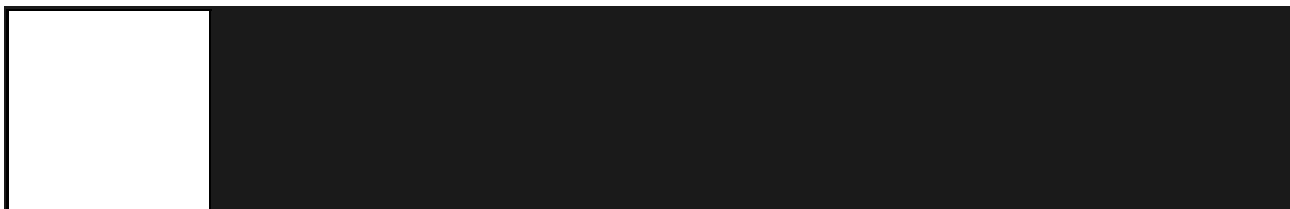


Khan, Rusha**Subject:** [MARKETING] Ontario Making Public Spaces More AccessibleREFERRAL TO _____
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NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Making Public Spaces More Accessible

New Chair Julie Sawchuk to lead work on behalf of province to review and improve accessibility of public spaces for people with disabilities

December 20, 2021

[Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government continues the ongoing work of identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities. Julie Sawchuk has accepted an invitation to be the chair of the Standards Development Committee that will lead the province's review of the Design of Public Spaces accessibility standards for outdoor and indoor public spaces. The committee will include people with disabilities from all across the province, as well as businesses, municipalities, and other impacted stakeholders. It will review existing accessibility standards, and consider whether new standards might be needed to improve accessibility in Ontario's public spaces.

"I am honoured that Julie Sawchuk has accepted the role of chair of this Standards Development Committee," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Her expertise and insights will be incredibly valuable in guiding the review of standards for accessibility in outdoor and indoor public spaces."



Ms. Sawchuk is a best-selling author, professional speaker, and accessibility strategist. She holds Bachelors of Science and Education degrees and is a designated professional for Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. Ms. Sawchuk's lived experience as a person who has a spinal cord injury offers an important perspective for the committee's work.

As part of the government's commitment to making Ontario more accessible and inclusive, it is breaking down barriers in outdoor public spaces such as bike paths, parks and playgrounds and indoor public spaces in buildings such as service counters and accessible washrooms. This is a key area of focus in the cross-government [Advancing Accessibility in Ontario](#) framework. The government is working with all levels of government, community partners, and businesses to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

"Creating accessible public spaces in Ontario is not the job of one person, it is the responsibility of all," said Ms. Sawchuk. "I'm both grateful and incredibly proud to be asked to lead this discussion and look forward to adding a rural perspective as often as I can. This is an opportunity to bring people together to share what is working and what needs to be done differently in design and construction and to listen to all the voices who are looking for change."

The Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee is expected to begin work in early 2022 and continue into 2023.

Quick Facts

- Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* have been created for customer service, employment, information and communications, transportation and the design of public spaces. Work to develop proposed Health Care, Kindergarten to Grade 12 and Postsecondary Education standards is currently underway.

Additional Resources

[Learn more about the Standards Development Committees](#)

[Advancing Accessibility in Ontario framework](#)

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