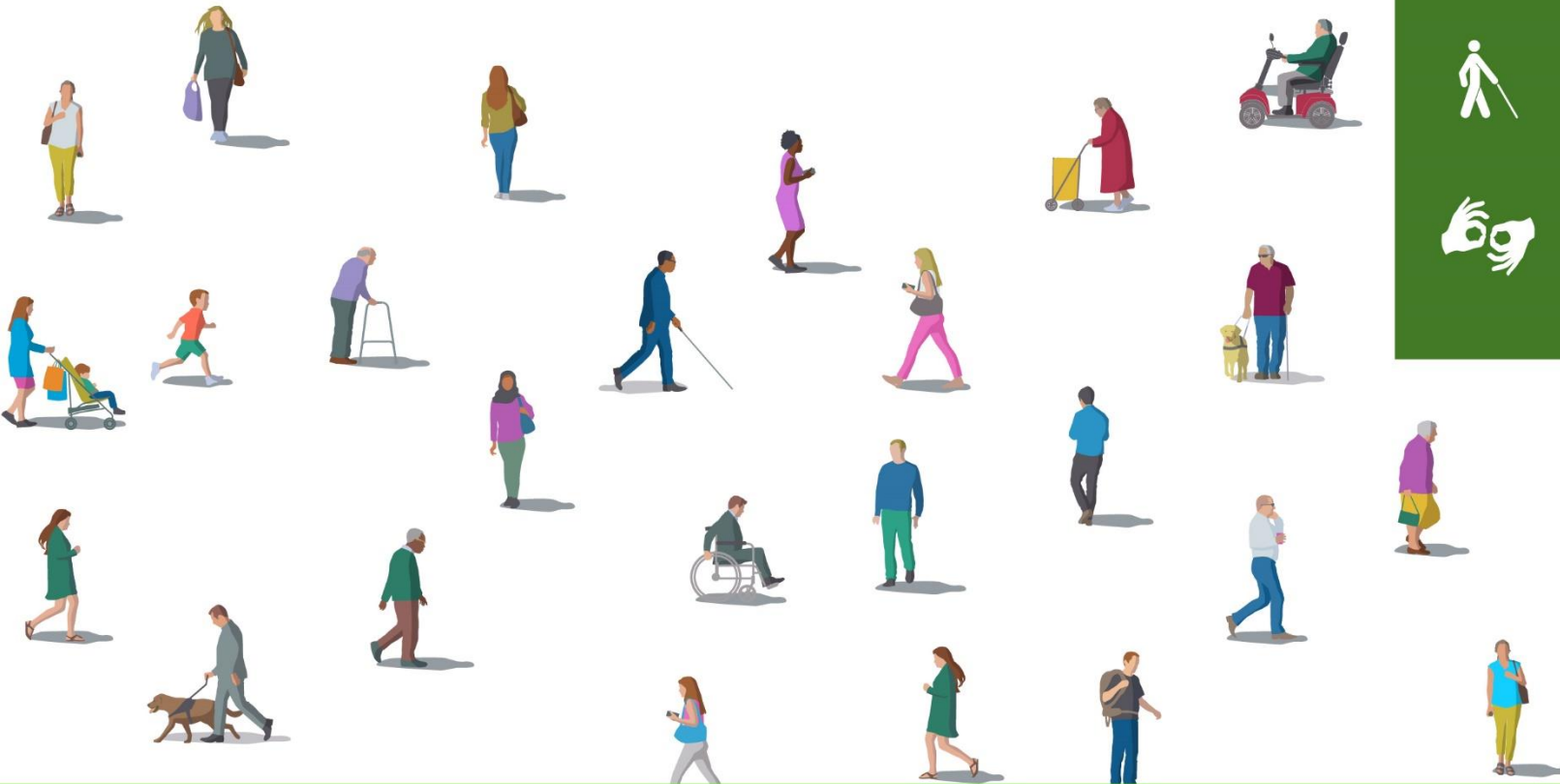




HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Accessibility Plan

2023-2025



December 1, 2022

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General

Message from the Speaker

As Speaker, I am proud to present the first Accessibility Plan of the House of Commons. This plan fulfills a duty under the *Accessible Canada Act* and represents an important step toward our commitment to being a leader in accessibility.

The House of Commons is central to our democracy and represents our society in all its diversity. As a place of work and as a public space, the House must provide a highly inclusive and accessible environment for Canadians, Members, their staff, and House Administration employees, as well as all visitors taking part in parliamentary business.

In developing this plan, consultations were held with persons with a diverse range of disabilities to better understand the barriers they face when interacting with the House. In response to these challenges, the House plans to put in place targeted initiatives to continue identifying, removing, and preventing the creation of barriers to accessibility.

Please read the *Accessibility Plan 2023–2025* to find out more about our concrete commitments to accessibility over the next three years. I hope the information you find here will encourage you to support the House's ongoing work toward an inclusive and accessible environment.

The Honourable Anthony Rota, M.P.

Accessibility statement

At the House of Commons, we are committed to meeting all our obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act*, including its regulations and standards, and to being a leader in accessibility. We are determined to acknowledge and respect the independence and dignity of everyone interacting with the House of Commons.

Therefore, we will develop and implement strategies and policies to ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of the House's activities. Identifying, removing and preventing accessibility barriers is a priority and part of a concrete initiative that will allow everyone the right to fully participate in the work of the House of Commons.

Contact information and feedback process

The Director of Accessibility Implementation is responsible for overseeing accessibility initiatives at the House of Commons.

Questions and feedback about accessibility and the House of Commons' plan, as well as requests to receive the plan in another format or information on the [feedback process](#) can be sent to the Accessibility Secretariat:

Accessibility Secretariat
House of Commons
181 Queen Street
PO BOX 11
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
accessible@parl.gc.ca
613-995-1111 (Ottawa) or 1-833-725-2686 (toll-free)

Anonymous feedback about accessibility at the House can be submitted [online](#); forms in another format are also available at the Accessibility Secretariat. The House will review all feedback received and take steps to address any identified barriers to accessibility.

Background: About the House of Commons

The House of Commons is the House of Parliament made up of 338 Members serving as representatives of the people who elected them through a democratic process. They have a wide range of responsibilities that include activities in the Chamber, in committees and in their constituencies.

The House is presided by the Speaker (elected by secret ballot by fellow Members). The Clerk of the House of Commons is the chief executive of the Administration and is responsible for the day-to-day management of its operations.

The *Accessible Canada Act* applies to the House of Commons, as represented by the Board of Internal Economy. The House includes, for the purpose of the Act, Members' constituency offices. The Board of Internal Economy is the governing body of the House and is chaired by the Speaker, who is also the head of the Administration and responsible for its overall direction and management. The 338 Members of Parliament also have staff in their parliamentary and constituency offices, totalling about 2,000 people.

The Administration, which is made up of roughly 2,300 employees, supports the work of Members by providing them with the services, infrastructure and advice they need to do their work as legislators and representatives in the Chamber, in committees, in caucus, and in their parliamentary and constituency offices.

Current state

For many years now, the House of Commons has had initiatives in place to remove and prevent accessibility barriers. In some areas, such as information technology and real property, accessibility is already an integral part of new projects. For example, heritage buildings often present unique accessibility challenges. In recent years, rehabilitation work on some buildings has made it possible to meet or exceed many accessibility standards. In the case of computer systems, whether during the redesign or implementation phase, great efforts are made to meet the highest accessibility standards. User-experience experts are also increasingly involved to ensure that web products are centred on the needs of users.

The *Policy on Workplace Inclusion* was developed to ensure that we build and support a welcoming workplace reflective of Canadian society, which is diverse in origins, cultures, experiences and perspectives. To support this policy, the Workplace Inclusion Program was introduced. It develops awareness and education activities, evaluates the House's current state of inclusion, and identifies opportunities for improvement. In addition, the Diversity Council consisting of committed employees who have a genuine interest in diversity and inclusion has been created to support this work in a meaningful way.

The House of Commons is proud to present its *Accessibility Plan 2023–2025*. This plan will help the entire organization move forward in areas where meaningful action is needed.

Consultations

Consultation was the first step in preparing the House of Commons' plan. In keeping with the principle of "Nothing without us," it was imperative to hear and understand what persons with disabilities had to say. Members, their staff, Administration employees, and groups representing persons with a diverse range of disabilities were consulted about existing barriers and about ways of improving accessibility.

Survey

In spring 2022, the House of Commons emailed an anonymous survey to Members, their staff, and Administration employees. Respondents were asked to describe barriers that they had encountered or observed, suggest ways of removing those barriers, and prioritize potential solutions. Respondents could self-identify as having a disability or as being close to someone with a disability. They could also provide their contact information if they were interested in participating in future consultations. A total of 244 responses were received over a two-week period. More than 25% of respondents self-identified as having a disability or as being close to someone with a disability.

Workshops

In partnership with the Library of Parliament, the House of Commons held small group or one-on-one workshops for willing participants with disabilities. Fourteen workshops were held, allowing participants to anonymously share their experiences. Some participants had mobility, visual or auditory impairments, while others were neurodivergent.

Advocacy groups

The House of Commons also consulted with representatives of the following stakeholder organizations:

- Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD-ASC)
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Inclusion Canada
- Disability Without Poverty

These representatives explained their perspectives in detail. Each advocacy group had experience interacting with the House of Commons, for example, during committee meetings as witnesses or interested parties and during meetings with parliamentarians.

Working group

In January 2022, the House of Commons set up the Accessibility Working Group, which is comprised of directors, managers and subject-matter experts from each Administration service area. This working group is co-chaired by two senior executives: the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and the Chief Information Officer. It is also supported by the Director of Accessibility Implementation, whose position was created to assist the House in developing its accessibility plan, feedback process and progress reports.

The 22 members of the Accessibility Working Group met regularly to develop the accessibility plan. Members of each service area started by taking stock of their existing programs, policies and services and by reviewing feedback received during consultations. Then, they identified the barriers specific to their service area and the potential solutions for removing them.

During the same period, representatives from all organizations in the parliamentary precinct set up a working group to share experiences and information, and to help facilitate strategic alignment among Hill partners.

Feedback received

The accessibility barriers identified by survey respondents were analyzed and classified according to the areas described in section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICTs)
- communication, other than ICTs
- procurement of goods, services and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

Employment and the built environment were the areas identified as having the most barriers. For employment, the barriers mentioned most often were attitudes, accommodations, and the need for training. For the built environment, the barriers mentioned most often were doors, entrances and signage. Acoustic issues in large rooms were also reported as barriers.

The House’s ongoing efforts to improve accessibility were highlighted during the workshop discussions. In relation to the objective of identifying, removing and preventing barriers, the following list summarizes the main areas that respondents identified as needing improvement:

- Better understanding the realities of persons with disabilities, as this is key to addressing biases, ableism, and negative attitudes.
- Increasing the presence and visibility of diversity, which includes persons with disabilities, within the organization for everyone’s benefit.
- Providing training on accessibility to educate and empower employees and managers.
- Simplifying the access to the Administration’s services by centralizing service points or call centres to remove barriers for Members and their staff and better take neurodiversity into account.
- Favouring plain language in parliamentary documents to reduce the use of technical language, thereby making documents more reader-friendly and increasing the participation of persons with disabilities and members of the public in House activities.
- Improving accommodation measures for persons with disabilities who appear before committees.
- Making sure that adjustments to emergency procedures are a priority.
- Renovating the buildings on the Hill not only to rethink accessibility, but to go above and beyond accessibility standards.
- Simplifying hiring and accommodation processes, which are often lengthy and challenging for requesters and not always well adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring consistency in accommodation measures across Administration service areas to achieve greater integration of processes and facilitate career progression for persons with disabilities.
- Supporting telework as it often eliminates barriers for many persons with disabilities.

The House of Commons is grateful to all participants who took the time to share their knowledge and experiences; this allowed us to clearly identify barriers.

Culture change and training: A strong foundation

Overview and objectives

During consultations, the House of Commons identified the most prominent barriers as being attitudinal in nature and linked to a lack of awareness of the realities faced by persons with disabilities. Accessibility training was mentioned by many as a key solution to raising awareness. Recognizing that culture is at the foundation of the work involved in achieving a barrier-free environment, the House will promote culture change and an inclusive work environment by providing accessibility training to Members, their staff, and Administration employees. It will also reinforce the governance of accessibility through the establishment of an Accessibility Secretariat.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

Training

- Provide general accessibility awareness training for Members, their staff, and Administration employees, make it mandatory for all Administration employees, and integrate it into all onboarding activities. This training will help participants better understand disability in Canada and its impact on the workplace. It will also provide them with strategies to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Provide guidance and best practices to Members' staff with respect to accessible customer service by offering training on how to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities.

Communications strategy

- Develop and implement a communications strategy to raise awareness across the House of the need to continue identifying, removing and preventing barriers; the importance of sharing feedback; and the implementation of the House's accessibility plan.

Governance

- Establish the Accessibility Secretariat, which will be responsible for monitoring feedback; evaluating and coordinating responses; overseeing the implementation and updating of the accessibility plan; ensuring ongoing consultations with persons with

disabilities; and providing leadership, advice, and coordination services across the House.

Medium term (2023–2024)

Training

- Provide accessibility awareness training tailored for managers and supervisors, with a focus on how to interact with persons with disabilities, assess the accessibility of a work environment, and accommodate persons with disabilities. This training will be offered to Members and their staff and will be mandatory for all Administration managers and supervisors.

Long term (2023–2025)

Policy review

- Review the *Policy on Workplace Inclusion* to strengthen disability inclusion and better address biases, ableism, and negative attitudes.

Employment

Overview and objectives

Consultations highlighted that, while there are hiring and accommodation processes and policies in place to support persons with disabilities, there is still a need to improve them. To do this, the House will review its staffing and assessment policies, make processes and tools more accessible and inclusive, and ensure that accommodation processes are better adapted to the realities of persons with disabilities. As part of the Members' Human Resources Services (MHRS), the Administration will provide advice and tools to help Members in their capacity as employers to assess and improve the accessibility of their offices and human resources processes. The Administration will also review, through the lens of accessibility and in consultation with persons with disabilities, key employment policies and processes.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

Recruitment

- Review the *Recruitment and Selection Policy*, including job posters and assessment processes, to reduce barriers and increase the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

Self-identification

- Review the processes for self-identification and exit interviews so that more comprehensive information about the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities can be gathered.

Medium term (2023–2024)

Advice to Members

- As part of MHRS, develop templates, guides and tools to help Members (in their capacity as employers) to assess, through the lens of accessibility, their recruitment and retention practices, accommodation processes, and physical and digital environments. Provide advice on how to remove barriers.

Accommodation

- Review the *Workplace Accommodation Policy* and process for accommodations to support employees with disabilities more efficiently.

Recruitment

- Review the recruitment strategy and process for the student employment program, including the Page Program, to better support the hiring of students with disabilities.

Built environment

Overview and objectives

The House of Commons is committed to providing an accessible and secure built environment to Members, their staff, Administration employees, the Canadian public, and visitors. The House is striving to be a leader in accessibility by ensuring that all its facilities meet or exceed applicable standards and that universal accessibility is integrated into the modernization of its infrastructure.

Overall, respondents who participated in the consultation phase recognized how far the House has come in terms of improvements to its built environment. The specific barriers that were identified will guide how the House prioritizes its facilities projects. Respondents most frequently mentioned issues with doors, entrances to buildings, emergency procedures, signage, washrooms and acoustics.

The House has already started to leverage the numerous opportunities to remove accessibility barriers during its ongoing restoration, renewal and modernization projects in the parliamentary precinct. These projects, especially the rehabilitation of Centre Block, have been flagged during consultations as potential project models offering key opportunities to rethink accessibility and exceed existing standards. To be a leader in universal accessibility, the House will continue to develop the Parliamentary Precinct Universal Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan, in close collaboration with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), parliamentary partners, persons with disabilities and the organizations representing them. In the years to come, the House, in partnership with PSPC, will also ensure that accessibility is a priority in the rehabilitation of Centre Block and the redevelopment of Block 2 (the city block facing Parliament Hill) by meeting, and when possible exceeding, accessibility standards.

Initiatives

In addition to the focus on accessibility in long-term modernization projects, the House will address barriers identified during consultations by taking the following actions:

Short term (2023)

Fire prevention and emergency preparedness

- Launch an awareness campaign to facilitate the self-identification of building occupants in the precinct who need assistance in case of an emergency.
- Develop personal emergency evacuation plans for persons with disabilities requiring assistance to leave a building.

Medium term (2023–2024)

Members' constituency office leases

- Assess Members' current constituency office leases in relation to the inclusion of accessibility clauses.

Signage

- Add accessibility signs on entrance doors, elevators, and elevator emergency alarms.

Interior doors

- Upgrade and adjust doors to ensure that they are easy to open for everyone.

Entrances to buildings

- Rehabilitate the existing Queen’s Gate pedestrian entry ramps on Parliament Hill to meet universal accessibility standards.
- Upgrade north entrance doors in the Confederation Building to ensure that they are easy to open for everyone.
- Install cane-detectable guards for power-operated doors when doors open onto a path of travel.

Washrooms

- Improve washroom accessibility, including adjusting mirror heights and installing grab bars, automatic soap dispensers, and coat hooks.

Elevators and stairs

- Adjust all elevator doors to ensure that they remain fully open for a minimum of 8 seconds.
- Install tactile-attention indicators on stairs that are not enclosed.
- Change carpeting on stairs to improve visibility.

Corridors

- Relocate protruding objects in corridors (such as fire extinguishers, mailboxes, garbage cans) to meet the clearance width requirement for an accessible route and a maneuverable space.

Common and public areas

- Modify space and furniture in common and public areas to improve accessibility.

Fire prevention and emergency preparedness

- Develop standard operation emergency procedures to assist persons with disabilities.

Long term (2023–2025)

Signage

- Review the signage guidelines to address the needs of all users.

Acoustics

- Improve the sound quality in key communication locations by installing sound-absorbing materials.

Food services

- Improve accessibility of food services in the precinct by reviewing menu boards and labels and by adding accessible seating in cafeterias.

Service counters

- Review and adjust service counter heights to improve accessibility.

Washrooms

- Assess the need for the addition of properly designed universal washrooms in the precinct and prioritize and plan their installation.

Entrances to buildings

- Eliminate tapered risers on several entrance stairs and ramps, and install handrails on both sides of ramps.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Overview and objectives

The House of Commons is working to ensure that everyone can access its digital information, services, technology, and tools regardless of their abilities. This includes digital information and services provided to the public, as well as information, services and tools used by Members, their staff, and Administration employees.

During consultations, the House received positive feedback on the ITC work achieved so far. However, it was frequently mentioned that more training was needed on how to create accessible documents and websites, and on how to manage issues with tools and software. Some of the House’s website features were also identified as problematic.

Having set the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (level AA) as its standard, the House will increase its capacity to better assess web content accessibility and train and advise Members, their staff, and Administration employees on the accessibility of the web content they produce. House websites draw information from many authors and applications that may not always comply with the WCAG 2.1 standard, and although it is not always possible for the House to guarantee the compliance of documents or publications provided by third parties, it will continue working with partner organizations to improve these documents.

To better support existing and future Members and employees with disabilities, the Administration will research and test, in consultation with users with disabilities, various assistive technology solutions (i.e. visual, auditory and mobility products). Also, in collaboration with users with disabilities, the Administration will review its development and productivity applications, systems and tools to identify and address accessibility barriers.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

Websites

- Continue to ensure that the House’s public and internal websites meet the WCAG 2.1 (level AA) and work with partner organizations to improve the accessibility of third-party documents posted on House websites. Periodically audit samples of the websites for compliance and prioritize and remedy identified issues.

Closed captioning

- Assess closed-captioning options for visitors in the House of Commons Galleries and develop an implementation plan.

Medium term (2023–2024)

Social media

- Improve accessibility of videos and images posted on the House’s social media channels.

Websites

- Assess new requirements of the WCAG 2.2, identify gaps, and develop a compliance plan.

Non-web documentation

- Establish a centre of expertise for Members, their staff, and Administration employees that will develop guidelines for creating accessible documentation, and provide related templates and training.
- Audit internal and external documents to ensure that accessibility requirements are being followed and gaps addressed.
- Research and establish supply chain services for accessible document formats.

Assistive technology – visual

- Research and test assistive technology solutions such as voice command services and friendly notification systems that can assist persons with visual impairments.
- Research and test braille solutions such as braille printers and braille translation software.
- Research and establish supply chain services for braille translation.

Assistive technology – auditory

- Research and test assistive technology solutions such as devices with assistive listening, alternative communication, and alerts.
- Research and establish supply chain options for closed captioning and live captioning to improve broadcasting accessibility.

Computing devices and peripherals

- Research and test assistive technology devices for physical disabilities such as an adaptive keyboard and mouse.

Long term (2023–2025)

Members’ parliamentary websites

- Build tools, guidelines, and training material to help Members improve the accessibility of their parliamentary website.
- Help Members assess their parliamentary website and recommend actions to increase accessibility.

Applications, systems and tools

- Assess the applications, systems and tools in current use and build a plan to address any accessibility gaps.

Communication, other than ICTs

Overview and objectives

Access to parliamentary information and proceedings is a key component of the Canadian democratic system. The House of Commons produces and disseminates a large volume of information, including the live or on-demand broadcasting of House and committee meetings, official publications (agendas, minutes, rules of proceedings, bills), and various content explaining the work of Members and the parliamentary process.

During consultations, it was mentioned that parliamentary documentation often uses technical language, which may constitute a barrier for many people. Recognizing that information should be prepared for and communicated to diverse audiences, the House will increase the use of plain language and promote the communication of parliamentary information, procedures and processes in a format and language that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

Sign language interpretation

- Assess, in collaboration with parliamentary partners, the resources required for providing sign language interpretation during some House proceedings and official parliamentary ceremonies.

Plain language

- Establish mandatory plain language training and performance objectives for all Corporate Communications advisors to ensure the use of plain language in corporate communications products.

Long term (2023–2025)

Plain language

- Review procedural materials intended for the public to ensure that updates are provided in plain language and that high-level summaries are provided for lengthy documents.
- Provide mandatory plain language training to content writers.
- Extend the library of videos explaining, in plain language, how Parliament works.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Overview and objectives

The House of Commons defines and maintains its own procurement policies and practices, except for those under Public Services and Procurement Canada relating to construction in its

facilities (see the Built environment section). The House is committed to implementing procurement guidelines, rules and practices that reflect and reinforce its accessibility initiatives, while maintaining efficient procurement processes.

Initiatives

Medium term (2023–2024)

- Develop guidelines and training for procurement officers to ensure that accessibility requirements are taken into account at the beginning of the procurement process.
- Develop corporate accessibility guidelines to promote the objective of identifying, removing and preventing accessibility barriers in the procurement of goods and services.

Design and delivery of programs and services

Overview and objectives

The House of Commons is committed to improving how Canadians can get involved in the parliamentary process and in Members' parliamentary work. Committee work in particular offers a key opportunity for Canadians to become directly involved in Members' work, seeing that private citizens, experts, organization representatives, and public servants are regularly invited to appear before committees to share information relevant to the topic under consideration. Committee meetings allow witnesses to give their point of view and allow Members to ask questions.

During consultations, it was highlighted that the process for appearing before committees was not always well adapted for persons with disabilities. The House will review the current process, work to better communicate and adapt the process for witnesses with disabilities, and offer training to committee staff who interact with witnesses. The House will also design accessibility floor plan guidelines to better help Members organize events and activities held in the parliamentary precinct for visitors.

The House's programs and services are in place to support the work carried out by Members and their staff, and the Administration is committed to designing and delivering programs and services that are accessible to all Members and their staff. During consultations, the complexity

of administrative processes and access points for Administration programs and services was identified as a potential barrier. Centralized service points with call-in options and extended office hours were suggested as potential solutions. In recent years, the Administration has been working on initiatives to streamline and improve the access to its programs and services and will continue to do so, while making sure that accessibility implications are fully considered.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

Approval of programs and services

- Include a mandatory Accessibility Implications section in the template for submissions presented to the Board of Internal Economy to ensure that these implications are considered when assessing new House of Commons programs and services.

Medium term (2023–2024)

Guidance for committee witnesses

- Review, through the lens of accessibility, communications and processes for witnesses participating in committee proceedings, including accessibility requirements for committee travel.
- Establish mandatory accessibility awareness and customer service training for committee staff interacting with witnesses.

Services to Members

- Establish a centralized, multidisciplinary contact centre that will focus on providing a simplified and seamless experience to Members and their staff. The service will provide new channels and appointment-based services, and will include technological enhancements to ensure that everyone has equal access to commonly used services regardless of their abilities.

Member events and activities in the precinct

- Design accessibility floor plan guidelines for Members' parliamentary events and activities in the precinct.

Transportation

Overview and objectives

The House of Commons provides a shuttle bus service to Members, their staff, and Administration employees travelling between buildings in the parliamentary precinct. A shuttle bus is equipped with a mechanical lift. The House is committed to reviewing shuttle bus functionality to improve accessibility.

The House also manages parking for Members and employees, and processes are in place to meet related accommodation requests. In response to feedback received during consultations, the House will review its processes for accommodating persons with disabilities when allocating parking spaces to ensure better coordination among the services involved.

Initiatives

Short term (2023)

- Review accessible parking spaces to ensure that they are clearly identified and appropriately located, as well as the parking accommodation process for persons with disabilities.

Medium term (2023–2024)

- Assess accessibility improvements for the shuttle bus fleet such as floor lights, rails, and sound signals.

Conclusion

The House of Commons, recognizing that improving accessibility is a work in progress, is committed to continuing the work that is already well underway. Developing and releasing the first three-year accessibility plan, in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act*, is an important milestone on the road to achieving a barrier-free organization. Also, implementing this plan represents an opportunity to renew the commitment to being a leader in accessibility and to ramp up organization-wide efforts to achieve this goal.

The House will continue to take the feedback from persons with disabilities and from all consultations into great consideration. It is determined to adapt and make the required changes to its policies, programs and practices according to the planning and reporting cycle outlined in the *Accessible Canada Act* and the standards still to be developed by Accessibility Standards Canada.

Glossary

Ableism

A belief system that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate or of less inherent value than others. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. It can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in the life of their communities.

(Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Glossary of Terms)

Accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada)

Accommodation

Any change in the working environment that allows a person with functional limitations in their abilities to do their job. Changes can include:

- adjustments to the physical workspace
- adaptations to the equipment or tools
- flexible work hours or job-sharing
- relocation of the workspace within the greater workplace
- the ability to work from home
- reallocation or exchange of some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments.

Accommodations (adjustments) can be temporary, periodic, or long-term, depending on the employee's situation or changes in the workplace.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada)

Assistive or adaptive device/technology

A device or system designed to help a person to perform a task, including assistive devices or equipment (for example, canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, hearing aids and personal

emergency response systems) as well as IT-related items (for example, computer screen-reading software).

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada)

Barrier

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal.

(Source: Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada, S.C. 2019, c. 10)

Bias

The term “bias” (also “implicit bias” and “unconscious bias”) refers to the unconscious assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes that human brains have about different groups. These learned mental shortcuts affect how we perceive and respond to people.

(Source: University of Victoria, Unconscious Biases)

Disability

Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

(Source: Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada, S.C. 2019, c. 10)

Diversity

The inclusion of different types of people. A diverse workforce in the public service is made up of individuals who have an array of identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, perspectives and experiences that are representative of Canada’s current and evolving population.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion)

Inclusion

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful.

Inclusion recognizes, values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada’s evolving human rights framework.

(Source: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion)

“Nothing without us”

The foundational principle of “Nothing without us” recognizes that persons with disabilities are equal participants in all areas of life. They should be involved in all decision making on policies, programs, practices and service delivery.

(Source: Government of Canada, Consulting persons with disabilities: “Nothing without us” and basic principles)

Persons with disabilities

Persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment.

Persons with disabilities include persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

(Source: *Employment Equity Act*)

Self-identification

Employees providing employment equity information for statistical purposes in analyzing and monitoring the progress of employment equity groups in the federal public service and for reporting on workforce representation.

(Source: Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2017 to 2018)

Universal accessibility

Universal accessibility is defined as the character of a product, process, service, information or environment that, with equity and inclusiveness in mind, enables any person to perform activities independently and achieve equivalent results.

(Source: J. Langevin et al., Research report for Montreal’s associative environments: Universal accessibility and contributory designs (version 5.3), Groupe DÉFI Accessibilité (GDA), Université de Montréal, quoted in Collectif A.U., What is universal accessibility?)