

# Metrolinx 2023 Accessibility Status Report

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of current and former Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members for their valuable input into our accessibility planning activities.

## Introduction

The 2023 Status Report provides updates on Metrolinx's efforts for the 2023 calendar year. Metrolinx, a Crown agency of the Province of Ontario under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), operates GO Transit, PRESTO, and the Union Pearson (UP) Express.

This Status Report responds to Metrolinx's obligation under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) to publish an annual update on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). Metrolinx's MYAP and other accessibility planning documents can be found on the [Metrolinx accessibility website](#).

Metrolinx, including its operating divisions, remains committed to meeting the requirements of the AODA and to implementing plans so that services are convenient and easier to use for all customers, including those with disabilities. More broadly, Metrolinx will work to improve the customer experience for all users which will include making efforts beyond AODA minimum requirements.

Metrolinx is guided by the following corporate statement of commitment:

*The organization will work diligently to remove existing barriers to access, avoid creating new barriers, and address gaps hindering the safety and customer experience of persons with disabilities. Metrolinx will demonstrate leadership, consulting widely and incorporating best practices that go above legislated requirements to enhance accessibility in its services and infrastructure.*

This includes the commitment to:

- Ensuring that its services, infrastructure, and operations are equitable, accessible, safe and convenient to all customers and employees, including persons with disabilities, in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), and to
- Work with transit agencies and municipal partners in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) to plan, build and operate a safe and integrated accessible transportation system.

This document will provide an overview of activities for 2023 under the categories of A) Plan and Design, B) Build, and C) Operate and Deliver.

## Accessibility Activities, 2023

Metrolinx, GO Transit, PRESTO and UP Express have continued to make improvements to existing and planned services to improve accessibility. Learn more about accessibility on the GO Transit, PRESTO, and UP Express systems:

- [GO Transit Accessibility](#).
- [PRESTO – Accessibility](#).
- [UP Express – Accessibility](#).
- [Metrolinx – Accessibility](#).

## A. Plan and Design

### Metrolinx

1. Regional Specialized Transit Working Group: Metrolinx continues to coordinate the Regional Specialized Transit Working Group, with representation from 15 regional specialized transit providers. Topics of discussion in 2023 include:
  - a. Participation in fare and service integration program discussions held by Metrolinx & Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), to ensure that the needs and operating conditions of specialized transit agencies are considered.
  - b. Working towards greater consistency for (and reducing, where possible) waiting times when transferring between municipal transit vehicles at cross-boundary transfer locations.
  - c. Creating an agreed-upon list of transfer location amenities for cross-boundary transfer locations.
  - d. Alignment on Support Person terminology.
2. Implementation of Design Standards: The following design standards apply to all new and renovated projects:
  - a. The Design Requirements Manual (DRM),
  - b. Metrolinx Universal Design Standard (DS-02),
  - c. Metrolinx Wayfinding Design Standard (DS-03),
  - d. Transit Oriented Communities Design Guidelines for Subway Stations (DS-01-S), and
  - e. GO Station Architecture Design Standard (DS-04).

These standards each address accessibility in the built environment beyond minimum requirements in the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

3. Throughout 2023, Metrolinx completed changes to the Metrolinx Universal Design Standard. The updated version will be published in 2024 and has editorial changes, falling into these categories:
  - a. Language updates to align with Ontario standard language and terminology defined within regulatory and legislative framework.
  - b. Greater clarity regarding applicability of regulatory requirements to avoid confusion or repetition.
  - c. Revision of absolute dimensions and introduction of range of dimensions with the goal of supporting construction tolerances that reflect industry standards, while maintaining accessibility.

- d. Full adoption of interim requirements for Internal Elevator Car Dimensions Reduction, which were previously approved on February 17, 2022.

## GO Transit

1. Review of existing facilities:
  - a. In 2023, a comprehensive GO Transit network-wide accessibility audit of existing GO rail stations and GO bus facilities assessed existing levels of accessibility and identified critical gaps, measured against current requirements under the Ontario Building Code, AODA *Design of Public Spaces Standard*, and DS-02 Metrolinx Universal Design Standard 2019. In 2024, findings will be analyzed to inform state of good repair activities, station renovations, and related prioritization of station works.
  - b. In January 2023, Metrolinx started a 3-year partnership with AccessNow, a Canadian-based website and mobile app that provides accessibility information about environments and businesses. Being a Verified Customer provides user-validated information on the accessibility of GO station environments and helps to communicate the universal design and accessibility of the existing Metrolinx system to customers who do not currently use GO services. Search for the verified listings at [accessnow.com](https://www.accessnow.com).

## Subways

1. Ontario Line North Subway Extension – Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) Consultation.
  - a. In July 2023, Metrolinx conducted a consultation with ACAT on targeted sections of the Ontario Line North Subway Extension Project Specific Output Specifications. ACAT members on the Design Review Subcommittee had the opportunity to provide feedback on project requirements relevant to accessible design for new subway infrastructure that will be constructed in Toronto. The ACAT review period was aligned with TTC Staff technical review timelines, ensuring comments were submitted by TTC Staff on behalf of ACAT.
  - b. Feedback to date has been positive as ACAT recognizes the value of providing feedback at the early stages of project planning and development.
2. Metrolinx Design Advisory Panel (MDAP).
  - a. The Metrolinx Design Advisory Panel (MDAP) is a series of professional reviews for Metrolinx projects, resulting in recommendations on architecture, urban design and landscape architecture for select Metrolinx capital projects. Attendance at

the MDAP consists of subject matter experts on design, including two members of the Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Bringing the lived experience of persons with disabilities into the early stages of the design process to act in an advisory position creates an alternate and broader perspective from which to understand universal design. It also enables lateral thinking and encourages designers to strive for a higher level of integration of universal design in their work. On July 25, 2023, the meeting focused on the Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE )preliminary design.

## B. Build

### GO Transit and UP Express

1. Metrolinx continues to work toward accessibility across all modes and services, including GO Bus, GO Rail and UP Express. To reflect Metrolinx’s commitment to accessibility and the principles and intent of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, work continues to address existing conditions across the GO network and to ensure future services will be accessible on opening day. At GO, all buses and rail fleet are accessible, and we are continuing to work to ensure all existing GO stations have step-free boarding and alighting to GO train services.

Further, for Metrolinx to achieve the public's accessibility expectations, it is necessary to look beyond the requirements in the AODA. While the AODA includes standards for transportation service providers, it does not explicitly define requirements for the accessibility of the interior of transit stations, nor are the standards retroactive. Work is ongoing to provide equitable access for all customers through the Metrolinx Universal Design program. Work is underway to make GO Train service accessible at the remaining three GO stations by creating a step-free route, as identified below.

- a. On the Lakeshore East line, Eglinton GO station improvements are well underway, and the station will be accessible by Fall 2024. Improvements include two new pedestrian tunnels with elevators or ramps to platforms, and platform upgrades including the addition of a mini-platform and tactile edge.
- b. On the Lakeshore West line, the Long Branch GO station project is under construction. Anticipated availability of an accessible route for the public is by end of 2026. Improvements include two new pedestrian tunnels with elevators to island platforms, with accessible entrances from the south side of the corridor. Platform upgrades include the addition of a mini-platform to support a step-free boarding location from the platform to the train, and a tactile edge.

- c. On the Lakeshore West line, the Mimico GO station project is in early design. Mimico station is located in a complex part of the Lakeshore West corridor; design and due diligence for the Mimico accessibility project must be coordinated and integrated with broader changes to the corridor which are still in development. As design for the accessibility works and corridor / track modifications progress through Fall 2025, the project team will be in a position to develop a construction schedule for Mimico station, which will be shared. Improvements are planned to include a new pedestrian tunnel with elevators to island platforms and accessible entrances from both sides of the corridor. Platform upgrades include the addition of a mini-platform for step-free boarding and a tactile edge.

## PRESTO

1. The launch of PRESTO Contactless and PRESTO in Google Wallet includes specialized transit services across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. OC Transpo's Specialized Service (Ottawa Para Transpo) also completed their rollout of PRESTO fare payment equipment to accept PRESTO physical cards and credit/debit cards via PRESTO Contactless.
2. In 2023, Metrolinx started deployment of the SIGMA Ticket Vending Machines device which has multiple accessibility features, for instance: height of controls for easy access when standing or sitting, labels and controls which are colour contrasted, LED lights, braille labels and tactile symbols, and audio mode controlled from the Pin Pad. One hundred units had been installed by December 2023 at such stations as Union, Old Elm, Pickering, Ajax, Oshawa, Exhibition, Long Branch, Clarkson, Mimico, and Weston.

## C. Operate & Deliver

### GO Transit and UP Express

1. GO Transit and UP Express have become members of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. GO Transit and UP Express support our customers living with hidden disabilities by providing a mechanism that allows customers to identify needs without disclosing a particular condition. Customers who choose to participate in the Sunflower Program can wear a sunflower lanyard or pin or share a sunflower card. Pins can be picked up at Union Station or by emailing [accessibility@metrolinx.com](mailto:accessibility@metrolinx.com) and requesting a pin. Customers can use sunflowers that have been provided by other organizations, such as the Pearson Airport sunflower lanyard. Since the initiation of the project in October 2023, Metrolinx has supplied over 350 individuals with sunflower pins.

2. Additionally in 2023, GO, UP Express & PRESTO partnered with Magnus to offer how to step-by-step digital guides using visual cues as well as audio and text-based instructions in the Magnus card app. These are designed to help everyone including individuals with autism or neurodiversity navigate everyday activities, building confidence and independence.

## PRESTO

1. PRESTO Contactless has been fully launched across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Transit Agencies. All elements of the system are designed to be accessible to customers with disabilities, including the fare payment devices, PRESTO website functionality and PRESTO app functionality.
2. Other accessibility-related PRESTO enhancements:
  - a. Improved support for large text system accessibility settings to enhance readability for PRESTO app users with low vision or visual impairments.
  - b. Support of bold text system accessibility setting to enhance readability and improve content legibility for PRESTO app users with low vision or visual impairments.
  - c. Enable 3-Finger Swipe (on the GO default trip setting screen) to change cards when mobile screen reader is active to provide PRESTO app users, using screen readers, with improved navigation when managing cards within the app.
  - d. Biometric log-in implemented to improve the sign-in experience by providing a faster and easier log-in as well as provide an extra layer of security.
  - e. The new PRESTO App landing page decreases the number of steps necessary to manage multiple cards (i.e. switching/swiping between screens to see other cards).
3. New PRESTO Website pages:
  - a. “Stay Tapped In” page provides information on the latest updates for PRESTO, PRESTO Perks, new payment options and other PRESTO news.
  - b. Fare type page for information on how to set-up fare types.
  - c. Various fixes for alternative text, alerts, and aria-labels implemented to conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, the international standard referenced in the Information and Communication Standards of the AODA.

## Metrolinx

1. In 2023 Metrolinx welcomed new members onto the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and updated the Terms of Reference to clarify roles and introduce terms.
2. Metrolinx and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) implemented new terms of reference to help evolve how Metrolinx consults with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) at the TTC.



## Accessibility Consultation and Feedback

Metrolinx receives feedback from people with disabilities on the accessibility of GO Transit, UP Express, and PRESTO services through several channels:

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), which meets up to six times a year.
- The annual Accessibility Public Meeting, held in September 2023.
- [Metrolinx “Contact Us” form, email or phone.](#)
- [GO Transit “Contact Us” form, email or phone.](#)
- [PRESTO “Contact Us” form, email or phone.](#)
- [UP Express “Contact Us” form, email or phone.](#)
- By email at [accessibility@metrolinx.com](mailto:accessibility@metrolinx.com).

## AODA Compliance Status Update

Metrolinx filed compliance for the 2023 reporting cycle. The next *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) Compliance report is anticipated to be due December 31st, 2025.

Learn more about reporting requirements under the AODA at the Province of Ontario websites:

- [Completing your accessibility compliance report.](#)
- [Accessibility in Ontario.](#)