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CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE LOOK AT BARRIERS:

Accessibility Planning at West Park Healthcare Centre
October 2022-September 2027

Submitted to:

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Prepared by:

Accessibility Working Group

Annual Progress Report

September 30, 2022

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This document is available at www.westpark.org/en/AboutUs/Accessibility.aspx and in alternative formats on request.

• Executive Summary

This document presents West Park Healthcare Centre's accessibility plan for the five years from October 2022 through September 2027 as well as an update for the remaining 12 months of the previous five year plan ending September 30, 2022. It responds to the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) and supports the Centre's long-standing commitment to being highly accessible to people with disabilities. The plan was prepared by West Park's Accessibility Working Group (AWG) and approved by the Board of Directors. The AWG oversees implementation of the plan with the support and participation of all staff to achieve an accessible Hospital.

West Park's accessibility objectives in this five-year plan fall into the following main areas:

- **Implementation of Provincial Standards** – West Park is proud to be in compliance with all current Provincial AODA standards including website accessibility.
- **Working toward compliance with new Health Care Standards** – Although not yet law, the AODA standards development committee has recommended 20 standards that should be applied to healthcare institutions to help remove barriers to care. West Park is taking initiative to include actions to meet many of the proposed standards.
- **Preventing & Removing Barriers** – Receiving and acting on key stakeholder feedback with respect to improvements to our services and physical environment. The working group endeavors to gain insight from patients and families with respect to Accessibility barriers that they may face when receiving care. This plan includes strategies to prevent and remove these barriers wherever possible.
- **Campus Development** – In July 2023 the new West Park Healthcare Centre will be substantially completed with an anticipated move in by the end of November 2023. This long awaited new Hospital building will create a highly accessible, senior-friendly and green environment that is flexible and technologically advanced.

The past 12 months were marked by numerous accessibility-related accomplishments and activities, such as the following:

- Campus development planning achieved several major milestones towards the construction of a highly accessible new hospital facility.
- Construction of a state of the art barrier free facility.
- Ensuring changes to the exterior of the site during construction are compliant with barrier free standards and legislative requirements.
- A Campus Development Working Group was created to facilitate patient and family feedback related to design and processes within the new building, ensuring that accessibility considered.
- Patients and families were engaged to provide feedback on a number of furniture and fixtures planned for the new building ensuring the items were accessible for patients. For example, patient feedback led to the design of the patient washroom sinks being more accessible.
- Patient and family feedback was also provided within the Wayfinding Committee ensuring wayfinding within the new hospital considered accessibility standards.
- Ongoing feedback related to our current and new hospital is provided through our Patient Family Advisory Committee and unit forums held monthly.

- The Best Practice Guideline Implementation Committee worked with patients and families to create patient centered whiteboards that include information related to communication preference and any accessibility needs identified by the patient.
- The creation of a patient care summary form that includes a summary of patients' needs related to accessibility and communication.
- Efforts to improve access to the Centre's campus by public transit included continued advocacy for service to the campus by a regular bus route once the new hospital is built. TTC is currently offering an Etobicoke Community Bus route with stops at the Main building and LTCC that provides patients and residents transportation to local malls and services. Plans are underway with hope that a regular bus route will be in place in 2024.
- Many activities to engage patients of all abilities were undertaken (see pages 14-16)

West Park's ultimate goal is that, with a heightened awareness of the range of disabilities and barriers, combined with a commitment to inclusiveness and participation, the Centre will promote, showcase and maintain a culture of accessibility for all its stakeholders.

• Introduction

Ontario has set a goal of making the province fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. West Park will be operating in a new building in the fall of 2023. This new hospital will set the standard for accessible healthcare facilities.

In keeping with the Centre's long-standing commitment to people with disabilities, West Park will continue demonstrating leadership in accessibility with this five-year plan for 2022-2027 prepared by West Park's Accessibility Working Group. Efforts to advance accessibility are guided by the following principles:

- **Dignity** – People with disabilities are able to maintain self-respect and the respect of others, with recognition of their individuality.
- **Independence** – People with disabilities are able to make use of their abilities and be self-reliant when obtaining services.
- **Integration** – People with disabilities receive services in the same place and manner as other customers, unless alternatives are necessary.
- **Equal opportunity** – People with disabilities have access to services equal to those available to others.

These principles are meant to strengthen the rights of people with disabilities, establish a norm of accessibility and make organizations more accountable. The principles are augmented by provincial standards with which public- and private-sector organizations must comply and will be further strengthened for hospitals once the Health Care Standards are accepted as law in 2023.

The Ontario Human Rights Code also protects the right to be free from discrimination due to disability or perceived disability. Accommodation of disabilities under the Code includes measures that may be different from, or go beyond, accessibility standards.

As a hospital for specialized rehabilitation and complex continuing care, the Centre must be accessible to people with many disabilities, and daily operations are closely examined by people with disabilities and their families.

West Park's ultimate goal is that, with a heightened awareness of the range of disabilities and the proactive prevention and removal of barriers, combined with a commitment to inclusiveness and participation, the Centre will promote and maintain a culture of accessibility for all its stakeholders.

• Accessibility Objectives from October 2022 through September 2027

West Park complies with the following provincial requirements for accessibility planning:

- A multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the law, shall be prepared and implemented.
- The plan shall be available on the organization's website and in an accessible format on request.
- The plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
- The plan shall be prepared, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and with an accessibility advisory committee.
- A status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy shall be posted on the organization's website in accordance with the legislative requirements and provided in an accessible format upon request.

West Park's accessibility objectives over the course of this five-year plan fall into the following main areas.

3.1 Implementation of Provincial Standards

The requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) have been phased in according to a prescribed schedule over a 10-year period from 2012 to 2021. These requirements encompass information and communication, employment and transportation. In July 2016, the accessible customer service standard was also incorporated into the IASR, in order to bring the accessibility standards into alignment. The transportation standards do not apply to West Park so long as the Centre is not an operator of transportation services. Standards covering the built environment took effect in 2015 and 2016 through amendments to the Ontario Building Code and the new Design of Public Spaces in the Built Environment standard. All standards above under IASR applicable to West Park have been implemented to date.

In June of 2021 compliance with the final standard under Information and Communication came into effect. Organizations must make their websites including web based applications accessible. Content must comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. This international standard gives web developers guidelines on how to make their webpages accessible to computer users with disabilities. This final standard was met as of March 2022. West Park is now 100% compliant with all AODA standards.

About Ontario Accessibility Standards:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws#section-2>

3.2 Recommended Health Care Standards

In 2019 the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Standards Development Committee drafted initial recommended guidelines on how to achieve workable solutions to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility gaps and barriers faced by persons with disabilities within hospitals and health care facilities. After significant consultation the committee brought forward the final recommendations to the Minister for Senior's and Accessibility in February 2022. The committee specifically considered accessibility barriers in the following areas:

- Disability awareness and sensitivity when communicating with persons with disabilities
- Accountability for accessibility within the administration of health sector institutions
- Training for health care providers to accommodate persons with disabilities

The standard development committee's view is that hospitals reflect society at large, and that persons with disabilities face disadvantage and discrimination if organizations are not equipped to meet accommodation requests or provide accessible service delivery. Committee members also highlighted that barriers faced by persons with disabilities are not caused by the disabilities themselves – they are caused by a society that is not inclusive and accommodating. Working towards a more inclusive society removes those barriers and allows everyone, with or without disabilities, to participate on an equal footing.

There are 20 recommendations dealing with various aspects of accountability, communication and knowledge & training. The Accessibility Working Group looked at the areas where West Park was already making headway to advance compliance with recommended standards. These include patient/provider communications and patient relations. In terms of patient relations there are opportunities to include a commitment statement to accessibility, inclusion and diversity in the next iteration of our Centre's declaration of values i.e. Partnership Pledge along with an explicit reference to the Centre's patient relations process. The process ensures the rights of patients to raise concerns and make complaints without fear of reprisal. Another values based opportunity is to add to the Centre's code of conduct; having all health services providers formally acknowledge their understanding, adherence and commitment to AODA standards and the Centre's Partnership Pledge. This acknowledgement would indicate that they will provide care of the same quality on the basis of free and informed consent, adherence to human rights using an intersectional lens that respects the dignity, autonomy, and diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

With respect to patient/provider communication there are four recommended standards that the working group believes West Park is well positioned to meet:

- Standard 6 – Documenting and sharing an individual's accessibility accommodations
 - Policies and procedures are in place to capture accommodation information upon admission however a documented process is needed outlining how information will be used with respect to the patient care plan
- Standard 7 – Accessible and inclusive person-centered care philosophy
 - The concept of patient and family centered care is embedded in the Centre's mission statement however additional education is needed to ensure that care givers facilitate full participation of patients and families in the design and delivery of their care; building sensitivity, capacity and time into schedules to demonstrate inclusivity
- Standard 8 – Effective patient-provider communication and informed consent

- Policies and procedures are in place with respect to informed consent however there is a need to ensure that healthcare providers allow patients with disabilities access to individualized accommodations, noted in the patient’s care plan including consequences and options relating to their decisions
- Standard 9 – Access to third party supports
 - West Park incorporates practices that support essential care partner participation in care. Policies and procedures exist and have been widely utilized throughout the past two years. Whether the support is family or agency patients have the ability to choose who assists them with care and decision making. Formal documented policies and procedures are required to ensure the effective management of inherent and potential liability issues pertaining to safety, confidentiality and privacy.

The development of policies, procedures and training to support the implementation of these standards will form the basis of the Accessibility Working Group work plan in the coming year.

For the full Health Care Standards Development Committee – Final Recommendations report please click on link [Development of health care standards – final recommendations report 2022 | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/development-of-health-care-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022)

3.3 Preventing and Removing Barriers

The Accessibility Working Group has worked with key stakeholders to identify areas for improvement in accessibility. Although West Park is in compliance with current AODA standards we are striving to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner and that feedback from patients, visitors and staff is taken into consideration and acted upon wherever feasible. Barriers can be Attitudinal, deal with Information / Communication, Technological, Physical / Architectural or Systemic.

Feedback that is provided is reviewed by the Accessibility Working Group and a barrier description and corresponding action plan are created to resolve the accessibility barrier identified.

Barrier Type	Description	Action	Responsibility	Target Date
Physical / Architectural	Equipment and furnishings are barrier free	Include accessibility as a procurement criteria for new purchases	Campus Development	Complete
	Exterior pathways are difficult to navigate	Modify walkways on the site to meet AODA standards through the various stages of construction	Campus Development	Complete
	Elevator buttons are faded	Explore options to make the print on the buttons more visible	Facilities	Complete
	Slope leading to main entrance is difficult to ascend	Construct new temporary main entrance to	Campus Development	Complete

		accessibility standards		
	Main Lobby information desk (plexi-glass) is not accessible	Replace reception desk at main entrance to make it accessible	Facilities	Complete
Information /Communication	Information on Accessibility is not easy to find on the public website	Create an Accessibility button on the home page for easier access	Public Relations/ Information Technology	Complete
	Ensuring enough time is taken to understand what patients with communication disabilities need	Include unique requirements in patient care plan. Raise awareness through education via an e-learning module with a specific focus on clinical staff	Program Operations	Complete Deferred-planned education with roll out of new electronic patient care summary in 2023
	Ensuring unique accessible needs of patients are considered (e.g. speaking in hearing ear or maintaining line of sight when speaking)	Include unique requirements in patient care plan. Raise awareness through education	Program Operations	Planned with roll out of new electronic patient care summary in 2023
	Ensure patients are respected in terms of patient independence and choices	Use of white boards to ensure all clinical staff are aware of accessibility needs with respect to the patient's care plan	Program Operations	Complete CCC and Rehab whiteboards created and implemented
Technology	Communication technology is not used to enable patients to participate in hospital activities (Eg: PFAC)	I Pads offered to patients Promotion of the HUB to access program content and information Formalize process to access I Pads	Information Technology/ Recreation Therapy/ Public Relations	Complete

	Unable to use written information provided (e.g. for patients with vision impairments or limited physical dexterity)	Alternate formats and communication supports are available upon request. This includes electronic formats which provide options to use accessible technology to read or access the content. Consult as needed with patient, family, unit staff (SLP, OT) to determine appropriate formats and supports.	Program Operations	Complete
	Need more access to computers	Raise patient awareness around computers that are free for use e.g. patient library, patient unit lounges and ensure this information is added to the patient handbook, and reminder provided to the patient upon admission.	Recreation Therapy Program Operations	Complete
	High cost of repairing patient owned wheelchairs	Work with repair vendor to mitigate delays at the local and provincial level by increasing communication with point of contact and monitoring accuracy of ADP and ODSP funding requests	Program Operations	Complete Ongoing monitoring and actions as needed

		submitted by West Park		
Attitudinal	Staff need to be more empathetic / sensitive when communicating with people with a wide range of abilities (e.g. use of slow speech or a loud voice when it is not needed)	Introduce new mandatory online customer service training module for new staff. Providing education to staff to: 1)Increase skills in communicating with people with a range of abilities 2)Build empathy to the patient perspective and possible barriers present within different patient populations identifying and removing attitudinal barriers (i.e. lunch and learn)	Human Resources / Information Technology/ Accessibility Committee	Complete
Systemic	Lack of time for clinicians to prepare patients for Centre activities	Track occasions when this is an issue and understand the root cause	Program Operations Recreation Therapy	Monitor HHR challenges
	Involve patients in their own care	Include patients in patient / care team rounds	Program Operations	Complete Walk rounds on every unit

3.4 Maintenance of Accessible Elements

West Park endeavors to keep the built environment functional and safe for patients, staff, visitors and vendors. There are procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible elements maintained by the Centre include exterior paths of travel such as walkways, stairs and ramps and parking lots. There are interior elements such as accessible push buttons for washroom facilities, elevators, grab bars and mobility aids.

Procedures for maintaining accessible elements include the following:

- Use of a computerized maintenance management system to log demand maintenance requests from any staff member

- In the event the Centre receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information is sent to the Maintenance department for appropriate action
- Dispatch of maintenance staff to repair or replace elements in priority order – accessible elements are given a higher priority and are usually repaired within 24 hours
- Daily tours of the interior and exterior of the Centre by Security personnel who log maintenance concerns
- Posted and electronic notice regarding any planned disruption to accessible elements such as walkways, exterior paths of travel or accessible parking
- Notices are posted in advance for planned disruption include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration and a clear description of alternative accessible elements that may be available
- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority
- To the extent possible the Centre will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps may include putting in place barriers and temporary way finding signage, and / or posting notices
- Notice of disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and to the extent possible will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of the alternative accessible elements that may be available; notices may be posted in conspicuous places and / or be made available electronically on the web site

3.5 Campus Development

West Park is on a bold path to transform its campus into a world-class center of rehabilitative care. Our vision is to be an integrated campus of care that models the way of the future for patient care, education and research. To achieve this, West Park has embarked on two major capital projects to bring together specialized rehabilitative, complex continuing, primary and long-term care and independent living opportunities on a single site.

The Hospital Development project oversees the construction of a new six-story, approximately 730,000 square foot hospital facility. Opening in 2023, the new 314-bed hospital is designed to create an accessible, senior friendly and green environment that is flexible and technologically advanced to enhance the exceptional care already delivered by dedicated staff. The project also includes the demolition of all current patient care and maintenance buildings, with the exception of the Long-Term Care Centre which opened in 2002.

Complementing West Park's services, the Non-Hospital Development project will broaden the continuum of care available on the campus with housing and related services for seniors and persons with disabilities. Aiming to promote independent living while enriching the surrounding Residential community, the Non-Hospital Development may include supportive housing, hospice, community-based services and doctors' offices.

Project planning includes both accessibility and universal-design expertise on the consulting

team as well as extensive consultation with, and participation in user groups by, persons with disabilities, support persons and members of the Accessibility Working Group.

Key Milestones for the Hospital Development

- 2015-17 Development of the design and technical requirements (“Output Specifications”) for final approval by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- 2017-18 Request for Proposals: Design competition by three pre-qualified bid teams
- 2018-23 Selection of preferred proponent, design of new facility, construction, procurement of furnishings, fixtures and equipment and operational readiness / transition planning
- 2023-24 Transfer of all hospital operations into the new facility, demolition of three older patient-care buildings, and re-landscaping of the grounds for outdoor therapy and recreation

A number of design objectives for the hospital project have direct bearing on people with disabilities who will visit or work in the new facility:

- Create an environment that fosters a positive patient and family experience
- Create an environment that fosters a positive work life for staff
- Drive a technology-enabled environment that enhances patient experience and optimizes service delivery
- Foster connections to nature and beauty both indoors and outdoors
- Advance accessibility, safety and security for all, and embrace diversity of populations served.

Following are some of the many ways in which accessibility will be enhanced in the new hospital building:

Evidence-based design

- Incorporation of recommendations from: Code+ 2nd edition (2015), a guide for the physical design of an elder-friendly hospital; the Senior Friendly Hospital framework of the Regional Geriatric Programs of Ontario; and West Park’s 2014 Strategic Service Plan for Geriatric Services
- Wheelchair turning circles and clear floor spaces informed by research conducted by Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDEA Center) at the University of Buffalo, New York.
- Integration of the principles of Universal Design, for a facility that is inclusive and usable by people of all abilities and ages to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Space and interior design

- Three sizes of single-user washrooms: barrier-free, enhanced barrier-free, and universal, the last of which includes adult change tables and floor-level drains for emptying urine bags

- Accessible movement between floors: Pass-through elevators (i.e. doors on both the front and rear walls), more-accessible elevator controls, and a request for innovations such as voice activation to enable hands-free use of elevators
- Rest areas with seating every 30m along public paths of travel inside the building and on the grounds
- Larger rooms in specified inpatient and outpatient locations to accommodate bariatric patients
- Colour contrasts and tactile walking surface indicators to facilitate navigation for people with vision impairments
- Interior-design cues to reduce confusion in people with dementia or cognitive impairments and to help prevent delirium
- Simple way finding with accessible signage and digital options
- Design of flooring to reduce tripping hazards, such as showers with level thresholds and level transitions between different types of flooring

Furnishings, equipment and assistive technologies

- Ceiling-mounted patient lifts in all inpatient rooms and in designated outpatient treatment areas including the hydrotherapy pool, which will also have a ramp into the water
- Hands-free power door operators with elongated activation plates that can be pressed with one's foot or wheelchair foot rest
- Integrated patient bedside terminals that are accessible (e.g. tactile controls, phone handset, assistive technologies such as voice recognition, range of viewing angles, optional mode for simplified use) and incorporate environmental controls (e.g. to adjust lights, room temperature and window shades) and communication/entertainment media (e.g. telephone, television, internet and webcam)
- Accessible hardware such as door handles, faucets, shower controls and public telephones, and accessible equipment and appliances such as refrigerators for patient and family access
- A variety of accessible seating options (e.g. dimensions, seat height, armrests, color contrast, cane-detectable, clear floor space) with accessible outlets in furniture for charging equipment
- Accessible lockers in patient and staff change facilities
- Assistive listening equipment, such as hearing-loop systems, that amplify sound directly to hearing aids, cochlear implants and headsets in areas such as the auditorium and reception desks
- In 2021, West Park toured patients and staff – in-person and virtually – through the Mock-Ups, which are replicas of actual patient rooms and team spaces in the new hospital. Campus Development received positive feedback and suggestions to improve accessibility for patients, which were logged and reviewed. Campus Development consulted with applicable managers, staff, consultants and patients to refine certain areas. As a result, several modifications were made to the wardrobe and patient washroom to improve and ensure accessibility for patients.

Exterior design features

- Underground parking in addition to surface parking, to reduce travel distances and risks posed by inclement weather for people with mobility limitations
- Canopies over the driveways at public entrances to provide protection from inclement weather for people who need extra time to enter and exit vehicles
- Sidewalks that are wide enough for people in large wheelchairs to pass each other
- An accessible landscape, including walking trails of varying degrees of difficulty and raised planting beds to help people in wheelchairs to enjoy and participate in gardening activities
- Direct access at grade from the hospital to outdoor therapy and recreation areas, and access to outdoor terraces on every upper floor
- Pedestrian-friendly crosswalks between the hospital, LTC home, surface and parking

Accessibility Activities from October 2021 through September 2022

The 12 months ending September 30, 2022, were marked by the following accomplishments:

- Continuation of the patient engagement strategy to promote inclusion of people with disabilities and all users of the Centre's services in a wide range of activities, including personal care and health decisions, program and service design, and policy, strategy and governance.
- As part of ongoing compliance with the provincial accessibility standards for customer service, training is provided to all new staff and others who interact with the public on the Centre's behalf. In September 2020 a new comprehensive online learning module was introduced which is mandatory for all staff, physicians and volunteers.
- Implementation of a Senior Friendly Hospital Action Plan as part of the Senior Friendly Hospital Strategy to improve the health, well-being and experience of seniors in hospitals as well as the capacity of older adults to live independently and avoid re-admission. Action was taken to address a lack of "orientation cues" in common areas and patient rooms. Further senior-friendly environmental design principles are being incorporated in the new hospital building, such as more storage space to reduce clutter/obstacles, lighting and improved visibility of activity calendars and clocks.
- West Park's Recreation Therapy services and Spiritual and Religious Care services were instrumental in reducing the risk of isolation and maintaining patients' quality of life as was demonstrated through facilitation of a variety of therapeutic programming addressing all domains of health, as well as providing patients with resources and education to enable them to engage in meaningful leisure experiences.
- Ongoing examples include: adapted gardening, art, mindfulness, afternoon socials, 'scoops' (ice cream delivery), bingo and other unit-based programming, centre-wide programming and special events featuring live and/or virtual entertainment as well as on-site spiritual and religious care services including one to one counseling.
- Due to Covid -19, many programs were adapted to maintain patient and staff safety however, patients were able to continue to stay engaged through the following offerings:

- Music Therapy, Therapeutic Clowning and Pet Visits (all aligned with Recreation

- Therapy services) were, and continue to be, offered to patients in a virtual setting.
- Virtual Special Event programs were introduced to enable patients, staff and other West Park community members to remain connected including the highly successful 'West Park's Got Talent' virtual talent show which saw submissions from patients and staff showcasing their unique skills
 - Recreation Therapy introduced unit-based activity calendars to keep patients, their families and staff informed about upcoming programs. Calendars may also be shared electronically with patients and family, with consent.
 - Enhanced service specific programming helped improve accessibility for patients on 2EC, 2EA and CAVC/LTV, allowing for increased leisure opportunities for patients.
 - Recreation Therapy Services and Volunteer Resources introduced the 'Caring Connections' project aimed to promote community engagement between volunteers, patients and staff at West Park – this project allowed several of our wonderful and talented volunteers to stay connected with patients and staff through weekly submissions of personal videos or audio recordings featuring jokes, travel stories, garden trivia, songs and more.
 - Non-leisure related individual support, including connecting patients to external virtual groups and offering education and support around utilization of various personal tech devices to enable patients to stay virtually connected to loved ones
 - Spiritual and Religious care services were made accessible to patients with communication impediments by utilizing specialized Spiritual Care Communication boards to assess and meet spiritual and emotional needs.
 - West Park patients involved in the 'Helping Hands' community outreach program through Recreation Therapy services, crafted and sold face mask chains and raised funds to help benefit the WP Foundation. The Helping Hands program is also presently working to collect donations and create hand-made art and bracelets for a local women's shelter in Toronto
 - Creating a Pet/Animal Visitor policy to ensure West Park provides an inclusive, safe and assessable opportunity for patients to connect with animals (family pets, therapy dogs, exotic animals) [in progress].
 - Recreation Therapy's Book Club program provided patients with the opportunity to learn how to use accessible and alternative reading methods (i.e. audiobooks, large print books etc.). Also, through this program, patients learned how to access resources available to them through the Toronto Public Library for independent leisure pursuits including virtual education courses.
 - A pilot accessible video game program was developed and implemented on

CAVC, in collaboration with Occupational Therapy in 2020. The program has since, expanded to other units and being offered to patients on 2WF, ELU, 3WD and 3WE. A generous Scotia Bank Grant was utilized to purchase additional accessible equipment to enable the growth and sustainability of this program.

- Zoom programming (1:1 and group) was implemented to increase cross-unit socialization, to decrease isolation and to continue providing patients with meaningful and accessible therapeutic programming during the pandemic.
- Patients were having a hard time understanding and hearing staff, due to mandatory PPE (mask and face-shield). Recreation therapy purchased dry erase boards as a low tech communication tool.

• Accessibility Planning at West Park Healthcare Centre

Founded in 1904, West Park is the regional rehabilitation Centre for the western Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and currently operates 130 rehabilitation and community-living beds, 169 complex continuing care (CCC) beds, 200 long-term care (LTC) beds⁵, and an array of outpatient services. It is located near the intersection of Jane Street and Eglinton Avenue West in the City of Toronto. More information is available on request or by visiting West Park's Internet site at www.westpark.org.

In its accessibility planning, West Park builds on a longstanding commitment to people with disabilities. The Centre's Board of Directors has declared its intention to comply with both the spirit and the letter of the law.

West Park has adopted formal policies committing the organization to compliance with the requirements of the AODA and the ODA, to promote a process for continual improvement of accessibility and to the provision of accessible customer service. Responsibility for overseeing accessibility planning, including compliance reporting to the Accessibility Directorate of the Government of Ontario, resides with the Accessibility Working Group, which reports through the Centre's President & CEO to the Board of Directors.

The law states that organizations are expected to "develop and implement accessibility plans within their existing planning processes and using existing resources." As such, accessibility initiatives are subject to the Centre's long-range capital plan and financial position and are incorporated into strategic planning, operating plans, and departmental work plans as required. The support and participation of all staff are key to achieving an accessible organization.

In May of 2021 the Health Care Standards Development Committee published its initial recommendations report on the development of a health care accessibility standard under the AODA. The committee is gathering input on the twenty two (22) recommendations and members of West Park's Accessibility Working Group attended a session hosted by the Ontario Hospital Association to provide feedback. The healthcare standards include recommendations on planning and engagement, consultation on procurement and access of equipment and services, coordination of accessibility accommodations along the continuum of care, documented requirements via the electronic health record, respect for capacity and consent, education and training, complaints management, emergency / pandemic planning, and inclusion of disability related rights in the hospitals declaration of values.

The Accessibility Working Group is working toward proactively implementing these recommendations where possible in advance of the standards becoming law. Work associated with meeting these standards will be incorporated into the new five year Accessibility plan that will take us from 2022 -2027.

⁴Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws>

⁵The long-term care home which is managed by Extendicare has an Accessibility Plan which is compliant with AODA standards and can be found at: <https://www.westpark.org/LongTermCareCentre/AboutUs/Accessibility>

Appendix A: Definitions

Disability

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, (ODA) adopted the broad definition for disability that is set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. “Disability” is:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Barrier

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

An example of each of the different kinds of barriers is shown below:

Barrier types	Examples
Attitudinal	Discriminatory behavior, disregard or ignorance
Informational/ communication	Materials that cannot be read, failure to use plain language
Technological	Lack of assistive technologies such as phones with volume control and closed captioning on TV
Systemic	Non-accommodation of disabilities in policies and practices
Physical	A button that cannot be pushed or a doorknob that cannot be operated
Architectural	Steps, narrow doors

Appendix B: Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Working Group

Purpose

The Accessibility Working Group (AWG) is accountable for ensuring the Centre is in compliance with legislative requirements laid out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The aim is to provide an inclusive environment for all patients, residents, visitors, and staff by removing barriers and encouraging dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people of all abilities.

Functions

- Assess the Centre's barriers to accessibility which may fall within the following five categories: attitudinal, systemic, physical, information/communication, technological;
- Develop and implement a multi-year plan which will assist the Centre in meeting the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation to address current barriers and prevent and remove future barriers to accessibility as well as highlight accomplishments;
- Build accessibility planning into West Park's way of doing business and, thus, prevent new barriers; advance best practices; ensure that the plan is aligned with other Centre initiatives as appropriate; and comply with accessibility legislation;
- Obtain approval of the accessibility plan from the President & CEO, communicate the plan throughout the Centre, and make the plan available to the public;
- Create learning opportunities for its members and Centre staff to develop an understanding of accessibility issues, legislation, and policies/procedures/practices that cause or may cause barriers to access for people with disabilities; and
- Establish a process for monitoring implementation of and compliance with accessibility legislation and standards across the Centre and for preparing status reports on progress, as directed by senior management

Meeting

At the call of the Chair (4 x per year)

Quorum

50% of membership

Membership

Director of Support Services (Co-chairperson)
Director of Inter professional Practice and Clinical Education (Co-chairperson)
Vice President, Campus Development and Support Services
Speech Language Pathologist, AAC
Communication Specialist, Public Relations
Community Services Coordinator, Transition to Independent Living
Patient Experience Coordinator, Program Operations
Manager, Environmental Services, Support Services
Environmental Services, Support Services
Human Resources Representative - Recruitment
Manager, Employee & Volunteer Services
Patient Advisor
Consulting members as necessary

Accountability

CEO through Chair of Committee