

A hand is holding a white sign with a black border. The sign has the text 'COME IN! WE'RE OPEN' written on it in a bold, serif font. The sign is hanging from a chain. The background is a blurred image of a garden with white flowers.

COME IN!
WE'RE OPEN

Applying an Age-Friendly Lens to Business & Service

Presented by...

The Town of Wasaga Beach

- & -

**Wasaga Beach Age-Friendly
Community Advisory Committee**

With funding from...



Module 5

Outdoor Safety



In this module

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How businesses can create safe,
accessible outdoor spaces



The first step is to carry out a “**walk audit**” of the surrounding property.

This simple activity will help you evaluate your outside environment and identify issues that might impact the comfort and safety of senior customers.

Areas to evaluate include:

- Entrances
- Doors
- Signage
- Parking spaces
- Curbs
- Sidewalks
- Roofline (overhang)
- Weather related hazards





Entrances

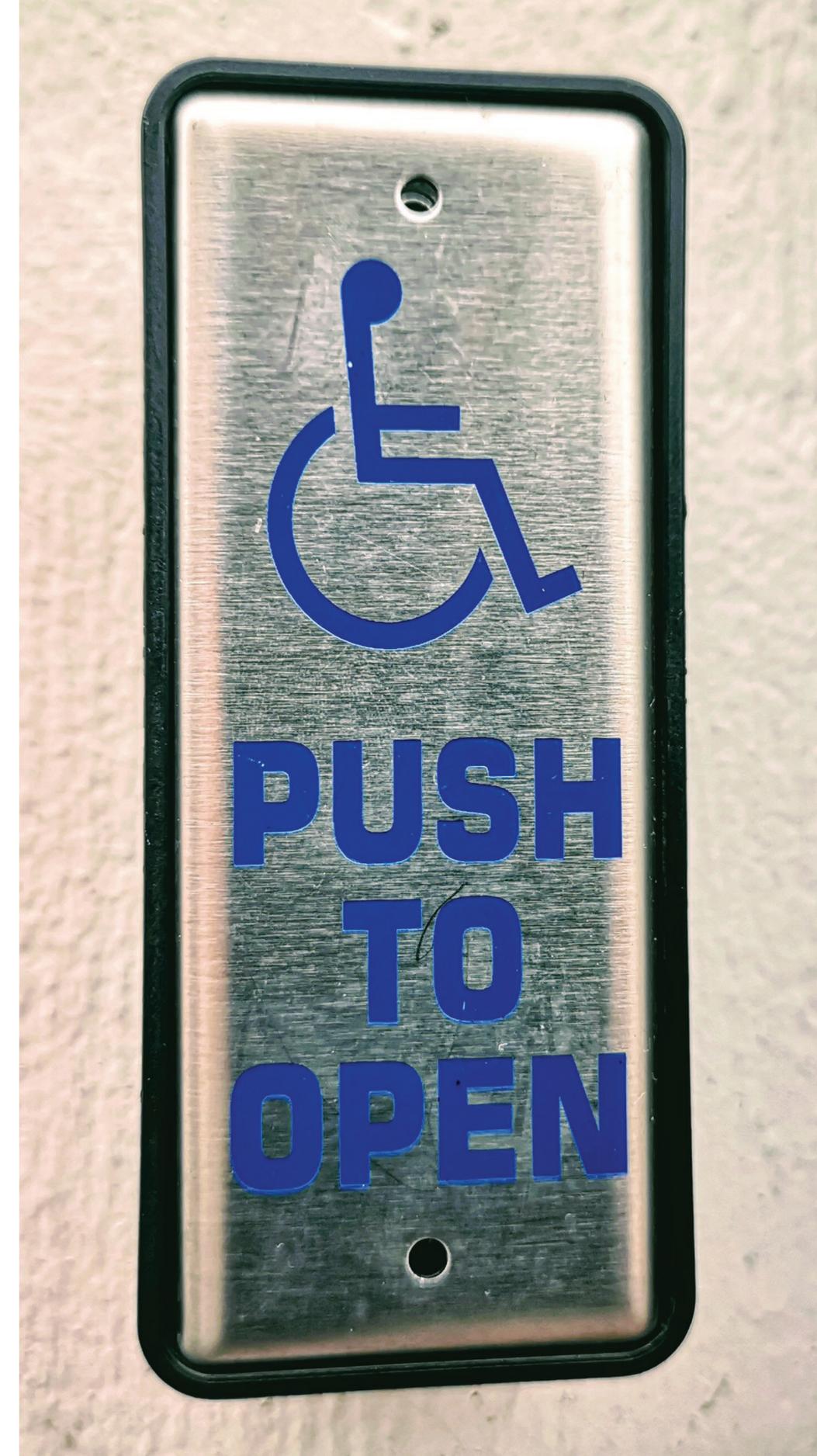
Many storefront businesses may not be in a position to modify their building space and streetscape features. However, there are age-friendly modifications that are minor but will still go a long way to assist those with accessibility challenges.

Among the points to consider for **entrances**:

- Accessible entrances should be clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility.
- Entrances are clearly identified and kept clear of obstructions. Consider whether sandwich boards/signage, displays, bike racks are correctly placed.
- Entrances are well and evenly lit.
- If you have steps, consider adding a ramp but ensure that slopes are gradual and the ramp is easy to maneuver and include a handrail.
- At least one entrance is on grade level.

Doors

As we age, dexterity involving fine precision grip and hand strength deteriorates, and can affect simple tasks, such as opening and manipulating doors.



Here are ways to improve your doors:

- Threshold ramps over door frames make it easier to navigate those uneven spaces.
- Offset hinges allow doors to swing completely out of the person's path through the open doorway.
- Lever-style handles are easier to manipulate and can be installed on any traditional push/pull door.
- Entrance doors that open automatically or have access buttons are useful for seniors who struggle to manipulate a door or who are wheelchair users.



Sidewalks & Parking Areas

For people with mobility devices such as wheelchairs and walkers, or people with wheeled devices like strollers and wheeled grocery bags, sidewalk and parking area surfaces are incredibly important. Ensure clear, direct, unobstructed continuous paths wide enough to serve all customers.

Consider the following with sidewalks & parking areas:

- Minimize or remove clutter. Clutter creates fall risks for seniors using canes, walkers, or wheelchairs.
- Sidewalks and parking lots are well and evenly lit.
- Curbs are cut and ramps are in place to allow for easier access. Curb ramps should have a running slope and a smooth transition from the ramp to adjacent spaces.
- Curb cuts are marked with yellow paint. A strip contrasting in colour and texture should be used at the top and bottom of ramps to warn persons with impaired visions.
- Designate accessible and seniors' parking spaces near entrances. They should be clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility

Consider the following with sidewalks & parking areas:

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- Accessible parking stalls should be wide enough to allow modified vehicles to offload a side wheelchair or scooter lift.
- Parking signage should have large, clear print.
- Parking meters should be at-grade and easy to use.
- Pick-up and drop off areas should be convenient, clearly marked and if possible, sheltered.
- Parking lot pavement should be smooth, without major cracks, bumps or potholes.

Weather Hazards

We don't have much control over Mother Nature. Wind, rain and snow can all play havoc with outdoor areas. Sidewalks, parking lots and entrances are even more dangerous if you don't look after them in bad weather.



Addressing weather hazards:

- Parking lots, accessible parking stalls and sidewalks that are part of the business's property should be cleared of snow, ice and other hazards according to bylaw requirements or better.
- Apply sand to reduce slipping at entrance areas and re-apply throughout the day as weather changes.
- Trim overhanging tree branches and hedges to reduce the stick and leaf debris falling on walkways.

In this module we introduced you to a number of key concepts:

- Carry out a “walk audit”. Place yourself in the shoes of an older customer, a person with reduced mobility or a person with sight or hearing challenges. Examine your outdoor areas from their perspective.
- Be prepared for inclement weather. Keep entrance areas, steps, walkways and parking surfaces clear of snow and ice.
- Modify doors to make them easier for customers with mobility issues to open and get through.
- Keep sidewalk and parking surfaces clear and smooth. Mark any broken or uneven walking surfaces with bright paint.



Coming up next...

Module 6

Mobility &
User-Friendliness