

Metrolinx 2024 Accessibility Status Report

This document is available in French at [L'engagement de Metrolinx en matière d'accessibilité](#).

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Introduction

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.

The 2024 Accessibility Status Report provides updates to the public on Metrolinx's accessibility efforts between January 1st and December 31st, 2024. The Status Report is an obligation under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (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 remains committed to meeting our obligations under the AODA and implementing plans and programs to make our services accessible, convenient, and easier to use for all customers, including those with disabilities. This includes making efforts beyond minimum AODA requirements.

Metrolinx is guided by the following corporate statement of commitment to accessibility:

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:

- Ensure that Metrolinx services, infrastructure, and operations are equitable, accessible, safe and convenient to all customers and employees, including people with disabilities, in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), and
- Work with regional 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 2024 under the categories of:

- Plan and Design.
- Build.
- Operate and Deliver.
- Consultations, Feedback and Other Engagement.
- PRESTO; and
- Additional Updates.

2024 Accessibility Activities

Plan and Design

Metrolinx Universal Design Standard

The Metrolinx Universal Design Standard, known as DS-02, sets key universal design requirements for transit infrastructure to design new and existing stations and terminals, stops, and other customer-facing facilities. DS-02 goes above and beyond the minimum Provincial legislated requirements, representing a better practice approach by providing universal design requirements for transit customers. The main purpose of DS-02 is to bring consistency to the user experience, maximize independent access and increase safety for customers with disabilities.

A comprehensive list of accessibility-focused legislation, standards and guidelines relevant to the accessible design of facilities and exterior spaces can be found in the [DS-02 document](#).

An updated version of DS-02 was published in September 2024 in accessible pdf format, in both English and French. These changes collectively aim to improve consistency and efficiency in design and procurement processes, while keeping DS-02 up to date with industry expectations.

Changes in DS-02 for 2024 fell into these categories:

- Language has been updated to align with applicable standards and codes.
- Some dimensions have been given a range, to account for allowable variations in construction and to align with industry standards.
- Previous content that had been communicated under a Design Standard Bulletin (DSB-009) in February 2022 was officially integrated into DS-02 to improve elevator procurement and to be in line with current industry standards and anthropometric data about human proportions and measurements.
- Greater clarity regarding the applicability of regulatory requirements to avoid confusion or repetition.

Design Reviews

As the business owner for Universal Design and DS-02, the Universal Design team conducts design reviews at all stages of project planning, design implementation and construction. Reviews for Universal Design look for compliance with regulatory codes such as the Ontario Building Code (OBC), the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) standards, and DS-02 Metrolinx Universal Design Standard.

Each review focuses on assessing design compliance of critical accessibility features, identifying any barriers and recommending improvements. The review step is a crucial opportunity to catch and correct errors or design decisions that would be difficult remediate after construction.

During 2024, the Universal Design team conducted reviews at all different stages of planning, design and construction, amounting to almost 800 reviews across five LRT lines, three subway lines, and thirty GO projects.

Build

Transportation and the AODA

While the AODA specifies obligations for transportation service providers, it does not explicitly set design requirements for the interior of transit stations, nor does it obligate organizations to improve or upgrade spaces which were built before the Act came into place.

Because of this, Metrolinx looks beyond the requirements of the AODA to meet the public's expectations for accessibility on our system, including activities such as the review and updating of DS-02 Universal Design Standard and establishing several maintenance, upgrade, and remediation programs.

Step-Free Paths at Stations

In 2024, Metrolinx completed [accessibility upgrades at Eglinton GO Station](#). These upgrades introduced barrier-free connections throughout the station and includes two new pedestrian tunnels with elevators or ramps to platforms, and platform upgrades including the addition of a mini-platform and tactile platform edge. See the [Eglinton GO Station page](#) for more information about that location.

On the Lakeshore West line, the [Long Branch GO Station Improvement project](#) is under construction including a new pedestrian tunnel, elevator access to the platforms, and an accessible entrance from the south side of the corridor. Platform upgrades include the addition of a mini-platform to allow step-free boarding of trains and a tactile platform edge. See the [Long Branch GO Station page](#) for more information about that location.

On the Lakeshore West Line, design for the Mimico GO station project is advancing. As design for the accessibility works progresses, the project team will develop and share a construction schedule for the station. Improvements are planned to include a new pedestrian connection 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 platform edge. See the [Mimico GO Station page](#) for more information about that site.

To receive regional and project-specific email updates, [sign up for Metrolinx emails](#).

Wayfinding

Wayfinding can refer to any information that helps customers find their way. In a transit environment, tools that help this process can include maps, signs, and graphics that help customers navigate the transit network.

In 2024, signage was added to elevators at York Concourse in Union Station to indicate which platforms have accessible boarding. This supported the later implementation of the International Symbol of Access on the departure screens to show which platforms have accessible boarding.

For instance, when a train arrives at platforms 11 and 12, doors open on both sides. A customer waiting at the York Concourse can determine the barrier-free path to their train by the digital and physical signage, allowing customers to take the most direct path to their train via the elevator shared by platforms 10 and 11.

Additional signage was also installed inside the elevator cab to help guide customers out of the correct side of the elevator towards the raised accessible portion of the platform.

State of Good Repair Program (SOGR)

The State of Good Repair Program is one way that accessibility improvements are made at stations. As part of Station Facilities division, the State of Good Repair team works to promote accessibility across the existing network through the planning and completion of accessibility rehabilitation projects. In 2024 SOGR focused on platform accessibility improvements to components including walkways, platform mini ramps, tactile platform edges and platform elevator access, as well as many other improvements to provide access to station facilities and amenities.

SOGR projects delivered in 2024 include:

- Washroom upgrades at Dixie and Meadowvale GO Stations.
- Tactile edge or mini-platform improvements at the following GO Stations: Oshawa, Dixie, Hamilton, Meadowvale, Barrie South, Kipling, and Bradford.
- Ongoing elevator rehabilitation work at Bronte, Kennedy, and Rouge Hill GO Stations.

Operate and Deliver

Quality of Stations Program

Delivering a high-quality station experience is essential to ensuring a seamless and inclusive journey for all customers. The Quality of Stations program focuses on eight service categories: Cleanliness, Ambience and Assets, Customer Service, Safety and Security, Communication, Navigation, Payments and Fares, and Accessibility. Each category is designed to enhance the customer experience and ensure stations are welcoming and inclusive.

In 2024, the Quality of Stations working group started developing day-to-day standards to provide criteria for measuring station accessibility at existing stations. Different than technical built environment audits or design reviews at the planning and construction stages, the Quality of Stations walk-through will look for barriers and disruptions as part of station management and operations. This will help identify, escalate, and prioritize work or improvements that arise in

stations which are in active, often high-traffic, use. Implementation of this work will be scheduled in 2025.

Accessibility Operating Plan (AOP)

In 2024, GO Transit & UP Express initiated development of a new internal Accessibility Operating Plan (AOP). Its goal is to establish a cross-functional Standard Operating Procedure that outlines how GO Transit and UP Express Operations and Safety Business Units will work together to provide customers with disabilities with an accessible, enjoyable, reliable, and safe customer experience.

The AOP outlines accessible customer service standards as well as the internal roles, responsibilities and processes required to provide the desired service level. Additionally, the AOP outlines processes for managing permanent, planned, and unplanned disruptions to the step-free path, to reduce or eliminate customer impacts. For instance, if a customer's trip is impacted due to a disruption in the step-free path like an elevator outage, the AOP identifies standards for completing ("recovering") their trip.

Pieces of this plan include:

- Development of improved elevator out-of-service signage that provides customers with phone and text-based assistance to navigate elevator disruptions.
- Updated elevator outage Service Alert templates that are posted to the GO website, station pages, social media and through [On-the-GO Alerts](#).
- An audit of all GO Transit bus stops to ensure accurate accessibility information is entered into a [General Transit Feed Specification database](#). The data is used to provide reliable information and updates to GO Trip Planner and third-party trip planning apps such as Google Maps, Transit app, etc.

Finally, the AOP provides an integrated governance structure to ensure continuous improvement of the established processes and to monitor compliance with the processes.

The AOP will be a major driver in preventing disruptions, communicating effectively internally and with the public, and improving accessibility across GO Transit and UP Express services in 2025 and beyond.

Support Person Documentation

GO Transit and UP Express customers now have more options for demonstrating the need for a support person while using Metrolinx services.

In addition to placing a support person sticker on a physical PRESTO card, people with disabilities can now use other documentation to allow a support person to travel with them for free. An internal Standard Operating Procedure was developed to support fare inspectors in recognizing various forms of documentation indicating the need for a support person, when a person with a disability is traveling using a fare media which doesn't support the use of the support person sticker, such as a digital wallet or credit card tap. Some examples of this alternate documentation are the Canadian

National Institute for the Blind's CNIB Card, the Access2 Card by Easter Seals Canada, or a Support Person Assistance Card from a municipal transit agency.

AccessNow Verified Listings

GO Transit station accessibility information was made live in the AccessNow app in January 2024, allowing customers to obtain user-validated information on the accessibility of GO Rail environments. Customers can search for the verified listings for each station at accessnow.com.

Metrolinx has also engaged AccessNow to complete the user validation of Eglinton GO, which reopened after accessibility-related improvements were made in Fall 2024. The updated verified listing for Eglinton GO will be live in Spring 2025.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

Now in its second year, the Metrolinx Hidden Disability Sunflower Program continues to provide customers with invisible disabilities a discrete way to indicate to GO Transit front-line staff that they might need additional support. In 2024, we mailed out approximately 300 pins in response to requests sent to the Universal Design team through the accessibility@metrolinx.com account and handed out approximately 150 pins at Union Station. Given the program's success, we introduced Sunflower lanyards to our mailed offerings in June 2024. Approximately 50 lanyards were mailed out in the second half of 2024 in response to customer requests.

MagnusCards

In 2024, Metrolinx continued our [partnership with Magnusmode](#) by introducing six new step-by-step guides on the MagnusCards app, a free digital life skills library which can help youth, neurodiverse individuals, newcomers to Canada, as well as people with disabilities perform everyday activities.

The six new guides are designed to help people travel safely and confidently on GO Transit and UP Express and provide direction on using PRESTO. These new guides are in addition to the 22 Metrolinx MagnusCards introduced in December 2023.

All Metrolinx MagnusCards are now available in English, French, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Hindi, and Punjabi, helping to improve availability of information for more customers navigating Metrolinx services.

MagnusCards can be found through the Google Play or Apple App stores, under the "Travel" category.

Consultation, Feedback, and Other Engagement

Accessibility Feedback

Metrolinx receives important feedback from people with disabilities on the accessibility of GO Transit, UP Express, and PRESTO services through several channels, which help inform projects, plans and improvements:

- The Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), which meets up to six times a year.
- The Annual Public Meeting on accessibility, held in June 2024.
- [The annual accessibility survey](#) which was launched at the Annual Public Meeting and was open for one month.
- [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.
- Other project-based initiatives.

Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice and input to Metrolinx staff on the development and implementation of accessibility plans, and on significant new developments, policies issues or changes which will affect customers with disabilities. The committee met six times via Teams in 2024. Some topics under review were:

- Onboarding of committee members:
 - Committee overview,
 - About the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*;
 - Built environment codes and standards beyond the AODA.
- The Digital Signage Strategy implementation and Digital Customer Experience.
- The Accessibility (5A) coach.
- The 2025 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- TripLinX and alternate ways to plan trips on Metrolinx services.

Committee members also receive invitations to express interest in other consultation opportunities, such as the co-design sessions described below, or the (digital) User Research Pool.

2024 Annual Public Meeting (APM)

The Annual Public Meeting on accessibility was held virtually on June 18, 2024. It was hosted in English, with English captions, ASL interpretation, simultaneous French interpretation, and French captions. Meeting materials were posted in advance in accessible pdf format, in both French and English.

The meeting agenda covered activities related to GO Transit, UP Express, and PRESTO.

Presentations included:

- Changes to the Metrolinx Universal Design Standard (DS-02).
- Updates on GO Stations which did not currently have a step-free path (Eglinton, Long Branch, and Mimico).
- PRESTO design-build and testing process, PRESTO in Mobile Wallet, and a new “[Fare Types and Discounts](#)” page on the PRESTO website.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Introduction of One Fare program.
- Status of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, AccessNow verified listings, and Magnus Cards.
- Development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Launch of the survey on accessibility.
- A Question-and-Answer period.

Information about the 2024 Metrolinx Annual Public meeting is available on the [Metrolinx Accessibility Page](#).

Co-design Sessions - Accessible Communications Requirements

The Metrolinx Customer Interface Design team is developing an internal Accessible Communication Requirements document to support internal teams and vendors in making their communications accessible. To support developing the requirements in the document, in July and November 2024, the Customer Interface Design team conducted four co-design sessions with screen reader users to help set priorities and understand usefulness and meaning when writing alt text and long text descriptions. The Accessible Communication Requirements document is under development and will be announced and rolled out to staff in the coming year.

Regional Specialized Transit Working Group

Metrolinx continues to coordinate the Regional Specialized Transit Working Group, with municipal representation increasing to 19 municipalities, adding Guelph, Niagara Region, Collingwood, and Orillia to the group since 2023.

The group met 9 times in 2024, with conversations including:

- Engagement with the Ministry of Transportation around initiatives that would improve the quality of specialized transit service for customers.
- Increase in demand as most municipal agencies have surpassed their pre-covid ridership numbers.
- Sharing of policies that have successfully been implemented in various municipalities.
- [AODA Customer Service Standard Report Recommendations](#) review.

Community Engagement and New Ridership

In 2024, Community Engagement teams worked with local groups to raise awareness of new or ongoing projects, and to introduce potential riders to our services. Some examples include:

- Presentation to the Hamilton Deaf community about the Hamilton LRT Project and GO accessibility initiatives, with sign language interpretation.
- Step-by-step tour from Clarkson GO to Union Station with the March of Dimes LIFE program, showing participants how to use our system - from tapping on with their PRESTO card, reading the schedule on screen, navigating elevators and finding platforms, through to safely boarding and deboarding the train upon arrival.
- Hosting a “Day on the GO” for Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy's vocational program in York-Simcoe to promote independence and confidence in using public transit, especially for those students with learning or cognitive disabilities.

The Community Engagement teams continue to offer this type of outreach with similar organizations, including local schools, or working with special education teachers for students with developmental disabilities, to help promote GO Transit services to potential future riders.

PRESTO

About PRESTO

Metrolinx manages [PRESTO](#), an electronic payment system that eliminates the need for tickets, tokens, passes and cash. Because PRESTO works across local transit in the Greater Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa areas, accessibility achievements create benefits for both conventional and specialized transit users beyond just Metrolinx’s GO Transit and UP Express services.

PRESTO is a key component of Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan. For more information about PRESTO and how it works, please visit our [Frequently Asked Questions section](#).

Transit services utilizing PRESTO include Brampton Transit, Burlington Transit, Durham Region Transit, GO Transit, Hamilton Street Railway, Mississauga Transit, Oakville Transit, OC Transpo, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), UP Express, and York Region Transit.

2024 PRESTO Updates

- 2024 saw the deployment of the new Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) devices at all GO and UP Express stations. The new TVM has a range of accessibility features including controls at a height for easy access when standing or sitting, colour-contrasted labels and controls, LED lights that indicate the current control, braille labels and tactile symbols, and an audio accessibility mode controlled via the PIN pad.
- PRESTO in Apple Wallet was launched August 2024 in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area for use on both conventional and specialized transit.

- Other smaller but notable enhancements to the PRESTO fare system, which make the system easier to use and more accessible for customers with disabilities include:
 - Modifications to the PRESTO telephone menu which make it easier to reach a live agent.
 - A new "Transit Agency Fares" page was added to the PRESTO website to provide customers with an easy place to check fares.
 - A series of PRESTO "how-to" videos has been published on the [PRESTO YouTube channel](#) and linked from appropriate PRESTO support pages. These provide an easy and approachable way to learn about various PRESTO topics.

Other Updates

2025-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)

Throughout 2024, Metrolinx's Universal Design team worked with external stakeholders and partners from across Metrolinx to develop the 2025 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). The new plan is built around four pillars which will help share accessibility targets and achievements for the next five years through readable and relevant status reports. The four pillars are Informed Staff, Informed Riders, Informed Design, and Coordinated Efforts and cover such priorities as staff training, increased communications about accessibility of Metrolinx services, continuous improvement for existing built environments, and working with internal and external partners to streamline efforts for a useable, integrated, and accessible regional transportation system.

The new MYAP is posted in both English and in French in accessible Word and pdf formats and, for the first time, in html on a [dedicated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan webpage](#).

For more information on the 2025 – 2029 MYAP or to request it in an alternate format, please get in touch through the [GO Contact Centre](#) or at accessibility@metrolinx.com.

Accessibility 102 Training

AccessNow's CEO Maayan Ziv and Director of Partnerships Jonathan Marriott delivered a 5-part educational series to Metrolinx staff called Accessibility 102.

Accessibility 101, delivered in 2023, focused on themes including Disability Awareness, Medical vs Social Models of Disability, Ableism and How to be an Ally, Digital, Built Environment and Beyond.

Accessibility 102, delivered in 2024, built on the previous years' themes with emphasis around the Disability Rights Movement and Canadian/ Ontarian legislation developments that support and recognize rights, Disability Culture, Accessibility Innovation, and empowerment of people with disabilities, and Disability Language.

Sessions were delivered live, virtually, with 30 minutes of education and 15 minutes of discussion. Recordings of the sessions are posted and available on the Metrolinx intranet for staff who couldn't join live.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program - Engagement

Throughout 2024, the team continues to have informal chats with transit agencies in Ontario, across Canada and in the United States to give insight into what adopting the Sunflower means internally for staffing, communication and budget planning and externally for the customer experience.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – Design of Public Spaces Review

Metrolinx completed a review of the 127 proposed recommendations made as part of the [AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard review](#), which requested commentary by August 29th, 2024. Metrolinx's comments provided insight on a number of proposed recommendations. Metrolinx looks forward to seeing how public comments will be incorporated into new or updated requirements under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards.

The 2023 [initial recommendations report](#) is posted on the Province of Ontario Accessibility in Ontario webpage.

External Communications

Increased Content

In 2024, the Communications team supported accessibility project work across the organization through sharing stories, articles, and posts across multiple social media and other channels. The increased accessibility-related content included updates on the MagnusCards deck additions, AccessNow platform and verified listings, the launch of the 2025 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and other awareness about how to travel on the GO Transit and UP Express networks.

Newsletter Updates

In September 2024, the Communications and Community Engagement division transitioned to a new email service provider for its community and regional newsletters. This update included a platform for improving Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) data collection, standardized AODA-compliant and mobile-accessible templates, and a tool for testing deliverability and accessibility.

Sign up for Metrolinx emails, including region and project-specific updates, through the [Metrolinx email subscription webpage](#).

AODA Compliance Reports

As a designated public sector organization, identified in Schedule 1 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) or [Table 1 of Ontario Regulation 146/10](#), Metrolinx must file an accessibility compliance report every two years. The last reporting cycle was in 2023. The next *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* Compliance report is anticipated to be due December 31st, 2025.

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

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

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of current and former Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members for their valuable contributions to our accessibility planning activities every year, and especially with the planning and development of the new 2025 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan throughout 2024.