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01

Introduction

Unity Design Studio was commissioned by the Town of The Blue Mountains and the Blue Mountains Public Library to review the accessibility of the L.E Shore Memorial Library at 173 Bruce St South in Thornbury.

Accessibility concerns have come to their attention through complaints and feedback from members. The library is a landmark of the community and the Board wants it to be accessible for all users.

The benefits of a built environment that is as inclusive as possible are supported by the demographics: as of 2017, 22% of Canadians over the age of 15 had self-identified as having at least one disability, and seniors account for 38% of that number.

1000 people turn 65 every day in Canada, and the growth rate for seniors is four times faster than the population at large.

When one considers family members of people with disabilities, an aging population, and temporary or situational disabilities, it is clear that disability affects most if not all of us in some way, at some point during our lives.

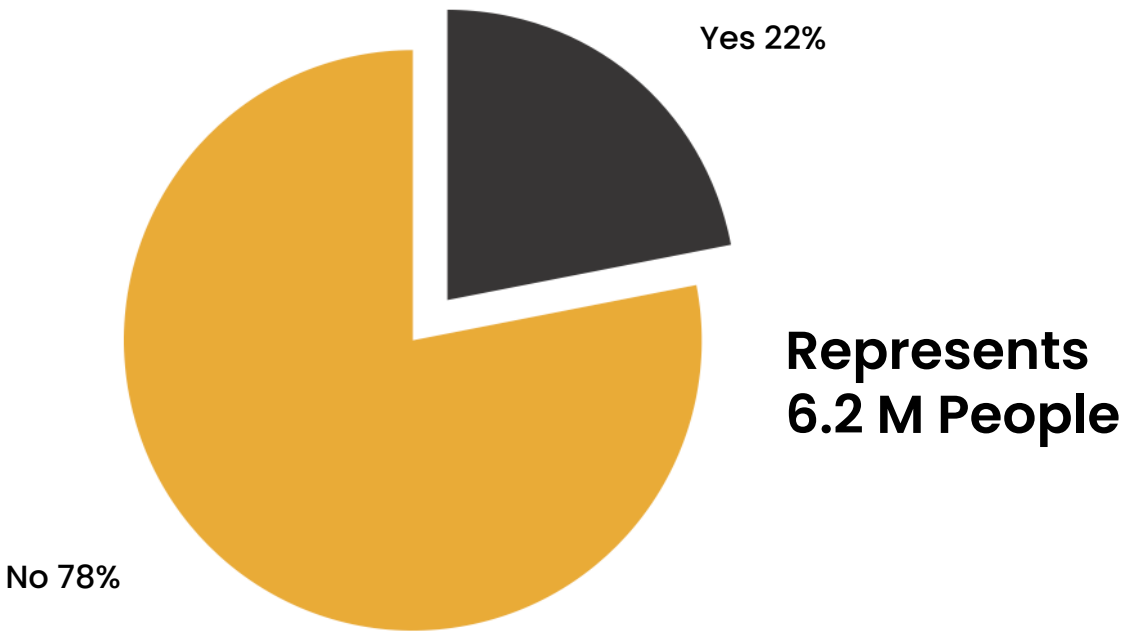
This is reflected in public opinion on accessibility: 93% of Canadians believe that accessibility is a basic human right, and 91% believe that accessibility should be a priority.

There is also a growing desire for a more sustainable built environment, and part of that is future-proofing our buildings so that they will continue to be useful for as long as possible.

A building that is more inclusive and more useful to a broader range of people is more likely to successfully stand the test of time.

While the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) contain many requirements pertaining to accessibility, these are minimum legal requirements in the province of Ontario.

Canadians aged 15 years and over who have at least one disability.



From the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability from Statistics Canada

	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Hear	 Deaf	 Ear infection	 Bartender
Speak	 Non-verbal	 Laryngitis	 Heavy accent
Move	 Wheelchair user	 Broken leg	 Parent with stroller
Touch	 One arm	 Arm injury	 Arms full
See	 Blind	 Cataract	 Distraction

The building code update process moves slowly, and as a result, designs that only meet the barrier-free requirements of the building code will not provide the level of accessibility that is required to ensure meaningful access to our built environment.

Building codes are also not very inclusive of the spectrum of disability experience: they remain very focused on mobility disabilities and to a much lesser extent sensory disabilities.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code both supersede the Ontario Building Code and AODA.

The protected status of people with disabilities is enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, which states that every person in Ontario has the right to equal treatment with respect to goods, services and facilities.

This creates an obligation for businesses operating in Ontario to make their facilities accessible, and a failure to provide equal access to a facility or equal treatment constitutes a violation of the Human Rights Code and provides basis for a human rights complaint.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has indicated that reliance on relevant building codes is not an acceptable defense to a Human Rights complaint.

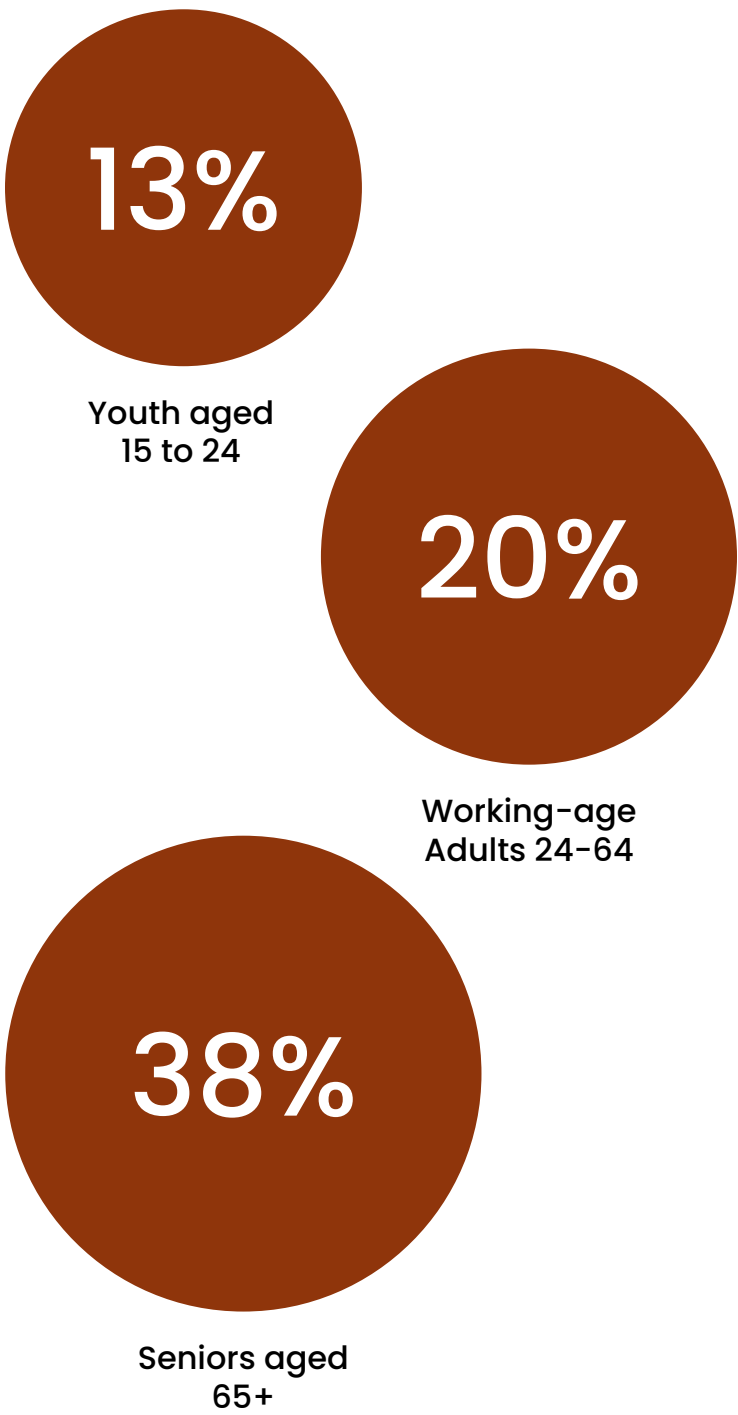
Truly meaningful access comes from an understanding of how people with disabilities experience space differently, and holistic design that considers that experience from the point of arrival to the use of the services and spaces in the building.

Unity Design Studios’ scope of work included a visit to the building to assess current conditions as they relate to accessibility, and to subsequently propose various possible improvements that could be undertaken to improve the meaningful accessibility of the site.

Several sources were used as guides in conducting this review: the CSA B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment standard, Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) criteria, principles of Universal Design, and to a lesser extent the OBC and the AODA.

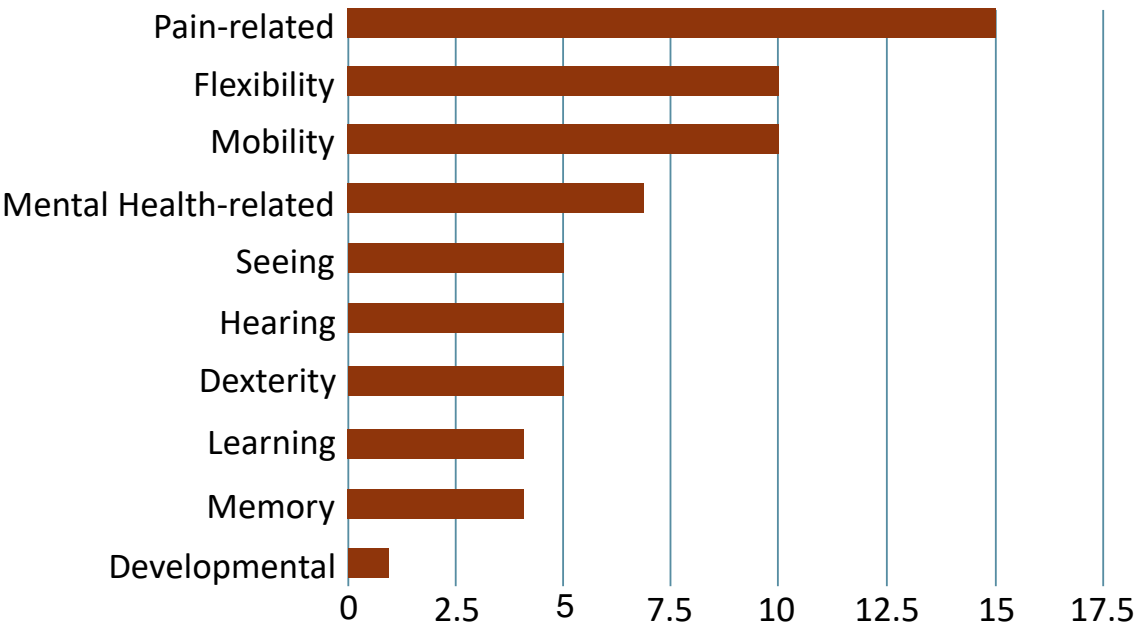
This review is not to be considered an audit of the building’s compliance with current OBC or AODA requirements.

Canadians aged 15 years and over who have at least one disability.



From the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability from Statistics Canada

Disability by Type



From the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability from Statistics Canada

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02

Parking & Building Approach

The site is in Thornbury and easily accessed by car, but although connected to neighbouring towns by a transit system, within Thornbury itself there is no public transit.

There is plenty of parking on site, including four designated accessible parking spaces, which exceeds the AODA and CSA B651 requirements. The parking spaces lacked access aisles and had a 5% slope. Their location also requires users to cross a vehicular lane or pass behind parked vehicles to get to the main entrance.

Adjacent streets leading up to the library were assessed as part of the accessibility of the site for users arriving on foot.

The pedestrian crossing at Bruce Street S and Napier Street E lacked tactile attention indicators and zebra crosswalk markings.

Tactile attention indicators are also required at any curb ramps or places where sidewalks are flush with vehicular areas.

These features are important for the safety of people who are blind or partially sighted.

Entrances are defined architecturally by the pergolas, the shape of the roofs, and the curved wall of the courtyard. These architectural features can help people locate the building entrances.



02 **Summary of Current Conditions**

Paths of travel to the entrances are wide enough to accommodate two-way pedestrian traffic and include rest areas, however the benches at the Bruce Street entrance are not accessible.

Seating located along the path of travel should be situated on a firm and stable surface, with adjacent space for a wheeled mobility device or service dog.

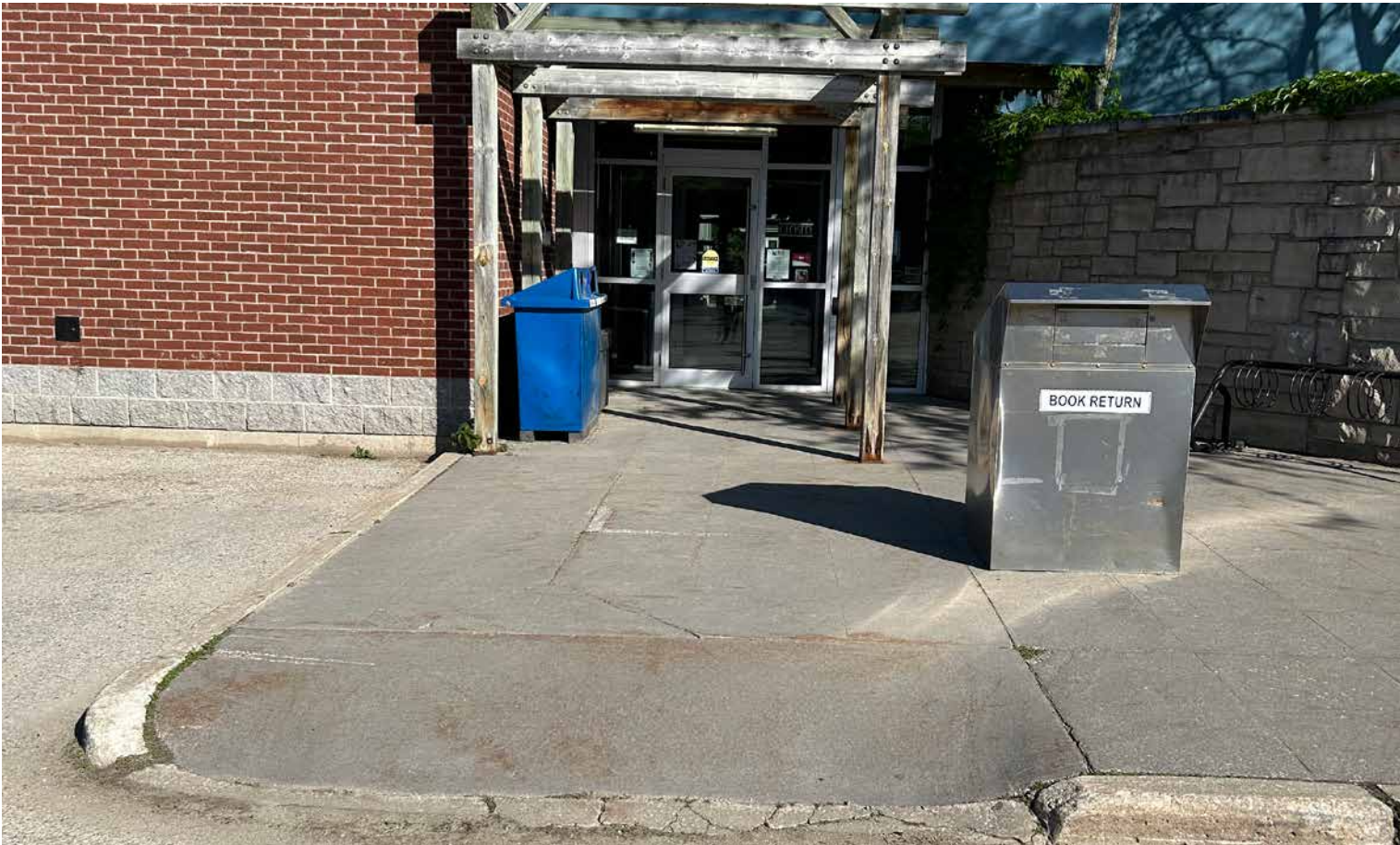
Obstacles along pathways leading up to the building can impede people with vision loss and make travel challenging for those using mobility devices.

Obstacles such as waste receptacles and the book return should be colour-contrasted with their surroundings and placed in amenity zones that have colour and textural contrast from the primary path of travel.

The door to the courtyard swings out into the path of travel, which is a safety hazard. It's currently marked by pylons, but the remaining space on the sidewalk is too narrow.

The door should swing inwards, be removed entirely, or the walkway could be widened and the door swing protected by a wall or cane-detectable guard.

Parking & Building Approach



Outdoor Areas

Doors into the courtyard have a 200mm step down into the courtyard area with no access ramps or sloping walkways, which make this space inaccessible to people in wheeled mobility devices.

Having a step right on the threshold of a door is also a safety hazard.

The outdoor seating areas require pathways that are firm and stable to be accessible for people in wheeled mobility devices or with blindness and low vision.



Outdoor seating options should include styles that have backs, heel space, arms and no arms, as well as an appropriate seat height.

Muskoka chairs, which are currently provided in the courtyard, can be challenging to get up from due to their low, rear-sloping seats.

Seating should also contrast with surroundings to make it easier to locate for people with reduced vision.



Building Entrance

Both main entrance doors are located under small canopies that provide some weather protection for people entering the building, and are on power door operators.

Push buttons for the power doors are round button types, which are acceptable, but best practice would be to provide buttons that can be pushed from a variety of heights.

The push button for the Bruce Street entrance may be better relocated to the nearest wood column. Opening and hold open times for the power door operators are sufficient.

Current Ontario Building Code and CSA B651 standard require a minimum accessible door width of 860mm.

The entrance doors currently have a clear opening width of 850mm. Change the hinge style to swing-clear hinges to meet this minimum clear space. The threshold height between interior and exterior is excellent.

Glazing should have vision strips at two heights to ensure glazing is not mistaken for openings.

The entrance glazing has horizontal mullions, but best practice would be to add another contrast strip at a higher level.



The size of the vestibules is somewhat smaller than current OBC requirements, but meets or is close to CSA B651 requirements.

The security access panel is mounted too high and too close to the wall – someone using a wheeled mobility device would not be able to access it.

It is also better for the device to contrast with its mounting surface so it can be more easily located by someone with low vision.

The style of panel, which has a keypad with raised buttons, is accessible.



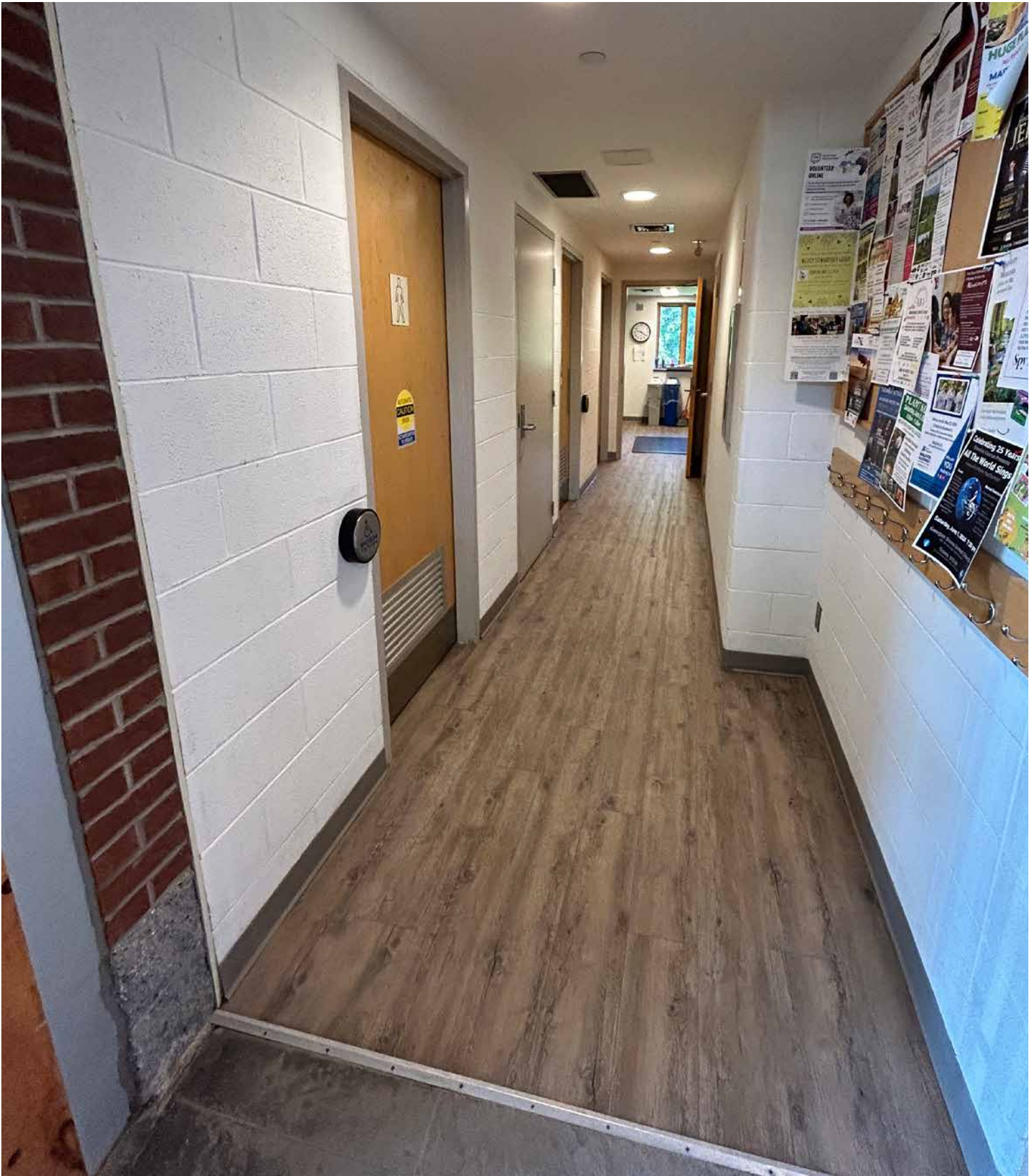
Doorways & Paths of Travel

The main corridor of the building is sufficiently wide to accommodate two-way travel and passing.

There are a few pieces of furniture that project into the path of travel and create an obstacle for people with vision loss.

These should be removed or repositioned.

The hallway where the washrooms are located meets the minimum requirements for a barrier free path of travel as per the OBC, however this dimension does not allow for two-way traffic of people in mobility devices or a service dog team.



Transition strips throughout the building meet requirements of a maximum height of 13mm set by OBC and CSA B651, though completely flush transitions are always preferred.

Many of the doors in the building do not have adequate clear space on the pull side and the push side of a door. OBC and CSA require 300mm on the push side of a door and 600mm on the pull side, if the doors are not on power door operators.

In some cases, items and clutter around the door can be removed to achieve this clearance.

In other cases, automatic door operators would be required or these doors can be left propped open.

The bottom edge of the glazed vision panels in doors are too high and do not comply with the OBC requirement.

All interior doors had a clear width of less than 860mm.

Replacing the existing hinges with swing-clear hinges will increase the clear width of doors and could allow some of them to achieve 860mm clear width.

Door handles are of an appropriate style and can be opened with a closed fist or by a service dog, however the lock style requires twisting.

This style of lock is difficult to operate for people with limited dexterity.

Change to a style of lock that can be operated with a knuckle or closed fist, or proximity cardreaders.



Library

The flooring running throughout has a strong linear pattern that can act as a source of directional confusion for people with diverse neurological experiences.

A library is intended to be a quiet setting and it is recommended to use a soft flooring material that will dampen sounds from sources such as footsteps that would otherwise echo through the space.

There are two existing reception desks in the library, one at a standing height and the other at a sitting height.

At the sitting height section of the desk the staff side does not have adequate knee space available due to the drawer under the counter.

There is no knee space available on the public-facing side of either desk.



Within the book stacks, the top two shelves and bottom of the lowest shelf are not within accessible reach.

Many of the aisles comply with the minimum OBC width for accessible path of travel and they're close to the CSA B651 minimum, but there are some aisles that do not meet the OBC minimum.

The CSA B651 minimum is based on one-way travel with no space for passing.

Reducing the height of the book stacks and increasing aisle space within the stacks will increase the amount of space required by the library to house the existing amount of material.

Furnishings with sharp edges present a risk of injury for users with vision loss or balance issues.

Some of the tables did not have adequate knee clearance, and the independent study carrels are also not wide enough for use with a wheeled mobility device.

Loose furniture has been arranged in such a way that there is no space in the seating arrangement for people with wheeled mobility devices.

The outdoor book returns are slightly above accessible reach, and the weight of the drawer makes it very difficult to open with a closed fist.



Gallery

The gallery is a large volume mainly consisting of hard surfaces and therefore has some issues with echo. Similar to the library, the flooring running throughout has a strong linear pattern that can act as a source of directional confusion for people with diverse neurological experiences.

Lighting levels in the gallery are also rather low, especially with the window shutters closed.



Boardroom

The boardroom is fairly accessible. Improvements can be made by increasing colour contrast between the furnishings and surroundings, and reducing clutter.



Kitchen

Kitchen provides a turning radius that is compliant with the OBC, though not the CSA B651 standard.

Counters are standard height, so there are no accessible counters or sinks with knee space.

There are some open spaces below one of the counters in the staff lounge, but they are being used for storage.

Sink faucets in both kitchen spaces should be a single lever style.

The paper towel dispensers should be located within reach of the sinks.

Drawer-style storage is typically considered more accessible than cupboards in the lower cabinets.

All lower cabinets have a drawer with a cupboard below, so there are some accessible storage options but limited to smaller items since all the drawers are the same size.

The pantry is inaccessible as it is too close to the wall and has obstacles placed on the floor in front of it.

The bar height is too high for accessible use and people of short stature, it also has no knee space on the service side or the public side.



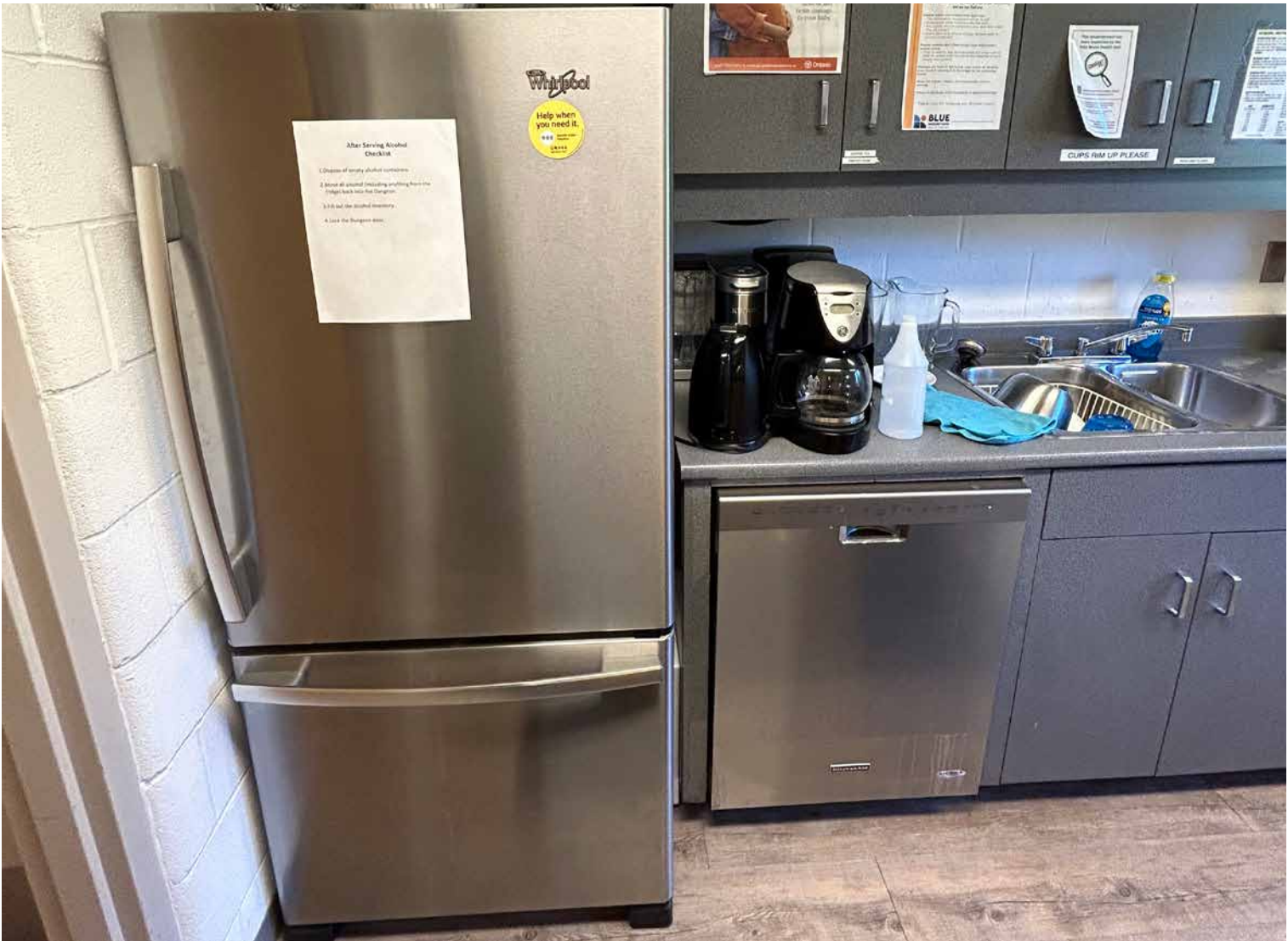
The style of the bottom drawer freezer fridge is good however the door swing on the fridge needs to open in the opposite direction to be accessible.

The undercounter fridge in the staff room cannot be opened with a closed fist.

Microwave placement in the staff room has sufficient adjacent space on the latch side of the door to put hot food.

General amount of clutter in kitchen spaces needs to be resolved to make the spaces more maneuverable.

The staff lounge in particular appears to have serious functionality issues as it is trying to serve too many different purposes.



Offices

Volume of items in the space impedes circulation in many areas of the office.

By moving these items to a dedicated storage area, the office area will function better.

The overhead desk storage overhangs the computer monitors, making them difficult to see especially for people who are taller.

Provide variable height desks that can accommodate a wide variety of users at a comfortable height.

The furniture has sharp corners, and there is not much contrast between the furniture and its surroundings.



Washrooms

The building contains male and female washrooms with three fixtures each, a staff washroom accessed from the office area, and a family washroom off of the library.

The gendered washrooms contain accessible washroom stalls.

These are the only accessible washrooms in the building and they offer limited accessibility.

Power door operators have been provided on the doors of the gendered washrooms.



Bar-style push buttons would be a better choice as they can be operated from a variety of heights. The opening and hold-open time are sufficient.

The corridor leading into the men's washroom is a bit narrow, and the lighting levels in both gendered washrooms are low with strong pools of light and shadow.

The floor and toilet partitions are both a dark gray and so lack contrast from each other, though they do contrast with the walls.

Neither of the urinals in the men’s washroom is accessible, and the mounting heights clearly present an issue for children as well, evidenced by the stepstool in front of one of the urinals.

The accessible stall is not quite large enough to accommodate a 1500mm turn circle in the men’s room, though the one in the women’s is large enough, and the transfer space in both washrooms is not quite large enough.

Stall locks in both washrooms are rotary style, which are challenging to operate for people with flexibility and dexterity issues. Stall doors also should have vertically-mounted pulls to help close them.



Grab bars behind toilets have the correct size and mounting height, but other grab bars have incorrect configuration and placement.

Flush valves should be located on the transfer side of the toilet, where they can be reached.

Toilet paper dispensers are too high, and in the women’s washroom, the sanitary napkin disposal should be placed where it can be reached without twisting around and risking a fall.

The sinks are too close to the side walls, with separate taps for hot and cold water that require a twisting motion to operate.

Some of the pipes are uninsulated, which presents a risk of burns if someone’s knees are beneath the counter.

Mirrors and other washroom accessories at the sinks are generally acceptable.

The family washroom and staff washroom are located back-to-back and neither is accessible for someone using a wheeled mobility device.

Not all washrooms need to be wheelchair accessible, but something that should be kept in mind when considering equitability is the division between front-of-house public spaces and back-of-house staff spaces.

If staff are generally not required to use public washrooms, then staff with disabilities should not be required to use them either and there should be an accessible staff washroom available.



Signage & Wayfinding

The building has lots of signage, but it lacks consistency and features that would make it more accessible.

Although most signage has appropriate contrast, it is not always mounted at accessible heights or locations, and there is no Braille and raised characters and pictograms.

The washroom signs have pictograms, but they are engraved as opposed to raised, which is not as easy to read.

Most signs are also in uppercase text, which is more difficult to understand than sentence or title case.

Some signage surfaces are susceptible to glare and reflections, making them difficult to read.

Exit signs are of the older style that read "EXIT" in red letters.

Upgrading to new "green running man" exit signs is not required unless renovating, but could be considered.



Emergency Systems

The building has visual fire alarms in some parts of the building, but they appear to be in compliance with the OBC requirements for visual fire alarms in assembly occupancies, which is inadequate.

There are no visual fire alarms in spaces where people are more likely to be alone, which is a safety issue for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Emergency exits other than the main entrances are not accessible as they have high thresholds and a step down.

First aid and firefighting equipment was mounted too high in some cases.

There were obstacles impeding the use of emergency equipment, such as a fire extinguisher behind the charging station and a fire alarm pull station that was blocked by a small shelf.

The fire extinguisher cabinet should be able to be operated with a closed fist.

All emergency systems should be mounted within accessible reach, and away from corners of walls or other obstacles so that someone using a wheeled mobility device has the clear space to approach and operate the equipment.



Other Considerations

Thermostats are mounted outside of accessible reach and the touchscreen controls would not be usable by people with visual impairments.

It is recommended to change this to a model with physical buttons.

Sun casting patterns or strongly patterned surfaces in the path of travel can be seen as physical obstacles for people with diverse neurological experiences.

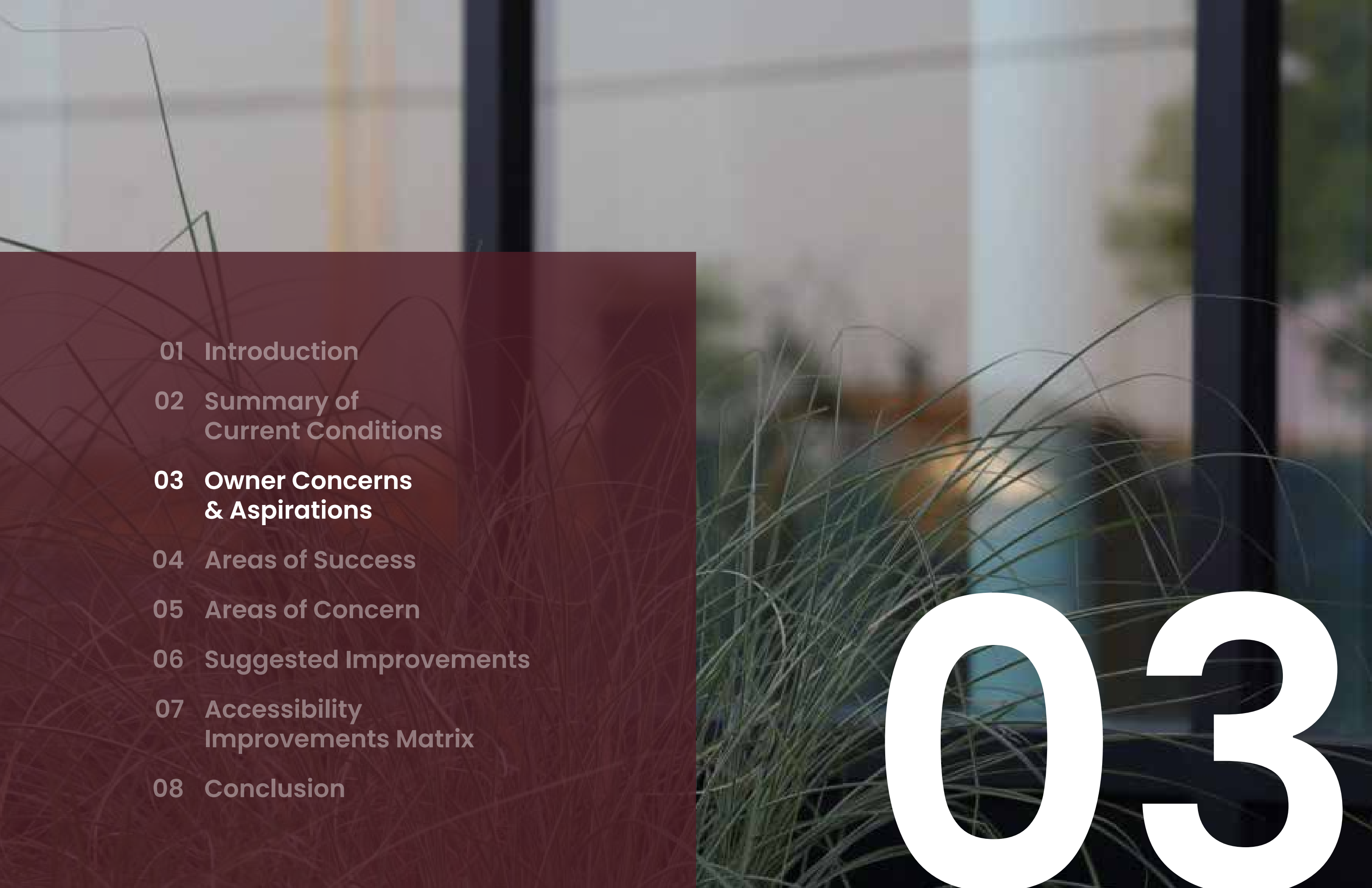
Where appropriate, glass can be replaced with insulated light diffusing glazing.

There contrast between some of the building elements in many of the spaces is low and could be improved.

Contrast can be helpful for wayfinding, and it is good to have contrast between floors and walls, doors and walls, furnishings or cabinetry and their surroundings.

Any upgrades to finishes and furnishings should be done with consideration to contrast and acoustics.



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Owner Concerns & Aspirations

The Town of The Blue Mountains and the Blue Mountains Public Library commissioned this feasibility report due to concerns they have regarding the accessibility of their building at 173 Bruce St South.

Accessibility concerns have come to their attention through complaints and feedback from employees and community members.

Concerns have primarily focused on the washrooms and lack of a fully accessible washroom, which is a significant barrier to inclusion.

Having a universal washroom would greatly improve the accessibility of the building.

The sunken reading room in the turret also came up during initial discussions, as the level change makes this space completely inaccessible for someone in a wheeled mobility device.

There are also concerns about the lack of storage.

Clutter is a prominent issue in the building that often impedes clear path of travel and door opening clear space.

The library has a large collection of items available to borrow and not enough space to store and display them all, even in the current configuration, which is understood to not be fully accessible.

The library is a community hub in the small town of Thornbury, as well as an architectural landmark in the area.

The library staff and Board have taken measures to maintain the building throughout the years, however there are accessibility challenges and addressing these would make the library more inclusive.



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Areas of Success

With the exception of the sunken reading room, all key functional spaces for the building are on the same level.

The main circulation spine in the building and the pedestrian walkways on the site are generously sized with plenty of space for maneuvering.

There is lots of natural light in the library space, and a number of different styles of seating throughout the building.

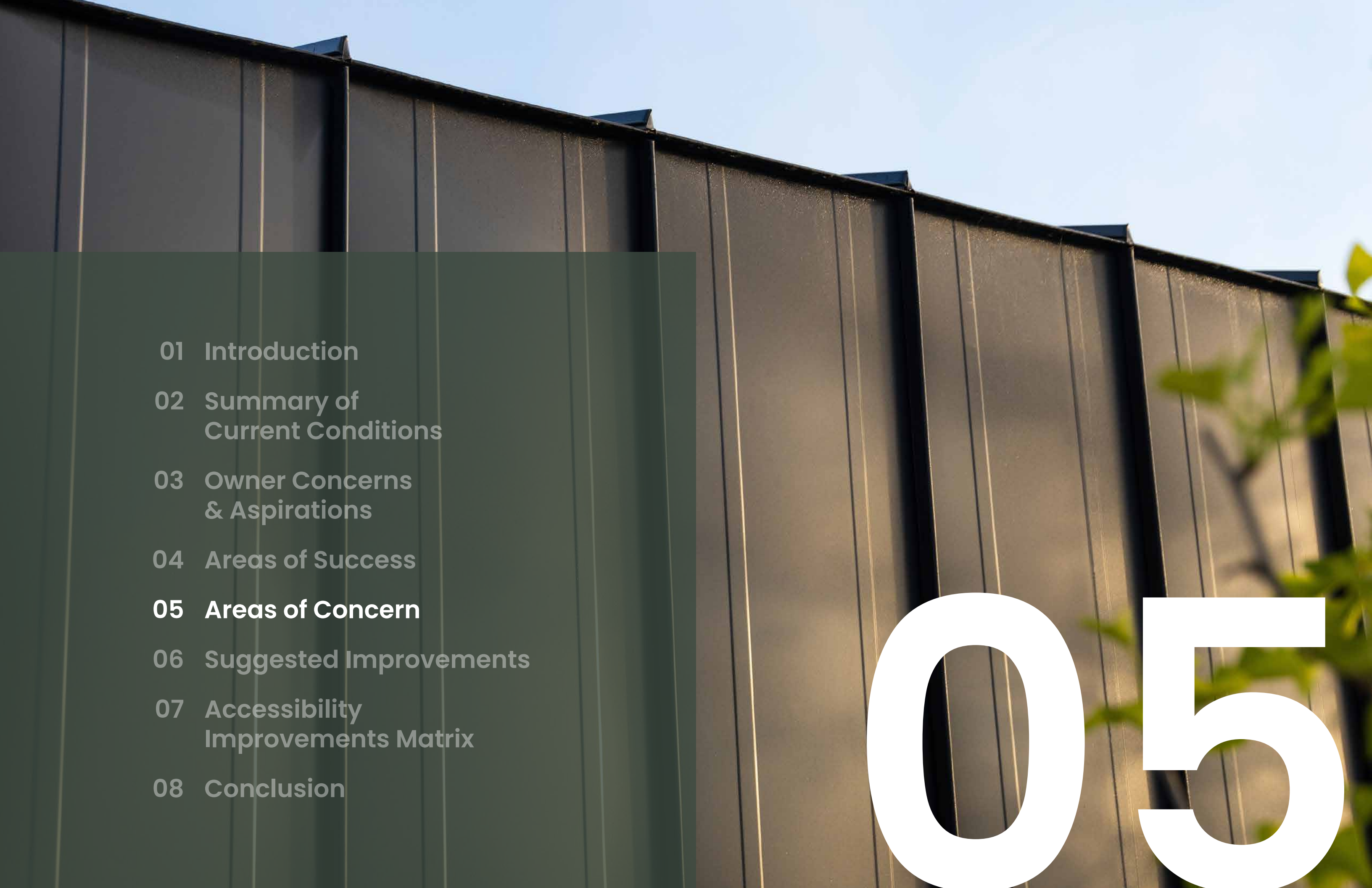
Most of the furniture arrangements are flexible, which allow them to be configured differently depending on who will be using the space.

This is helpful for ensuring space can be provided for people using wheeled mobility devices and/or with service animals, or that furnishings can be arranged in more circular groupings for people who are Deaf/hard-of-hearing.

Many people with disabilities find attitudinal barriers to be among the most significant barriers they encounter.

There is much then to be said for the attitude of organizations that continuously attempt to improve themselves, that put in place policies and procedures that will improve accessibility, and who ask what they can do to help and are willing to work to find solutions to the problems presented to them.



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Areas of Concern

There are a number of areas of concern regarding the accessibility of the building.

The following is not an exhaustive list of accessibility issues in the building, some of which represent more significant barriers and/or safety issues than others.

Safety, independence, and dignity are paramount in making a space accessible, and can serve as guiding factors in determining priorities for initial focus as well as when considering future upgrades.

The items related to safety and washrooms are of particular concern in improving the accessibility of the L.E. Shore Library.



Vehicular Access

- Accessible parking spaces lack access aisles
- Location of accessible parking spaces requires crossing vehicular lane to get to the building

Exterior Approach & Entrance

- No tactile attention indicators on the site to mark transitions between dropped curbs and vehicular access
- Entrance doors do not have a clear width of 860 mm
- Courtyard door opening outward into path of travel is a safety hazard

Interior Circulation

- Doorways do not have a clear width of 860 mm

Interior Areas & Services

- Most of the book stacks in the library have shelves that are outside of accessible reach
- Aisles between book stacks are on the narrow side, only allowing for one-way travel
- The reading room in the turret is one of the unique features of the building but is currently inaccessible
- Window seats, another unique feature of the building, are not accessible
- Kitchen and staff room are generally inaccessible
- Reception desks are not accessible
- Some furnishings, such as the information kiosks and study carrels, are not accessible
- No assistive listening system available
- Clutter creates obstacles in some spaces
- There is a lack of assistive technology in the Library of Things Collection

Sanitary Facilities

- There is no fully accessible universal washroom in the building

Wayfinding & Signage

- Signage does not have raised characters, symbols, and Braille

Emergency Systems

- Visual fire alarms do not extend throughout the entire building. This is a safety hazard for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing
- Accessibility of emergency exits. Despite being at grade, the emergency exits from the gallery and library are not accessible
- Accessibility of emergency and first aid equipment. It should be mounted at an accessible height and location, and unimpeded by clutter and obstacles

Interior Environment

- Lack of contrast between finishes
- Lighting is dim in some places
- Acoustics are challenging in some places

Outdoor Areas

- Courtyard is inaccessible
- There are no accessible pathways leading to outdoor areas
- Seating in outdoor areas is generally not accessible

- 
- A photograph of a modern building facade featuring a series of vertical, metallic-looking fins of varying heights. The building is set against a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay covers the left side of the image, containing a list of eight items. The number '06' is prominently displayed in large white font on the right side of the image.
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Suggested Improvements

It was clear from the site review that there are space challenges within the building that are affecting functionality.

These space challenges are also affecting accessibility.

Accessibility for people in wheeled mobility devices in particular involves having enough space for travel and maneuvering, as well as having all items and controls within a height range that can be reached from a seated position.

These needs are not reflected in the current design and setup of the library area in particular and addressing them will increase the amount of space required to house the current collection of materials.

One of the most significant upgrades is to provide a universal washroom for the building.

People who require a high level of accessibility in washrooms to be able to use them must plan their excursions around the availability of washrooms that meet their needs.

It can affect the duration of their visit or their ability to visit at all.

From a staffing standpoint, the lack of an accessible washroom is also a barrier to employment.

Universal washrooms require a significant amount of space and the best option for providing one in this case is to include it in a building addition.

An addition would increase the amount of space available to the library, address the need for more space to improve the accessibility of the book stacks and the lack of storage that is creating clutter throughout the building, and provide a functional and easily accessed universal washroom without affecting the washroom fixture counts and layout of the existing washrooms.

Trying to extensively renovate the existing washroom area to accommodate a universal washroom would result in a layout that is ultimately less functional and would almost certainly reduce the current number of fixtures.

The presence of building services such as a hot water tank and electrical panel in the janitorial closet between the washrooms would also present a challenge to renovating this area.

The following is a list of suggested accessibility improvements to address the concerns outlined in the previous section, along with some additional suggestions to continue enhancing accessibility.

06 Suggested Improvements

Vehicular Access

- Reconfigure parking lot so that accessible parking is directly in front of sidewalk in front of building, properly sized and with access aisles
- Regrade accessible parking spaces to a maximum of 2% slope
- Provide TIAs at all curb ramps/wherever sidewalk is flush with vehicular access

Exterior Approach & Entrance

- Resolve issue with unprotected doorswing of courtyard door
 - ◊ The door should swing inwards, be removed entirely, or the walkway could be widened and the doorswing protected by a wall or cane-detectable guard
- Rethink strategy for amenities on route to main entrances (wastebins, benches, book returns, bike racks, etc)
- Provide a designated service dog relief area with waste bin
- Replace push buttons with bar-style ones and relocate button for Bruce St. entrance on a column
- Add a vision strip to entrance glazing. Yellow is considered the best colour for vision strips
 - ◊ Position strip between 1350-1500 mm per OBC and CSA B651
- Relocate security keypad
 - ◊ Locate between 460-1100 mm above floor finish
 - ◊ Locate minimum 695 mm from any adjacent walls
- Replace existing hinges with swing-clear hinges to increase clear width of existing doors

Interior Circulation

- Replace push buttons with bar-style ones (interior and exterior doors) and relocate button for Bruce St. entrance on a column
- Place seating/obstacles in corridors so that they don't project into the path of travel
- Replace existing door hinges with swing-clear hinges to increase clear width of existing doors
- Provide adequate clear space for doors (remove obstacles if necessary). If clear space cannot be provided and door needs to be kept closed, considering putting operators on the doors

Interior Areas & Services

- Provide new accessible reception desk
 - ◊ Include new standing height and seats height sections
 - ◊ Provide knee clearance height of 685mm
 - ◊ Design waste and recycling areas into desk so knee space areas will not be compromised
- Provide variable height desks for staff
- Replace or modify book stacks so that all shelves are within accessible reach. Select/fabricate products without any sharp edges
 - ◊ Shelves should sit between 400-1200mm above floor finish, or 460-1100mm for better practice
- Increase width of aisles within book stack area
- Raise information kiosk tables so that they have adequate knee space
- Raise floor in the turret to match adjacent floor. Could provide a variety of seating types, including some higher and lower benches, beanbags, etc or entirely flexible furnishings (the more accessible option) as long as there is space for mobility devices
- Create a reading nook area that is also accessible (accessible option to the window seats)

06 Suggested Improvements

Interior Areas & Services	Sanitary Facilities
• Rearrange furnishings in lounge areas so there’s space for someone in a wheeled mobility device • Replace existing study carrels with accessible ones ◊ Minimum width of 820 mm ◊ Minimum knee clearance of 685 mm AFF • Provide more accessible book returns • Purchase an assistive listening system that can be used in the gallery or boardroom or for other programming. A flexible system may be best so it can be brought to different areas that need it • Improve accessibility of kitchen and staff room ◊ Provide single lever faucets on sinks ◊ Paper towel dispensers should be within 500mm reach of sink ◊ Fridge should be modified or replaced so that the door opens from the other direction ◊ Undercounter fridge in staff room needs to have a handle that allows it to be opened with a closed fist • Replace existing workstations with sit-stand desks • Reduce clutter, which impedes maneuvering spaces and creates safety hazards for people with partial sight or blindness by storing items in dedicated storage areas • Consider providing a sensory/respite area and access to sensory stimuli and equipment to help individuals with sensory processing issues engage and regulate their sensory input. This could include things like weighted blankets, tactile textures, headphones, sound/noise machines, fidget spinners, and interactive displays • Add basic assistive technology to the Library of Things Collection. Items such as book stands for hands-free reading, handheld magnifiers, lingo pens, and exam reader pens would allow the library to better serve the needs of the community	• Provide a universal washroom. Given space challenges in the existing facility, an addition that includes a universal washroom is recommended • To improve the accessibility of the existing washrooms (universal washroom is being provided elsewhere): ◊ Replace rotary style locks with sliding locks ◊ Orient washroom stall handles vertically ◊ Provide sinks at appropriate height and distance from side wall ◊ Insulate all sink pipes ◊ Provide single lever style faucets ◊ Ensure flush lever is on the transfer side of toilet ◊ Placement and mounting height of washroom accessories to meet OBC & CSA B651 ◊ One urinal in the men’s washroom should be made accessible. Mount with rim 430mm max from the floor, with appropriate size and configuration of grab bars • Merge staff washroom and family washroom into a larger, more accessible staff washroom. The size will likely not be large enough to accommodate a fully accessible washroom

06 Suggested Improvements

Interior Environment

- Acoustical improvements
 - ◊ Changing the floor to a soft surface
 - ◊ Using an acoustic ceiling or wall baffle system
- Remove shutters on clerestory windows and replace glass in all the building's clerestory windows and the skylight over the main spine with insulated light-diffusing glazing
- Increase amount of artificial lighting in the gallery (and library)
 - ◊ Changing bulbs to modern LED bulbs with a higher output will brighten the space
 - ◊ Some additional fixtures may be needed
- Rethink colours and finishes throughout the building to achieve better contrast between elements
- Consider an alternative flooring material without a directional pattern for spaces where the flow of traffic is more flexible
- Relocate building controls such as thermostats so that they are in an accessible location and within accessible reach. Replace thermostats with non-touchscreen type

Outdoor Areas

- Provide access to courtyard: level concrete pads that are 1700 x 1700mm in size, that ramp down into the courtyard space at a slope of at least 1:12, but over 1:20 is preferred
- Provide access to outdoor areas via hardscaped pathways. Note that pavers can be problematic as they can lift or spall over time – concrete is preferred.
- Provide accessible seating in outdoor areas: seats at accessible height with backs, options with and without arms, and that contrast with surroundings.

Wayfinding & Signage

- Create a comprehensive and consistent signage strategy for the building. Provide new signage for rooms and spaces that is high contrast, with raised characters/symbols and Braille, and located in the correct place per OBC. Ensure surface of signs is matte and does not cause reflections or glare.

Emergency Systems

- Relocate emergency and first aid equipment so that it is in an accessible location and within accessible reach
- Add concrete pads and OBC-compliant thresholds to emergency exits so that all emergency exits are accessible
- Expand visual fire alarm system so it extends into all spaces, especially ones where people are likely to be alone
- Replace old style exit signs with new green running man signs

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Suggested Improvements

The following is a list of suggested accessibility improvements to address the concerns outlined in the previous section, along with some additional suggestions to continue enhancing accessibility.

The included Accessibility Improvements Matrix further classifies the improvements based on whether they are felt to be high impact or lower impact, and short term versus long term projects.

High impact improvements are likely high priority improvements, as they are anticipated to make a big difference in overall accessibility.

Lower impact improvements will still enhance accessibility but are not necessarily addressing direct barriers to participation or safety issues.

A number of the high impact improvements are larger projects and will be more costly to implement, and will therefore likely need to be implemented over a longer time frame.

Lower impact improvements, while also likely lower priority, may be easier and cheaper to implement in the short term while planning of higher priority upgrades is in progress.

#	Suggested Improvement	High Impact	Lower Impact	Short Term	Long Term
1	Reconfigure parking lot so that accessible parking is directly in front of sidewalk in front of building, properly sized and with access aisles				
2	Regrade accessible parking spaces to a maximum of 2% slope				
3	Provide TAIs at all curb ramps/wherever sidewalk is flush with vehicular areas				
4	Resolve issue with unprotected doorswing of courtyard door				
5	Rethink strategy for amenities on route to main entrances (wastebins, benches, book returns, bike racks, etc)				
6	Provide access to courtyard: level concrete pads that are 1700 x 1700mm in size, that ramp down into the courtyard space at a slope of at least 1:12, but over 1:20 is preferred				
7	Provide access to outdoor areas via hardscaped pathways. Note that pavers can be problematic as they can lift or spall over time – concrete is preferred.				
8	Provide accessible seating in outdoor areas: seats at accessible height with backs, options with and without arms, and that contrast with surroundings.				
9	Provide a designated service dog relief area with waste bin				
10	Replace push buttons with bar-style ones (interior and exterior doors) and relocate button for Bruce St. entrance on a column				

07 **Accessibility Improvements Matrix**

11	Add a vision strip to entrance glazing. Yellow is considered the best colour for vision strips. Position strip between 1350-1500mm per OBC and CSA B651								
12	Relocate security keypad - Locate between 460-1100mm above floor finish - Locate minimum 695mm from any adjacent walls								
13	Place seating/obstacles in corridors so that they don't project into the path of travel								
14	Replace existing door hinges with swing-clear hinges to increase clear width of existing doors								
15	Provide adequate clear space for doors (remove obstacles if necessary). If clear space cannot be provided and door needs to be kept closed, consider putting operators on the doors.								
16	Provide a new accessible reception desk. - Include standing height and seated height sections - Provide knee clearance height of 685mm - Design waste and recycling areas into desk so knee space areas will not be used for this purpose								
17	Provide variable height desks for staff								
18	Consider an alternative flooring material without a directional pattern for spaces where the flow of traffic is more flexible								
19	Replace or modify book stacks so that all shelves are within accessible reach. Select/fabricate product without any sharp edges. Shelves should be between 400-1200mm above floor finish, or 460-1100mm for better practice								
20	Increase width of aisles within the book stacks area								
21	Raise information kiosk tables so that they have adequate knee space.								
22	Raise floor in the turret to match adjacent floor. Could provide a variety of seating types, including some higher and lower benches, beanbags, etc or entirely flexible furnishings (the more accessible option) as long as there is space for mobility devices.								
23	Create a reading nook area that is also accessible (accessible option to the window seats).								
24	Rearrange furnishings in any lounge areas so there is space for someone in a wheeled mobility device								
25	Replace existing study carrels with accessible ones. - Minimum width of 820mm - Minimum knee clearance of 685mm AFF								
26	Provide more accessible book returns								
27	Acoustical improvements - Changing the floor to a soft surface - Using an acoustic ceiling or wall baffle system								

07 **Accessibility Improvements Matrix**

#	Suggested Improvement	High Impact	Lower Impact	Short Term	Long Term
28	Remove shutters on clerestory windows and replace glass in all the building's clerestory windows and the skylight over the main spine with insulated light-diffusing glazing				
29	Increase amount of artificial lighting in the gallery (and library) • Changing bulbs to modern LED bulbs with a higher output will brighten the space • Some additional fixtures may be needed				
30	Purchase an assistive listening system that can be used in the gallery or boardroom or for other programming.				
31	Improve accessibility of kitchen and staff room • Provide single lever faucets on sinks • Paper towel dispensers should be within 500mm reach of sink • Fridge should be modified or replaced so that the door opens from the other direction • Undercounter fridge in staff room needs to have a handle that allows it to be opened with a closed fist				
32	Replace existing workstations with sit-stand desks				
33	Reduce clutter, which impedes maneuvering spaces and creates safety hazards for people with partial sight or blindness by storing items in dedicated storage areas				
33	Provide a universal washroom. Given space challenges in the existing facility, an addition that includes a universal washroom is recommended				

#	Suggested Improvement	High Impact	Lower Impact	Short Term	Long Term
34	To improve the accessibility of the existing washrooms (universal washroom is being provided elsewhere): • Replace rotary style locks with sliding locks • Orient washroom stall handles vertically • Provide sinks at appropriate height and distance from side wall • Insulate all sink pipes • Provide single lever style faucets • Ensure flush lever is on the transfer side of toilet • Placement and mounting height of washroom accessories to meet OBC and CSA B651 • One urinal in the men's washroom should be made accessible. Mount with rim 430mm max from the floor, with appropriate size and configuration of grab bars				
35	Merge staff washroom and family washroom into a larger, more accessible staff washroom. The size will likely not be large enough to accommodate a fully accessible washroom				
36	Create a comprehensive and consistent signage strategy for the building. Provide new signage for rooms and spaces that is high contrast, with raised characters/symbols and Braille, and located in the correct place per OBC. Ensure surface of signs is matte and does not cause reflections or glare.				

07 **Accessibility Improvements Matrix**

#	Suggested Improvement	High Impact	Lower Impact	Short Term	Long Term
37	Relocate emergency and first aid equipment so that it is in an accessible location and within accessible reach				
38	Add concrete pads and OBC-compliant thresholds to emergency exits so that all emergency exits are accessible				
39	Update evacuation plans with legends and showing locations of emergency exits (including accessible exits). Ensure surface of plans is matte and does not cause reflections or glare.				
40	Expand visual fire alarm system so it extends into all spaces, especially ones where people are likely to be alone				
41	Replace old style exit signs with new green running man signs				
42	Consider providing a sensory/respite area and access to sensory stimuli and equipment to help individuals with sensory processing issues engage and regulate their sensory input. This could include things like weighted blankets, tactile textures, headphones, sound/noise machines, fidget spinners, and interactive displays				
43	Relocate building controls such as thermostats so that they are in an accessible location and within accessible reach. Replace thermostats with non-touchscreen type				
44	Rethink colours and finishes throughout the building to achieve some better contrast between elements				

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Conclusion

It’s important to consider the needs of the specific user group of the building when determining how to proceed.

The accessibility review of the site completed as part of this report attempted to consider accessibility from the perspective of a range of disabilities, and the impact of upgrades has been assessed based on what appear to be the most significant barriers and safety issues.

It is recommended that the library consult with their users, and particularly users with disabilities, to assist in assigning priority to the suggested accessibility upgrades.

Consultation with members with disabilities should be also be included as part of any design process undertaken for improvements to the building, to ensure those with lived experience have the opportunity to provide input and give feedback.





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