

Facilitating Inclusive Running Events: Policy Analysis to Reduce Barriers for Persons With Disabilities

by

Eamon P. Gaudio

Submitted to OCAD University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Design in Inclusive Design

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2023

### **Copyright Notice**

This document is licensed under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International 2.5 Canada License. To view the license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

#### **You are free to:**

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material.

#### **Under the following conditions:**

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

**Abstract**

Through an Inclusive Design lens, this secondary research investigates the current state of accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs) within Toronto road-running events. The current academic literature demonstrates that PWDs benefit from participating in athletic and sports activities but that there are barriers preventing PWDs from participating. This research looks at the role event facilitators can play in reducing barriers for PWDs. The research uses evidence, in the form of policy documents, collected from event facilitators' online public accessibility policies and, wherever possible, internal accessibility policies were also collected. The collected policies were then compared to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA is a Government of Ontario law that aims to ensure persons with disabilities (PWDs) have the same opportunity as people without disabilities in all aspects of daily life. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the collected event facilitator's accessibility policies were compared to the AODA. The research found that the current state of event facilitators' accessibility policies varies widely and often does not comply with the AODA standards. As such, event facilitators must do more to comply with the AODA and work towards creating more inclusive road-running events.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to Dr. Sandra Danilovic, my Principal Advisor, for the guidance and opportunities you provided me. I am grateful for all your help and support throughout my academic career. Thank you to my Inclusive Design cohort. I learned as much from the program as I did from each of you. Thank you to the two unknown runners who just happened to be running by as I looked out my office window. The restlessness from sitting at my desk doing schoolwork and seeing two people running mid-day sparked my interest in running. Two years later, I am an avid runner and dedicated my degree to researching accessibility within running. Thank you to my friends and family for their ongoing support during my master's and running antics. Thank you to the Toronto road-running race directors and representatives for your willingness to talk openly regarding accessibility at your events.

## Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Research Question .....	2
Chapter 2: Background .....	3
What Do We Call Disability and Sports? .....	3
History of Disability within Sports .....	4
Non-Disability Related Barriers in Sports .....	8
History of Running Events in Toronto.....	10
Literature Review.....	11
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	17
Critical Discourse Analysis.....	17
Coding Process.....	18
Policy Selection .....	18
Forms of Evidence .....	21
Generalizability & Trustworthiness of Evidence.....	22
Chapter 4: Findings.....	23
Information and Communication Standard.....	26
Transportation Standard.....	28
Design of Public Spaces Standard .....	30
Customer Service Standard.....	30

Chapter 5: Discussion .....	35
Information and Communication Analysis .....	37
Transportation Analysis .....	40
Design of Public Spaces Analysis.....	42
Customer Service Analysis .....	43
Race Roster Analysis .....	52
Chapter 6: Addressing the Discrepancies .....	54
FAQ – Information and Communication .....	55
FAQ – Transportation.....	56
FAQ – Design of Public Space .....	58
FAQ – Customer Service .....	58
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	61
Limitations and Further Research .....	63
References.....	65

List of Tables

Table 1.	Event Names and Event Facilitators	25
----------	------------------------------------	----

## Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the many things the COVID-19 global pandemic has highlighted is the need to have access to physical activity. There is the obvious physical health benefits and mental health benefits, but it is more than just that. Along with participating in physical activity often comes community building and human connection. During the height of the pandemic, the City of Toronto implemented ActiveTO, a collection of programs aimed at improving the health and well-being of residents by creating additional space for residents to get outside and be active (City of Toronto, 2023). As Toronto has shifted to a new phase of the pandemic, ActiveTO and some of the programs have been reduced or discontinued altogether (Callan, 2022; City of Toronto, 2023). This has left Torontonians looking for other ways to continue their physical activity. One avenue for continuing physical activity for many people, not just in Toronto but globally, has been running. The Covid-19 pandemic has created a large influx of new runners and, for people who already run, has allowed them to run more often (Moreton, 2021; World Athletics, 2021). While the pandemic has increased running's popularity, running events have been put on hiatus or moved to virtual events due to public health measures. With public health restrictions eased and in-person events starting back up. Runners can reconnect with the larger running community again. On the surface, running events are about competition, and for a select few elite-level athletes, this is true. But for most runners, they will never be the first to cross the finish line. Running events are more than the competition against others. More substantially, road-running events are a celebration. Used as a medium for self-improvement, building social connection through shared experiences, and improving health and well-being through physical activity. Regardless of the personal reason for participating, what happens when there is a percentage of the population that does not have the same access to running events?



For persons with disabilities (PWDs), this is often the case. Local (Toronto) road-running events provide varying, often minimal, levels of information, resources, and opportunity for PWDs to participate. This is not just a running problem; it is a larger societal problem. PWDs are, through intentional and unintentional design, socially isolated, stigmatized, and forced to justify their existence. People without disabilities, by default, can navigate society without encountering the same barriers which make simple daily tasks difficult. Due to ableism (discrimination against PWDs due to their disabilities), the social and built environment is not fully accessible for PWDs. This can and must change.

While ablism is a larger social issue, this research aims to help road-running event facilitators create events where PWDs can meaningfully participate. The increased participation levels of PWDs will work towards destigmatizing PWDs' participation within sports and work towards larger social acceptance of PWDs. To achieve this, this research analyzes government policy and local road-running event policies to identify gaps and discrepancies between the two. These gaps and discrepancies will then be addressed through a proposed interpretation of how best to accommodate PWDs and create more inclusive road-running events. An understanding of what the current Toronto road-running event facilitators accessibility policies and practices is needed. Additionally, a comprehensive review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 standards is required to identify the sections applicable to facilitators.

### **Research Question**

*How do the current policies and practices of Toronto road-running events align with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and where, if any, is there a disconnect?*

## Chapter 2: Background

### What Do We Call Disability and Sports?

What do you call sports that have a focus on creating meaningful participation for persons with disabilities (PWDs)? There are many terms used, such as disability sports, inclusive sports, accessible sports, parasports, or adaptive sports. All these terms are correct, but are overlapping, similar, or adjacent in meaning and are being used in the same or different contexts. Within the academic and public spheres, there is inconsistency within the language used. For example, adaptive sports can be used to describe cycling which uses adaptive sports equipment (handcycle, tandem bike, etc.). However, adaptive sports could mean soccer which has had the traditional rules modified. The inclusive sports term could also be interchanged for adaptive sports in this soccer example. This creates confusion and difficulty in researching how disability and sports intersect. There are many potential phrases used to describe the same or similar concept leading to academic information being siloed into distinct classifications depending on which field of study is looking at the topic.

More importantly, and within the public sphere, this confusion and lack of clear expectations of terminology can create barriers for individuals searching out programs to participate in. Each term may mean something different for each organization, program, or department. This is just the beginning when it comes to barriers faced by PWDs and participating in sports. Further exploration of barriers faced by PWDs in sports will be examined in the following sections. Moving forward, the term *inclusive sports* will be used as an all-encompassing term used to describe meaningful participation for PWDs in sports, and only when applicable the other terms will be used.

### **History of Disability within Sports**

On a global stage, sports and athletics' most renowned example is the Olympic Games. The first written account of the Games is dated back to 776 BCE. The original Olympic Games allowed only men to spectate and participate, while all participants competed nude, and competed until the opponent surrendered or a death occurred (International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2018). Within ancient Greece, the Olympics took place every 4 years and were considered a religious festival (IOC, 2018). The connection between sports and religion is common in history, as many other civilizations throughout history have incorporated aspects of sports and athletics into religious or spiritual events (Schultz et al., 2015, 86).

Pierre de Coubertin founded the IOC in 1894 and in 1896 the first modern Olympic Games was held in Athens (IOC, 2021a). The modern Olympic Games and other major sporting events have shifted away from being overtly religious in nature, but there are still significant resonances between the two (Schultz et al., 2015, p. 9). This can be found both in player's actions based on their religious beliefs (religious gestures and speech) and by the terminology used to describe sports actions or the sporting event (Hail Mary pass, Miracle on Ice, etc.) (Schultz et al., 2015, p. ix). Another example of the enduring connection between religion and sports is the quasi-religious, (in some cases) cult-like following spectators can create for an individual player, team, or sport (Schultz et al., 2015, p. 114). However, these actions are not exclusive to sports and spectators; similar quasi-religious elements can be found in fandoms across a wide range of industries.

While sports are shifting away from overt religion, the showcasing of the peak athletic body remains. This showcasing is used for propaganda by countries on a national and international stage. Some notable examples include the Nazi 1934 Winter and 1936 Summer

Olympic Games where Hitler used the events to showcase "... the myth of 'Aryan' racial superiority and physical prowess" (Schultz et al., 2015, p. 68; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021); the United States using the story of Pat Tillman (NFL player joins the military after 9/11 and dies while on deployment), against his wishes, to gain public support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Krakauer, 2009); and Russia's state-sanctioned doping operations to artificially boost their image on the world stage (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2021). A consequence of the showcasing and propaganda is that athlete without a disability is the cultural de facto association when thinking of an athlete.

In 1944, a Jewish doctor, who was a refugee from Nazi Germany, Ludwig Guttmann, had a novel, for the time, approach to treating PWDs within a medical setting. This approach ran counter to the current, at the time, medical practice which viewed disability as a burden, deficit, or death sentence. Instead, the focus was on sports and crafts to help PWDs gain physical and psychological benefits (International Paralympic Committee [IPC], 2019). The intent is that PWDs would then have the skills to integrate back into society (IPC, 2019). This approach focuses on equipping a person to better navigate or conform to society's social and built environment. With the underlying assumption that society is a ridged structure where PWDs must conform to it. As opposed to the social model of disability which views society as a malleable structure that can be moulded to better suit everyone's needs. The social model of disability is further explained within the Social Model of Disability section.

Dr. Guttmann was a key contributor to the modern-day Paralympic Games by starting the first iteration of the games at the Mandeville Hospital (IPC, 2019). The first Paralympic Games was in Italy for the 1960 games, and the 1992 games saw, for the first time, the same host city for both the Olympics and Paralympics (IPC, 2019). However, the Paralympic Games were not

the beginning of sporting events for PWDs. In 1924 the first Deaflympics or International Silent Games was held (International Committee of Sports for the Deaf [ICSID], 2016). Before the engrail Deaflympics, there was a deaf sports club in Berlin. This sports club was founded in 1888 and is regarded as the first of its kind (ICSID, 2016). While this 1888 deaf club was the earliest inclusive sports event found, it is reasonable to speculate that there have been local inclusive sports events organized for hundreds, if not thousands of years earlier but their recognition is lost to forgotten and untold history.

Even within the disability community, not all disabilities have been treated equally. First, inclusive sports focused on injured soldiers and then gradually allowed civilians with disabilities. But there were limitations to which disabilities were allowed to participate in sporting events. For example, it was not until 1980 that athletes with cerebral palsy were officially allowed to compete in the Paralympic Games (Inclusive Sports Academy [ISA], 2021). Then not until 1986 that athletes with intellectual disabilities could compete in the Paralympic Games (ISA, 2021). Social barriers stopping participation in sporting events are not an artifact of bygone eras. It is still happening today and will be further discussed in this chapter.

In modern times, inclusive sports are both integrated and separated depending on the sporting event. Take the Paralympic Games, Canada Games, and Invictus Games. Each large-scale athletic event approaches athletes without disabilities or with disabilities in a different manner. Olympics and Paralympics share the same venues but occur at separate times (the Paralympics happen after the Olympic Games finish) (IPC, 2019). The Canada Games, unlike the Olympics and Paralympics, have all athletes, regardless of ability, participate in their respective competitions during the same event window (Canada Games Council, 2021). The Invictus Games, unlike the Olympics and Paralympics, or the Canada Games, specifically

focuses on athletes with disabilities who are current or former service members with physical or mental injuries (Invictus Games Foundation, 2016).

Currently, there is a range of approaches for separating or integrating sporting events with athletes who are non-disabled or disabled. There has been participation crossover between event styles where an athlete with a disability has participated in a non-disability sporting event: this first happened in 1904 when George Eyser, an American amputee athlete, took part in the Olympic Games and won multiple medals (3 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze) (IOC, 2021b). These events are not a one-off occurrence; for example, most recently, Melissa Tapper, an Australian Table Tennis athlete with a disability, competed in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (Wood, 2021a). Tapper is part of a growing list of athletes who have competed in both the Paralympics and Olympic Games (Wood, 2021b).

The crossover of athletes with disabilities participating in non-disability-specific events, at the highest level of competition, calls into question the current standards for categorizing sporting events. A sport is generally categorized into subcategories with the intention of upholding credibility, fairness, and safety within the sport (IPC, 2020). Subcategories are based on age, sex, or weight but within disability-specific sports, these classifications are specific to how a disability impacts a person's ability to participate in each sport (IPC, 2020). These categorizations are rooted in societal assumptions and what happens when these assumptions are incorrect? Currently, athletes like Melissa Tapper can compete in both Paralympics and Olympic Games. However, when assumptions are proven incorrect in other categorizations, some athletes are barred from participating. This speaks to the larger social issue surrounding categorizing people. Specific to sports, it is clear, there needs to be a rethinking of sports classification.

### **Non-Disability Related Barriers in Sports**

The ancient Olympic games excluded women altogether, even from watching (IOC, 2018). Although, there was a notable workaround in 392BC and 396BC by Kyniska, daughter of a Spartan king, whereby the winner of the chariot race was the owner of the chariot and not the athlete. Women were able to own chariots and Kyniska was able to claim victory wreaths two times (IOC, 2018). Sexism within sports is a barrier facing female athletes. It was not until 1966 when the first woman, Bobbi Gibb, ran the Boston Marathon by sneaking onto the race despite being told by the race director that ““women aren't allowed, and furthermore are not physiologically able”” (Wallock, 2016). A current-era example is the difference in pay between Canada's men's and women's soccer teams. The men’s team has only recently made an appearance on an international stage, while the women’s team has been consistently playing at international tournaments for many years. Despite the difference in performance, the men’s team was getting paid more than the women’s team (CBC, 2022). This, however, is changing as both men’s and women’s teams have demanded action through the bargaining table with Soccer Canada (CBC, 2022). This is a notable shift in the equal pay movement for Canadian athletes, which happened shortly after the USA women’s team gained equal pay to the USA men’s soccer team (CBC, 2022). While there is progress toward pay equality, there are still many other inequalities between the men's and women’s teams that are at the heart of the ongoing labour dispute between the women’s soccer team and Canada Soccer (Brady & Houpt, 2023).

Another barrier is the ongoing debates regarding transgendered athletes and their eligibility to participate in sporting events. The Olympics have allowed athletes who are transgender to participate since 2004 but it was not until Tokyo 2020 (which happened in 2021) that openly transgendered athletes participated (The Associated Press, 2021). Again, here

Canada's women's soccer team is leading by example by having the first openly transgendered athlete, Quinn, participate in the Olympics (The Associated Press, 2021). The debate regarding transgender athletes and athletes who do not conform to societal assumptions is ongoing. The latest decision by World Athletics (the international governing body of track and field events) has banned transgender athletes who have undergone male puberty from participating in female events (Pells, 2023). World Athletics has also implemented further restrictions for athletes with differences in sex development (DSD) (Pells, 2023). These rules are perpetuating exclusionary practices for athletes who are outliers to, often outdated and binary, rigid standards. Take for example, South African track star, Caster Semenya, who was born a female, and raised as a woman but is unable to compete in the Tokyo Olympic games because her naturally occurring testosterone levels are too high for the World Athletics' limits (Block, 2021; North, 2019). These limits only apply to select events (between 400m and one mile in distance), which are the events Semenya competes in (Block, 2021; North, 2019). This ongoing debate has also sparked conversations around racism within sports as all the athletes who are impacted by the testosterone limits are from Africa (Block, 2021; North, 2019).

There are also financial barriers faced by athletes. These barriers are common for most athletes, specifically, those requiring any adaptive sports equipment (which can cost more than traditional sporting equipment) are further impacted by financial barriers (Magrath, 2022, p. 69). The list of barriers faced by athletes is long and involves race, gender identity, class, and ability. It is important to acknowledge all these intersectional barriers for a holistic view of the current sports landscape. However, for the purpose of a deeper analytic engagement, the focus of this research will be on the intersection of disabilities and sports. Barriers faced by PWDs will be expanded upon in the Literature Review section.



### **History of Running Events in Toronto**

As outlined by David Wencer (2014) in an article looking at the history of running events in Toronto, the first recorded major road race event was the 1906 Ward Marathon. At the time, a marathon was considered anything 15 miles (~24 kilometres) or greater, currently, the marathon is defined as 26.2 miles or 42.195km. The Wards Marathon took place annually from 1906 to 1913 and gained national and North American acclaim during this time (Wencer, 2014). Once a key administrator of the race died, Ward's son and World War I started, Wards Marathon and running events in Toronto ended (Wencer, 2014). It was not until the 1970s that there would be consistent road running events in Toronto (Wencer, 2014). The Canadian International Marathon in 1977 (now Toronto Marathon) and Harry's Spring Run Off in 1978 (now Spring Run Off) are two of the oldest road-running events that are still going on to this day (Brookes, 2011; Toronto Marathon, 2015; Wencer, 2014;).

Annual running events have been present within the Toronto running community for over 45 years. Currently, in Toronto, you can find a wide range of running-related sports events, from grassroots weekly neighbourhood runs to national and international running events. While the City of Toronto has had a rocky relationship with events (running charity events and sports/active events) that close roads, there is still a thriving running community (Callan, 2022; Kalinowski, 2014). The Toronto running community has events throughout the year. Apart from sanctioned road race events, Toronto also has a thriving running community made up of a diverse range of running groups. Some groups are paid memberships, some are organized by local running stores, and some are volunteer or grassroots organized. The Toronto running community is not just for the typical runner. There are running clubs for all, which reflects Toronto's diverse population.

These running groups have specific characteristics that appeal to different members of the Toronto running community. For many within the running community, these local groups and organized events are the first steps in their athletic journey. Local events are often volunteer-run and aimed at supporting a charity or cause within the community. They are often low-cost to enter and focus on community building. With such a wide range of running clubs and group members, the Toronto running event space should be reflective of this value. There are community groups focused on promoting inclusion for marginalized populations; for example, there is Frontrunners Toronto, a running group, which works to build a +LGBTQ2S and allies inclusive running community from within Toronto's gay village (Frontrunners Toronto, 2012). There are community groups focused on disability. Achilles International Canada and Achilles Canada are both running groups focused on empowering athletes with disabilities (Achilles Canada, 2021; Achilles International Canada, 2022). There are community events, such as the Toronto Women's Run Series that host multiple runs throughout the year geared towards creating an inclusive space for women runners and having women be the first to cross the finish line (Toronto Women's Run Series, 2015). There are Toronto running events that incorporate a range of accessibility elements within the event, but no dedicated events to creating an inclusive space for athletes with disabilities.

### **Literature Review**

This research draws on academic literature from OCAD U's Dorothy H. Hoover online library and Wilfrid Laurier University, University of Waterloo, and University of Guelph's shared online library database, OMNI. The qualitative research literature reviewed the wide range of benefits PWDs gain through participating in sporting events; barriers faced by PWDs to participate in sporting events; and examples of academic inclusive sporting event frameworks.

### ***Social Model of Disability and Sport***

To understand the barriers faced by PWDs, it is important to understand the social model of disability. The social model of disability is a framework used by the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organization, 2001), which states that a person's ability to function within any setting is the result of "complex interactions with a health condition, other domains of functioning and disability, as well as environmental and personal factors" (Hollenweger, 2014, p. 16). This approach shifts the, often oppressive, onus of inclusion from PWDs back onto society. The social model of disability argues that a disability occurs because of a mismatch between individual ability and the social and built environment; if the social and built environment does not inhibit the individual, then there is no disability. In the context of PWDs and sporting events, this means PWDs should be able to participate in the sporting events and not be limited in participation based on artificially constructed barriers rooted in systemic ableism. However, this is currently not the case and there are still many barriers for PWDs to participate in sporting events.

### ***Mental and Physical Benefits of Sport Participation***

PWDs have a desire to participate in sporting activities, however, the percentage of PWDs who participate in sporting activities is lower than the public participation rate (Ballas et al., 2022, p. 1018; Borland et al., 2020, p. 916). This is true across the spectrum of disability types and while there are some disabled types with high levels of participation, the levels are still lower than the public participation rate (Borland et al., 2020, p. 916). The disconnect between desire and participation levels, on its own, is cause for concern and investigation. However, the cause for concern increases when faced with the knowledge that this discrepancy impacts the opportunity for PWDs to improve their mental and physical health. It is becoming common

knowledge that there are benefits to physical activity regardless of ability. For PWDs, just like everyone else, overall physical health is improved through participation in physical activity (Ballas et al., 2022, p. 1027; Kim et al., 2018, p. 208). Similarly, there are mental health and emotional well-being benefits to participation in physical activity (Ballas et al., 2022, p. 1028; Kim et al., 2018, p. 208). As well, physical activity or sport participation can improve social connection and build community (Daigo & Filo, 2020, p. 29; Kim et al., 2018, p. 210). From a personal well-being and physical health perspective, and social and community perspective, participation in athletic activities has been shown to have a positive impact on participants. This holds true for PWDs regardless of disability type (Borland et al., 2020, p 917). Despite this, there are many barriers faced by PWDs to participate in sporting events.

### ***Personal Barriers***

Despite the social model of disability attempting to re-center the focus of disability on the environment, there are still social barriers, such as social stigmas towards PWDs —sociocultural norms which uphold ableist views of who can participate— which perpetuate low confidence for PWDs (Ballas et al., 2022, p. 1030; Comella et al., 2019, p. 184; Hansen, 2023, p. 60). These ideas are rooted in systemic ableism which views the body as the source of the disability, not society (Brittain et al., 2020; Hansen, 2023). To address these personal barriers, systemic social attitudes must change through increased exposure and education (Martin Ginis et al., 2016, pp. 485-487; Hansen, 2023, p. 70). As well, increased program availability for PWDs to participate in can help to build self-confidence and reduce internalized ableism (Brittain et al., 2020, p. 220; Martin Ginis et al., 2016, pp. 489-490).

*Institutional Barriers*

From an event facilitation perspective, PWDs experience institutional barriers, such as a lack of access to appropriate training facilities and subsequent adequate amenities (bathrooms, transition areas, parking spaces, etc.); lack of access to specialized adaptive sports equipment; lack of funding from organizations (government and private); lack of accessible appropriate programming; lack of public and accessible information regarding inclusive sports programming; and notably a lack of education and formal training for facilitators to appropriately work with the target community, which goes beyond the status quo typically afforded events (Comella et al., 2019, p. 184; Martin Ginis et al., 2016, pp. 485-490; Hansen, 2023, p. 68).

Comella et al., suggest one way to reduce the common lack of resource barriers (funding, human, and space), needs to be from a top-down (a hierarchical structure where influence and power are held at the top and funnelled down) approach (2019, p. 186). Notably, Comella et al., believe that it is unlikely barriers will ever be adequately addressed if there is no commitment and enforcement of anti-discrimination policies laid out by both organizations and governments (2019, p. 186). This speaks to a larger issue surrounding the treatment of populations that require more than the status quo to work with. Similarly, Hoekstra et al. echo the need for governments to "...develop and implement promotion of policy programs that promote sports and physical activities among people with disabilities because of its potential impact on functioning, participation, quality of life, and health" (2018, p. 1217).

However, these approaches are top-down mandates and, if improperly introduced, could further marginalize PWDs through non-community lead initiatives. Jeanes et al. found that grassroots organizations often have a key member of the group which champions the inclusive sports attitude (2018, p. 44). The key members dictate the inclusive practices each organization

uses through a range of factors such as policy interpretation, club values, and access to resources (Jeanes et al., 2018, pp. 46-47). However, this bottom-up (influence and power come from the lowest levels, of a hierarchical structure, and progresses upward) approach can be a cause for concern when, as seen throughout Jeanes et al., there is a wide range of outcomes, often still problematic, all under the same intent of being inclusive (2018). Regardless of approach (top down, bottom up, or a combination), there are many factors culminating in PWDs being less physically active than the public.

### *Academic Approaches to Facilitating Inclusive Sport Events*

While many academic sources provide insight into the benefits and barriers for PWDs to participate in sporting activities, academic attempts at social change through sports remain in the abstract realm while perpetuating a divide between theory and practice (Misener et al., 2022). Some disability scholars use their research findings to create models or frameworks for tangible positive social change. Evans et al. developed the Quality Parasport Participation Framework based on six core elements (autonomy, belongingness, challenge, engagement, mastery, and meaning) to create sporting environments with meaningful participation for PWDs (2018). This framework can be used by a variety of stakeholders, as the information and insights transcend individual communities and stakeholders. Notable, within the Quality Parasport Participation Framework, are the three conditions (physical environment, activities, social environment) which are a foundation for the rest of the framework (Evans et al., 2018). These three conditions highlight themes present within the previously explored benefits and barriers to sports participation for PWDs which help to bridge the divide between theory and practice that Misener et al. (2022) call out.

Another academic approach is using Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory which looks at the structure of an industry, the relationships between stakeholders within an industry, and the larger social environment the industry is situated within (Kitchin, 2021, p. 3). Kitchin, using this theory, can explore the shifting power dynamics within different (micro-, meso-, macro-) levels of the sports management industry (2021). Notably, the power-holders (as manifested through laws or capital) must effectively communicate with community groups (micro level) regarding the reasoning for the policies and for better feedback on how the system can be improved for PWDs (Kitchin, 2021, p.12). It is important to note that these approaches do not include non-academic, community-driven frameworks which will be addressed in Chapter 5.

### ***What Does This Means***

As discussed, there are multiple benefits for PWDs when participating in sporting events. Yet, there are many factors that impact PWDs and their ability to participate in sporting events. These barriers impact their physical and mental well-being and are often dictated by external factors. Academic research has highlighted many internal and external factors contributing to lower sports and athletics participation for PWDs. Addressing each barrier comes with its own set of challenges. For this research, the micro or community level will be further examined from an event facilitator perspective. This approach focuses on trying to remove the lack of access to community events barrier and involves micro- and meso-levels of power-holders. As far as reasonably searched for, there is very minimal academic literature specifically looking at the government policies (in this case, the Ontario Government's AODA) and community level facilitator's policies (in this case, Toronto road-running events facilitators). This research aims to help address this academic literature gap.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The goal of qualitative research is to analyze and interpret text—in this case discourse from multiple mediums—to find patterns and themes of meaningful phenomena (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p.13). This research uses a hybrid qualitative analytic methodology through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Grounded Theory Coding (GTC) to organize, analyze, and identify themes relating to the facilitation of inclusive Toronto road-running events for persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

#### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA is a flexible qualitative research approach that sits outside of a rigid academic framework (and which must be situated within a larger social context), that reveals the design, preservation, and enablement of social inequalities through the medium of language (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Mullet, 2018). Since CDA does not have a prescribed framework of application, there are multiple interpretations and applications of CDA.

For example, one application of CDA, the linguistics or language-in-use approach, focuses on the micro aspects of discourse by examining the specific details of language (grammar, syntax, phonology, etc.) used within the context for communication (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 8; Mullet, 2018). Another CDA approach, according to Wodak & Meyer, examines social issues from the perspective of those most impacted by the prevailing social power structures and critically analyzes those who have the power, means, and opportunity to solve the problem by way of direct and indirect language (discourse) used by the power-holders (2001, p. 2). Regardless of the approach, CDA can highlight how inequality is reinforced through language, or a lack thereof (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Mullet, 2018).



For this research, the CDA approach used will focus on social power structures and the subsequent relationships which reveal social dominance, discrimination, power, and control as expressed, explicitly or obscurely, through language (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, pp. 2-3). CDA is a useful tool for examining the outcomes of the power-holding government policy and road-running event facilitator's policies which impact the level of social inclusion, and health and wellbeing of PWDs.

### **Coding Process**

Grounded Theory Coding (GTC) is an inductive research coding method that builds upon each step sequentially, starting with raw text then refining to the relevant text, then identifying repeating ideas, which are then identified as themes, which leads to theoretical constructs and then theoretical narrative which is the final step in addressing the gap between research concerns and raw data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, pp. 34-44). Once key themes and theoretical narratives are identified through the GTC process, CDA is used to examine connotations of power dynamics in the discourse to theorize how the policy is impacting PWDs. This involves the selection and collection of discourse which is explained in the subsequent subsections.

### **Policy Selection**

According to Athletics Ontario, in 2022, there were only 11 events that applied and met the Ontario Athletics Sanctioned events standards within Toronto (Athletics Ontario, 2023). This is a notable decline from pre-pandemic numbers where in 2018 there were 21 Ontario Athletics Sanctioned events within Toronto (Athletics Ontario, 2023). Many more unrecognized running community events take place within Toronto; however, these are often community groups made up of volunteers whose focus is on community building and local fundraising, and the events are not formally structured or sanctioned through the City of Toronto permits. As such, these events

have been omitted from the event search criteria. The event selection criteria consisted of being an Ontario Athletics Sanctioned event, being located within the City limits of Toronto, Ontario, and the event being available for any member of the public to sign up for.

To become an Ontario Athletics Sanctioned event, there are required standards in the categories of medical and aid, signage and wayfinding, aid station(s), hydration plan, course management, and traffic management plan which must be met, and then there are recommended standards which go beyond (Athletics Ontario, 2022). The events selected for the research fall within the Athletics Ontario Road & Trail Race Sanction Criteria which is updated yearly (Athletics Ontario, 2022). From these 11 Ontario Athletics Sanctioned events selected, there are 8 unique event facilitators.

There were 2 events included within the research that was not listed on the Athletics Ontario-sanctioned event list. Both events were included because they have a specific connection to inclusive sports road-running events within Toronto. Sporting Life 10k is one of the largest road-running events in Toronto and works with charity partner Campfire Circle, a private charity with the mission of supporting children in all stages of their cancer journey through community, in-hospital, and overnight camp programs year-round (Campfire Circle, 2022; Sporting Life 10k, 2022). This run often involves children and families who are requiring additional support that other events do not provide, such as extended course cut-off times (when all participants must be off the course), increased aid stations, and more toilets throughout the event. The other exception is the Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race, which works with and is organized by Achilles Canada, "... a non-profit organization that provides people with various disabilities an opportunity to receive the physical, psychological, and communal benefits of running" (Achilles Canada, 2021). Since the event is interconnected with an inclusive sports organization, reviewing what policies

and practises the Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race has in place could provide insight into PWDs' lead community-level policy approaches.

In all events selected, signing up for the event required paying a fee to participate. This fee ranges in price based on the event and distance selected to race. There is no standard price across the public road-running event industry. Participants get an electronically timed chip attached to a bib. This bib is required to be worn on the racecourse. There are aid stations along the course which have fuel and hydration for participants, some aid stations also have medical staff. Participants, often, get a t-shirt, medal, and swag bag (free promotional materials). There is also pre-run, and post-run fuel and hydration available. This fee is different from a membership fee to a running club or group which some events require on top of the event fee itself. This fee is also different from an event charity partner fundraising goal amount, where a minimum amount is required to fundraise on top of the registration fee.

In addition to the race event policy selection, the policy of Race Roster was also collected. Of the events used within the research, 6 out of the 7 events used Race Roster. Race Roster is a widely used online software tool designed to help event facilitators in all stages of event management (Race Roster, 2023d). Race Roster provides products and features in the areas of event management, customer relationship management, fundraising, timing tools, and more (Race Roster, 2023f).

Within Toronto, there are many policies and guidelines that mandate built environment criteria, how to provide goods and services, and the rights of PWDs. Some notable examples include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982; the Canadian Human Rights Act, 1997; the Accessible Canada Act, 2019; the Blind Persons' Rights Act, 1990; the Accessibility for

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; and the City of Toronto Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2020-2024 (Canadian Heritage, 2018; Accessible Canada Act, 2019; Blind Persons' Rights Act, 1990; Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; City of Toronto, 2022b). While all options intersect with PWDs, the policy selected was the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA was selected because it is, currently, the most robust Act with specific standards outlined within the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation. These standards must be met across five categories (Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service) and the standards apply “to every person or organization in the public and private sectors of the Province of Ontario” (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act [AODA], 2005, p. 3; Integrated Accessibility Standards [IAS], 2016, p. 4). This means the road-running event facilitators organizing events in Toronto, must meet the requirements set out by the AODA. Else the offending party is liable to a fine of up to \$50,000 for each day the offence continues to occur, and if the offending party is a corporation, liable for up to \$100,000 for each day the offence continues to occur (AODA, 2005, p. 17).

## **Forms of Evidence**

### ***Online Collection Process***

All events had their online information collected and analyzed for accessibility policies, plans, practices, or any other content that relates to providing accessible services. This involved the event's main website, registration page, and if applicable, any external digital information directed to from either previous location. Similarly, Race Roster had their online information collected and analyzed for accessibility policies, plans, practices, or any other content that relates to providing accessible services. The AODA was accessed directly from the Ontario

Government's e-Laws webpage which provided digital access to official current and historical copies of Ontario statutes and regulations (Government of Ontario, 2022). Any additional information regarding the AODA coming from the Ontario Government Accessibility webpage.

### ***Additional Policies***

In addition to the online policy content being gathered, each organization was contacted directly requesting additional information that may not be listed on the website. Any additional information provided was via email or phone/web call with representatives from the respective event facilitator organizations. Each conversation was with a subject matter expert (SME), requesting further information regarding accessibility policies relating to AODA standards.

### **Generalizability & Trustworthiness of Evidence**

The generalizability of this research aligns with a humanistic model as opposed to a quantitative social science model which promotes replicability and transferability as defining properties of scientific generalizability (Danilovic, 2018, p. 40; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 51). The nature of the evidence (i.e., policy documents, which reflect standard and best practices) means it is continuously evolving, and specific to Toronto, Ontario. Thus, the outcomes of the research may become outdated as the policies continue to develop. Nonetheless, the ethos and outcomes of the research can be applied to other contexts due to the nature of the evidence (policy documents). Information regarding opportunity and support for all athletes is transferable to other contexts and a globally universal social issue, so long as it is understood that the evidence cannot be simplistically transferred to new contexts with identical outcomes expected. When it comes to CDA, there are minimum criteria that define qualitative trustworthiness and rigour within the field of study (Mullet, 2018, p.120). However, there are two criteria used for most CDA approaches which are *completeness* (if new data provides no new findings) and *accessibility* (the

social group(s) involved should have access and understand the outcomes) (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, pp. 29, 51). Due to the fluid nature of the evidence used in this study, *completeness* will not be applicable and as such, a focus on *accessibility* will be critical to maintain the trustworthiness and rigour of the research.

#### **Chapter 4: Findings**

In this chapter, the information from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is reviewed and presented in a neutral manner. Similarly, the Toronto road-running event policies are reviewed and presented in a neutral manner. In Chapter 5, the AODA and road-running policies will be analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The AODA, as defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation, has five sections—Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service—which prescribe accessibility standards that all public and private organizations that provide goods, services, or facilities within Ontario must uphold (IAS, 2016, p. 4). These standards are the minimum required action, by law, a provider of a good, service, or facility must meet when doing business within Ontario. The AODA requires that every provider develop, implement, and maintain policies regarding how to provide goods, services, or facilities, to persons with disabilities (PWDs) (IAS, 2016, p. 4). The AODA is designed so that PWDs get the same level of access to goods, services, or facilities regardless of organization or industry (IAS, 2016, p. 41). Depending on the organization, some standards will or will not apply. As such, the AODA does not specifically outline road-running event facilitators' policies but rather provides standards that must be upheld for every organization regardless of industry.

Of the five standards, one standard has been omitted from the analysis. The Employment Standards focuses on the accessibility of the workplace for current and potential employees. This section has been omitted from the research because analyzing the relationship between employer and their employees is beyond the scope of this study, and the information is not publicly available unless the organization has over 50 employees (IAS, 2016, p. 4). However, all the road-running event facilitators featured in this research fall under the 50-employee threshold and these policies do not need to be publicly available or written down making CDA of Employment Standards policy documents inaccessible to this study.

In total, there were 13 Toronto road-running events that met the criteria to be included in the research (see Table 1 for a full list of each event and the facilitator). Of the 13 events, there were 10 unique event facilitators with 2 events having a combination of a main event facilitator, and a secondary contracted event facilitator. In this case, the event was listed under the main event facilitator and not the contracted event facilitator. There were 2 instances where an event facilitator had multiple events meeting the criteria to be included in this study. In these cases, each event's accessibility policy was reviewed in combination with the facilitators' general accessibility policy, but each event was listed separately, and the information was not amalgamated across events under the same facilitator.

Of the 10 event facilitators, 4 facilitators (Achilles Canada, Canada Running Series (CRS), Sporting Life, and Toronto Women's Run Series) had specific accessibility policies or related information anywhere on their website, event-specific webpage, or within the online event registration process. This does not mean that the 6 event facilitators without online accessibility-related information, had no accessibility policies in place. Upon further event accessibility information requests (sent via email) to all event facilitators, some facilitators (CRS,

Sporting Life, Running First, Toronto Women’s Run Series, and Yorkville Run) provided event-specific protocol and policies not found online. In total, 6 out of 10 event facilitators (Achilles Canada, CRS, Sporting Life, Running First, Toronto Women’s Run Series, and Yorkville) have accessibility-related policies (available online or through requests for further information). Important to note that some events and event facilitators mentioned being inclusive, or not discriminating based on disability, this was not considered to be an accessibility policy as no further information was provided online or upon request.

**Table 1**  
*Event Names and Event Facilitators*

Event Name	Event facilitator(s)
Toronto St. Patrick’s Day Race	Achilles Canada
TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon	Canada Running Series
Under Armour Toronto 10k	Canada Running Series
Spring Run-Off	Canada Running Series
Día de Muertos Race	Day of the Dead Race
Pride & Remembrance Run	Pride & Remembrance Foundation
Sporting Life 10K	Sporting Life & Canada Running Series
Toronto Carnival Run	Toronto Carnival Run
Toronto Island Run	Toronto Island Run Club
Sunset Shuffle	Toronto Island Run Club
Toronto Marathon	Running First
Puma Toronto Women’s Half Marathon/10k/5k	Toronto Women’s Run Series
Constantine Yorkville Run	Yorkville Run & Canada Running Series

Specific to events, 6 events (Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race, TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Under Armour Toronto 10k, Spring Run-Off, Sporting Life 10K, and Puma Toronto Women’s Half Marathon/10k/5k) out of the 13 total events had accessibility-related information, of any kind, within their event specific website or within information on the event registration



page. In some cases, there was event accessibility-related content located only within the active registration process. This could only be reached when an event is open (event registration closes after a pre-set date) and signed into the Race Roster platform. There is no way of viewing the information before starting the sign-up process. Despite the information not being available until the registration process has begun, these events were considered to have accessibility-related information. To what extent PWDs can participate in road-running events, based on the accessibility policies gathered (online and internal), varied from one event facilitator to another and varied from event to event under the same event facilitator.

### **Information and Communication Standard**

The Information and Communication standard provides guidelines for how an organization, upon request, must provide an accessible format of all public information (IAS, 2016, p. 6). For road-running events, this would be the way information is shared regarding the event and the event registration process. Under the AODA all large (over 50 employees) and small (1 to 50 employees) public organizations and large (over 50 employees) private organizations must provide web-based content which meets the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA (IAS, 2016, pp. 6-9). Notably, this excludes small (1 to 50 employees) private organizations from needing to have accessible web content (IAS, 2016, p. 7). However, they must still provide accessible content upon request. Since all event facilitators (featured in this research) are considered small private organizations under the AODA, they are not required to have their web content meet the guideline of WCAG 2.0, Level AA but upon request must have accessible information in an appropriate format.

Race Roster is the predominant road-running event management tool used by 12 out of 13 events with just the Toronto Marathon not using the platform. Race Roster provides event

facilitators with an event registration process which provides accessibility features that comply with the Information and Communication standard. This only covers an events registration webpage and not an events general information website, marketing materials, or other online digital platforms. Race Roster promotes their service to be compliant with the AODA and the Government of Canada's web accessibility standards which are the WCAG 2.0. Race Roster's accessibility features include labels on all form inputs (this improves screen readers' usability); keyboard navigation (allowing full event registration without the use of a mouse); webpages are optimized for user experience depending on the platform (mobile and desktop specific design and layout for easier navigation); and built-in colour and contrast checker to alert event facilitators of accessible standards (uploaded content and the event page's graphic design checked for colour and contrast standards).

These features are provided by default to all Race Roster event pages. Apart from these features, there is little information provided by Race Roster to event facilitators on how to implement and track accessibility-related registration. Race Roster has two distinct web pages dedicated to providing resources and support to event facilitators. After reviewing both resources, there was minimal information from Race Roster on how to modify existing or implement new accessibility-related features. Upon request to Race Roster for further information, an SME stated that the platform is flexible enough to be customized to meet the needs of people with disability-related registration requests. Event facilitators have the two web pages for more information, and any event facilitators can get access to Race Roster staff for any questions on how to set up a feature.

Another aspect of the Information and Communication Section is the contact and feedback requirements all organizations must have. Any organization that gathers feedback must

have the feedback process accessible to PWDs (IAS, 2016, pp. 6-7). This means having accessible formats and communication support available, upon request. There was no information on any of the event facilitator's websites regarding how to provide feedback requests in an accessible manner. All event facilitators have some form of contact information on their website. This was a general email address or contact form to fill out but there was no information specific to accessibility. Despite the AODA requiring that organizations notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports (IAS, 2016, pp. 6-7). If more accessibility information is required, not a feedback request, for a specific event's accessibility policy, only 3 events (Sporting Life 10k, TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, and Under Armour 10k) specifically outline an email address to contact for accessibility-related event inquiries. Race Roster requires all events to have general contact information (name, email, optional phone number) within the event page. Again, this is for general inquiries and not specific to accessibility requests.

### **Transportation Standard**

The Transportation standards only apply to organizations that provide transportation services (IAS, 2016, p. 13). In the case of running events, they are not obligated to provide a transportation service, but if they do provide a transportation service (for example, a shuttle bus to the start line), an accessible transportation option must be provided at the same or lesser cost than the standard cost for the service. Additionally, if a person with a disability requires a support person to accompany them due to their disability, there cannot be any form of additional fee for the second person (IAS, 2016, p. 14). Of the 13 events, 3 events (Toronto Marathon, TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, and Sporting Life 10k) provide transportation options along with their race event. Of those who provide transportation as part of the event, 0 indicate online

(without request for more information) that they provide accessible transportation. All the other events do not provide any transportation services associated with their events.

The event facilitators who offer transportation must also follow guidelines around the storage and transportation of assistive devices (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.). Assistive devices should be stored in the same area the participant is being transported, whenever possible (IAS, 2016, p. 15). If not, then the assistive devices should be stored in the baggage compartment of the same vehicle the participant is travelling within (IAS, 2016, p. 15). Event facilitators cannot charge a fee for the storage or transport of assistive devices (IAS, 2016, pp. 24-25). The return process of assistive devices must be in a manner that does not impact the safety of other passengers and does not cause damage to the assistive device (IAS, 2016, p. 16). The AODA require transport providers to publicly state what accessibility features and services are offered (IAS, 2016, p. 13). There were no event facilitators who provided this information online. However, according to CRS's SME, their event's information regarding this process is discussed and organized directly with the participant. The AODA does not have any guidelines regarding the transportation of assistive devices when the passenger is not within the same vehicle.

Within the AODA, the only mention of access to toilets is under the Transportation standard regarding transit-accessible washroom requirements. Information regarding access to toilets or accessible toilets is not outlined within the AODA. Of the 13 events, 9 events provided information regarding the location of toilets in the pre-event area, during the event, or in the post-event area. Information varies across events and no events highlight the location of accessible toilets, online. However, 4 events (Día de Muertos Race, Toronto Island Run, Sunset Shuffle, and Constantine Yorkville Run) did not have any information regarding toilet locations.

### **Design of Public Spaces Standard**

The Design of Public Spaces standard applies to new or renovated built environment areas, often public outdoor spaces (IAS, 2016, p. 29). Since road-running events, within the research, do not create public spaces but rather inhabit the built environment, this section does not directly apply to event facilitators. The onus for complying with the design guidelines and maintenance of public space is on the City of Toronto or other property owners the road-running event inhabits, not the event facilitators themselves. However, the built environment does impact the participation of PWDs. Namely in the form of what adaptive sports equipment is allowed for each event. This will be further discussed in the Customer Service standard section below.

It is customary practice for event facilitators to show the route the event will take through the streets, parks, sidewalks, or trails of Toronto. Of the 13 events, 12 events show the event route on a map available to participants before signing up for the event. The map style varies across events, some events use an image with just the direction and route indicated and other events have interactive maps allowing participants to filter by event route (if there are multiple race distances at the same event), aid stations, toilet location, cheer stations, road closures, and more. Regardless of how much information is provided, all events have a route map so that the route can be Athletics Ontario sanctioned and/or the City of Toronto knows what roads will be closed. The Constantine Yorkville Run did not have a publicly available map of the route for the 2022 or 2023 event on Race Roster or on the Yorkville Run website.

### **Customer Service Standard**

The Customer Service standard aims to ensure that everyone gets the same opportunity to access goods, services, and facilities regardless of ability level (IAS, 2016, p. 41). According to the AODA, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, the service animal

must be allowed to accompany the person with a disability, unless the service animal is excluded from the goods, services, and facilities' premises by law (IAS, 2016, pp. 42-43). Exclusions by law are rare and in the case of road-running events, the AODA does not mention service animals within the context of sports or physical activity. Of the 13 events, 2 events (TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon and Under Armour Toronto 10k), specifically addressed participants requiring a service animal. In both cases, information was provided prior to the sign-up process. The policies in place allowed athletes to participate with service animals so long as the service animal wears an identification harness for the duration of the event and the policy notes that race officials have the right to refuse participation if the service animal poses a safety concern.

According to the AODA, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, both persons are permitted to enter the event premises (IAS, 2016, pp. 41-42). If there is a fee associated with entering the premises, then the fee for the person with a disability and the fee associated with the support person must be made known in advance (IAS, 2016, p. 42). If a support person is required for the health and safety of the person with a disability or other event participants, then any admission fee must be waived for the support person (IAS, 2016, p. 42). In the case of road-running events, if the event facilitator, after consulting the person with a disability, finds that for the health and safety of the person with a disability and/or other participants, a support person must accompany the person with a disability, then no additional fee can be required. If the event facilitator, after consulting the person with a disability, finds that there is no risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or other participants, then a fee of the same or lesser value can be required for the support person. In both situations, the AODA requires that any fees be made known to the person with a disability ahead of time (IAS, 2016, p. 42).

Of the 13 events, 5 events (Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race, TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Under Armour Toronto 10k, Spring Run-Off, and Sporting Life 10K) had online information, of any kind, regarding athletes requiring a guide or second person to participate. The 5 events within their registration process had an optional checkbox that, once selected, prompts participants to answer questions relating to information (name and email) about the support participant. There was no mention of fees associated with a support person during this process. Of the 5 events, 2 events (TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon and Under Armour Toronto 10k) provided information beyond the checkbox and textbox via their events frequently asked question (FAQ) sections which outlined the fee structure. In both cases, events provided two options: first, a free option for the support person which involved no chip timing, t-shirt, finisher medal, and wearing a guide bib; the second option was paid with the support person getting chip timed, t-shirt, finisher medal, and wearing a guide bib. The Toronto Marathon's SME provided information, which was not listed online, outlining the event's policies. For the Toronto Marathon, the policy included the support person wearing a guide bib and, in some cases, paying a reduced fee, and in other cases having the fee waived. The SME also provided information about the Toronto Marathon's history of working with Toronto athletes with disabilities community group. The head of the community group would reach out to Toronto Marathon, and they would work together to provide reduced fees for the support persons and ensure other athletes with disabilities have their needs met to fully participate in the race.

According to the AODA, the organization's customer service policies must address the use of assistive devices by PWDs (IAS, 2016, p. 42). These policies must allow PWDs to benefit from the goods, services, or facilities (IAS, 2016, p. 41). For event facilitators, this would mean that they must accommodate the use of adaptive sports equipment within their events. The

policies on how to accommodate athletes with disabilities' adaptive sports equipment vary widely across events. Of the 13 events, 6 events (Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race, TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Under Armour Toronto 10k, Spring Run-Off, Sporting Life 10K, and Puma Toronto Women's Half Marathon/10k/5k) provided online information regarding athletes using any form of adaptive sports equipment. Only 4 events (TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Under Armour Toronto 10k, Sporting Life 10K, and Puma Toronto Women's Half Marathon/10k/5k) provide information before the sign-up process regarding any event-specific guidelines around adaptive sports equipment. CRS provides information prior to event registration for 2 events (TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon and Under Armour Toronto 10k) but not for their third event (Spring Run Off). The Spring Run Off has the option to register with adaptive sports equipment. Within CRS, event online information varies but the same accessibility policies are in place for each event.

Running First and Yorkville Run do have internal policies in place, but those policies are not stated online. When considering internal information provided, 8 events provide information regarding athletes using, any form of, adaptive sports equipment. According to SMEs from multiple event facilitators, the current policies and practices in place were designed from a combination of stakeholder feedback (government policies, PWDs, Athletics Ontario, international road-running policies, and the City of Toronto). This combination has resulted in varying approaches to events' accessibility policies. Depending on the event, the Toronto Women's Run Series allows participants to use adaptive sports equipment only in select sub-events, citing built environment elements of the course (narrow bridges, walkways, or roads) as the limiting factors due to participant safety concerns. While CRS and Running First also have concerns regarding built environment elements (streetcar tracks, hills, narrow bridges), and



health and safety concerns, the facilitators provide the option of having volunteers on bikes to accompany the participant using adaptive sports equipment. CRS goes over the course route with participants using adaptive sports equipment to highlight any potential issues and develop workarounds directly with the participant.

The starting location of participants using adaptive sports equipment, or a support person also varied depending on the event facilitator. In some instances, athletes using adaptive sports equipment get placed in their own starting wave in the front or the back of the starting corrals. Other events have athletes using adaptive sports equipment starting based on their estimated finishing time and integrated with the rest of the participants. Another limiting factor is the type of equipment and potential speed and size of the equipment. In some cases, SMEs cite limits for how quickly the course can open due to the City of Toronto permit as a restriction to what adaptive equipment can be accommodated. This means some events do and do not allow specific types of sporting equipment and that there may be a course speed limit for equipment. There are 3 out of 13 events (TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Sporting Life 10K, and Puma Toronto Women's Half Marathon/10k/5k) that provide online detailed information regarding what adaptive sports equipment is allowed.

The Customer Service standard also requires that all organization's employees and volunteers must receive ongoing training to ensure they are able to provide the goods, services, or facilities to PWDs (IAS, 2016, p. 43). However, small organizations (under 50 employees), do not need to document and provide this information publicly (IAS, 2016, p. 44). As such, this criterion could not be evaluated. Under the AODA, small organizations are not required to make their customer service policies available to the public. However, upon request and free of charge,

information relating to an organization's customer service policy must be made available in a timely and agreed upon (with the person with a disability) accessible format (IAS, 2016, p. 44).

### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The research intention is to identify the current policies and practices of Toronto road-running events and where, if any, there is a disconnect between event policies and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). This chapter explores the evidence found (policy documents) and applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in a similar structure to how Chapter 4 is presented. CDA is a way to compare two forms of text. With the goal of seeing where they line up and where they fall short. Additionally, using CDA allows for a critical reading of ‘between the lines’ that shows where and how power and influence manifest. Important to note that there is minimal academic literature using CDA to compare government policy and sports event facilitator policies. Chapter 6 will take the information gathered through CDA and provide actionable steps for event facilitators to create more inclusive sports events.

As the findings showed, there are varying degrees of accessibility policies from event to event and even between events under the same facilitator. Of the five AODA standards—Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service—again, the Employment standard has been omitted from the analysis as internal organizational policy documents are not required, under the AODA, to be publicly available for small organizations (under 50 employees), making the information inaccessible to this study. Within the AODA there are no specific mentions of sports or athletic activities, let alone information specific to road-running events. Despite this, the AODA requires that every organization implement, and maintain policies regarding how to provide goods, services, or facilities, to persons with disabilities (PWDs) (IAS, 2016, p. 4). The design of the AODA

ensures that PWDs get the same level of access to goods, services, or facilities regardless of industry or organization. For event facilitators, this means they must, under the AODA, have a policy in place for how to accommodate PWDs participating in their event. While there is no outright list of what must be included within the organization's accessibility policy, the AODA outlines what must be met under different criteria (the five sections). The five AODA sections cover some aspects of facilitating road-running events but also leave out other aspects. The AODA sections that are applicable to event facilitators, can be ambiguous for event facilitators. This has created uncertainty and varied approaches to providing goods, services, or facilities.

The following chapter provides information to reduce ambiguity for event facilitators and highlights where event facilitators have the opportunity to reduce social stigma around PWDs participating in sports events; improve access to opportunities for PWDs that provide positive health and wellbeing outcomes; and increase event facilitators' overall event participation levels.

The 10 event facilitators (see Table 1 for a list of facilitators and event names) can either improve the mental and physical health of PWDs or continue to limit access to mental and physical health outcomes, further stigmatizing PWDs. This puts event facilitators in a position of power over potential PWDs wanting to participate. Kitchin's (2021) framework describes Toronto's road-running hierarchical power structure as PWDs being micro-level agents where; the macro-level power-holder is the Ontario Government's AODA law; and the event facilitators would be the meso-level power-holders who are obligated to the macro-level agent (byway of the law) and who are in a position of power and influence over micro-level agents (PWDs). As such, event facilitators can either uphold the traditional ableist power structure or work to destigmatize athletics for PWDs.

### **Information and Communication Analysis**

Since all event facilitators in this research are considered small organizations (less than 50 employees), under the AODA, they are not required to provide web-based content which meets the standards of World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA (WCAG 2.0) (IAS, 2016, p. 4). However, event facilitators are still required to provide public information in an accessible format upon request (IAS, 2016, p. 6-9).

Currently, there are only 4 out of 10 event facilitators who have any accessibility policies or related information anywhere on their website or registration page. That leaves 60% of event facilitators who provide no online information to the public. The overall lack of online information, unintentional or otherwise, has consequences. As Comella et al. found, one barrier to PWDs participating in sporting events is the lack of information regarding what opportunities are available to PWDs (2019, p. 186). As a meso-level power-holder, not providing or promoting an event's accessibility contributes to the lack of information barrier for PWDs. This is true regardless of intentional or accidental omission of online information. The net outcome is the same, information barriers to participation result in lower participation rates for PWDs. The lack of information online can be viewed as not wanting to promote or support PWD's event participation which further stigmatizes and marginalizes PWDs in sports.

Once accessibility information was requested, only 2 out of the 6 event facilitators (who had no online information) provided internal accessibility information. Combined that is 6 out of 10 event facilitators who have any form of accessibility. That still leaves 40% of event facilitators, in Toronto, not providing any communication of the required accessibility policies road-running event facilitators must have under the AODA. From an event perspective, only 6 out of 13 events had any kind of accessibility-related information online. There were instances

where event accessibility-related content was located only within the active registration process. This looked like a checkbox or textbox for participants to indicate they will be using assistive devices (any mobility aid that a person requires to function) or adaptive sports equipment (sport-specific assistive devices). There was no further information provided prior to or further within the registration process. After speaking to Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if a participant selected an adaptive equipment or secondary person option the event would reach out with further information. Reaching out to the participant regarding accessibility-related information is good practice but there is no feedback to participants registering that further communication will occur. SMEs also explained that often PWDs reach out first before registering. This is most likely because most of the time, there is little information available online regarding what accessibility policies an event has. By default, any participant not requiring accessibility support can sign up with no questions asked while those requiring accessibility support must request further information most of the time. This means that most of the time, in Toronto, the onus is on PWDs to make the first step to being treated as equal members of society. Accessibility is being treated as an individual issue and not the responsibility of society. This approach runs counter to the social model of disability and goes against the AODA's ethos of accessibility being the standard, not an afterthought. The lack of online information creates a climate where, by default, information on a road-running event's accessibility policies must be requested, most of the time. This can further stigmatize PWDs by treating them as outsiders. Having to ask for participation, when others in society do not, is, by extension, a form of requesting PWDs to justify their belonging in society. Since the AODA does not require small organizations to publicly outline their accessibility policies, but a lack of online information is a known barrier, this puts event facilitators in a position where they have the opportunity to go beyond the AODA requirements.

Event facilitators can list accessibility-related information online which will help to reduce barriers for PWDs participating in road-running events. This does not need to be an outline of all the accessibility policies, although the more information the better, but rather a simple acknowledgement that PWDs are welcome to participate in the event; listing some key event accessibility-related information; and providing contact information for PWDs to get more information if required. Currently, 6 out of 10 event facilitators do not provide online information regarding accessibility. These event facilitators, intentional or not, are upholding the status quo which contributes negatively to PWDs' mental and physical health. According to Comella et al., 2019, providing online information regarding accessibility services, can help to reduce participation barriers for PWDs. Which in turn, promotes program availability for PWDs which can help to build self-confidence and reduce internalized ableism (Brittain et al., 2020, p. 220; Martin Ginis et al., 2016, p. 485-490; Hansen, 2023, p. 70).

Due to the potential resource limitations of some event facilitators, it may be difficult to provide information online about the event's accessibility policies. One step can be to simply provide a direct contact point, such as where to direct inquiries or feedback, specific to accessibility on the event's existing website. Currently, there are only 3 events out of 13 that provided direction on who to contact if there are any accessibility-related questions. The AODA requires that all organizations who accept and respond to feedback must provide feedback opportunities in an accessible manner and state this publicly (IAS, 2016, pp. 6-7). All events had some form of contact information publicly available online, but no events stated publicly that there are accessible feedback options available. When power-holders do not provide an opportunity for accessible feedback, despite being required to state this, it sends the message that the feedback of those who require accessible options is not important to the facilitator. This

perpetuates ableist attitudes and change cannot happen if the events are unaware of their shortcomings. Kitchin found that it is important to improve meso-level power-holders (event facilitators) communication and feedback from micro-level agents (PWDs) (2019, p. 12). While not required under the AODA, academic literature is suggesting online information regarding an event's accessibility and direct accessibility-related feedback options are beneficial for PWDs.

### **Transportation Analysis**

Under the AODA, if transportation is provided, then there must be accessible transportation options available at the same or lesser cost (IAS, 2016, p. 14). For event facilitators, transportation is not required for an event, if it is provided, then there are standards that need to be met. Currently, 3 out of 13 events state that the event has transportation options associated with the event. Of those 3 events, non-indicate online that they provide accessible transportation. The AODA does require that this information be made public, as accessible transport services are required wherever transport services are provided (IAS, 2016, p. 13). As discussed in the previous section, the lack of information is a barrier, the more information that can be provided the better. If information is difficult to find on the matter, the result is unjust barriers reducing participation for PWDs.

The AODA outlines the storage and transportation of assistive devices (wheelchair, walker, etc.) and if any fees are allowed. PWDs and their assistive devices must be kept together wherever possible, if not then the assistive device must be stored within the same vehicle (IAS, 2016, p. 15). The AODA clearly outlines that there cannot be any additional fee for the accessible transportation option (IAS, 2016, p. 24). However, the AODA does not outline the guidelines for transporting assistive devices when the user of the assistive devices is not in the same vehicle. This is notable for event facilitators because if the start and end location of the race

is at separate locations, how do participants using adaptive sports equipment, that is different from their daily assistive devices, collect their assistive devices once they complete the race?

Here is an opportunity for event facilitators to take the initiative and create an event policy for this situation. Within road-running events, there is often a baggage check service where participants can leave a bag (usually containing a change of clothing, shoes, extra food, or drink) and then post-event, pick up their bag. Bags are often dropped off near the start line and then picked up near the finish line. This approach could be used for participants using adaptive sports equipment, too. A notable distinction here is that baggage drops provide an optional service which is a nice-to-have but assistive devices are required for PWDs.

Each event would be different, but the same overall principles can apply, providing a service, like baggage check, that is specific for PWDs who use assistive devices. If the event has the starting line and finish line at separate locations, then the event facilitator provides a service where PWDs can transition from assistive devices to adaptive sports equipment near the starting location, and the assistive devices are safely and securely transported to the finish line, and then the participant can transition back into their assistive devices. This service would require one-on-one communication with the participant and facilitator.

Within the AODA, toilets and access to accessible washrooms are only mentioned under the Transportation standard regarding transit-accessible washrooms. The road-running industry has varying degrees of toilet-to-participant ratios. Regardless of the ratio, information regarding the location of all accessible washrooms should be provided to PWDs. Further, as a best practice, information should be publicly available for all participants regarding the location of toilets, water, and food stations.



When it comes to the transportation of PWDs and their assistive devices, no academic literature specific to sporting events or road-running events was found. This means it is up to the road-running industry to develop best practices for how to deal with the transportation of PWDs and their assistive devices. Event facilitators must keep in mind that accessibility should be approached on a one-size-fits-one basis. While one approach may work for one person, it may not work for another. As such, it is important that feedback and constant review of event practices are maintained to ensure an inclusive sports event.

### **Design of Public Spaces Analysis**

The Design of Public Spaces standard does not directly apply to the event facilitators in this research since the events inhabit the public space and are not responsible for the design or maintenance of the space. As such, the only actions event facilitators can take regarding this standard is the design of the event's route and providing information to participants about the route. Event route design will be further discussed in the forthcoming Customer Service section.

When it comes to providing online information regarding the course route, the majority (12 out of 13) events provided a course map to participants. Map styles and the level of detail varied across events but at minimum the route was present. Apart from one exception, the information was publicly provided ahead of time. This is good for all participants and especially beneficial for PWDs as the information can help inform decisions regarding the route and personal ability level. Apart from providing information prior to signing up, events should work with PWDs on a one-to-one basis to go over the course and highlight any areas that could pose a potential problem. For example, some roads in Toronto have streetcar tracks. This information will impact participants using assistive devices and adaptive sports equipment, whose wheels may get stuck within the track groves. As some SMEs explained, they go over the course with

the participants to ensure participants know where the built environment may cause a problem and create a plan for how to address the situations in advance. In some cases, this involved volunteers on bikes to accompany the participants and in other cases, it involved stationing volunteers in potentially problematic areas to help if needed. These approaches are examples of event facilitators helping PWDs to overcome built environment barriers.

There was no academic literature found that investigated the impacts of government policies on the design of sports events routes, let alone any academic literature on the AODA and the design of road-running event routes. As such, no academic literature could be applied to this topic and the AODA does not clearly outline any protocol. This means it is currently up to the road-running industry to develop best practices for how to deal with built environment limitations. Again, event facilitators must keep in mind that accessibility is a one-size-fits-one, one approach may work for one person, but it may not work for another. It is important that feedback and constant review of event practices are maintained.

### **Customer Service Analysis**

The AODA's Customer Service standard ensures that everyone gets the same opportunity to access goods, services, and facilities regardless of ability level (IAS, 2016, p. 41). Notable for event facilitators, the Customer Service standard outlines how to accommodate service animals, support persons and any fees associated, and the use of assistive devices.

Under the AODA, small organizations are not required to make their customer service policies available to the public, however, upon request and free of charge, information relating to an organization's customer service policy must be made available in a timely and in an agreed upon accessible format (IAS, 2016, pp. 4, 44). The Customer Service standard also requires that all organization's employees and volunteers must receive ongoing training to ensure they are

able to provide accessible goods, services, or facilities to PWDs (IAS, 2016, p. 43). Since small organizations do not need to document this information publicly, this criterion could not be evaluated (IAS, 2016, p. 44).

### *Service Animals*

According to the AODA, if PWDs are accompanied by a service animal, the service animal must be allowed, unless the service animal is excluded from the goods, services, and facilities' premises by law (IAS, 2016, pp. 42-43). Exclusions for service animals are rare and the AODA does not mention any exclusions for sports or athletic participation. Just 2 out of 13 events make any mention of the service animals within their online policies. In both cases, service animals are allowed to be with participants during the event, if the health and safety of everyone involved is not impacted. Upon registration for these events, there is no prompt to communicate that the use of a service animal is required. The AODA does not require an organization to state that service animals are allowed, as the default is service animals are allowed wherever the public may go, with few exceptions. However, providing this information does help to reinforce that PWDs are welcome to participate in the event.

There is limited academic information on service animals participating with handlers in road-running events. Here, again, event facilitators should turn to feedback from PWDs and the larger road-running event industry for best practices. Within road-running events, it is rare to see any animals participating. It would be reasonable, for health and safety, to not allow service animals while participating in road-running events (in the starting corral and on the course) but at all other areas of the event (pre- and post-race) service animals must be allowed. Within the starting corral, it is often shoulder to shoulder with little room to move and throughout the

course, while participants do spread out due to different paces (the speed at which a person is moving during the race), it can still be congested with people shoulder to shoulder. Having a service animal tightly packed within an area people are not expecting service animals could lead to health and safety concerns for all involved.

However, this must be weighed with the facts that: service animals are required for handlers to maintain their independence; under the AODA there are no service-animal exemptions for road-running events; and the AODA requires that if a provider of goods, services, or facilities does not allow service animals, the provider must make the goods, services, or facilities available in another way (IAS, 2016, p. 41-42). The use of service animals should be allowed but there will need to be health and safety protocols put into place. This could include a volunteer to accompany the participant and service animal to ensure extra space within the starting corral, a specific wave start time where there is extra room within the starting corral, or a volunteer to accompany the participant along the course to ensure extra space is provided. If an alternative solution cannot be agreed upon, the Ontario Government suggests that service animals be given a safe and secure space to wait as the handler uses the goods, services, or facilities (Government of Ontario, 2023, pp. 43-44). If participants require service animals but are not with them during the event, this could mean the event facilitator may need to provide a space for the service animals to wait at the finish line. There may be logistical issues for event facilitators to provide these options. It will come down to event facilitators working one-on-one with the participant to find a solution that best suits everyone's needs.

### ***Support Person***

Participants may require the use of a support person to participate in the event. This could be as an alternative to service animals, an alternative to the use of assistive devices or adaptive

sports equipment, or for the health and safety of the participant. Under the AODA, if there is a fee associated with entering the premises, then the fee and the fee associated with the support person must be made known in advance (IAS, 2016, p. 42). If the event facilitator and participant believe that for the health and safety of the participant and/or other participants, a support person is required, then no additional fee can be requested for the support person (IAS, 2016, p. 42). If the event facilitator and participant find that there is no risk to the health and safety of the participant or other participants, then a fee of the same or lesser value can be required for the support person to participate (IAS, 2016, p. 42).

Currently, just 5 out of 13 events show the option to register for an event with a support person. With just 2 out of those 5 events explicitly stating their support person policies. There is just 1 out of the 8 other events that provided internal information regarding participating with a support person. The current practice within Toronto road-running events is, during the registration process, to have some form of checkbox and/or textbox to indicate that a support person is required. There is no information saying the event will get in contact to discuss accessibility policies (either at the time of registering or prior to registering), but SMEs state that events reach out to further discuss accessibility needs after registration.

As talked about in Chapter 5's Information and Communication section, this omission of public information negatively impacts PWDs. Again, here Toronto road-running event facilitators must be better at communicating their policies. While not required, as a small organization, to publicly state their accessibility policies, they are still legally required to provide notice of the fee structure ahead of time (IAS, 2016, p. 42).

For event facilitators, having a multi-level approach, as some facilitators already do, provides compliance with the AODA, and balances the financial cost associated with every participant, regardless of if they are a support person or not. If participants require, for health and safety, a support person, admission must be free for the support person. If participants do not require but could benefit from a support person, there can be two options: a free option where a support person does not get any of the swag (t-shirt, medal, etc.) or chip timed but along the course has access to hydration, fuel, and toilets; and the paid option can be the same or lesser fee of the standard admission but the support person get everything a participant would receive. Event facilitators can be creative in how they provide the multi-level approach to event participants for a support person. However, wherever possible, fees should be limited to reduce the financial barriers that specifically target PWDs due to excessive costs associated with participating, travel, and equipment (Magrath, 2022, p. 69).

### *Assistive Devices and Adaptive Sports Equipment*

The AODA requires that the organization's customer service policies address the use of assistive devices while accessing goods, services, or facilities (IAS, 2016, p. 42). While adaptive sports equipment is not directly named within the AODA, it is a safe assumption that these aids fall under the AODA's umbrella terms of "mobility aid" and "mobility assistive device" (IAS, 2016, p. 4). Interpreting this, assistive devices, at a minimum, would mean that wheelchair users must be allowed to participate in the road-running event.

Of the 13 events, just 6 events provided online information regarding participants using any form of adaptive sports equipment and only 4 of those events provide information prior to the sign-up process regarding any event-specific guidelines around assistive devices or adaptive

sports equipment. With internal accessibility information included, 8 out of 13 events provide information regarding participants using assistive devices or adaptive sports equipment. The current registration process for assistive devices is like the registration process with a support person, where during the registration process some form of checkbox and/or textbox is used to indicate which assistive device or adaptive sports equipment is required. Just like registering with a support person, there is no information saying the event will get in contact to discuss further accessibility information. Here, again, SMEs provided information saying that events will reach out to further discuss accessibility needs after registration. Just 4 out of 13 events provide any online public information before the registration process. Notably, CRS provides information prior to event registration for two events but not for their third event (Spring Run Off). After starting the registration process for the Spring Run Off, the option for registration with assistive devices is provided but unlike the other CRS events, there is no information provided within the FAQ section of the event webpage. There is a specific Adaptive Athletes section on the Spring Run Off webpage, but the only content within this section says, “More info to come” (Canada Running Series, 2023a). This section was monitored leading up to and post-event date, this section was not updated. However, there were PWDs participating in the event. Despite online information discrepancies, the Spring Run Off and CRS events, at large, have the same accessibility policies.

While this example highlights a discrepancy in an event facilitator's online communication, more broadly, there needs to be improved communication regarding what assistive devices and adaptive sporting equipment is allowed and what are not. According to SMEs from multiple event facilitators, the current adaptive sporting equipment policies and

practices were designed from a combination of stakeholder feedback (government policies, PWDs, Athletics Ontario, international road-running policies, and the City of Toronto). Similar to the findings of Jeanes et al. (2018), there are varying degrees of accessibility policies and practices all under the same intent of supporting PWDs. For example, the starting location of participants using adaptive sports equipment, or a support person varied depending on the event facilitator. Some facilitators had a separate starting wave at the front or back of the starting corrals and others placed participants within the starting waves based on participants' estimated finishing time. Generally, starting PWDs within the estimated seems to provide the most agency for PWDs as they are with other people of similar pace, and PWDs would not be constantly overtaken or passing other participants, as would be the case if PWDs started at the back or front of the starting waves.

Another example of varied approaches to accessibility policies is how events deal with the built environment along the course route. As mentioned, events inhabit the built environment and are not responsible for the built environment meeting AODA standards, however, this does not mean event facilitators can exclude PWDs due to the limitations of the built environment. As the AODA outlines within the Customer Service standard, PWDs must be given equal opportunity to obtain and benefit from the goods, services, or facilities provided (IAS, 2016, p. 41). This may pose a challenge for event facilitators as the design of the course route is dictated by a variety of stakeholders. Regardless, all PWDs must be allowed to sign up for the event and cannot be excluded based on the built environment. Some event facilitators restrict PWDs' participation to only specific events citing narrow bridges, walkways, or other built environment elements are limiting factor due to safety concerns. As the AODA currently reads, this would be



an inappropriate response to the built environment and safety concerns. Everyone, regardless of ability level, must be allowed the opportunity to participate.

Multiple event facilitators highlighted that the City of Toronto's roads, trails, and bridges become narrow at points, which is why participants in wheelchairs cannot participate in specific events. After reviewing the course routes where narrow built environment elements are claimed to be an issue, the narrow parts of the path seem to meet the accessibility requirements laid out in the AODA's Design of Public Spaces standards. The AODA requires that recreational trails have a minimum width of one meter, a minimum height of just over two meters, and the surface be firm and stable (IAS, 2016, pp. 30, 34). Any additional accessibility standards are then outlined within the municipal building code. The areas listed on event websites and mentioned by SMEs were specific bridges and parts of trails along the Lower Don Trail, Taylor Creek Trail, and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. Along the Lower Don Trail, Taylor Creek Trail, there are multiple points where the asphalt trail transitions to metal or wood bridges with guardrails as the trail goes over rivers, creeks, and train tracks (City of Toronto, 2019; Toronto and Region Conservation Authority [TRCA], 2023). Along the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, the narrow area is the Mimico Creek bridge (City of Toronto, 2022a; TRCA, 2023). This bridge currently meets the AODA requirements. Notably, there is a proposed expansion of the current Mimico Creek bridge and the development of a new bridge as part of the current ongoing Humber Bay Park redevelopment (City of Toronto, 2022a). Information on specific bridges, trails, and redevelopment plans can be publicly found on the City of Toronto website, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority website, or by calling 311 (City of Toronto, n.d.; TRCA, 2023). The areas in question meet the AODA standards, the issue may be that the paths become narrow

in the sense that bidirectional travel becomes a single file line each way. As well, there are no off-trail areas (grass or road) that participants can use when trying to pass other participants. This speaks to issues of congestion for event participants. Facilitators can work to mitigate the congestion through waved starts, and volunteers at problem areas helping to manage movement flow. Also, the City of Toronto's event permits do not fully close some paths, trails or roads to the public which increases the overall congestion along the course route.

The City of Toronto permits pose restrictions on event facilitators which legitimately impact their ability to provide inclusive events. The most notable example, apart from not fully closing parts of the route to the public, is the time restrictions for road closures. This means that events must start and stop their events at specific times or else they risk penalties from the City of Toronto. As such, often events have minimum pace (the maximum time participants can be on the course) and maximum pace (the shortest time participants can be on the course) limits. These limitations mean that some assistive devices or adaptive sports equipment may be too fast, or slow, for the course meaning events cannot allow them on the course. However, this does not mean that all adaptive sports equipment must be restricted or that all must be supported. In an ideal world, all assistive devices and adaptive sports equipment time restrictions (due to City of Toronto permits) and built environment limitations would be non-existing.

If the built environment is a legitimate limitation, then the event facilitator should bring this to the attention of the City of Toronto, citing that the built environment is inaccessible and impacting the participation of PWDs. In the interim, as the City of Toronto or any other landowners work to fix the built environment issues, there are actions that event facilitators can take to ensure the PWDs have the same opportunity to participate and benefit as everyone else

does. It is reasonable for event facilitators to not support adaptive sports equipment that may go faster or slower than a predetermined course pace (due to City of Toronto permit logistics).

PWDs can still participate in their assistive devices or adaptive equipment that do not go outside of the predetermined restrictions. There is no known academic research on this specific topic, so it is, again, the duty of event facilitators, in combination with the PWDs community, and any other key stakeholders to develop solutions to these limitations. This can include facilitators providing the option of volunteers on bikes to accompany the participant using adaptive equipment; placing volunteers at potential problematic areas along the course; and reviewing the course route with participants who are using adaptive sports equipment to highlight any potential issues and develop workarounds directly with the participant.

### **Race Roster Analysis**

Race Roster is an event management tool used by 12 out of 13 events for event registration; only Toronto Marathon does not use the platform. This exceedingly high rate of use by event facilitators places Race Roster in a unique position. Through the platform's design, Race Roster can either maintain the current status quo (limited PWDs participation rates perpetuate negative health outcomes, negatively impact the ability for human connection, and restrict opportunities for shared experiences and community building) or contribute to the destigmatizing and dismantlement of ableist perceptions of PWDs. Race Roster, following Kitchin's (2021) framework, can be considered a meso-level power-holder, along with event facilitators, as both are obligated to the Ontario Government's laws (macro-level power-holder) but hold power over PWDs participation.

From an Information and Communication standard perspective, Race Roster provides event facilitators with an event registration process that has accessibility features that comply

with the WCAG 2.0 standards outlined within the AODA. From an online user perspective, Race Roster provides an accessible service and is clearly committed to ensuring their platform is usable for people of all ability levels. With Race Roster's influential position within the Toronto road-running event space, this is encouraging to see.

Where Race Roster, as a power-holder, falls short is on the back end for event facilitators. Race Roster does have services for event facilitators to make their event webpage more accessible (registration process fully keyboard navigable, image contrast checker, image alternative text, and more). But apart from AODA Information and Communication features, there is minimal accessibility information. Race Roster has two distinct web pages dedicated to providing resources and support to event facilitators. As the review of the resources found, there is minimal information on how to modify existing or implement new accessibility-related features. For example, within the “Support” page’s sub-category “Registration Questions” there are multiple articles on how and what gender-encompassing terms to include within the registration process and how to create custom gender registration questions (Race Roster, 2023h). These actions reduce barriers for event facilitators to implement language and practices that reduce LGBTQ+ participant's barriers. This is a win-win situation and a fitting example of Race Roster using their position of power to provide event facilitators with inclusive event protocol. However, nothing similar is provided when searching for disability-related support. Despite the Race Roster SME stating that accessibility is important to Race Roster, this omission of accessibility-related information specifically for event facilitators indicates a disconnect between intention and action. There is an external promotion of accessibility values at Race Roster but through a lack of awareness, knowledge, or education there is not the same level of

accessibility commitment for non-participant facing content. The disconnect may not be intentional but nonetheless there is a negative impact on PWDs.

For event facilitators, to gather registration information, there are personal information questions (name, age, email, etc.) which are pre-formatted (one click and all the information and formatting required is added), although there is the ability to turn on or off aspects of each question. The personal information questions include an option for a gender or sex question, or event facilitators can disable this question and create their own sex or gender identity question within the custom question section. The current way to gather information regarding any accessibility requirements for participation is by creating custom questions within the registration process. Within the custom question section, Race Roster provides the option to include some pre-formatted questions (emergency contact questions, SMS contact opt-in/out, etc.). Here is an opportunity for Race Roster, with its influential and powerful position within the event facilitator industry, to provide accessibility as the default and not the exception to the rule. Race Roster can simply provide pre-formatted accessibility-related questions, similar to how the sex and gender identity questions are currently implemented. While there is limited academic literature on digital sports event management platforms and the impact they can have on event facilitators, it is safe to assume that this simple action will reduce barriers for event facilitators to implement language and practices which reduce barriers for PWDs and create more inclusive Toronto road-running events.

### **Chapter 6: Addressing the Discrepancies**

The Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 have shown the current Toronto road-running event's accessibility policies vary widely and often fail to meet all requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). To address this discrepancy, the following

chapter aims to reduce ambiguity for event facilitators in the process of ensuring their road-running events comply with AODA standards. This chapter will be structured in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) style where common discrepancies are highlighted through questions, the AODA requirements are listed, and where possible potential solutions are suggested. These suggestions are the first steps for event facilitators to create more inclusive events.

As has been mentioned, the Employment standards, for small organizations (less than 50 employees) are not required to be publicly available. As such, the information could not be evaluated within this research. The Ontario Government has a web page dedicated to helping Ontarians better understand accessibility in Ontario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-in-ontario>). This web page directly links to the current official AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation. The web page provides information regarding many aspects of accessibility in Ontario, including workplace accessibility and the Employment standards. Additionally, the Ontario Government has a hotline that can be called for accessibility related questions (1-866-515-2025). Please refer to Chapter 4 and Chapter 5's corresponding sections which provide further information on road-running event specific AODA requirements.

### **FAQ – Information and Communication**

*The event website has a “contact us” (or similar) section, is there anything else that is needed?*

The AODA requires that all organizations who accept and respond to feedback (like having a contact email) must provide opportunities to receive feedback in an accessible manner and state this publicly. This does not mean you need to have a dedicated email for accessibility feedback. Simply, state that the listed email address is used for all inquiries, including accessibility-related inquiries.

*Does my website, or any other web-based content, need to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA standard (WCAG 2.0) outlined in the Information Communication standard?*

All small private organizations, under the AODA, do not need to meet the WCAG 2.0 standards. However, all organizations, upon request, are still required to provide public information in an accessible format. While not required, providing accessible web-based content is a time and cost-efficient way to provide information in an accessible format.

As a starting point, stating publicly that persons with disabilities are welcome to participate in the event (along with directing participants where to address accessibility-related information requests) can help to create more inclusive road-running events.

Additionally, listing event accessibility information online helps promote participation for persons with disabilities and helps reduce the lack of information barrier.

*What are other considerations under the Information and Communication standard?*

It is important to note that current academic research suggests providing more information regarding accessibility online helps to reduce the information and social barrier's persons with disabilities face when trying to participate in sports events. Simply, publicly acknowledging that persons with disabilities are welcome and listing some event specific accessibility policies and practices will help to reduce social stigma and promote participation amongst persons with disabilities.

### **FAQ – Transportation**

*I provide a shuttle bus (or similar transportation service) within my event, do I need to provide accessible transportation too?*

Under the AODA, the Transportation standards only apply to organizations that provide transportation services. If your event does not provide a shuttle bus (or similar transportation service), this AODA standard does not apply. If, however, your event does provide a shuttle bus (or similar transportation services), then an accessible transportation option must be provided. Accessible transportation must be provided at the same or lesser cost than the standard fee. This information must be publicly available.

*Can there be an additional fee associated with transportation of assistive devices (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.)?*

Under the AODA, there may be no additional fees associated with the transportation of persons with disabilities required assistive devices.

*Can there be an additional fee associated with service animals on transportation?*

Under the AODA, there may be no additional fees associated with the transportation of a required service animals. Service animals must be allowed to accompany the handler.

*Can there be an additional transportation fee associated with a support person?*

Under the AODA, there may be no additional fees associated with the transportation of a required support person. If, however, the support person is not required for the health and safety of anyone involved, then a fee of the same or lesser can be charged for a non-required support person.

*Does the AODA require a specific number of accessible toilets at my event?*

The AODA only mentions toilets under the transportation section and in the context that no current event facilitator in this research meets. As such, there are no AODA guidelines specific to accessing accessible toilets outside of limited transportation contexts. Event



facilitators should look to other Ontario Government laws, the City of Toronto event requirements, or road-running industry standards for guidance and best practices.

### **FAQ – Design of Public Space**

*There are parts of the event route where I have accessibility concerns regarding participant health and safety, what can I do?*

If the event inhabits a public or private space, the event facilitator is not responsible for AODA compliance of that space. The onus for complying with the design guidelines and maintenance of the space is on the City of Toronto or any private property owners the road-running event inhabits, not the event facilitators themselves. As such, if a part of the route is a health and safety concern, contact the landowner to inform them of the inaccessible area. It is important to note, this does not mean that persons with disabilities can be excluded from an event because of built environment limitations.

### **FAQ – Customer Service**

*Are service animals allowed within road-running events?*

Under the AODA, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, the service animal must be allowed to accompany the handler. There are rare instances where service animals are excluded from the goods, services, and facilities' premises by law.

The AODA does not mention any exclusions for sports or athletic participation.

*Are service animals allowed to accompany participants on the course?*

Since the AODA does not outline any exceptions for service animals in sports or athletic contexts, allowing service animals on the course may be required. However, this may pose health and safety concerns for the handler, service animal, or other participants.

As such, working directly with the person with a disability to identify other, safer, methods for participation could be an avenue to resolve any potential conflict. For example, instead of a service animal accompanying the participant, a support person or volunteer could. To achieve the best outcome for everyone, work directly with the person with a disability to address their unique needs.

*What are the guidelines around a support person accompanying a participant on the course?*

Under the AODA, if a support person is required for the health and safety of a participant, then a support person must accompany the participant. Events must provide the opportunity for a support person to accompany a participant. It is best practice to have information online and within the registration process outlining the protocols around registering for an event with a support person.

*Can a participant with a disability be required to wear a disability specific identification indicator (i.e., some form of additional bib) that other participants are not required to wear?*

Under the AODA, there is no information directly addressing this question. If a participant is not required to be accompanied by a support person or service animal, requiring them to wear something others are not required to would be an inappropriate and possibly discriminatory request. If a participant is required to have a service animal or support person, then having other forms of identification for health and safety is a more appropriate response. For example, a volunteer accompanying the participant. A bib or similar identification can be worn by a volunteer or support person who needs identification to be permitted on the course (i.e., they are not a registered participant).

*Can there be an additional registration fee associated with a support person?*

Under the AODA, if there is a fee associated with entering the premises, then the fee and the fee associated with the support person must be made known in advance. If the event facilitator and participant believe that for the health and safety of the participant and/or other participants, a support person is required, then no additional fee can be requested for the support person. If the event facilitator and participant find that there is no risk to the health and safety of all involved, then a fee of the same or lesser can be required for the support person. Event facilitators can create a multi-level fee structure where the AODA requirements are met and costs for event facilitators can be addressed.

*Does my event need to allow participants to use a wheelchair or other assistive devices?*

Under the AODA, it requires that the organization's customer service policies address the use of assistive devices while accessing the goods, services, or facilities. While adaptive sports equipment is not directly named within the AODA, it is a safe assumption that these aids fall under the AODA's umbrella terms of "mobility aid" and "mobility assistive device." Interpreting this, assistive devices, at a minimum, would mean that wheelchair users must be allowed to participate in the event.

*Can I only allow persons with disabilities to participate in specific events?*

The current interpretation of the AODA would suggest that this approach is not allowed. The AODA requires that persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to others to obtain and benefit from the goods, services, or facilities.

*Do I need to redesign the event route to allow participants who have a disability?*

Public trails, paths, and bridges must comply with AODA standards and municipal accessibility building codes. If the course route has areas of accessibility concern, inform the landowner and they must make their property meet the built environment accessibility

standards. As the landowner works to comply with the AODA, events can work directly with participants to create a plan for how to overcome these built environment barriers. This could involve going over the course route with persons with disabilities ahead of time to highlight potential problem areas, stationing a volunteer at the highlight areas, or having a volunteer accompany the participant along the route. It is important to remember that what works for one person with a disability may not work for another.

*Are there any other considerations under the Customer Service standard?*

In general, the more information that can be provided online ahead of registration, the better it is for all potential participants, regardless of ability level. Event course maps are a wonderful way to provide general information about the event. If there is more accessibility information required, state where and how people can get in contact. Additionally, the Customer Service standard requires that ongoing training must be received for all employees and volunteers. This ensures that employees and volunteers can provide goods, services, or facilities in an accessible manner.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

Within Toronto, there are many laws and policies in place to prevent anyone from being discriminated against and restricted from active participation in any form. However, there are unequal, ultimately discriminatory in nature, limitations to accessing resources required to participate in sports. These limitations are socially constructed barriers shaped by, among other factors, a person's sex, gender identity, ethnicity, economic status, and ability. However, specific to persons with disabilities (PWDs), there is a lack of opportunities for participating in inclusive sports. This results in further marginalization by reducing opportunities to obtain the benefits that sports provide. The current academic literature shows that, regardless of ability level, there are

mental and physical health benefits to participating in sports, and that there are social and community benefits to participating in sports. Yet, within Toronto, there are still many barriers faced by PWDs when trying to participate in sports. This research focused on analyzing barriers PWDs face when attempting to participate in Toronto road-running events. This was done by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the event facilitator accessibility policies and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). This research approach is novel as, currently, there is limited academic sports and disability literature using CDA and accessibility policies. Further, there is no known research specifically using CDA on Toronto based road-running events and the AODA.

To answer the research question (*How do the current policies and practices of Toronto road-running events align with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and where, if any, is there a disconnect?*), the findings of this research suggest that the current road-running event facilitators in Toronto have a varied and often inadequate response to compliance with the standards outlined in the AODA. Overall, the AODA clearly describes what is required within each of the five sections. But there is ambiguity for event facilitators when it comes to aspects of accessibility the AODA does not specifically outline. The event facilitators must work to reduce their accessibility policy discrepancies and comply with the AODA. If there is any unclear area, event facilitators must work with PWDs to find an appropriate solution to the situation. The varied approaches event facilitators have does not mean that the AODA needs amendments prescribing exactly what to do in each road-running situation. Rather, the onus is on event facilitators to provide a good, service, or facility where PWDs can gain the same benefits as others do. This can be achieved through working one-on-one with PWDs, and all other stakeholders involved. Ultimately, event facilitators are in a position where they must uphold the

government standards, at a minimum, but also can go beyond to provide an event that reduces barriers and improving quality of life for PWDs. Since Race Roster is used by almost all events in Toronto, they are in a similar position of power as event facilitators. Race Roster should look to take the next steps in their accessibility journey. In addition to the continued dedication to their accessible registration service, the next steps should involve providing event facilitators information and easy-to-implement registration accessibility features. By taking these further steps, Race Roster can continue their goal of providing an accessible platform and helping event facilitators provide accessible events for PWDs.

### **Limitations and Further Research**

This research focused on the AODA and event accessibility policies. The intention of this research is to continue advocating for PWDs and provide information to event facilitators to take the initiative on improving PWDs inclusion within Toronto road-running events. The evidence gathered was focused on discourse in the form of the AODA and event accessibility policies. This research is secondary and by its nature, does not directly interact with either the PWDs road-running community or the event facilitator community.

There must be continued research to address the highlighted academic literature gaps. Further secondary research should broaden the scope of policies investigated to include accessibility policies from other industry stakeholders, such as Athletics Ontario or Athletics Canada. The AODA's Employment standard was omitted from this research due to access limitations. However, further research looking into this section could provide insight into how event facilitators view accessibility within the workplace, which speaks to and impacts the accessibility of events. The current academic research on sport policy and frameworks often overlooks working directly with PWDs and event facilitators. Further research should work to

create frameworks for road-running event policies shaped directly by PWDs and event facilitators. Additionally, looking at Toronto road-running community groups within subsequent research, is another avenue to gain insight into how best to foster inclusive sports communities.

Regardless of research topic, a simple way to ensure inclusive design practices are implemented within academic research and within road-running event policies is through the phrase: “If not with us, then not for us.” PWDs are not a monolith one-size-fits-all, event facilitators must have an agile approach to their accessibility policies. Inclusive sport relies on an accessibility policy that uses the one-size-fits-one approach.

### References

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005 c. 11, amended by S.O. 2016, c. 5 (2005). <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>
- Accessible Canada Act, S.C. 2019, c. 10 (2019) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/>
- Achilles Canada. (2021). *Achilles Canada: Running beyond disability*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://achillescanada.ca/what-we-do/>
- Achilles International Canada. (2022, September 9). *Who We Are*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://achillesinternationalcanada.org/about-achilles-international-canada-athletics>
- Athletics Ontario. (2022, December). *Road & Trail Race 2023 Sanction Criteria*. Athletics Ontario. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://athleticsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Sanction-Criteria-2023-Updated-21Dec22.pdf>
- Athletics Ontario. (2023, February 28). *Sanctioned Athletics Ontario Events - All Recognized Events in Ontario*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://athleticsontario.ca/events/#road-running>
- Auerbach, C., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York University Press.
- Ballas, J., Buultjens, M., Murphy, G., & Jackson, M. (2022). Elite-level athletes with physical impairments: Barriers and facilitators to sport participation. *Disability & Society*, 37(6), 1018–1037. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1862642>
- Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7 (1990). <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90b07>
- Block, M. (2021, July 28). Olympic runner Caster Semenya wants to compete, not defend her womanhood. *NPR*. Retrieved April 3, 2023, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/tokyo-olympics-live-updates/2021/07/28/1021503989/women-runners-testosterone-olympics>



- Borland, R. L., Hu, N., Tonge, B., Einfeld, S., & Gray, K. M. (2020). Participation in sport and physical activity in adults with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 64, 908–922. <https://doi-org.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/jir.12782>.
- Brady, R., & Houpt, S. (2023, February 16). The Canadian Women's soccer team labour dispute, explained. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/soccer/article-soccer-canada-women-dispute/>
- Brittain, I., Biscaia, R., & Gérard, S. (2020). Ableism as a regulator of social practice and disabled peoples' self-determination to participate in sport and physical activity. *Leisure Studies*, 39(2), 209–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2019.1694569>
- Brookes, A. (2011, April 1). “Tradition”, legend in Canadian running and Harry’s Spring Run Off tomorrow. *Canadian Running Magazine*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://runningmagazine.ca/uncategorized/tradition-legend-in-canadian-running-and-harrys-spring-run-off-tomorrow/>
- Callan, I. (2022, June 16). Toronto ending regular ActiveTO waterfront road closures. *Global News*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://globalnews.ca/news/8924000/activeto-lakeshore-west-closures-set-to-become-special-events/>
- Campfire Circle. (2022, August 16). *All about us - Learn about the Magic of Campfire Circle*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://campfirecircle.org/about-campfire-circle/>
- Canada Games Council. (2021, October 7). *About*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.canadagames.ca/about>
- Canada Running Series. (2023a). *Spring Run Off*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://canadarunningseries.com/spring-run-off/>

Canada Running Series. (2023b). *TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com/>

Canada Running Series. (2023c). *Under Armour Toronto 10K*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://canadarunningseries.com/toronto-10k/>

Canadian Heritage. (2018, September 7). *Rights of people with disabilities*. Government of Canada. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-people-disabilities.html#a2>

CBC. (2022, November 20). *The Sunday Magazine*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/sunday/the-sunday-magazine-for-november-20-2022-1.6656972>

City of Toronto. (2019). *Taylor Massey Creek Park Planning*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/parks-facility-plans-strategies/taylor-massey-sub-watershed-master-plan/>

City of Toronto. (2022a). *Humber Bay Park Master Plan*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/parks-facility-plans-strategies/humber-bay-parks-master-plan/>

City of Toronto. (2022b). *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/accessibility-at-the-city-of-toronto/multi-year-accessibility-plan/>

City of Toronto. (2023) *ActiveTO*. Retrieved April 6, 2023, from <https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/activeto/>

- City of Toronto. (n.d). *Bridge and Structure Condition*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/maps/bridge-and-structure-condition/>
- Comella, A., Hassett, L., Hunter, K., Cole, J., & Sherrington, C. (2019). Sporting opportunities for people with physical disabilities: Mixed methods study of web-based searches and sport provider interviews. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 30(2), 180–188. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.31>
- Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. (2021, May 28). *The Russian doping scandal*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/russian-doping-scandal>
- Cragg, S. (2019). *Policy and program considerations for increasing sport participation among members of underrepresented groups in Canada* (2nd ed.). Sport Canada. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Encouraging-Sport-Participation-in-UnderRepresented-Groups-2nd-Edition-Final-Dec-31.pdf>
- Daigo, E., & Filo, K. (2020). Using a Sport Event to Create a Sense of Community: Charity Sport Event Manager Perspectives. *Event Management*, 24(1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599519X15506259856039>
- Danilovic, S. (2018). *Game Design Therapoetics: Autopathographical game authorship as self-care, self-understanding, and therapy*. [Doctoral Thesis] University of Toronto.
- Día de Muertos Race. (n.d.). *Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) Race*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <http://conveyadvertising.ca/DiadeMuertosRace/>
- Evans, M. B., Shirazipour, C. H., Allan, V., Zanhour, M., Sweet, S. N., Martin Ginis, K. A., & Latimer-Cheung, A. E. (2018). Integrating insights from the parasport community to

- understand optimal Experiences: The Quality Parasport Participation Framework. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 37(Complete), 79–90.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.04.009>
- Frontrunners Toronto. (2012, October 27) *Frontrunners Toronto*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.frontrunnerstoronto.ca/>
- Government of Ontario. (2023, January 9). *How to comply with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service*. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-comply-accessibility-standard-customer-service>
- Government of Ontario. (2022, January 21). *About e-Laws*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/about-e-laws>
- Hansen, E., Nordén, H., & Ohlsson, M. L. (2023). Adolescents with intellectual disability (ID) and their perceptions of, and motivation for, physical activity and organised sports. *Sport, Education and Society*, 28(1), 59–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2021.1969909>
- Hoekstra, F., Roberts, L., van Lindert, C., Martin Ginis, K. A., van der Woude, L. H., & McColl, M. A. (2018). National approaches to promote sports and physical activity in adults with disabilities: Examples from the Netherlands and Canada. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 41(10), 1217–1226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2017.1423402>
- Hollenweger, J. (2014). Definition and Classification of Disability. *United Nations Children's Fund*. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/35121/file/Definition.pdf>
- Inclusive Sports Academy CIC. (2021, October 13). *The History of Disability Sport* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc38SM2k1As&feature=youtu.be>

Integrated Accessibility Standards, O.R. 191/11, amended by O.R. 2016, 165/16 (2011)

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191>

International Committee of Sports for the Deaf. (2016, January 3). *History*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.deaflympics.com/icsd/history>

International Olympic Committee. (2018, January 19). *Welcome to the Ancient Olympic Games*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://olympics.com/ioc/ancient-olympic-games>

International Olympic Committee. (2021a, May 3). *What is The Origin of the Olympic Games*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://olympics.com/ioc/faq/history-and-origin-of-the-games/what-is-the-origin-of-the-olympic-games>

International Olympic Committee. (2021b, October 5). *George Eyser: Medals, mystery and the Games' first amputee*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://olympics.com/en/news/george-eyser-medals-mystery-and-the-games-first-amputee>

International Paralympic Committee. (2019, August 6). *Paralympics History*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>

International Paralympic Committee. (2020, October 26). *Paralympic Categories & How to Qualify*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.paralympic.org/classification>

Invictus Games Foundation. (2016, November 30). *The Invictus Games Story*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://invictusgamesfoundation.org/foundation/story/>

Jeanes, R., Spaaij, R., Magee, J., Farquharson, K., Gorman, S., & Lusher, D. (2018). 'Yes we are inclusive': Examining provision for young people with disabilities in community sport clubs. *Sport Management Review*, 21(1), 38–50.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.04.001>

- Kalinowski, T. (2014, December 19). *Tory wants to move some runs and charity events out of downtown*. thestar.com. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from [https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/12/19/tory\\_wants\\_to\\_move\\_some\\_runs\\_and\\_charity\\_events\\_out\\_of\\_downtown.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/12/19/tory_wants_to_move_some_runs_and_charity_events_out_of_downtown.html)
- Kim, J., Chun, S., Kim, H., Han, A., & Hodges, J. S. (2018). Contribution of Leisure Participation to Personal Growth Among Individuals With Physical Disabilities. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 52(3), 201-214. <http://dx.doi.org.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/10.18666/TRJ-2018-V52-I3-8805>
- Kitchin, P. J. (2021). Bourdieu's practice theory as a multilevel framework for exploring change in disability sport: A case study of disability cricket. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 0(0), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2021.1944820>
- Krakauer, J. (2009). *Where Men Win Glory: The odyssey of Pat Tillman*. Penguin Random House.
- Magrath, R. (2022). *Athlete activism: contemporary perspectives*. Taylor & Francis. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/52792>
- Martin Ginis, K. A., Ma, J. K., Latimer-Cheung, A. E., & Rimmer, J. H. (2016). A systematic review of review articles addressing factors related to physical activity participation among children and adults with physical disabilities. *Health Psychology Review*, 10(4), 478–494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2016.1198240>
- Misener, L. & Darcy, S. (2014). Managing disability sport: From athletes with disabilities to inclusive organisational perspectives. *Sport Management Review*, 17(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2013.12.003>

Misener, L., Rich, K., & Pearson, E. (2022). Tensions and opportunities in researching social change in sport management. *Sport Management Review*, 25(2), 323–340.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2021.1902123>

Moreton, J. (2021, May 13). Covid-19 led to running boom, survey shows. *Runners World*.

Retrieved April 6, 2023, from <https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/news/a36373939/covid-19-running-boom/>

Mullet, D. R. (2018). A General Critical Discourse Analysis Framework for Educational Research. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 29(2), 116–142.

<https://doi-org.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1932202X18758260>

North, A. (2019, May 3). "I am a woman and I am fast": What Caster Semenya's story says about gender and race in sports. *Vox*. Retrieved April 29, 2023, from

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/5/3/18526723/caster-semenya-800-gender-race-intersex-athletes>

Pells, E. (2023, March 23). Track bans transgender athletes, tightens rules for Semenya. *ABC News*. Retrieved April 29, 2023, from <https://abcnews.go.com/Sports/wireStory/track-bans-transgender-athletes-tightens-rules-semenya-98079298>

Race Roster. (2022a). *Constantine Yorkville Run*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2022/55043/2022-constantine-yorkville-run>

Race Roster. (2022b). *Día de Muertos Race - Toronto*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2022/63530/dia-de-muertos-race-toronto>

Race Roster. (2022c). *Sunset Shuffle 2022: Toronto's best kept secret*. Retrieved February 13,

2023, from <https://raceroster.com/events/2022/30773/sunset-shuffle-2022>

Race Roster. (2022d). *Toronto Island Run*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2022/59791/toronto-island-run>

Race Roster. (2023a). *2023 Sporting Life 10K*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/62866/2023-sporting-life-10k>

Race Roster. (2023b). *2023 Toronto Carnival Run: Run to the beat of the drum*. Retrieved

February 13, 2023, from <https://raceroster.com/events/2023/63054/2023-toronto-carnival-run>

Race Roster. (2023c). *2023 Toronto St. Patrick's Day race*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/66509/2023-toronto-st-patricks-day-race?aff=VINWI>

Race Roster. (2023d). *About us - Race Roster*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/about>

Race Roster. (2023e). *Constantine Yorkville Run*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/66162/2023-constantine-yorkville-run>

Race Roster. (2023f). *Features Archive - Race Roster*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/features>

Race Roster. (2023g). *Spring Run Off 2023*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/59852/spring-run-off-2023>

Race Roster. (2023h). *Support*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from

<https://support.raceroster.com/hc/en-us>

Race Roster. (2023i). *TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/65909/2023-tcs-toronto-waterfront-marathon>



Race Roster. (2023j). *The PUMA Toronto women's half marathon/10K/5K*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://raceroster.com/events/2023/61977/2023-puma-toronto-womens-half-marathon10k5k>

Race Roster. (2023k). *Under Armour Toronto 10k*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://raceroster.com/events/2023/65107/under-armour-toronto-10k-2023>

Schultz, B., Sheffer, M. L., Bain-Selbo, E., Goldenbach, A., Evensen, B., Geyerman, C., Hardin, R., Huffman, L. T., Kurtz, J. B., & Mielczarek, N. (2015). *Sport and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Lexington Books. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oculocad-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4097302>

Sporting Life 10k. (2022, December 17). *Learn More - Sporting Life 10K*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.sportinglife10k.ca/toronto-information/>

The Associated Press. (2021, July 26). First openly transgender Olympians are competing in Tokyo. *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/first-openly-transgender-olympians-are-competing-tokyo-rcna1507>

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. (2023). *Trail strategy*. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://trca.ca/conservation/lands/trail-strategy/>

Toronto Carnival Run. (2023). *Toronto Carnival Run: Run to the beat of the drum*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <http://torontocarnivalrun.com/>

Toronto Island Run Club. (2023a). *Sunset Shuffle*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://longboatroadrunners.com/sunsetshuffle/>

Toronto Island Run Club. (2023b). *Toronto Island Run*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://longboatroadrunners.com/torontoislandrun/>

- Toronto Marathon. (2015, May 30). *Toronto Marathon*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <http://www.torontomarathon.com/>
- Toronto St. Patrick's Day Race. (2023). *2023 Toronto St. Patrick's Day race in support of Achilles Canada*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://torontostpatricksdayerace.ca/>
- Toronto Women's Run Series. (2015). *About Us*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://towomensruns.com/>
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (2021, July 28). *The Nazi Olympics Berlin 1936*. Holocaust Encyclopedia. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-olympics-berlin-1936>
- Wallock R. M. (2016, January 6). How Bobbi Gibb changed women's running, and finally got credit for it. *ESPN*. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from [https://www.espn.com/sports/endurance/story/\\_/id/15090507/endurance-sports-bobbi-gibb-first-woman-run-boston-marathon](https://www.espn.com/sports/endurance/story/_/id/15090507/endurance-sports-bobbi-gibb-first-woman-run-boston-marathon)
- Wencer, D. (2014, October 11). *Historicist: A Running Start*. Torontoist. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://torontoist.com/2014/10/historicist-a-running-start/>
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. SAGE Publications.
- Wood, R. J. (2021a). Disabled Olympic Participants. *Topendsports.com*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.topendsports.com/events/summer/athletes/disabled.htm>
- Wood, R. J. (2021b). List of athletes who have competed in both the Paralympics and Olympic Games. *Topendsports.com*. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.topendsports.com/events/paralympics/athletes/olympic-games.htm>

World Athletics. (2021, June 2). *New research reveals running boom during Covid-19 pandemic.*

Retrieved April 6, 2023, from <https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/global-running-day-research-nielsen>

World Health Organization. (2001). International classification of functioning, disability and

health (icidh-2). *World Health Organization.* Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42407>

Yorkville Run. (2023). *Constantine Yorkville Run.* Retrieved February 13, 2023, from

<https://www.yorkvillerun.com/>