



**2024**

# Peel Region Accessibility Status Report

**Ensuring a Continued Focus  
on Accessibility**

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# Peel Region 2024 Accessibility Status Report

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Peel Region's 2024 Annual Accessibility Status Report outlines the progress and measures taken to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities, while meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), Integrated Accessibility Standards. It details the actions taken in 2024 to implement Peel's 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

After a year of uncertainty and insecurity in 2023 brought on by the announcement of Bill 112, *The Hazel McCallion Act*, which proposed dissolving Peel Region, followed by the year end announcement that Peel would not dissolve and instead focus to reviewing options to build more homes faster, 2024 was a year to recalibrate and get back on course. Despite the announcement of Peel Region no longer dissolving, there continued to be uncertainty and ambiguity about what the new decision and shift in focus meant for the organization and the delivery of services that the Peel community rely on.

Despite the uncertainty regarding the future of some of Peel's programs and service, Peel's commitment to delivering inclusive and accessible services for all members of the community remained a priority.

This report highlights actions and activities towards the removing barriers that exceed minimum legislated requirements.

To review Peel's 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the 2023 Annual Accessibility Status report, visit [peelregion.ca/accessibility](https://peelregion.ca/accessibility).

## Statement of organizational commitment to accessibility

Peel Region is committed to implementing, maintaining, and enhancing accessibility with respect to employment and the use of all regional goods and services, programs, and facilities for all persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- respects their dignity and independence and is sensitive to their individual needs;
- ensures reasonable efforts are made so that service outcomes are the same for persons with disabilities as those without disabilities; and
- allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services as those without disabilities, in the same location and in a timely and similar manner considering the nature of the service accommodations.

## Office of Culture and Inclusion

Peel Region aims to create a community where residents and staff feels a sense of belonging, regardless of income, race, gender, or social status. Advancing reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion for both the workforce and community is a top priority for Peel Region. The Office of Culture & Inclusion (the Office) supports these efforts by enhancing individual and organizational capabilities to ensure programs and services align with principles of reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion. A number of initiatives were undertaken in 2024 to advance DEI in Peel:

- Transitioned Peel DEI Strategy report into a DEI Strategy Implementation Plan to actively identify and address systemic barriers affecting equity-seeking groups and marginalized populations within the organization and the broader community.
- Developed Peel's Municipal Diversity Plan, as required by the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, to ensure that members of the police services board represent the diverse communities the board serves.
- Launched "*Bridging Beliefs: An Introduction to Understanding Religions*"—a virtual series exploring Peel's most practiced religions. This series fosters learning and understanding of diverse faiths, supporting the creation of safer, more connected, and inclusive communities.
- Launched the "Decolonizing Disability - Indigenous Knowledges & Why Stories Matter" event to deepen understanding of identity intersections and encourage inclusive practices that value diverse ways of knowing and being.
- Continued knowledge and awareness building through Peel's Observance and Recognition Policy. In 2024, 109 faith-based, cultural and diversity related observances were acknowledged, promoting cultural understanding and inclusion across the organization.



## Peel Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to be an integral partner in advancing accessibility at Peel. The knowledge and lived experience that they provide as persons with disabilities is essential to advancing accessible and inclusive service delivery that meet the needs of the community. In 2024, AAC members participated in:

- The Dixie Corridor Revitalization Project Walking Audit.
- The redevelopment and continued efforts of Peel's website to improve end user experience and meet AODA compliance, including testing new digital forms and solutions.
- Peel Manor Senior's Rental Building site plan review.
- East Avenue Affordable Housing project site plan review.
- Review and approval of Peel's Accessible Design Guidelines and Use Policy for Peel's Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations.
- Opportunities to review and provide feedback on Accessibility Standards Canada draft Accessibility Standard on Plain Language, the initial recommendations of the AODA's Design of Public Spaces Standard review as well as recommendations of the AODA's Customer Service standards review.



# 2024 Accessibility Initiatives

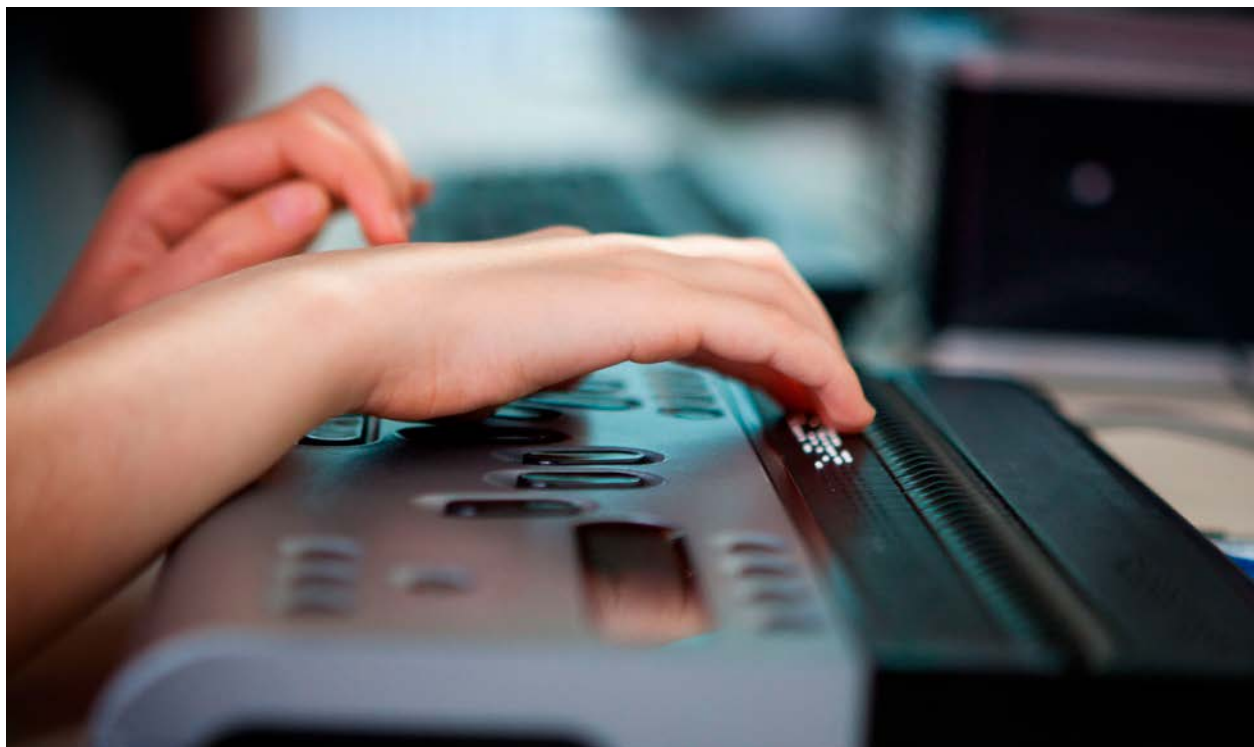
## Peel: A digital government

Peel continued its journey of transforming into a digital government by improving the customer experience and ensuring that our digital services meeting the needs of the community, the following initiatives were undertaken to achieve this objective:

### New peelregion.ca website:

Peel's website generates an average of 20 million page views annually, with 14% of users relying on assistive technology. In response, a new website was introduced in 2024, shifting from an organization-based structure to one organized by service areas. A new Content Management System (Drupal) was introduced and all content on peelregion.ca was migrated. This new resource supports the development and operations of an AODA compliant website which meets or exceeds AODA's WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.

Website content produced during design and development stages such as publications, presentations, tools, videos and documents, adhere to accessible guidelines. In addition, Peel acquired Siteimprove, a software that crawls Peel's website weekly and generates an accessibility score. This has greatly assisted in advancing the work, moving from a manual to an automatic system. All efforts have been made to provide an inclusive user experience.



## Digital solutions to access Peel Region programs and services:

Peel Region has enhanced its peelregion.ca website to provide a more inclusive user experience, improving access to services, and better customer experience. Peel residents have more ways to access services on the enhanced peelregion.ca, which provides access to over 100 services. Peel Region strives to provide residents with a consistent user experience, helping them find important service information quickly, related to eligibility, fees, how to apply or initiate a service, and contact information.

Key improvements include:

- **Accessibility:** The new website supports AODA compliance, meeting or exceeding WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements. Content is created following accessible guidelines, and Siteimprove software helps maintain accessibility by generating weekly scores.
- **Content Management:** A new Content Management System (Drupal) was implemented, and all content was migrated to ensure a seamless user experience.
- **PDF Remediation:** Over 12,000 non-accessible PDFs were removed, and a decision matrix was introduced to offer alternative solutions for posting PDFs. Web-to-email forms are being replaced with dynamic digital forms.
- **Digital Solutions:** New technologies provide an end-to-end digital service experience. In 2024, digital solutions were introduced for Freedom of Information requests, landlord and tenant water billing account changes, business hazardous waste, construction project feedback, and several public health services.
- **Archives Digitization:** Peel's archives were digitized to make heavily requested records more accessible. The archive platform includes over 10,000 pages of annotated land research files dating back to 1806 and planning maps from the 1950s to 1970s, covering most of modern day Brampton and Caledon.

The AAC's participation in testing new digital forms and solutions before public launch was integral to the project, resulting in a 94% customer satisfaction rating. The redesign of Peel's resident portal is underway to fully update and meet AODA accessibility requirements. Continued investments in modern technologies are part of Peel Region's efforts to remove accessibility barriers and provide secure, convenient access to services from computers and mobile devices. These advancements support Peel Region's vision of becoming a digital government.

## Digital accessibility working group:

To advance digital accessibility within the organization, a digital accessibility working group was established. The working group, composed of staff involved in advancing digital accessibility in Peel will be focused creating an enterprise-wide business process with clear roles and responsibilities for planning, design and delivery of online resources that are AODA compliant for peelregion.ca. Additionally, the group will support an organization-wide education strategy to help employees learn and adopt digital accessibility practices.

## AODA web accessibility compliance:

Peel continues to ensure open and transparent communication with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to keep them updated and informed of Peel's ongoing AODA compliance efforts. In 2024, Peel continued to work the Ministry to revise its compliance plan and website compliance efforts going into 2025.

## Accessible information and communications

Peel continued to seek for opportunities to improve accessibility and remove barriers in its communication. In 2024, branded corporate templates were introduced to the organization, incorporating accessibility features to help users create accessible documents, presentations and correspondence while adhering to Peel's brand.



Additionally, Peel also introduced its fully accessible budget document. This 700+page document meets rigorous design and accessibility criteria ensuring that all community members can access and understand Peel's budget process.

## Inclusion guide for Peel's learning and development programming:

Peel introduced "Inclusion at the Core: An Inclusion Guide for Peel's Learning and Development Programming". This guide provides inclusive and accessible principles to the procurement, design, delivery, and measurement of Peel's learning and development programs and activities.



## **Freedom of Information:**

Peel Region continues to deliver accessible services through an enhanced, user-friendly webpage. This platform provides individuals with the right to access general records and their personal information, with limited exceptions. In 2024, Peel introduced an AODA-compliant digital form for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). This form allows residents to easily submit their requests and make payments online.

## **Accessible procurement**

### **Vendor Code of Conduct:**

Peel's Vendor Code of Conduct was updated in 2024 and will be launched in 2025. The new code outlines minimum performance standards for vendors to maintain a positive business relationship with Peel Region, reflecting Peel's values and commitments. It requires vendors to respect labor conventions prohibiting disability discrimination and mandates a respectful workplace culture free from hate, harassment, and discrimination when vendors are working at Peel workplaces.

### **Vendor Performance Management (VPM):**

Peel's VPM procedure and Vendor Step by Step guide were reviewed and updated to reflect AODA standards before posting to the external website. Internally, the VPM online tutorial for employees also conforms to AODA standards.

### **Website accessibility statement:**

Peel Region ensures that its web accessibility statement is used by content providers, including external vendors. This statement outlines Peel's AODA requirements for website compliance, ensuring digital content is accessible and AODA compliant. Vendors must provide proof of conformance to WCAG 2.1 or PDF/UA standards. The web accessibility statement includes guidelines and resources to achieve accessibility and is integrated into Peel's procurement process.

## Accessible EV charging stations retrofit project

In 2024, Peel continued its accessible EV charging stations retrofit project. An external consultant was hired to design and prepare construction-ready documents and serve as the contract administrator for retrofitting several EV charging stations at Peel Region headquarters. The work included site visits to assess concepts for making the stations more accessible. A report outlining the findings will be available for review in 2025.



## Walkable and accessible neighbourhoods

In 2024, Peel Public Health's Active Living Team conducted a walking audit for the Dixie Corridor Revitalization Project in Mississauga. A walking audit is a program where community members assess the ease and safety of walking in a neighborhood using the Peel Walking Audit Tool and process. The goal is to improve walkability in cities and suburbs, providing community feedback for municipal planning initiatives that include accessibility considerations. Members of Peel's AAC participated in the walking audit.



## Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor

The SHWV at Peel Manor opened in November 2024, welcoming long-term care residents, adult day services clients, and expanding community support services. As the recipient of AdvantAge Ontario's 2024 Innovation and Excellence Capital Project Award, SHWV includes a long-term care home and a service hub designed to support seniors and their caregivers in the broader community.

### Key features include:

- **Transitional Behavioural Support Unit:** Provides specialized dementia support and emotion-based care in a safe environment for individuals with complex expressive behaviors.
- **Service Hub:** Offers integrated care for seniors, including adult day services to help maintain mobility, strength, and cognition, while reducing social isolation.

With the aging population and higher risk of disability, Peel is committed to ensuring accessible services for seniors. In 2024, several initiatives were undertaken:

- **Accessible Technologies:** Digital screens at the building entrance and throughout can be customized for visual aid. Hearing assistance technology was installed in Huxley Town Hall. Live broadcasts of events are restreamed for residents to participate from their rooms.
- **Explorer Tags:** Provided to residents with mobility limitations and fall risks, allowing them to move freely within the facility while ensuring their safety.
- **Modernized Nurse Call System:** Enhances two-way communication between healthcare professionals and residents, improving the quality of care.

These efforts ensure that services meet the unique needs of Peel's seniors, creating a more accessible and inclusive environment for both residents and staff.



## Adult Day Services

Virtual Adult Day Services (ADS) provide interactive social, physical, and intellectual recreation programs via computer or phone. In 2024, the program expanded eligibility to better support community-dwelling clients not on in-person waitlists. Peel continues to build partnerships with internal and external stakeholders to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and coordination between services.



## Community public health clinics

Peel Immunization Clinics are strategically located and accessible by transit and car at:

- 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton
- 7120 Hurontario, Mississauga
- Meadowvale Town Centre, Mississauga
- Malton Community Centre, Malton
- Caledon Community Centre, Caledon

### Accessibility features:

- **Mobility Access:** Main floor locations with automatic doors and wide corridors for wheelchairs and mobility devices.
- **Private and Quiet Spaces:** Areas for privacy and low-stimulation environments.
- **Washroom Accessibility:** Accessible washrooms with grab bars, automatic doors, and signage.
- **Service Animals & Support Persons:** Registered service animals and support persons are welcome.
- **Communication Supports:** Large print materials, verbal explanations, and translation services.



## Additional services:

Baby Feeding Support, Dental (children and youth), and Healthy Sexuality Services: Available at 10 Peel Centre Drive, with dental and healthy sexuality services also at Fairview Street Clinic in Mississauga. Both sites have gender-neutral bathrooms with braille signage and automatic doors.

These features ensure Peel Immunization Clinics are accessible and inclusive for all community members.

## School-based clinics

Peel Public Health operates school-based immunization clinics for Grade 7-8 students and other eligible groups, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. Key features include:

- **Mobility Access:** Clinics are held in accessible school spaces with wide entryways and step-free access.
- **Private and Quiet Spaces:** Designated areas for students needing privacy, sensory accommodations, or low-stimulation environments.
- **Washroom Accessibility:** Accessible washrooms with grab bars and automatic door openers where available.
- **Support Persons:** Students can have support persons, caregivers, or educational assistants present.
- **Communication Supports:** Staff provide clear verbal explanations, large-print materials, and can arrange interpretation services, including ASL, in advance.
- **Wayfinding & Signage:** Clear, high-contrast signage for easy navigation.
- **Collaboration with Educators:** School clinic staff work with educators to ensure accommodations for students with disabilities or additional needs. Families can contact Public Health for further accommodations at community clinics.

These features ensure all students can receive their vaccines in a safe and inclusive environment.

## Mobile public health clinics

In school and community settings that host immunization, dental screening and mobile preventive service delivery, Peel employees work with the clinic host to ensure on-site locations meet the need for those who may need accommodations. This includes access to rooms, adequate spacing, locations that do not require stairs, translation support, translation, deaf and hard of hearing services, etc. Parents and/or support workers are welcome to support any of their children during the delivery of services.

## Supervised Consumption Services in Peel

Peel's first interim Supervised Consumption Services Clinic opened on March 4, 2024, at 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton. This site provides a safe space for people to use their own substances under the supervision of medically trained, non-judgmental, and trauma-informed staff.

### Accessibility features:

- Large, barrier-free space for mobility devices
- Accessibility buttons at entrances and within the site
- Accessible washroom
- Extra spacious booth with an electronic adjustable surface
- Additional surface lighting in consumption booths

The clinic was designed with input from Moyo Health and Community Services, WellFort Community Health Services, and individuals with lived experience of substance use. It ensures accessibility and is well-connected to public transportation. The clinic also connects users to health and social services, including mental health, addictions, and housing support.

## Peel Infant Feeding Survey summary report

Peel Public Health published its first AODA-compliant population health assessment report in 2024. The report focused on highlights from the 2019 Peel Infant Feeding Survey which collects information from new parents in Peel about their infant feeding practices. The report advanced previous population health assessment reports by addressing reading level, screen reader functionality, graph and data table formats, colour selection and other formatting features. Additional AODA-compliant reports are planned for 2025.

## Early Years and Child Care

Peel continued to enhance access and inclusion by creating accessible documents, using plain language, supporting French language services, collecting sociodemographic data, and improving DEIA in programs.

### System Navigation Service:

In collaboration with Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP), this service supports families in finding Early Years and Child Care programs through an online search tool, phone, live chat, and email.

### EarlyON:

EarlyON child and family centres offer free, high-quality programs for families with children aged 6 and younger. In 2024, initiatives to improve accessibility included:

- Offering 25 core weekly hours and 31 programs to support mental health for children and families.
- Providing ongoing weekly virtual programming to ensure families can access resources and connect online.
- Collaborating with agency partners to develop a flexible process for addressing demand, to be launched in 2025.
- Funding agencies to collaborate with community partners and develop customized programming for equity-deserving groups.



## Housing and social supports

Peel continues to provide affordable, inclusive, and accessible housing to meet community needs. In 2024, the following facilities were completed:

- **Peel Family Shelter:** Converted a former hotel at 2420 Surveyor Rd., Mississauga into 108 suites for families, including barrier-free suites and improvements to common spaces and exterior amenities like a new playground.
- **Birch Place:** Converted a former hotel at 5 Rutherford Rd., Brampton into 50 affordable rental units and 17 transitional housing units for youth, with fully barrier-free units and an elevator for full access.
- **Credit River Way:** A new 150-unit affordable housing project at 200 Missinnihe Way, Mississauga, with 21% of units being fully barrier-free.

Peel also supports third-party affordable housing developments with barrier-free units for lower-income households:

- **Armagh:** Expanded facility in Mississauga, adding 10 new transitional housing units for women and children fleeing abuse, including a fully barrier-free unit and accessible programming space.
- **Cornerstone Suites:** New 40-unit supportive housing development at 25 Thomas and 263 Victoria Ave., Mississauga, with 10 fully barrier-free units and accessible common areas.
- **Pathway Arbour Mill:** Added 6 new affordable rental units to an existing social housing project at 3023 Parkerhill Rd., Mississauga, all with barrier-free features for older adults and those with mobility challenges.



To address growing community needs, Peel opened an asylum seeker shelter in 2024. This renovated shelter is designed with accessibility in mind, providing spaces that meet the needs of asylum claimants arriving with limited resources and no community connections.



## Affordable Transit Program (ATP)

Peel's Affordable Transit Program (ATP) offers 12 discounted monthly passes for Brampton Transit and Mississauga MiWay, with eligible users also receiving GO Transit discounts. Accessibility considerations ensure a barrier-free application process.

### Key features:

- **Application Assistance:** Provided by phone for residents with disabilities who cannot complete the online application through the MyPeel Portal.
- **Accommodation Requests:** Applicants are not required to disclose a diagnosis. An ATP coordinator contacts the applicant to process a manual application, ensuring barrier-free access to transit pass subsidies.

ATP is committed to reducing barriers and enhancing program accessibility for Peel residents.

## TransHelp

2024 continued to be a busy year for TransHelp, Peel's specialized transit provider. Ridership fully rebounded faster than expected since the COVID-19 pandemic and surpassed expectations. Customer satisfaction continued to be high, achieving an 85% overall client satisfaction rating. Notable service enhancements for the year included:

- Passenger Orientation Training
- The introduction of One Fare Program
- Enhanced Flexible Trip Times
- The addition of DriverMate Technology



## Age-Friendly Built Environment Assessment Project

Progress continued to be made on the Age-Friendly Planning Built Environment Assessment project.

Peel staff coordinated efforts and reported on recommendations from the Final Report, partnering with local municipalities to create inclusive and accessible communities for the aging population.

However, some recommendations were paused due to potential implications from provincial legislation, including Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022), Bill 112 (Hazel McCallion Act, 2023), and Bill 185 (Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act). Peel continues to monitor these impacts on the project.

## Peel Children Water Festival

In 2024, Peel reinstated the Peel Children's Water Festival (PCWF), a 5-day spring event for students in grades 2-5. Held at Heart Lake Conservation Area, the festival features interactive booths and activities on water-related topics like conservation, the water cycle, and Peel's water treatment process. Accessibility is a key focus in the festival's planning and design to ensure an inclusive experience for all children.

## Modernized workplace

Peel continues to modernize workspaces to support staff as they prepare for more in-person connections. Key activities include:

- **Reconfiguring Workspaces:** Larger corridors for improved accessibility.
- **Enhanced Atmosphere:** Modern, brighter, and more inclusive work environments.
- **Ergonomic Workstations:** Improved sit-stand, height-adjustable workstations for better ergonomics and accessibility.



These efforts ensure staff have the resources they need to achieve their full potential.

# 2024 Events and Observances

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Peel recognizes that diversity includes many dimensions. Increasing awareness, understanding, and respect for these differences helps create an inclusive workplace and community. Peel's Observance and Recognition Policy celebrates significant faith-based, cultural, and diversity-related events, including accessibility observances that promote the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In 2024, Peel celebrated its 50th Anniversary. During National AccessAbility Week, "Peel's Accessibility Journey" was highlighted, sharing stories on the history of accessibility in Canada and advancements in Peel Region. This highlighted the progress made and the work still needed to make Ontario fully accessible.

For the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Peel hosted a virtual event titled "Decolonizing Disability - Indigenous Knowledges & Why Stories Matter." Keynote speaker Dr. Rheanna Robinson discussed the intersectionality between disability and Indigenous identities, sharing her experiences and research. Attendees learned how Indigenous knowledges can transform understandings of disability in Canada and globally.

## A Year to Recalibrate

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2024 was a year to recalibrate and get back on course. Despite the provincial government's announcement at the end of 2023 that Peel Region would not be dissolved, uncertainty remained for some programs and services. Nevertheless, Peel maintained its focus on delivering accessible and inclusive services. Peel demonstrated resilience in the face of challenges, continuing to fulfill its accessibility mandate and seeking opportunities to exceed minimum legislated requirements. This is what persons with disabilities and the community expect from us, and it is the right thing to do.

# We Welcome Your Feedback

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Your feedback is important to us. Please let us know if you have any questions or feedback about the programs or services mentioned in this report, Peel Region's 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, or about accessibility in general.

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