



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2022-2024

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

WDBA 2022-2024

In accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act* and
WDBA Accessibility Policy

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Please contact Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority at: 1-844-322-1733 or by email at
info@wdbridge.com

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Part 1: General

1.0 The Legislated Framework

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (“An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada”) or the Act was enacted in 2019, with the purpose being to enhance the full and equal participation of all persons, especially persons with disabilities, in society. This is to be achieved through the realization, within the purview of matters coming within the legislative authority of Parliament, of a Canada without barriers, particularly by the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers in priority areas.

1.1 Vision on Accessibility

Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) envisions a fully inclusive organization and workplace, achieved through collaborative efforts to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities. WDBA commits to achieve, and where reasonable, exceed the commitments established in the legislation. WDBA encourages partnerships with stakeholders, project partners and all other service providers. WDBA embraces the concept of universality and is committed to implementing policies and practices that support the procurement and delivery of inclusive goods, facilities, and services.

1.2 WDBA’s Commitment to Accessibility

As stated in WDBA’s Accessibility Policy, WDBA commits to (i) identify and remove barriers and prevent new barriers for persons with disabilities in the priority areas described in the *Accessible Canada Act*, (ii) attain the goal of a fully inclusive workplace, and (iii) achieve, and where reasonable, strive to exceed the commitments to accessibility to employees, persons with disabilities, data users and clients, as established in the *Accessible Canada Act*.

1.3 The Plan

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) is a document respecting WDBA’s policies, programs, practices and services that will be implemented over the course of the three years (2022 – 2024) to support inclusion and provide details regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers for persons with disabilities. It incorporates the legislated requirements of the *Act* as well as the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) (“Regulations”) and is guided by WDBA’s Accessibility Policy*. It also outlines the methods for ensuring that all accessibility features will comply with Canada’s accessibility legislation in the following areas:

- employment;
- the built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication, other than information and communication technologies;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation.

* WDBA developed an Accessibility Policy, which was reviewed and approved by WDBA’s executive leadership team and the Board of Directors in June 2022. The WDBA Accessibility Policy has been used as guidance in development of the Plan.

1.4 Accessibility consultations and feedback

Consultation and feedback are essential to assist with the identification, removal and prevention of barriers at WDBA for both its employees and those from the public it interacts with and provides services to.

WDBA consulted with WDBA employees, the public and fellow Crown Corporations through various means including virtual meetings, online surveys, and in-person focus groups.

Results and feedback received through consultation activities have been used to identify barriers and opportunities and to guide the development of this Plan. A summary of the consultation activities can be found in Part 3: Consultations and Communications.

WDBA also utilized an internal working group of employees representing organizational departments to assist in identifying barriers within their respective departments, providing input into consultation activities and supporting review and development of the Plan.

Employees and members of the public are encouraged to report accessibility barriers and issues, request a description of WDBA's feedback process and provide feedback, or request further information regarding this Plan. For this purpose, please contact:

Vicky Tuquero, General Counsel
Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority
400 - 100 Ouellette Avenue
Windsor, ON N9A 6T3
Telephone: 1-844-322-1733
Email: info@wdbridge.com

Part 2: Areas Described under Section 5 of the Act: Programs and Services for 2022-2024

The following describes WDBA's policies, programs, practices, and services in relation to the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers in the areas listed under Section 5 of the Act.

Barriers were identified based on results and feedback received through consultations held with WDBA employees, the public and the internal working group. Further information about consultations can be found in Part 3 of this Plan.

2.0 Employment

As identified in the WDBA Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall identify, remove, mitigate, or prevent barriers in the recruitment, retention, and development of talented employees through equitable and barrier-free practices and offer disability-related employment accommodation throughout all aspects of employment.

Employment barriers identified:

- Information about accessible accommodations may be unclear for applicants and/or new employees during WDBA's recruitment and hiring processes.
- Employee-related forms (like time-off request, overtime applications, etc.) may not meet accessibility standards and can be difficult to navigate.
- Accessibility is not discussed frequently, and employees feel they are not well-informed about accessibility for it to be considered represented in WDBA's corporate culture.

Actions to address employment barriers:

WDBA, through its Human Resources department, will undertake the following actions during the initial 2022-2024 period:

a) **Conduct a review of WDBA's current HR policies**
(2022 - 2023)

WDBA shall complete a full review and update to its internal policies by mid-2023 to identify, remove and prevent systemic employment barriers.

b) **Review and update recruitment and hiring processes**
(2023-2024)

WDBA is focused on creating a recruitment practice that emphasizes fairness for all applicants. WDBA will work to effectively honour its commitment to providing a safe and inclusive environment through its advertising and interview processes. WDBA's practices are intended to solicit interest from candidates from all backgrounds, including people with disabilities.

Beyond recruitment, WDBA's goal is to ensure that its workplace is one where all people, including those with disabilities, are fully supported to have every opportunity to succeed in their role. WDBA will ensure that its fair recruitment and employment practices employ "right fit" candidates, supporting the position requirements for each role to enable each department to achieve their objectives.

WDBA will research and identify potential partnerships with local organizations to support recruitment of people with disabilities and assist with identifying other opportunities such as work placements, apprenticeships and new audiences for recruitment.

WDBA shall review current hiring processes to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This includes review of HR policies, procedures and new hire training and documents.

WDBA will continue to include information about the availability of accessible accommodations for applicants and new employees in its recruitment and hiring processes. WDBA will also continue to consult with applicants and new employees directly to discuss what supports or accommodations may be required for them.

WDBA will identify and develop new tools and resources, like guidelines or 'desk-top guides' to help improve the information gap regarding accessible accommodations and to further support applicants and new employees during their recruitment and hiring experience.

c) **Improve accessibility of employee forms**
(2023-2024)

WDBA shall conduct a full review of employee forms to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

WDBA will utilize new technologies to improve accessibility of employee forms and ease navigation.

WDBA will continue to consult directly with staff and assist employees who require forms in alternate formats upon request.

d) Incorporate accessibility into employee culture
(2023-2024)

WDBA is utilizing third-party analysis and recommendation undertaken through the HR team and shifting responsibility organization-wide to share together in supporting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. This will assist with improving employee culture in relation to accessibility.

WDBA will utilize internal communication channels (i.e., Culture Moment during all-staff meetings) and committees (i.e., Culture Committee) to assist with increasing dialogue about accessibility, accessibility accommodations and accessibility-focused training opportunities available at WDBA.

WDBA will research and identify accessibility training opportunities for employees to assist them with incorporating accessible practices in their day-to-day operations, projects and strategies, further embedding accessibility into WDBA's culture.

WDBA will include additional information to its onboarding training videos and sessions about accessible accommodations, available training and other resources available for employees.

2.1 Built Environment

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall meet or exceed barrier-free design requirements for its offices and use office equipment, and goods which adhere to accessibility standards, as developed and revised by Accessibility Standards Canada.

Built environment barriers identified:

- WDBA has identified staff who will ensure everyone is able to vacate the WDBA offices during an evacuation. The existing Emergency Evacuation Plan may still need further review to ensure that the specific needs of employees and visitors with disabilities are considered.
- Existing built environment of WDBA office locations may not be fully accessible for people with disabilities.
- Lease contracts for WDBA offices may not yet include clauses for landlord's compliance with the latest accessibility standards.

Actions to address built environment barriers:

WDBA, through its Facilities and Health and Safety teams, will undertake the following during the initial 2022-2024 period:

a) Review and update WDBA's Emergency Evacuation Plan
(2023-2024)

WDBA will review and identify any barriers in the existing Emergency Evacuation Plan (EEP) for all WDBA offices by the first half of 2023. WDBA will ensure people with disabilities are consulted during the review of the EEP. WDBA will also ensure that individual emergency evacuation plans are developed based on employee needs should they require one.

WDBA will continue to include copies of the EEP at the health and safety bulletin boards at each WDBA location.

b) **Review of existing built environment of all WDBA office locations (2023-2024)**

WDBA office locations will be reviewed to address barriers identified through consultations, as well as ensure offices meet accessible criteria for federal buildings.

WDBA will consult with current office landlord(s) to discuss and identify ways to improve facilities and address accessibility issues identified through consultations, such as parking and bathroom accommodations.

WDBA will continue to offer and provide accessible accommodations for employees to address barriers within their individual workspaces.

c) **Retrofit of existing built structures and work environment (2024)**

Through review of WDBA's office locations, barriers may be identified where retrofits may be appropriate. Where possible, WDBA shall retrofit existing structures and the built environment to remove or minimize identified barriers, in accordance with accessibility standards, as defined by the criteria set for federal buildings.

d) **Review and update terms of lease contracts (2024)**

WDBA shall continue to improve the accessibility of its leased portfolio by ensuring that, during contract renewals in 2024/2025, lease contracts will include clauses for landlord compliance with the latest accessibility standards and requirements for federal buildings.

WDBA shall also include clauses for landlord(s) in all new lease contracts to ensure compliance with the latest accessibility standards and requirements for federal buildings.

2.2 Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall focus on adopting, developing, and implementing accessible information technology, including website accessibility.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) barriers identified:

- The specific needs of employees and visitors with disabilities have not been fully considered in WDBA's adoption of existing policies, systems, software and equipment.
- Website content owned by WDBA may not all follow website accessibility standards.

Actions to address ICT barriers:

WDBA, through its Information Technology and Corporate Affairs and External Relations team will undertake the following during the initial three-year planning period:

a) **Review existing information and communication technologies (2023)**

WDBA shall complete a review of its policies, systems, software and equipment to ensure that they are accessible and that accessibility requirements are considered in the procurement and use of new information and communication technologies.

WDBA will review existing WDBA-owned web content to ensure it is following WCAG 2.1/AODA website standards. WDBA will continue to follow WCAG 2.1/AODA website standards with regards to WDBA-owned content on the project's website. WDBA will also continue to offer web content in English and French and other languages as needed, as well as continue to offer any information or web content in alternate formats upon request.

2.3 Communications, other than ICT

WDBA shall focus on developing and providing information in accessible formats or with communication supports for people with disabilities.

Communications barriers identified:

- Information may not always be communicated in accessible formats consistently across the organization, and not all employees are trained to develop accessible communications.
- WDBA currently has no resources for accessible communications like braille, or sign language interpreters (including Indigenous Sign Language).

Actions to address communications barriers:

WDBA, through its Corporate Affairs and External Relations department, will undertake the following during the initial 2022-2024 period:

a) **Communication and accessible formats**
(2023-2024)

WDBA shall research and identify opportunities to provide training for employees to be able to develop accessible communication skills and practices.

WDBA shall review current communication channels to identify barriers and develop guidelines that will assist employees with the development of accessible communications.

WDBA will continue to provide the option to receive communications in alternative formats upon request.

WDBA will continue to encourage and accept feedback from staff and the public with regards to accessibility to ensure continuous improvement in developing accessible communications.

b) **Resources for accessible communications**
(2022-2024)

WDBA will research, identify and develop relationships with third-party organizations and providers of accessible communication services, such as braille and sign language interpreters, to assist with improving accessibility of communications and ensure WDBA is equipped and able to provide communication in alternative formats, upon request, within a reasonable timeframe.

In accordance with the *Act*, WDBA recognizes the use of American Sign Language (ASL), Quebec Sign Language and Indigenous Sign Language as the primary languages for communication by deaf persons in Canada.

2.4 Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall provide consistent high-quality accessible services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Design and delivery of programs and services barriers identified:

- Employees may not be trained, or be aware of accessibility training, resources, and information available to them.
- Accessibility may not have been fully considered in the design and delivery of programs and services at WDBA, for both staff and the public.

Actions to address design and delivery of programs and services barriers:
WDBA, through its various departments, will undertake the following during the 2022-2024 period:

a) **Review programs and services from an accessible lens**
(2023-2024)

WDBA shall review and update existing employee programs and services (i.e., employee recognition programs, volunteer programs, etc.) as well as public-facing services (public inquiry line, Community Benefits Plan initiatives and events, etc.), to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

WDBA will continue to provide programs and services to employees and the public in alternative formats upon request.

WDBA will continue to seek and work with vendors and venues who include accessible accommodations in their services and locations.

b) **Accessible training and resources**
(2023-2024)

WDBA will conduct an audit of current training and resources provided at WDBA to identify and limit barriers with accessing training, as well as identify gaps in employee training needs and requirements as it relates to accessibility.

WDBA will conduct a review of current employee positions to identify role-specific training requirements and organizational needs.

WDBA will research and identify new accessible training opportunities to address the identified gaps as well as role-specific training requirements and organizational needs.

2.5 Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall incorporate accessibility considerations in procurement criteria and planning, where applicable, and ensure that procurement activities and processes are fair and accessible to vendors and that they incorporate accessibility requirements into their bids.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers identified:

The following barriers have been identified:

- Accessibility criteria are not yet incorporated in WDBA's procurement processes.
- Procurement of construction, goods, and services may not yet have considered the accessibility requirements of the Act.

Actions to address procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers:

WDBA, through its Procurement team, will undertake the following during the 2022-2024 planning period:

a) **Develop procurement accessibility criteria**
(2023-2024)

WDBA shall establish guidelines on how it will evaluate vendor proposals and selection of procured services and goods based on accessibility.

b) Accessibility as a technical requirement
(2023-2024)

WDBA shall ensure that accessibility designs, features and standards are included as part of the technical requirements in its procurement initiatives, to be complied with by prospective vendors.

2.6 Transportation

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy, WDBA shall meet or exceed barrier-free design requirements for its vehicle fleet to adhere to accessibility standards.

Transportation barriers identified:

The following barriers have been identified:

- Existing vehicle fleet may not have considered accessibility requirements within the Act.
- Employees may not be aware of how to access fleet vehicles, and what accessible accommodations are available when using fleet vehicles.

Actions for addressing transportation barriers

WDBA's Vehicle Fleet team, will undertake the following during the 2022-2024 planning period:

a) Review fleet for potential accessible retrofits
(2023)

WDBA shall review its existing vehicle fleet in consultation with employees with disabilities and technical experts to identify how WDBA's existing fleet could conform to accessibility standards.

WDBA will continue to include existing accessible features like running bars on some of the fleet vehicles, and assist with providing accommodations, where possible, upon request.

b) New vehicles
(2024)

In its lease or acquisition of new vehicles WDBA will consider accessibility standards and the need to accommodate its employees with disabilities.

Part 3: Consultation and Communications

3.0 Consultation summary

In preparation of this plan, WDBA conducted consultations with WDBA employees, the public, and fellow Crown Corporations. The consultation and communications objectives were to:

- Gather feedback from WDBA staff, the public, and people with disabilities to be incorporated into WDBA's federally mandated Accessibility Plan.
- Ensure WDBA staff, the public and people with disabilities are aware of the opportunities to provide feedback on the Accessibility Plan.
- Meet the consultation requirements set out by the *Accessible Canada Act* and *Accessible Canada Regulations*.

Timelines and consultation activities

Between June and August 2022, WDBA received input and comments from over 20 members of the public, 51 WDBA employees and two federal Crown Corporations to inform the development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The following consultations took place:

- **Virtual meetings with Crown Corporations:** WDBA held two virtual meetings with two Crown Corporations in July 2022 to learn about their approach, gain feedback on WDBA's consultation strategies and share ideas.
- **Online employee survey:** A survey gathering feedback on WDBA accessibility was available to staff from August 8 - 24, 2022. Fifty-one responses were received, with five of the respondents self-identifying as having a disability.
- **Online public survey:** A public survey gathering feedback on WDBA accessibility was available August 15 - September 7, 2022. Twenty-one responses were received, with three respondents self-identifying as having a disability and seven respondents self-identifying as a caregiver to someone with a disability.
- An internal WDBA focus group and external public focus group session were planned and communicated to relevant audiences, however, no employees or members of the public registered to attend the events.

WDBA employees and the general public were asked various questions to assist with identifying existing barriers pertaining to WDBA's employment, built environment, information, communications and technologies, communications outside of ICTs, programs and services, procurement and transportation. Feedback received through consultation has been used to identify the barriers noted within this Plan as well as to inform the actions developed to address them moving forward.

It should also be noted that in addition to utilizing WDBA communications channels, WDBA requested local organizations and agencies who serve people with disabilities in the Windsor-area to support the communication of consultation opportunities, as well as gain their feedback.

3.1 Progress reporting and providing feedback

Progress reporting

WDBA will publish progress reports of the Plan by the first (end of 2023) and second (end of 2024) anniversary of the Plan's publication date (December 2022). At this time, WDBA will consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of its progress report.

The progress reports shall include the information required under the Act and the Regulations, including how people with disabilities were consulted and how feedback was used in the preparation of the report.

Providing feedback

Employees and members of the public are encouraged to continue reporting accessibility concerns, providing feedback, or request further information regarding the Plan by contacting WDBA at info@wdbridge.com, or 1-844-322-1733.

3.2 Communication of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

WDBA's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is available in alternate formats upon request and can be viewed:

- on the project's website: gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com/Accessibility

- by written request to: Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, 100 Ouellette Ave., Suite 400
Windsor, Ontario, N9A 6T3
- by telephone request at: 1-844-322-1733
- by email request at: info@wdbridge.com

WDBA will provide print, large print, Braille, audio format or an electronic format compatible with adaptive technology intended to assist persons with disabilities, at the latest, 45 days of a request for a plan in Braille or audio format, or 15 days of a request for a plan in any other format.

Acknowledgements

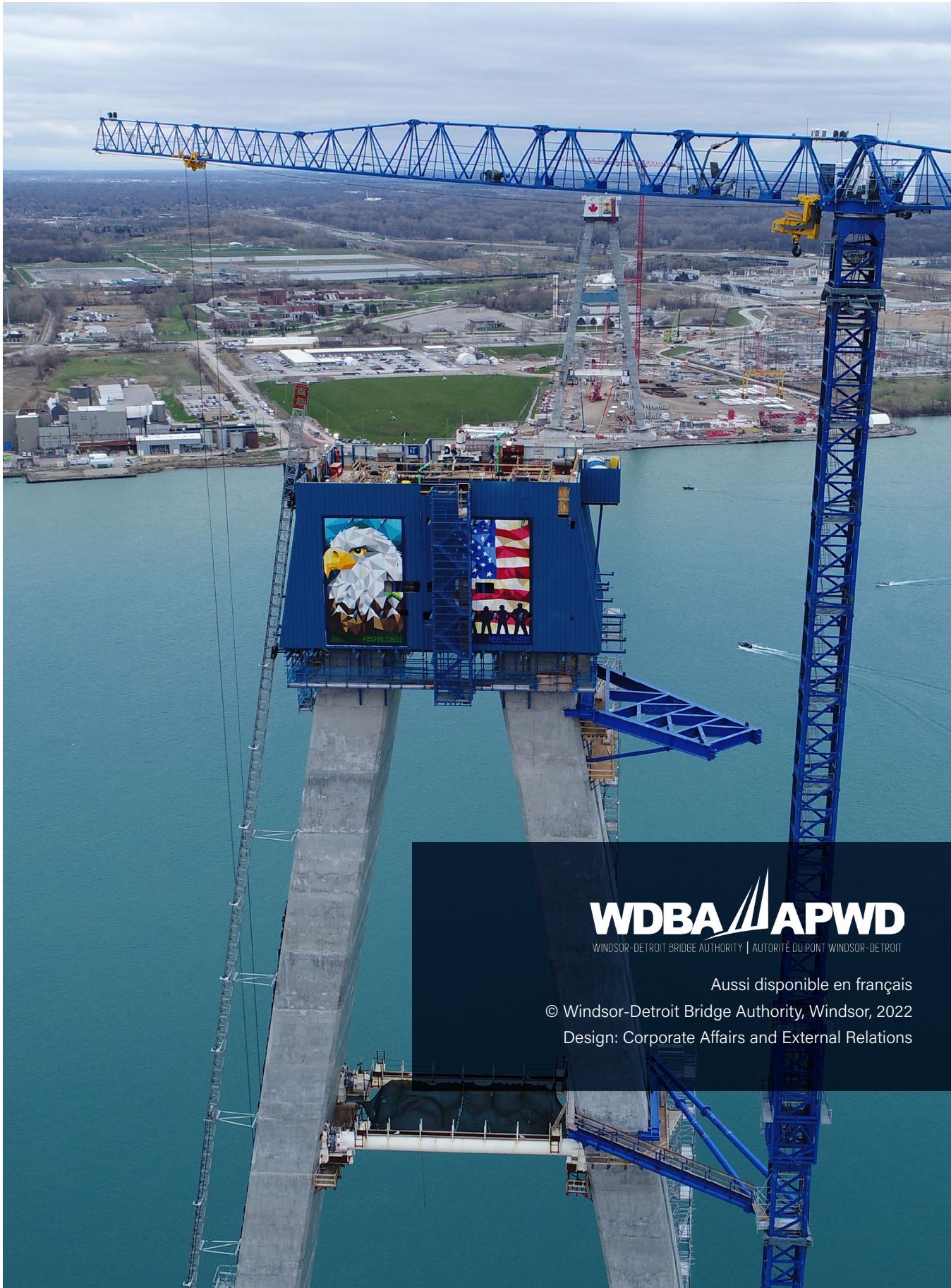
WDBA would like to recognize the commitment of the Board of Directors, employees and internal working group, the Windsor community and fellow Crown Corporations for their guidance in the preparation of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Definitions

As identified in WDBA's Accessibility Policy:

Barrier means anything, including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice, that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

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



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