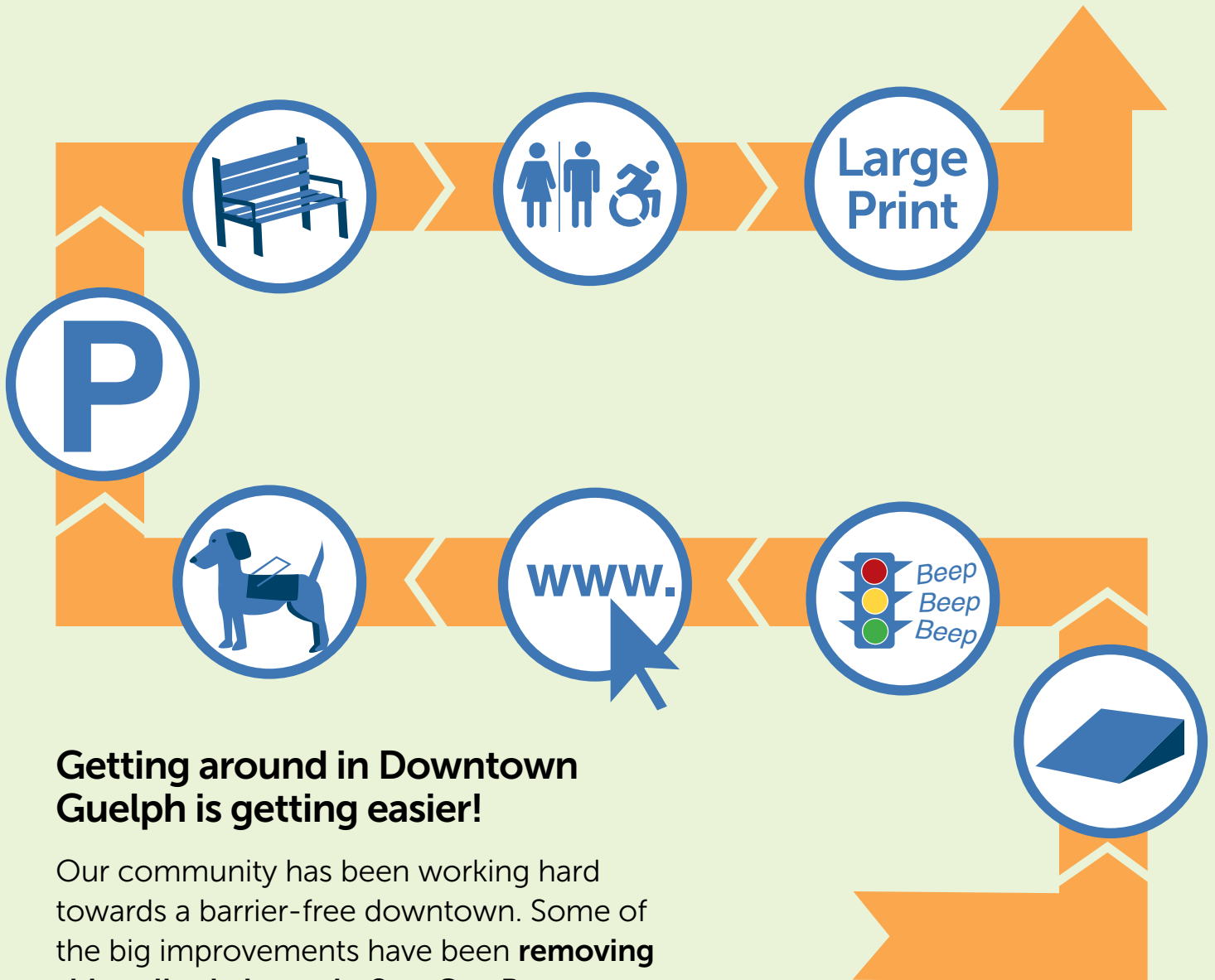


All Access

Downtown Guelph

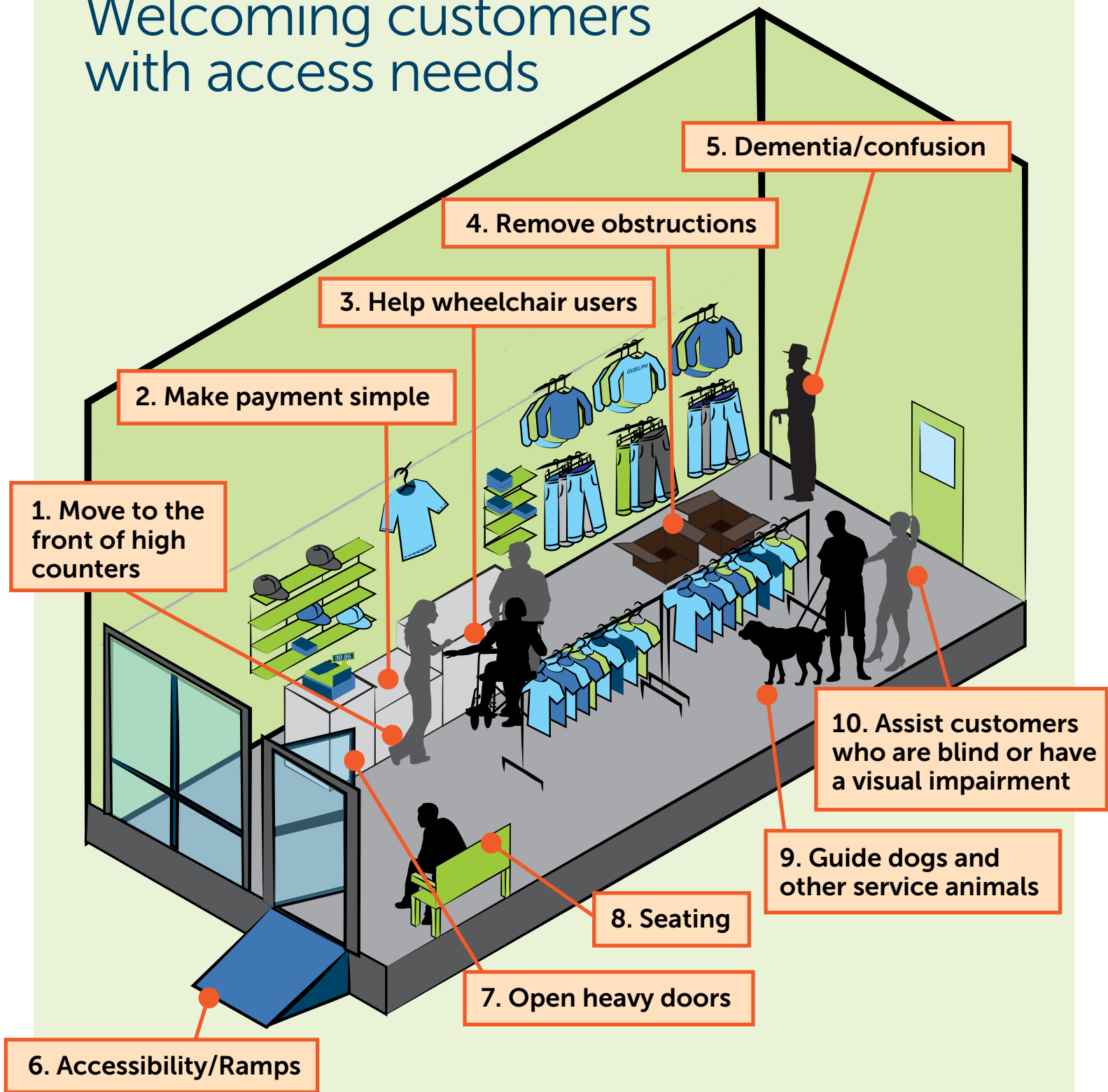


Getting around in Downtown Guelph is getting easier!

Our community has been working hard towards a barrier-free downtown. Some of the big improvements have been **removing sidewalk trip hazards, StopGap Ramps, Accessnow.me, Signage, and Accessible Parking and Customer Service.**

Infographic

Welcoming customers with access needs



Appendix to infographic

Welcoming customers with access needs

1. Move to the front of high counters

If you need to speak to someone in a wheelchair for more than a few moments, it is advisable to move to the front of any high counters in-store. Try to put yourself in a wheelchair user's eye-level to avoid stiff necks.

2. Make payment simple

- Tell the customer clearly how much their items cost and ask the customer how they want to pay.
- Lower counters allow the customer using a wheelchair to see the money being counted, sign their signature, hear and see the clerk, or simply to reach the bagged merchandise

3. Help wheelchair users

- Avoid leaning on a wheelchair. This is the equivalent of leaning or hanging onto a person.
- A wheelchair is a user's personal space. Never push a wheelchair without the user's consent, or move crutches, canes or walking frames, without the user's consent.

4. Remove obstructions

Try to keep aisles free from obstacles and ensure furniture does not restrict access for people with mobility impairments or sight problems. This will aid customers navigation in-store, such as those using wheelchairs or scooters and people who have difficulty walking.

5. Dementia/confusion

Customers may become confused or distressed and not know where they are or why, for example those with dementia. Reassure them and allow them to sit down somewhere quiet. Tell the customer where they are and ask if they know what they want. People with a learning or developmental disability may also require guidance.

6. Accessibility/ramps

Your store should be fully accessible for people who use a wheelchair or scooter. Try to make your premises step free or accessible by using permanent or portable ramps. Deep-pile carpets or rugs can also be barriers to access.

7. Open heavy doors

Offer to open heavy doors for customers who use sticks, crutches, walking frames or wheelchairs.

8. Seating

People who use walking aids may find it hard to use their hands when standing up, for example to count out money. Offer a seat if you can and offer to open doors. If a customer has difficulty walking be prepared to offer more personalized service. Find a place for the customer to sit down and bring goods directly to them.

9. Guide dogs and other service animals

Guide dogs and other service animals should not be treated as pets. Speak to the customer rather than making a fuss of their service animal. More information about helping customers with guide dogs is available at <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk>

10. Assist customers who are blind or have a visual impairment

- Ask the customer how you can help.
- Remember to talk and speak clearly.
- Offer an arm to guide the customer to their requested location in-store.

Other ways in which to serve customers who cannot get into your shop include:

- Serving the customer outside if it is a small item.
- Shop for the customer and bring the goods to them.
- Regular customers could call you with a list of what they want and have their shopping ready for them to pick up later.
- Consider offering online shopping or in home service.

Check list for businesses

Meeting the needs of your customers

“Understand, Engage, Advocate”

Good business means anticipating what your customers want and need. It is a good idea to talk to your customers about any issues they may have when accessing your facilities and using your services. The following is a checklist of items to assist you in meeting the needs of your older customers and customers with disabilities. Many of these are no or low cost improvements.

Entrance

Easy to use door handles, automatic door opener, hand railings on both sides that can be easily gripped, good lighting. Avoid mats that are not flush and make sure ramps are non-slip, not too steep and strong enough to handle a mobility scooter/power wheelchair.

Signage

Large/clear font, plain language, good contrast. A-frames should be appropriately placed to not be a trip hazard.

Training

Customer service training, including disability (AODA) and age friendly training Staff should know how to use accessibility equipment (e.g. portable ramps) and how to provide practical support to customers.

Marketing

Diversity, positive identity, clear and appropriate language. Choose a simple layout with legible text.

Website :

- Does your website conform to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guideline?
- Is the information on your website clear and easy to use? Clear language which is easy to understand, easy to read, good sized text, and use of images with text.
- Is there useful and accurate information about the facilities including: Accessible parking, barrier-free features, accessible washrooms for customers, hearing enhancement systems, assistance available for customers, restricted access.

Customer Service

- Confident communication - “May I help you?”. Good manners, practical assistance, avoid making assumptions, maintain eye contact, speak slowly and clearly.
- Providing good customer service to customers with a disability will sometimes mean doing things differently – ask your customer how best to assist them.

Additional features that may make it easier to meet the needs of older customers and customers with disabilities:

- Large print
- Clear Signage
- Lower counters
- Designated seating



Resources

Accessibility

guelphaccessibilityproject.com

guelph.ca/living/accessibility

theonnc.ca/resources/infographics

Business Case for Accessibility:

navigator.wlu.ca/content/documents/fileItemController/business_case_for_accessibility.pdf

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws

aoda.ca

accessforward.ca

Age Friendly Information

guelph.ca/living/recreation/recreation-programs/support-services

guelph.ca/agefriendly

Handbooks

BIA Handbook on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: obiaa.com/accessibility

The Business of Accessibility: How to Make Your Main Street Business Accessibility Smart: obiaa.com

Venue information

planat.com

accessnow.me

stopgap.ca

refugerestrooms.org

Workshops and Webinars

AccessOntario.com/events

Web

w3.org/WAI

Accessibility

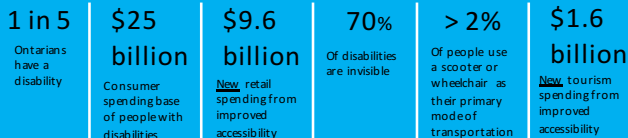
Facts and figures

Accessibility Smart: Make It Your Business

REFLECT THE MARKETS YOU SERVE

The Ontario marketplace is becoming more diverse and businesses need to reflect the customers they serve to better understand them and fill their needs. By creating an inclusive and supportive work environment for people with disabilities, employers can reach into different segments of the community and appeal to a wider customer base.

Many businesses understand that being responsive to changing demographics and societal values is a business imperative and a competitive advantage.



ACCESSIBILITY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Demonstrating a commitment to accessibility through your business practices—such as hiring people with disabilities—sends a message to your customers, employees, and the wider community that your business is open to all. This helps improve your brand image and business reputation, and increases customer loyalty.

87%

Of survey respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that they would prefer to give their business to companies that employ people with disabilities.

83%

Of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that employing people with disabilities showed customers that businesses care about all workers.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MAKE GREAT EMPLOYEES

86%

Scored above average for attendance

90%

Scored average or above average for performance

97%

Scored average or above average on job safety

Competition for talent can be intense for small business owners who may not be able to offer the same salaries and benefits as their larger competitors. Being able to attract, hire, and retain employees with disabilities opens up a whole new talent pool from which to draw.

77%

Of small business owners who have hired people with a disability said these employees either met or exceeded their expectations.

50%

Of people with disabilities have post-secondary education

Companies That Invest In Accessible Employment Practices Report.....

A+

- > Better job retention
- > Higher attendance
- > Lower turnover
- > Enhanced job performance and work quality
- > Better safety records
- > Stronger competitive capabilities
- > Greater customer loyalty

- ❖ Hiring employees who have a disability does not adversely affect an employer's WSIB premiums.
- ❖ Over two-thirds of job accommodations cost less than \$500.
- ❖ Less than 4% of people who have a disability require any physical accommodations at all.
- ❖ People with disabilities are less likely to miss work.
- ❖ Workers with a disability were 5 times less likely to change their job or leave.

Become an accessibility smart business!

Businesses cannot market effectively to customers with disabilities if they don't recognize, and truly understand, their needs.

Learn how to become an accessibility smart business.

Visit: OBIAA.com/Accessibility

