

Destination Stratford Wins Provincial Accessible Tourism Award

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) presented the 2023 Accessible Tourism Award for the Stratford Boathouse Public Washroom Expansion Project



Boathouse Public Washrooms. Image: Destination Stratford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stratford, Ontario, November 6, 2023 – Destination Stratford is honoured to be the recipient of the Accessible Tourism Award for the Boathouse Public Washroom Expansion Project, presented by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) at the recent 2023 Ontario Tourism Summit awards ceremony.

The Stratford Boathouse Public Washroom Expansion Project, led by Destination Stratford, reimagined, rejuvenated, and modernized the dated and seasonal Boathouse public washrooms and tourism kiosk centrally located within Stratford’s downtown core by increasing the number of washroom stalls from 3 to 6, winterizing the facility for year-round use, improving accessibility, and creating a safe, attractive space for residents and visitors. The space now includes a universal washroom equipped with change tables for children and adults – the latter being at the top of the City of Stratford’s accessibility priority list.

“Congratulations to Destination Stratford! This award demonstrates the benefits we reap when we apply an accessibility and inclusive lens in all stages of a project,” said Gabby Rodriguez, Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator for the City of

Stratford. *“The City of Stratford will use this example to continue the advancement of developing an accessible and inclusive city for all.”*

“Destination Stratford takes a community-first approach to our destination development work, and so it’s an honour on behalf of Stratford to have the Boathouse Public Washroom project recognized at a Provincial level with this 2023 Accessible Tourism Award,” said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. *“Year-round accessible public washrooms are foundational to a healthy community and are also essential in supporting cultural activation and the visitor economy. Replacing the seasonal tourism kiosk function with accessible year-round public washrooms was a bold decision, and given the extraordinary usage of the upgraded facility, we’re confident that this was the right approach to maximize benefit for everyone.”*

In addition, a priority for Destination Stratford when deciding on their destination development projects is the recently community-curated Welcoming Community Statement:

Stratford strives to be a welcoming and supportive community: healthy, vibrant, and accessible, where everyone’s sense of belonging, dignity, and safety is a shared priority. In Stratford, we work collectively to ensure all individuals feel valued and included.

The Stratford Boathouse Public Washroom Expansion Project is a great example of this statement in action as it fills an important need within the community with a focus on accessibility and inclusion.

Destination Stratford obtained partial funding through FedDev Ontario and worked closely with the City of Stratford, including the City’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and Community Services Department, to design and upgrade the City-owned facility to become the new gold standard for the community’s public washrooms that meets or exceeds all regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This project also demonstrates Destination Stratford’s focus on regenerative tourism - sustainably enhancing the visitor economy while also improving the quality of life in the community.

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For more information, please email hello@visitstratford.ca.