



# Town of East Gwillimbury

## Accessibility Advisory Committee Strategic Plan



## Table of Contents

Town Information	3
Message from the Mayor	4-5
Message form The Accessibility Advisory Committee	6
Committee Vision, Guiding Principles and Committee Purpose	7
Purpose of the Accessibility Advisory Committee	8
Strategic Goals	8-9
Strategic Directions	10
Implementation of the Strategic Plan	11

# Town Information

Located between downtown Toronto and the tranquility of cottage country, East Gwillimbury offers residents a fully balanced lifestyle. The Town consists of a number of communities including Holland Landing-River Drive Park, Sharon, Queensville and Mount Albert, each with their own rich history, unique charms and opportunities. Farms, forest, countryside and recreational areas add to the overall pastoral character of the Town, linking these urbanized communities together.

East Gwillimbury's opportune location makes our Town an ideal location for businesses and a wonderful place to live. The services of the Town, shown by key business unit areas, are outlined below:

## Administration

### Chief Administrative Officer

- Administration
- Staff Development
- Community Initiatives
- Corporate Strategy

### Corporate Services

- Municipal Clerk
- Information Technology
- Human Resources
- Centralized Purchasing
- Corporate Communications
- By-Law Enforcement

### Finance

- Financial Services and Reporting
- Revenue Services
- Administration, Policy and Planning

## Development Services

### Planning

- Administration and Information Services
- Community Planning and Development Review
- Long Range Policy
- Economic Development

### Engineering and Transportation Services

- Infrastructure Maintenance and management
- Waste Collection and Diversion
- Infrastructure Planning
- Capital Roads and Sidewalks
- Water & Sewer Operations
- Capital Water and Sewer

### Building Approvals and Inspections

- Building Code Enforcement
- Accessibility Advisory Committee Liaison

## Community Services

### Library

- Library Resources
- Library Services and Support
- Governance/ Administration

### Parks and Recreation

- Parks and Property Services
- Facilities Management
- Program Services

### Emergency Services

- Fire Prevention
- Emergency Services Training
- Emergency Preparedness
- Operations



## ***Message from the Mayor and Council***

---

We are proud of our community. East Gwillimbury residents and businesses enjoy the benefits of a balanced urban-rural community. We will grow, but the character of our community will not change.

Our Strategic plan is the bridge between Our Town and Our Future. We will support this bridge with Five Strategic Pillars:

- Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
- Providing and Advocating for Quality Programs and Services to the Community
- Investing in Municipal Infrastructure
- Managing Growth to Ensure a Sustainable Community
- Supporting a Municipal Organization Focused on Excellence

Our Municipality has a proven track record of being committed to protecting and enhancing our environment through our own and Provincial legislation. Moving forward, East Gwillimbury will continue to be at the forefront of environmental stewardship.

East Gwillimbury will continue to provide accessible cultural/recreational programs and services to residents. We will work together to retain cultural heritage and pride in our community while welcoming diversity and promoting multi-culturalism. Our Town will foster partnerships with external agencies to advocate for quality education, and the provision of medical, protection and other community enhancing services.

East Gwillimbury has recognized that infrastructure is an integral component of a sustainable community. We have and will continue to maintain and invest in quality infrastructure to service residents and businesses for today and tomorrow.

Balanced residential growth and employment is a key priority for our Town and Region. The Town of East Gwillimbury has the only Official Plan in Ontario that requires employment opportunities to be provided within our community before residential subdivisions are constructed.

East Gwillimbury will maintain a strong and accountable Municipal government through: open, frequent dialogue with all stakeholders; excellence in customer service delivery; a properly resourced and aligned corporation; and continuing to support, recognize and value our most important resource, our volunteers and community based organizations.



*Mayor James R. Young*



*Councillor Cathy Morton*



*Councillor Virginia Hackson*



*Councillor Marlene Johnston*



*Councillor Jack Hauseman*



To achieve a sustainable community it is paramount that our strategic plan be predicated on our commitment to: the environment; society and culture; infrastructure and; the economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Young". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being the most prominent.

Mayor James R. Young  
Councillor Marlene Johnston  
Councillor Jack Hauseman

Councillor Cathy Morton  
Councillor Virginia Hackson

# ***Message from the East Gwillimbury Accessibility Advisory Committee***

---

The Province of Ontario passed the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* in 2001. The preamble to the *Act* recognizes that the “people of Ontario support the right of persons of all ages with disabilities to enjoy equal opportunity and to participate fully in the life of the province”. The proclamation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* was welcomed with great excitement in the Town of East Gwillimbury, a community that embraces the spirit and principles articulated in the *Act*.

In response to the legislation, the Town of East Gwillimbury set up the Accessibility Advisory Committee (EGAAC). The members of the EGAAC are drawn from the citizens of the Municipality, a Council member, and employees of the Town. It is a vibrant and active committee that works hard toward making the Town of East Gwillimbury barrier free.

The EGAAC addresses accessibility issues from a wide and varied perspective. Among other things, the committee advises the Town and others on accessibility issues relating to Town buildings, existing businesses, and new projects planned for development in the Municipality. The committee also liaises with other Accessibility Advisory Committees in an effort to share experiences and develop best practices. The committee is also excited about having taken on an educational role. The EGAAC believes that teaching the public about barriers faced by certain individuals is one of the most important steps toward ensuring that these barriers disappear. The EGAAC is the voice of those with accessibility concerns in the community and embraces input from the entire community at all times.

To ensure the continued meaningful and efficient work of the EGAAC, a strategic plan has been developed. This plan addresses the committee’s goals and objectives over the next few years. It is released to the public in an effort to make the work of the EGAAC transparent and in the hope that it will inspire input by those living in East Gwillimbury. It is a privilege for the committee members to work in this Municipality and toward such laudable goals.

## **East Gwillimbury Accessibility Advisory Committee 2008**

### **Committee Vision:**

Working Together to Make Our Community Barrier Free

### **Values and Guiding Principles:**

1. Respect for all individuals within our community, whether residents or visitors, is essential
2. Recognition that different barriers exist for differently abled individuals
3. All people should be able to participate in civic, business, recreational, commercial, educational and personal growth activities within the community
4. Continued research as a committee and a resource to the community
5. Fostering community dialogue
6. Municipal and Provincial legislation forms the legal environment for our work
7. Provide quality advice to support Council in the making of informed decisions

### **Committee Purpose:**

To advise Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards, the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice, and to review site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the *Planning Act*.

## **Strategic Goals**

### **Strengths of the Committee:**

1. Tenure, experience and background knowledge of the members
2. Commitment of the East Gwillimbury Council and Committee members
3. Support and resources of the York Region Accessibility Committee
4. Provincial Legislation, *e.g.* AODA
5. Fiscal responsibility and projected increase in the tax base

### **Weaknesses for the Committee:**

1. Limited resources, both financial and human
2. Many in the community do not recognize barriers or the significance of planning for barrier free access
3. Societal attitudes that see disabled members as unable or marginal members of the community
4. The committee serves as advisor to Council and has no “teeth” or effective budget to enact changes directly
5. An inordinate amount of time is required to see effective changes in the community
6. We often have to revisit the same issues due to the lack of public understanding and awareness

### **Opportunities for the Committee:**

1. Making East Gwillimbury a community of choice for diverse populations
2. Attract others to the EGAAC who have or do experience barriers in their work or personal/family life
3. Education and awareness of disability, access and the contributions of the committee to the quality of life in East Gwillimbury

4. Greater communication between first responders, educational institutions, and municipal committees at Town and Regional government levels
5. Identify funding opportunities for agencies and the private sector in order to improve private facility access
6. Act as a resource committee for consultation on accessibility needs/barriers within our community
7. Encourage private sector involvement in accessibility planning and accessible services
8. Improve accessibility to public Town facilities of all types
9. Increasing mean age of society provides for greater linkage with other community groups such as seniors clubs

**Threats to Committee:**

1. Possible changes in economic forecasts
2. Societal attitudes
3. Change in political environment both municipally and provincially
4. Burnout of committee members due to the extended time to completion of activities and change in the community

## Strategic Directions

### 2008-2010

1. Identify priority projects and make timely recommendations to Council for action
2. Audit all Town facilities for access and barriers both internally and externally. Enlist volunteers from the community who have disabilities, including visual, hearing, mobility impairments, etc. to assist the committee in this work
3. Establish and review a budget for the committee in line with stated priorities
4. Continue to improve access within Civic Centre and develop recommendations for additional facilities
5. Review and update Accessibility Standards
6. Review plans for new Civic facilities in advance of construction
7. Plan and implement “Accessibility Fair Days” for the Fall of 2009 to bring private sector vendors, community agencies, schools and community together to learn about barrier free access in East Gwillimbury
8. Suggest Council undertake customer service training, regarding disability, sensitivity, accessibility and accommodation for all municipal employees
9. Review work completed as a result of accessibility audits by the Committee

## **IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Approval of the Town of East Gwillimbury Council of this inaugural Strategic Plan of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will provide future direction for the Committee.

Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan is dependant on the following key elements:

- Endorsement and support of the Strategic Plan by Council
- Continued involvement from the residents, businesses and key stakeholder groups of East Gwillimbury
- Continued monitoring of the Strategic Plan by the Committee via advice to Council and the annual Municipal accessibility reporting to the Province