does have concerns with the implementation of some of the requirements, based on site constraints. As such, the

City recommends the Province include guidance on how to implement these recommendations when there are existing site limitations.

### **Recommendation 58: Electric vehicle charging stations**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this the principles of this recommendation. However, the Province should clarify details on what "facility" or "close" means. There may not be a facility at some charging stations, and where a facility does exist, there are regulations on proximity of battery banks to a facility under the Fire Code. Additionally, the location of existing electrical conduits must equally be considered when planning for electric vehicle charging stations, and this may mean proximity to the facility's entrance is not possible.

Further, requiring Type A spaces with an access aisle may result in fewer charging stations due to space constraints if all spaces must meet this requirement. Additionally, it may be difficult to construct a Type A space in the right of way given space constraints. As such, the City recommends this requirement be changed such that Type A spaces be provided where practicable, with clear guidance provided.

Finally, the charging port location on vehicles differs and the chargers may not be designed to meet requirements of an accessible parking space.

As such, it is recommended that the Province provide clear guidelines as to what is to be considered versus what is considered best practice when planning for EV charging stations and associated parking spaces.

### **Recommendation 59: Repainting accessible parking spaces**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation but would instead suggest implementing performance requirements of existing accessible parking spaces, rather than the rigid timelines outlined in the recommendation.

### **Recommendation 60: Retrofits for specific sectors**

**Unclear.** While the City supports the recommendation that organizations should include actions in their multi-year plan to meet the current standards for accessible parking spaces, the second recommendation is unclear as to how a provincial task force would work to increase the number of accessible spaces in inaccessible parking facilities. Specifically, if an existing parking facility without accessible spaces is going to be redeveloped to include accessible spaces, it would already be required to meet current Standards to include the correct number of spaces based on the size of the lot, not fewer. This should be clarified.

## **Recommendation 61: Signage for access aisles**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation. The Province should also develop guidance on the requirement to provide standardized signage, as well as how and where bollards or signposts should be placed around access aisles that would not otherwise impede accessibility.

## **Recommendation 62: Signage for accessible parking**

**Disagree.** The City disagrees with this recommendation as it does not guarantee that accessible spaces would always be available, which could cause frustration with drivers. Additionally, the location of accessible spaces to be as close as possible to the entrance is already a requirement of the DOPS, and in the case of multiple entrances, this is addressed in Recommendation 56.

## **Recommendation 63: Prevention of reduced access to accessible parking during temporary disruptions**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 64: Passenger loading zones**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 65: Underground and covered parking facilities**

**Concur.** Overall, the City supports this recommendation but does acknowledge that providing alternative covered parking if an accessible vehicle cannot access an existing garage would be exceedingly difficult and not always practicable. In most cases, the alternative parking solution would need to be on an adjacent street, which is not covered.

## **Recommendation 66: Overhead clearance for accessible parking**

**Unclear.** While the City supports the principles of the recommendation that overhead clearance must accommodate taller accessible vehicles, it is unclear if this is already included as part of Section 3.8.2.2 “Access to parking.”

Additionally, this recommendation would be required to align with current industry requirements. A 3000-millimetre overhead clearance is much higher than current standards.



### **Recommendation 67: Authoritative guidance for obtaining services**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 68: Provision of assistive listening devices for obtaining services**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 69: Redefine maintenance**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation, as the recommendations are already being followed through City Maintenance Quality Standards and processes.

### **Recommendation 70: Language around intent to maintain**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 71: Maintenance requirements**

**Agree and Disagree.** The City supports the principles of maintenance requirements; however, certain aspects, such as the repainting of parking stalls, may not need to be performed annually. The current condition of the parking stalls should be assessed in accordance with the organization's established maintenance quality standards.

### **Recommendation 72: Requirement for maintenance and/or creation of corresponding elements**

**Disagree.** While the City agrees with the intent of this recommendation, adopting it would have cost and constructability implications, requiring significant investment and planning. Further clarification is required for the recommendation that states "as intersections are maintained" as it is unclear if this would trigger a need for upgrades even through maintenance activities.

Further clarification is also required regarding "all corners", which would include instances where a sidewalk facility only exists on one side of the intersection. The wording also does not address mid-block facilities.

The City would also like the Province to consider whether accessibility features are required at rural intersections which do not have pedestrian facilities.

### **Recommendation 73: Inclusion of diagrams in the standards**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 74: Inclusion of Images in the standards**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 75: Municipal enforcement of Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation requirements**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 76: Amend exemption section to prevent arbitrary decisions**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 77: Environmental sustainability and accessibility**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation and recommends winter maintenance as a consideration when selecting materials for environmental sustainability and accessibility. Overall, this guidance would be helpful when making decisions to balance the needs of all users of public spaces, and conflicting priorities for environmental sustainability and accessibility (i.e. the removal of mature trees to widen a sidewalk may conflict with the desire to provide cool, shaded areas for the public). While the City agrees that parking for people with disabilities should be protected, parking spaces may be removed where they are not required, which may allow for other enhancements that benefit people with disabilities, such as the addition of a bus stop.

### **Recommendation 78: Impact of connected/autonomous vehicles**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation; however, we believe that drop off/pickup zones should be the same for all vehicles, including connected/autonomous vehicles (CAV). It is unclear what a "vehicle-free" zone means if CAV's are allowed to operate in that zone, but we agree that equal access to facilities is needed. Clarity should also be provided in whether the CAV infrastructure relates to the vehicle (i.e., ramps into the CAV) or other physical infrastructure.

Finally, autonomous vehicles (such as robot taxis) would not likely use a charging station with people inside, due to the time this takes. Otherwise, the item regarding charging stations would just relate to Electric Vehicles in Recommendation #58.

**Recommendation 79: Update the Ontario Building Code with inclusive language**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 80: Accessibility strategy as a part of municipal land use studies**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 81: Doorways and doors on barrier-free path of travel**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 82: Harmonize width of barrier-free path of travel**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 83: Harmonize exterior accessible paths of travel**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 84: Entrance width requirements**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 85: Service animal relief area**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 86: Harmonize exterior ramps and stairs**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 87: Update doorway and door requirements**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 88: Update handrail requirements**

Concur. The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 89: Handrails and “rough surfaces”**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 90: Tactile walking surface indicator consistency**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Consistent guidance for TWSIs where cycling facilities intersect pedestrian facilities should be provided.

**Recommendation 91: Align with CSA/ASC B651 for floor and ground surfaces**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 92: Public area kitchens and kitchenettes**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 93: Fitness/recreation facilities**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 94: Clearance from return wall**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 95: Operating controls**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 96: Accessible systems controls**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 97: Elevator communication systems**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 98: Accessible door operator requirements**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 99: Assistive communication devices for service areas**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. However, the recommendation should be clarified to confirm whether this new standard must be applied to both new construction and redeveloped spaces.

### **Recommendation 100: Navigation in public spaces**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. However, the recommendation should be clarified to confirm whether this new standard must be applied to both new construction and redeveloped spaces.

### **Recommendation 101: Accessible washroom signage**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. However, the recommendation should be clarified to confirm whether this new standard must be applied to both new construction and redeveloped spaces.

### **Recommendation 102: Visual fire alarms in multi-stall washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation for new and redeveloped facilities. Organizations should also develop a plan to upgrade systems based on need and feedback to ensure these emergency systems meet the needs of all building occupants.

### **Recommendation 103: Emergency call systems in washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation for new and redeveloped facilities. Organizations should also develop a plan to upgrade systems based on need and feedback to ensure these emergency systems meet the needs of all building occupants.

### **Recommendation 104: Visual signal devices in classrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should provide further clarity as to what constitutes a “classroom.” For example, would this apply to spaces in which the City runs classes for staff or the public (i.e. cooking, swimming classes, employee training) or to daycare facilities?

### **Recommendation 105: Washroom fixtures**

**Concur.** The City supports his recommendation.

### **Recommendation 106: Automatic locks**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should clarify in the Standard that this would apply only to single stall accessible universal washrooms.

### **Recommendation 107: Adult change tables**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should include “for all new construction and redevelopment.” The City regularly receives feedback indicating that there is a need for adult change tables.

### **Recommendation 108: L-shaped grab bars**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should include “for all new construction and redevelopment..”

### **Recommendation 109: Fold-down grab bars**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The Province should include “for all new construction and redevelopment.”

### **Recommendation 110: Universal and multi-stall washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 111: Single-user accessible washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 112: Hotel washrooms**

**Concur.** The City supports the recommendation. The Province should include a requirement for accessible hotel rooms to include additional accessibility features, such as grab bars in bathrooms. The City has received feedback indicating that there is a lack of accessible hotel facilities.

### **Recommendation 113: Percentage of barrier-free units**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of requiring more accessible units. However, based on feedback received, staff have concerns related to existing accessible units being unaffordable to those who need them. There should be greater coordination between the Province and municipalities to ensure that accessible housing is affordable for people with disabilities who require barrier-free units.

## **Recommendation 114: Areas requiring barrier-free path of travel**

**Concur.** The City supports with this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 115: Back-up power in residential buildings**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation, but as expressed by various Council members of [Ottawa's Emergency Preparedness and Protective Services Committee](#) in February 2023, the Province must identify a budget or grant opportunities for private multi-storey buildings without existing funding.

## **Recommendation 116: Ensure the Ontario Building Code follows CSA/ASC housing requirements**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation.

## **Recommendation 117: Improve accessibility of emergency egress**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Currently, City facilities have ground level emergency exits which lead to an accessible path of travel, as part of the City's Emergency Response Plan.

## **Recommendation 118: Ground-level emergency exits**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Currently, City facilities have ground level emergency exits as part of the City's Emergency Response Plan.

## **Recommendation 119: Areas of refuge during a fire event**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. The City's Accessibility Design Standards currently specify requirements for Areas of Refuge "when they're part of a facility's fire safety/evacuation plan," and these are already included in many buildings.

## **Recommendation 120: Emergency evacuation chairs**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation. The Province should clarify whether emergency evacuation chairs must be provided at all floors, or one per stairwell as this could be a significant budget pressure.

### **Recommendation 121: Retrofit of existing facilities**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation. However, sufficient timelines and budget support from the Province for retrofit renovations must be considered, as this will have significant constructability and budget.

### **Recommendation 122: Material alteration requires compliance with barrier-free standards**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation. However, sufficient timelines and budget support from the Province must be considered, as this will have significant constructability and budget concerns.

### **Recommendation 123: Retrofit of emergency systems**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. Timelines must be considered to avoid significant budget pressures.

### **Recommendation 124: Retroactive washroom requirements**

**Concur.** The City supports the principles of this recommendation. However, sufficient timelines and budget support from the Province for retrofit renovations must be considered, as this will have significant constructability and budget concerns.

### **Recommendation 125: Ensuring access during temporary disruptions**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation. This recommendation is already part of the City's regular practice.

### **Recommendation 126: Resources for retrofits**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation but would encourage the Province to include all sizes of public sector organizations in grant opportunities to relieve budget pressures.

### **Recommendation 127: Accessibility features information**

**Concur.** The City supports this recommendation and notes that this work is already underway on the City's main website.



## **Conclusion**

Barrier-free access to public spaces is essential for everyone in their day-to-day lives.

Through the pursuit of improved legislative clarity, businesses and organizations in Ontario will have the direction and tools to create, provide and receive accessible public spaces. An inclusive society that designs and builds with universal accessibility benefits everyone from this achievement.

And finally, the City wants to emphasize to the Province the importance of recordkeeping when considering all recommendations under the DOPS. Good recordkeeping will support public trust as it demonstrates legal compliance, good governance, accountability, and transparency. Good recordkeeping requires business systems that meet records requirements whereby records and audit logs of actions on records are unalterable. When considering the implementation of the DOPS, the City recommends recordkeeping requirements should equally be incorporated, where required.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments.

Contact:

**Caitlin Salter MacDonald**

City Clerk/ Greffière municipale

City of Ottawa/ Ville d'Ottawa

Tel./Tél. 613-580-2424, ext./poste 28136