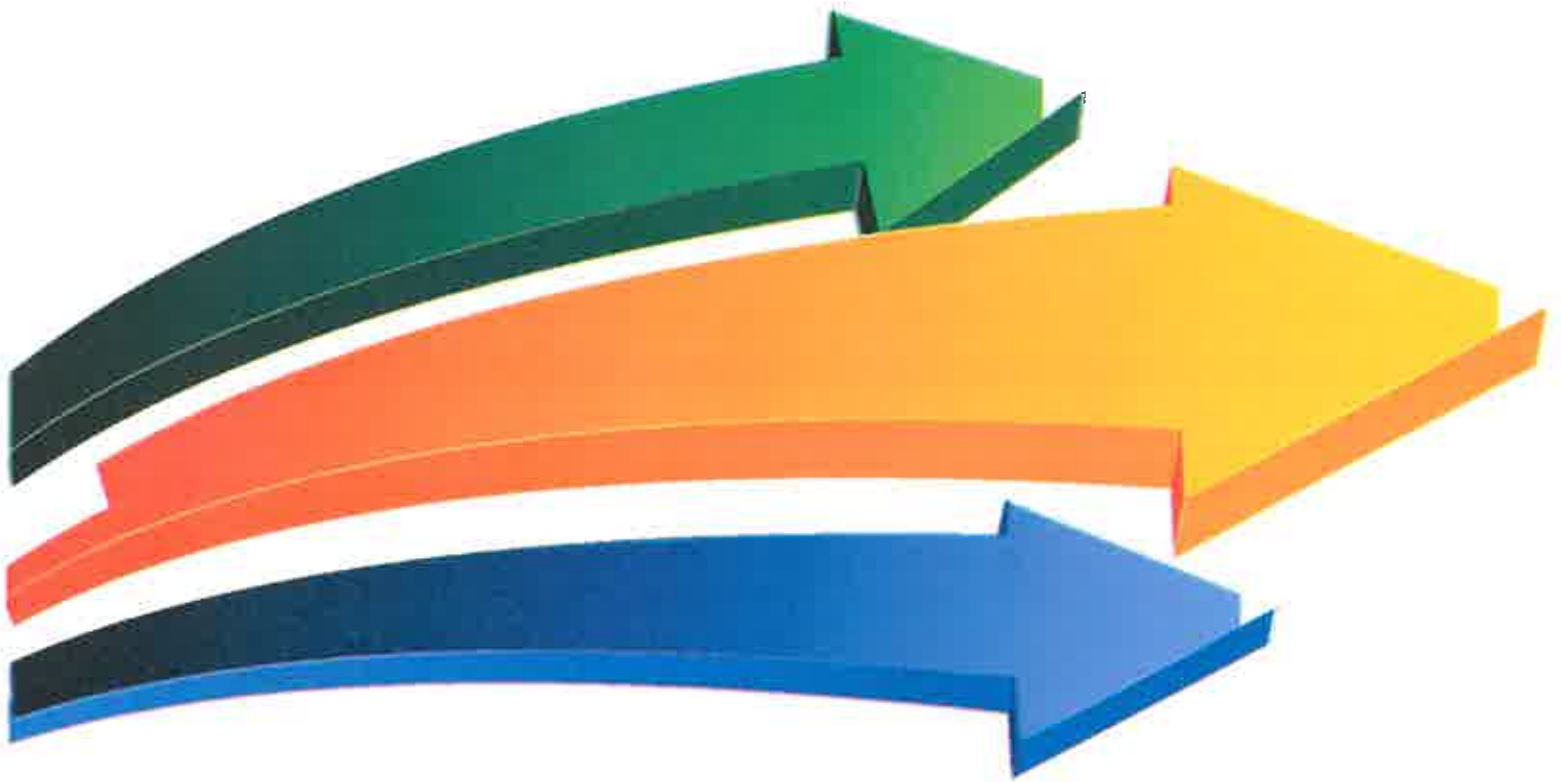


Accessibility STARTEK Kingston:  
**Leading the Way Forward**

December 13, 2014



Accessibility is more than a legal obligation.

It's good for our employees.

It's good for our visitors.

In other words, it's just plain good for business.



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## Message From The Site Director

In recent years STARTEK Kingston has been working to become a more accessible organization. I have great respect for our accomplishments to date, however, I also recognize that there is still work to be done. Improving accessibility for people is essential as it creates a workplace that is open for everyone.

STARTEK is committed to providing a barrier free environment for our employees, job applicants, clients and visitors who enter our premises or access information.



STARTEK will work to eliminate barriers including physical, technological, environmental and attitudinal. Our goal is to provide a workplace that promotes full participation from all stakeholders. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements of all legislations, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005). The requirements of AODA will be our guide to ensure we achieve our goal to be a barrier free environment. We are committed to ensuring our organization's compliance with accessibility legislations and will review and update our policies and practices on a 5 year cycle to ensure our employees have the required understanding to achieve our desired work environment.

I am confident the leadership team of STARTEK Kingston to deliver towards building a barrier free environment that will make the workplace open for everyone

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Lamendeau'.

**Trevor Lamendeau**  
**Site Director**



## A Message from Human Resources Diversity and Accessibility

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("the AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and mandating accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.



STARTEK is committed to establish a planned and coordinated approach to implementing initiatives that promote the independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity of persons with disabilities, and becoming a barrier free environment ensuring compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and with Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

This plan will integrate strategies pertaining to Communication, Workplace Environment, Hiring and Retention Processes and Practices as well as Training as we work towards building an effective accessible organization through the knowledge, collective understanding and dedication of the Staff and Managers at STARTEK. I am confident in the commitment we share that we will achieve an accessible STARTEK Kingston. Our future depends on it.



**Amelia Kirkpatrick**  
**Human Resources Manager**

# Realizing the Vision: Where We Are Headed

“Releasing the constraints that limit full participation within our work environment will create a significant force for growth, health and well-being.”

## Accessibility in Kingston STARTEK site

For STARTEK, accessibility means much more than people getting through the front door. It’s what happens once they’re inside that makes all the difference.

Navigating easily into and around buildings and offices, accessing services and information in an appropriate format, working in an accommodating environment – all these everyday situations are important parts of accessibility and they benefit everyone.

For many years, the STARTEK has had a vision and commitment to building an inclusive environment, and we continue to assist in having accessible programs and services.

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan details our approach to building an inclusive STARTEK and takes our vision to a whole other level: achieving an accessible environment.

## About the STARTEK Multi-Year accessibility plan

The STARTEK Multi-year Accessibility Plan is a road map that describes how we will transform Kingston STARTEK into an accessible organization.

What is outlined here is the result of many years of experience designing and implementing accessibility programs and services. The contents were developed in consultation with staff, visitors and people with disabilities.

In this document, you will find important background information about accessibility in the operation. You will also find three key sections detailing our approach to building an accessible organization:

- **The Accessibility Strategic Road Map:** The overall vision, desired outcomes and strategy that will lead to achieving accessibility by 2025.
- **Key focus areas for immediate results:** What we are doing to achieve results over the next five years.
- **Compliance with the AODA:** Our approach to compliance with Ontario’s accessibility legislation and highlights of key successes.

## Goals and vision for an accessible STARTEK Kingston

Accessibility is a powerful tool – it improves our communication, it brings more people together, and it increases our competitive advantage. In an accessible organization, a broader range of people will be able to work for STARTEK Kingston.

Our goal is to make the Kingston workplace a welcoming environment – a place where employees are accommodated according to their needs. Employees need to be able to function effectively in a way that works for them.

We want to provide excellent service for all staff. We want to attract the talented people we need to fill jobs. Building a dynamic and accessible organization will help us reach these goals.

### Transforming our roles

To transform into an accessible organization, Kingston STARTEK is making changes in its roles as:

- Employer
- Policy maker

### Commitment to persons with disabilities

STARTEK Kingston 'commitment to persons with disabilities statement' reflects our vision to become an accessible organization:

STARTEK Kingston endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility. Our goal is to provide accessibility for our employees in our services and facilities.

## How we have been building an accessible STARTEK Kingston

### Several key milestones have shaped our work

STARTEK Kingston has been building an inclusive and accessible organization for a number of years. As a private sector organization, we are required to do this by law, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. But our involvement began much earlier, and has been influenced by several milestones.

### Ontario is changing, and the key to the future is accessibility.

About 15.5% or 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability – that's one in seven. That number is expected to grow significantly in the next 20 years as the population ages<sup>1</sup>. The proportion of seniors is also expected to rise to 23.4% by 2036<sup>2</sup>.

The incidence of disability is higher for seniors than in the rest of the population. This will have an unprecedented effect on the way we work and live our lives. It will mean that many organizations will need to change the way they do business. They will need to recognize and accommodate these new realities in order to remain competitive.

In short, we need to be prepared for a changing workforce and population in Ontario.

<sup>1</sup> Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006, Statistics Canada

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Population Projections 2008-2036, Fall 2009 Ministry of Finance Report

STARTEK Kingston empowers a proactive approach to accessibility, where our work provides an outstanding model for others to follow.

Accessibility opens doors and creates possibilities for everyone.

Statutes such as Ontario's Human Rights Code (revised in 1982 and 1990) and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, laid the early groundwork for our approach to accessibility and inclusion. We committed many years ago to creating an inclusive organization, and have come a long way since we began this work.

## The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: How we fit

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. To help public, private and non-profit organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility; the AODA contains accessibility standards in areas, including:

- Customer service
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The built environment

The accessibility standard for customer service came into force in 2008. The next three standards – information and communications, employment and transportation – have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR is now law and the requirements will be phased in over time. The standard for the built environment for facilities and outdoor spaces is still in development.

STARTEK Kingston is proud to lead the way amongst our corporate and partnered sites.





# How We Will Get There

## The STARTEK accessibility strategic road map

What does an accessible STARTEK look like? Organizational change is complex and involves many components: policies, processes and practices; people; technology; infrastructure; communications and awareness. Taken together, these are the levers that will bring about change.

The STARTEK Accessibility Strategic Road Map provides an overall view of the approach to and management of organizational change. (See the STARTEK Kingston Strategic Road Map on the following page.)

## How we will achieve results

### A strong foundation helps build success

Building a solid structure and organization has been a key component of our success so far in creating an accessible organization.

We believe that the critical factors for our success include:

- Informed and committed leadership
- Organization-wide alignment and coordination
- Strong governance and accountability
- Measurement, evaluation and reporting

### Informed and committed leadership

We need informed and committed leadership to propel us forward. From Directors, HR and Operations, leaders have identified accessibility as a priority. In addition, all Operations senior managers are encouraged to have a commitment to accessibility in their individual performance plans.

*“Building a diverse, accessible and inclusive organization is a journey – not an event.”*



# STARTEK The STARTEK Strategic Road Map

Vision	An Accessible Kingston STARTEK				
Key Outcomes	People with Disabilities participate fully meaningfully in services and employment	There is greater accessibility into, out of and around the complex	Information and communications are available in a number of formats to all staff	Staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the complex	
Levers	<u>Policies, Process and Practices</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Communications and Awareness</u>	<u>Technology</u>	<u>Infrastructure</u>
Changes	<p>New/Refreshed directives and policies will reinforce accessibility considerations</p> <p>Policy, program and legislative reviews take place to find and fix barriers to accessibility</p>	<p>Performance commitments, talent management and individual accommodations plans</p> <p>Accessible human resources practices</p> <p>Improving employment accommodations practices through a disability management review</p>	<p>Accessibility information is widely available through corporate communications and events</p> <p>Accessible feedback mechanisms are in place</p>	<p>Accessible intranet/internet sites and business applications</p> <p>Telephony widely available</p> <p>Materials available in accessible formats on request</p> <p>IT staff know and understand the various adaptive technologies used and who can provide employee assistance, training and trouble shooting</p>	<p>Facilities and premise will be retrofitted to meet new accessibility standards</p> <p>Stationary equipment are appropriate for use by people with a range of disabilities and body types, adjustable work stations, adjustable or varied height chairs, seating appropriate for accessibility needs</p>
Foundation	Informed and Committed Leadership		Strong Governance and Accountability		
	Alignment and Coordination		Measurement, Evaluation and Reporting		

We will continue to develop and implement annually an accessibility plan that includes initiatives to increase accessibility in the work environment along with efforts to reduce and remove barriers. These plans are made publicly available to ensure that our leaders are accountable for promoting accessibility.

## Alignment and Coordination

Employees who are engaged and knowledgeable are able to incorporate accessibility considerations into their daily business practices at all levels of STARTEK Kingston. To ensure they have the tools and information they need, we are responsible for delivering clear communications across the organization.

## Strong governance and accountability

An effective governance structure is key to realizing our vision. All employees have a role to play in accessibility, and key individuals and groups will be assigned responsibilities to ensure our goals are met:

- **Executive Champions of Accessibility:** Senior leaders who champion and are accountable for accessibility include:
  - The Site Director is accountable for implementing accessibility standards and coordinating the accessibility strategy with Facilities and Human Resources.
  - The Human Resource Team is also the authority that reports compliance on behalf of the Operations Team and Health & Safety Team

*"Accessibility is a matter about thinking from one day to another about how we can make a better environment or program for everyone."*

*“Accessibility is very important. It impacts employees with or without accessibility issues and it is our responsibility to be accessible for everyone”*

Don Vandale  
STARTEK  
Facilities Manager  
Facility Services  
Programmer Systems Analyst

- **Accessibility Leads:** Each Operations department works together as a group that champions the accessibility agenda. In this manner they provide tactical and “hands-on” assistance to guide others in their accessibility work, with guidance from the Facilities Department, Human Resources.
- **Kingston STARTEK Site Director Services:** Specific areas – such as information and information technology, human resources, procurement and emergency management – has overall responsibility for implementing accessibility standards.
- **Health & Safety Group:** This consolidated “voice” provides a critical perspective on the needs of persons with disabilities. This group provides feedback on accessibility strategies and the implementation of key priorities.
- **Human Resources and Wellness:** HR provides support to help promote effective, safe and timely employment accommodation for employees with disabilities and coordination of workplace discrimination and harassment prevention processes.

## Measurement, evaluation and reporting

The success of this strategy – like any other – depends on having a clear way to measure, evaluate and report on progress.

The Kingston STARTEK management team reports publicly on progress toward accessibility in a number of ways:

- STARTEK Kingston is accountable for complying with accessibility legislation.
- STARTEK Kingston will publicly post their accessibility plans annually and include progress reports.

In addition, new initiatives are underway to ensure that we continue to progress and that we are responding to the needs of employees.

**Quality and Compliance:** The STARTEK Kingston management team will launch a process to ensure that existing and new regulatory requirements are implemented and maintained. This internal quality assurance and audit process will help us maintain long-term and systemic organizational change.

**Listening to feedback:** Getting feedback from staff and customers is an important part of our evaluation process. We are developing a consultation strategy to engage key groups, including those representing people with disabilities.

## Key focus areas for immediate results

Creating an accessibility road map is a long-term, continuous process. However, our success will also depend on maintaining and achieving effective short-term goals. We are currently focusing on key areas that will be catalysts for change in the near future and lead to long-lasting systemic change. This approach will enable STARTEK Kingston to meet regulatory obligations and, over time, achieve an accessible organization.

The Operations Team will help weave in an accessibility analytical tool that helps staff incorporate elements into their work through an enhanced understanding of diversity and accessibility. This can be used when initiating a project or reviewing policies, programs, legislation, guidelines and procedures.

## Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

### How we will get the job done

The Operations Team is demonstrating leadership and compliance by meeting the requirements of the AODA and advancing beyond minimum requirements.

We achieve these goals by:

- **Ensuring organizational readiness to meet compliance**

In order to meet and sustain compliance, the Operations Team revises policies or develops new ones with accessibility in mind. Policies and guiding principles not only help staff embed accessibility into everyday activities, but also help ensure that compliance activities are communicated and delivered in a consistent way across the complex.

- **Providing quality assurance and audit practices**

Compliance with the AODA needs to be kept active, so ongoing maintenance and quality controls are needed. The Operations Team is building a quality assurance and audit framework – including a verification process.

Support tools such as checklists and guides will be available to conduct audits on compliance. This system will help ensure compliance with the legislation and keep the issue of accessibility front and centre.

### • **Implementing education and awareness**

Comprehensive just-in-time and ongoing training give staff the knowledge, skills and tools they need to meet and exceed compliance requirements.

Operations Team has a broad range of functions and roles. For that reason, training is adapted to suit the type of work, the work location, and the type of involvement staff may have with accessibility.

Training topics include developing alternate formats, hosting accessible meetings, and creating documents and policies with accessibility in mind. A variety of training materials, resources and best practices are being developed as a result, and are shared across the Operations Team.

The Operations Team will also prepare communication materials that help supervisory staff better understand their regulatory responsibilities and what they need to do to comply with the AODA.

The Government hosts annual Accessibility Expos where themes can focus on raising awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use. Exhibitors from disability organizations participate and guest speakers share their expertise.

## Accountability and reporting compliance

The Operations Team must file its official compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. The compliance report is then filed with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

## Our progress on the AODA regulations

The following outlines our commitments and our progress in meeting accessibility standards:

- Information and communications
- Employment
- Procurement
- The built environment

## **Our commitment**

The Operations Team is committed to ensuring that all staff – whatever their ability – work in an accommodating environment and receive accessible services in a timely manner.

## **How we will achieve our vision**

- Reviewing and updating policies and standards regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service
- Consulting with key advisory groups on emerging or changing requirements
- Embedding accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials
- Using internal expertise to conduct reviews to ensure compliance and improve services
- Reviewing feedback and taking appropriate action
- Providing training for staff who make policies and on how services are delivered

## **Outcome**

- All persons receive an equitable and effective experience that accommodates their needs.

## **Our accomplishments**

- Rollout of STARTEK Accommodations Policy.

## **Accessibility Guideline**

The Accessibility Guidelines clarifies mandatory requirements under the standard. It is posted on the WWW website for access to all.

## Information and communications

**Communicating and providing information in ways that work for all employees is another cornerstone of building an accessible organization.**

### **Our vision**

The Operations Team will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, intranet sites, communications materials and face-to-face interactions. The goal is to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

### **Our commitment**

The Operations Team is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

### **How we will achieve our vision**

- Achieving compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines-based (WCAG) commitments in the Information and Communication section of the IASR (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation) to ensure websites are accessible for all.
- Developing guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Ensuring that information, including emergency procedures, plans, and public safety, is readily available in a variety of alternate formats such as large print, HTML and tagged PDFs.
- Developing a training strategy to ensure that staff, partners and stakeholders have the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials.
- Continuing to expand knowledge and use of accessible devices such as audio amplifiers.

### **Outcome**

- All Personnel receive equal and timely access to the information and communications products they need.



## Our accomplishments

### Written materials

- Staff who work in communications receive training on developing or revising materials with accessible content in alternate formats.
- Staff are trained to create, evaluate and enhance accessible PDF documents using a variety of software environments.
- Operations Team can access a single reference source on how to create accessible documents using common office applications such as Word, PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat.
- STARTEK HR can assist in making ministry publications available in alternate formats on request.

### E-mail

STARTEK staff is encouraged to use best practices to make mail communications more accessible:

- Avoiding the constant use of PDF attachments to relay information and placing content in the body of the email when possible.
- When using attachments, ensuring the content – if brief – is also copied into the body of the email.
- Providing context and further information with a link to the HTML version of the full document.

### Outcome

- Communications standards are being developed and implemented to ensure the streams of information is accessible to all users.

There are automated tools for evaluating a website's conformance to WCAG.

## What is WCAG 2.0 AA?

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is a collection of documents developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). These documents explain how to make web content more accessible to persons with disabilities. Web accessibility involves understanding a wide range of disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, cognitive, speech, learning, language, and neurological disabilities. For each of the twelve guidelines there are success criteria used to test the website at three different levels: A, AA and AAA.

## Employment

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**The process of finding, getting and keeping a job must be inclusive and accessible in order to build an effective workforce within STARTEK Kingston.**

### Our vision

STARTEK Kingston will be an employer of choice that enables and encourages persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of the organization.

### Our commitment

STARTEK Kingston is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. STARTEK Kingston has a long history of modeling the spirit of Ontario's Human Rights Code and has developed and implemented policies that support accommodation and address non-discrimination and harassment allegations.

### How we will achieve our vision

#### Staff Training

Recruitment managers and staff will receive accessibility training that supports the goals of the AODA. It is expected that the training will cover a range of topics such as:

- How to identify and remove barriers in the workplace for staff and customers
- Understanding and accommodating various types of disabilities and their impact on work performance
- Understanding employer obligations to provide employment accommodation
- Understanding obligations and leadership under AODA regulations
- Enhancing workplace emergency responses through individualized emergency response information and assistance as required
- Revising individual work plans and developing a manager's guide, tools and templates to remove barriers from screening practices

#### Websites

The STARTEK Careers website will be updated to ensure accessibility. Tools, tips and resources in alternate formats will be available for candidates who are preparing for an interview.

The STARTEK Kingston Wellness provides information on the STARTEK Kingston policies and best practices related to employment accommodation.

## Outcomes

- As required, individual workplace emergency response plans have been developed for employees with disabilities.
- Reference materials on disability-related absence management are available.
- Employment-related policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure they meet legislated requirements.
- Recruitment, retention and career development programs and processes are barrier-free.
- Accommodation for disabilities is offered and provided as required.

## Our accomplishments

**Phase one:** removing barriers from job advertisements. All job advertisements are in plain language, available in alternate formats and include information for applicants on how to request accommodation or assistance. Recruitment staff must respond to requests within 48 hours.

**Phase two:** removing barriers from the selection process. All applicants invited to interviews are asked if they require accommodation in order to participate.

**Phase three:** (under development) removing barriers from resume screening practices.

- **HIRING MANAGERS** remove barriers from the recruitment process and create a barrier-free interview and selection best practices checklist. A best practices in recruitment tip sheet helps ensure practices are fair, transparent and consistent.
- **USE OF MANAGER'S TOOLKIT:** Providing Accommodation to Employees with Disabilities," developed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.
- **ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS** have been added to STARTEK Kingston management strategy meetings and subsequent reference materials on disability-related absence policies are made available.

## Built Environment

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**STARTEK Kingston strives to be a leader in developing the built environment and plans are underway to incorporate accessibility retrofits into renovations when undertaken.**

### **Our vision**

Staff will be able to move freely – unrestricted by barriers – in all interior and exterior spaces.

### **Our commitment**

STARTEK Kingston is committed to greater accessibility into, out of, and around our facilities.


### **How we will achieve our vision**

- It is expected that the AODA's built environment standard will require accessibility features to be incorporated into the facility during any significant renovation.
- STARTEK Kingston will continue to model best practices when undertaking accessibility retrofits.

### **Outcome**

STARTEK Kingston will strive to have accessible and accommodating environments for staff.

# Leading the Way Forward: A Final Word



## Our Commitment

STARTEK Kingston is committed to making accessibility throughout the complex a reality. Our progress so far would not have been possible without the vision from members of our workforce, the leadership team, and the commitment of many individuals – with and without disabilities.. We thank them for their invaluable feedback.

There is much more to accomplish. We will continue to identify and remove barriers at every level within STARTEK Kingston in order to create accessible spaces and services for everyone.

## We'd like to hear from you

Do you have any thoughts or feedback on what has been accomplished so far? Ideas on how plans or projects could be improved? Do you need any other information to move forward with your own plans? Please contact us with your questions and ideas. We would be pleased to hear from you.

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