



2019 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

A summary of progress achieved in 2019 on the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2018 – 2022)

People who require this document in an alternative format such as large print or computer file may request it from the City Hall by calling 519-271-0250 extension 5237, or by e-mailing the Clerk's Division.

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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Update - 2019

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed by the Ontario government in 2005. It called for the development of standards and regulations to make Ontario fully accessible to people with disabilities by the year 2025. A series of accessibility standards have been developed since that time, and are all incorporated under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) - Ontario Regulation 191/11. There are standards for Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and Design of Public Spaces.

The IASR requires the development of a multi-year accessibility plan, as well as annual status updates to the accessibility plan. This is the second status update to the 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan. The 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan reflects the proposed intentions of the City of Stratford for meeting the regulations under the AODA, and for identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities in City programs, services and facilities.

Using a web browser you will find accessibility policy and plan documents on the [Accessibility Page](#)¹ of the City of Stratford website.

Stratford's Accessibility Commitment

The City of Stratford will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and practices are consistent with the following principles:

- People with disabilities must have equal opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services, which will be provided in a manner that respects their dignity and independence and is integrated with non-disabled people unless an alternative accommodation measure is necessary.
- The City will prevent and remove barriers that impede access by people with disabilities.
- The City will communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her needs and abilities.
- People with disabilities may make use of an assistive device, service animal and/or a support person to access information, goods and services.

¹ <https://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/accessibility.asp>

- The City will continue to meet the requirements for consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee as established under various sections of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Council appoints consumers, people with disabilities, and a City Councillor to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. AAC members are trained on all standards under the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it pertains to people with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Stratford City Council about the accessibility of City services, programs, and facilities, including:

- Accessibility plans
- Bus stops and shelters
- Accessible taxicabs
- Recreational trails
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- On-street parking spaces
- Site plan reviews

In 2019, the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted twenty-seven (27) times and AAC Feedback Reports were sent to City staff.

The Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC)

The Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC) represents all City Departments and manages the City's AODA compliance process. The Committee met five (5) times in 2019.

Monthly reports are provided to the ASC on issues relating to AODA compliance.

Compliance Status

As at December 31, 2019, the City of Stratford is in compliance with all currently applicable requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, except one of the requirements under the Information and Communications Standard. It is a requirement of the Information and Communications Standard that municipal websites and web content must meet the requirements of the World Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA. Some third party documents that comprise part of City Council agenda packages are not accessible to screen readers. The City of Stratford

does not have the resources to remediate third party documents, which means that some agenda packages posted on the City website are not completely accessible to screen readers. Alternate formats of the agenda packages are available, upon request.

Compliance Overview for 2019

The following outlines the City of Stratford's commitments and progress in 2019 in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (and Built Environment)

There are also a number of General Requirements that apply across all of the accessibility standards.

New goals established by the City under each of the accessibility standards in the coming years will be reflected in the Annual Status Updates to the 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan.

General Requirements

Procurement

People with disabilities will be treated equitably with respect to the procurement, use and benefit of City services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, and integration. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities. Furthermore, the City will ensure that accessibility is integrated into all City initiatives, business practices, boards, committees, departments and divisions. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services or facilities, an explanation will be provided, upon request.

Reporting

Reports will be produced annually on the progress and implementation of the multi-year Accessibility Plan, and this information will be posted on the City website and will be available in alternate formats, upon request. The multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated once every five years. Compliance Reports will be filed bi-annually with the Accessibility Directorate. The 2019 report was submitted. The next report must be completed by December 31, 2021.

Training

All employees, volunteers and persons developing policies for the City of Stratford are trained on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the IASR and on the Human Rights Code. Persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City must also be trained.

All members of the Stratford City Council are trained on accessible customer service and how to interact with people with different disabilities.

The Corporate Accessibility Policy is updated to reflect changes to any of the standards, and training is provided in order to ensure an understanding of any changes.

Records will continue to be maintained for training provided on accessibility, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals who attended.

Feedback

The City welcomes input from the public in order to help identify ways to improve accessibility in facilities, goods and services. Members of the public are encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Clerk's Office at the City of Stratford or complete the Contact Us section on the City of Stratford website.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Phone: 519-271-0250 Ext. 5237

Email: clerks@stratford.ca

Mail: City Clerk
City of Stratford
City Hall, P.O. Box 818
Stratford, ON N5A 6W1

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Customer Service Standard

The City of Stratford continues to meet requirements under the Customer Service Standard, including:

- Gathering feedback on the goods and services it provides and acting on that feedback to improve services to persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring that the feedback process is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.
- Posting notices regarding service disruptions
- Allowing service animals to accompany their owners into City facilities, except into areas not allowed by law.
- Allowing support persons are allowed to accompany persons with disabilities into City facilities, and in some cases, requiring a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons.
- Ensuring that all employees, volunteers and persons developing policies for the City of Stratford are trained on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the IASR and on the Human Rights Code. Ensuring that persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City must also be trained.
- Ensuring that any new policies created with regards to customer service will take into account the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all persons.

2019 Initiatives for Accessible Customer Service

- Public Consultations for the City of Stratford Strategic Priorities for the 2018 to 2022 term of Stratford Council were held in accessible locations.
- Public Consultations for the Community Transportation Project were held in accessible locations.
- The annual Community Recognition Awards Night hosted by Stratford City Council was held in an accessible location. This event recognizes individuals and teams on outstanding accomplishments over the past year.

2020-2022 Goals for Accessible Customer Service

- The Human Resources Department will be working towards streamlining online accessibility training for new employees.
- Accessibility Advisory Committee to visit fire stations for discussions and ideas.
- The CAO and Mayors office will continue to ensure that public consultations and special events hosted by the City are held in accessible locations.

Information and Communications Standard

The City of Stratford continues to meet the requirements under the Information and Communications standard, including:

City Web Site Compliance

- The City of Stratford web site and the Stratford Public Library web site are compliant with Level AA of the WCAG 2.0 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which meets the requirements in the AODA, except for some agenda packages as outlined above.
- Because the City web sites are compliant with Level AA of the WCAG 2.0, all documents added to these web sites must also meet this standard and comply with City style guidelines.

Availability of Accessible Formats

- The City provides documents in accessible formats upon request, and has notifications to this effect on the City web site.
- The City solicits feedback and undertakes to facilitate feedback from people with disabilities in an accessible format, upon request.
- The City has adopted a policy stating that persons who request a document that cannot be converted to an accessible format will receive an explanation as to why the document is unconvertible, and will receive a description of the document's content from the appropriate City department.

2019 Initiatives for Accessible Information and Communications

- CAO/Mayor's Office ensured that documents/reports for the City website and Council agenda system (Escribe) were in an accessible format, where possible.

- Information Technology Services ran an accessibility checker for every tab of the City of Stratford website and performed corrections, as required to meet World Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.
- Information Technology Services documented website processes and automated attendant created in accessible format.
- Phone system upgrades/enhancements utilizing accessible technology available on the market.
- Public consultations and surveys for the City of Stratford Strategic priorities for the 2018 to 2022 term of Stratford council were advertised in multiple accessible formats. Multiple formats of engagement and alternative formats were offered to persons with disabilities.
- Public consultations and surveys for the Community Transportation Project were advertised in multiple formats. Multiple formats of engagement and alternative formats were offered to persons with disabilities.
- Consulted with the Accessibility Coordinator on the design and installation of plaques in Market Square.
- Social Services worked with the Accessibility Coordinator to adapt complex application forms into accessible formats.

2020-2022 Goals for Accessible Information and Communications

- Human Resources plans on circulating existing or revised accessibility policies, materials or information, i.e. bulletin boards, health and wellness newsletter one to two (1-2) times per year, as required.
- Human Resources plans to review the status of existing Workplace Emergency Response Information forms and work with departments to update, as required.
- Work to ensure that documentation uploaded to the City Website is in an accessible format.
- Continue to update templates and documents for accessibility.
- Continue to consider accessibility needs when planning meetings and events, including accessible formats, multiple forms of engagement and communication supports.
- CAO/Mayor's office will be updating the City of Stratford Emergency Response Plan so that it is in an accessible format.

- CAO/Mayor's Office will continue to ensure that documents/reports for the Council agenda system (Escribe) are in an accessible format, where possible.
- Information Technology Services (ITS) will continue to annually run accessibility checker for every tab of the City of Stratford website and fix any errors to ensure the website meets legislative requirements.
- 2020 website upgrade will utilize all current accessibility tools available. Full training will be provided by supplier on the use of the tools and features.
- ITS staff to participate in refresher course and any new training as available pertaining to accessibility offered both in-house and externally, such as eSolutions Group.
- ITS: Future phone system upgrades and/or enhancements to utilize the most current accessible technology available on the market and provide accessible phone sets as required accommodating hearing, vision or mobility impairments. Solutions will be shared with other departments, such as Human Resources, as required.

Employment Standard

Accommodating the needs of people with disabilities throughout the employment cycle.

The City of Stratford is committed to making reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities throughout the employment cycle, including:

- Notifying job applicants that accommodations are available upon request during the recruitment and selection process.
- Informing employees of supports available.
- Consulting with employees with disabilities to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Working with employees who may need individualized workplace emergency response assistance.
- Working with City employees with a disability in developing and documenting an individual accommodation plan that takes into account his or her needs.
- Implementing and documenting a return to work process for supporting employees who have been absent due to reasons related to their disabilities.

- Applying processes for performance management, career development and redeployment as required, considering the needs of employees with disabilities.

2019 Initiatives for the Employment Standard

- The Corporate Services Department completed AODA training for members of Council and Advisory Committees/Local Boards
- Human Resources staff participated in training related to return to work and individual accommodation policies, plans and processes.

2020-2022 Goals for the Employment Standard

- The Corporate Services Department will continue implementation of AODA training for volunteers on advisory committees and local boards.
- The Human Resources Department will continue to circulate existing or revised accessibility policies, materials or information to new and existing staff as available or required.

Transportation Standard

The City of Stratford is meeting all of the applicable requirements for Conventional and Specialized Transit.

The Stratford Police Services Board is responsible for licensing taxis in the City of Stratford.

On April 29, 2019, Stratford Council adopted the City of Stratford Strategic Priorities for the 2018-2022 term of Stratford council. Mobility, Accessibility and Design Excellence is one of the priorities which include:

- Improving ways to get around, to and from Stratford by public transit, active transportation and private vehicle.
- Designing options that are accessible to people of all levels of ability.

2019 Initiatives for the Transportation Standard

- The City Community Services Department holds an annual public consultation on transit accessibility. The most recent session was held on October 9, 2019 at the Stratford Rotary Complex. This consultation was the opportunity to report and seek feedback on Stratford Transit and Stratford Parallel Transit's accessibility objectives and plans for the current year and the coming year.

- Stratford Parallel Transit is available at all hours when Stratford Transit is available.
- The new Transit Terminal was completed. Please see [Community Services section of the Design of Public Spaces Standard](#).
- The City of Stratford now has eight (8) Nova buses (conventional) with rear facing seats available for persons with disabilities. They have one (1) belt, instead of the four (4) strap harness used in the older buses. This promotes independence for those customers with different needs.
- Parallel Transit replaced an existing, older van with a sustainable van to help meet the increased demand for Mobility buses. The van was delivered April 2019.
- Seven (7) cement pads were poured for accessible bus stop shelters.
- All Stratford Transit and Stratford Parallel Transit operators must complete training required by the Transportation Standard.
- Newly hired staff for Stratford Transit and Parallel Transit must also complete hands-on training on tie-down operation, loading and unloading of customers, the use of the lift and how to position the bus for pick up and drop off.

2020-2022 Goals for the Transportation Standard

- Plan to build twenty to twenty-five (20-25) accessible bus stops with shelters, and will consult with the public and people with disabilities as well as the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee on the design of the bus shelters.
- Plan to purchase six (6) new forty (40) foot conventional buses and two (2) new mobility buses.
- Plan to install a digital display board at the Bus Terminal that will show bus arrival times, in conjunction with a real-time app that will be introduced at the same time. This is a funding dependent project.

Accessible Taxis

- In 2012 the Police Services Board completed the required consultations with people with disabilities, the general public and members of the taxi sector on the number and availability of accessible taxis in the City, and other accessible taxi requirements.

- Currently, there are no on-demand accessible taxis in the City of Stratford. The consideration of alternative services and a comprehensive review of Taxi By-law 3-2004 of the Stratford Police Services Board for the City of Stratford be discussed to formulate a complete approach.

Design of Public Spaces Standard / Built Environment

The City of Stratford is meeting the requirements for the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This standard consists of the following Public Spaces, Services and Planning requirements:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services
- Maintenance planning for above public spaces

In 2019, the City of Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted twenty-seven (27) times to provide feedback on plans for new or redeveloped public spaces, formal consultations for proposed developments and site plan reviews.

2019 Initiatives for Design of Public Spaces Standard and Built Environment

a) CAO and Mayor's Office

- On April 29, 2019, Stratford Council adopted the City of Stratford Strategic Priorities for the 2018-2022 term of Stratford council. Mobility, Accessibility and Design Excellence is one of the priorities which includes:
 - Improving ways to get around, to and from Stratford by public transit, active transportation and private vehicle.
 - Designing options that are accessible to people of all levels of ability.

b) Infrastructure & Development Services

- Four (4) major construction projects added 1.6 km of new sidewalk, replaced 300 meters of sidewalk, added forty-one (41) new tactile warning plates and one (1) new park bench.

- The City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) allocated funds to replace eighty-five (85) meters of deficient sidewalk and add eleven (11) new tactile warning plates.
- Audible pushbuttons installed at the intersections of:
 - Waterloo Street and Lakeside Drive; and
 - Ontario Street and C.H. Meier Boulevard.
- The Traffic Division installed [Key2Access2](#) improvements at the intersections of:
 - Ontario and Waterloo Streets and;
 - Wellington Street at St. Patrick Street.

Key2Access is revolutionizing pedestrian mobility with wireless technology that allows users to request a crossing without having to find and reach the button on the pole. Using mobile devices or special key fobs, these hand held solutions are customized for the visually and mobility impaired but also support the needs of the elderly, parents with strollers and those with an active lifestyle such as runners or cyclists.

- Staff developed a Facilities Accessibility Audit Form and worked with members of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to conduct Sports Venue accessibility audits across the City of Stratford. Audits are a resource for budgeting and grant applications when planning new or significant renovations to existing facilities.
- As recommended by the City's AAC and by City staff, curb ramps are retrofitted. Also known as curb cuts, these modifications enable people with mobility impairments and/or a wheeled mobility device to move more easily between the street and the sidewalk.
- A universal washroom at City Hall was completed and operational in 2019.
- The design and tender have been prepared for an accessible reception counter replacement, including enhanced security in the Clerk's office.
- The AAC and City staff will continue to identify new projects as they are identified over time.

² <https://key2access.com>

c) Community Services

- Replaced the Shakespeare Park Play Structure with a full accessible structure, including an accessible pathway.
- Purchased picnic tables at a 5:1 ratio (standard:accessible).
- Completed three hundred (300) feet of bank and pathway restoration on the North shore of the Avon River.
- The new Transit Terminal was completed. The design includes a number of accessible features including:
 - Universal washroom with emergency call button.
 - Tactile plates at each bus loading zone.
 - Braille signage at each bus loading zone.
 - Accessible Bus shelters with heat and space for mobility devices.
 - Tempered glass panels on bus shelters at the front, back and sides with a double row of 2" diameter yellow dots so that people with visual disabilities will not walk into the glass.
 - Large font signage with sans serif fonts to indicate bus stops on the bus routes.
 - Two (2) bicycle racks.
 - Eight (8) outside benches plus benches in shelters.

d) Social Services

- Incorporated two (2) AODA compliant units in new affordable housing build at 230 Britannia Street (fully wheelchair accessible) and five (5) barrier free units (3 x 2 bedroom and 2 x 1 bedroom units).
- Incorporated LULA lift into new affordable housing building at 230 Britannia Street. LULA Stands For Limited Use / Limited Application. It is a hybrid between a full-size commercial elevator and a wheelchair lift. It looks and rides like any other elevator with a sole function to provide accessibility to a building.

2020-2022 Goals for Design of Public Spaces Standard and Built Environment

a) Infrastructure and Development Services

- Construction of an accessible reception counter with enhanced security in the Clerk's office to begin in 2020.
- Plans to generate over 1.4 km of new sidewalk on Erie Street, Mornington Street and West Gore Street.
- Plan to install sixteen (16) new tactile warning plates.
- Install new signalized pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Huron Street and Huntingdon Avenue.
- The City of Stratford will continue to complete annual and ongoing reviews through public feedback and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Identified barriers and required actions will be forwarded and responded to by the appropriate departments.
- The City will ensure that new curb cuts are located only where they are safe; for example, where there are traffic lights or an established crossing.
- Review of the City of Stratford Accessibility Guidelines began in 2017, with a plan for a new Facility Accessibility Design Manual to be completed in 2020, which will be in line with a new Zoning Bylaw.

b) Community Services

- New accessible play structures to be added to new subdivision parks annually (number per year is budget dependent). The process will include consultations with the public, persons with disabilities and the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee, as legislated.
- Continue to purchase and replace picnic tables for accessible use (ratio of 5:1).
- Continue to rehabilitate and repair existing paths. The process will include consulting with the public, persons with disabilities and the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee, as legislated.
- Continue to hold annual transit public meetings.

- Ongoing accessibility improvements of existing bus stops and installation of new accessible bus stops in Capital Plan, dependent upon budget.

c) Stratford Public Library

- The existing Children's floor public service desk is to be replaced with an accessible model.
- Addition of a power door operator to the back parking lot door.

d) Social Services

- Pending capital budget approval and Government grants, planning to upgrade Perth-Stratford Housing Corporation (PSHC) properties in Listowel and Stratford to provide more accessibility options, including wheelchair accessible units, elevating devices in properties that lack elevators, as well as scooter access and related storage.

e) Corporate Services

- Implement a mobile parking payment system to offer additional method of paying for parking.
- Will continue to add more accessible parking spaces in the downtown core, where possible.
- Implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding strategy which includes installation of wayfinding signs.
- Will continue to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on further ways to remove barriers to accessibility.

f) Fire Department

- Future retrofits of fire stations will include accessibility during the planning.
- Accessibility Advisory Committee to visit the fire stations for discussions and ideas.