



2018 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

**A summary of progress achieved in 2018 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 237, by TTY at 519-271-5241 or by e-mailing the Clerk's Division.

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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Update - 2018

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 first 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)

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

Council appoints consumers, people with disabilities, and a City Councillor to this 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 Steering Committee (ASC)

The Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC) represents all City departments and manages the City's AODA compliance process. The Committee met 7 times in 2018.

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

Compliance Status

As at December 31, 2018, the City of Stratford is in compliance with all currently applicable requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Compliance Overview for 2018

The following outlines the City of Stratford's commitments and progress in 2018 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 next report must be completed by December 31, 2019.

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 Accessibility Coordinator 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.

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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.

2018 Initiatives for Accessible Customer Service

- Developed and implemented an accessibility plan for the 2018 municipal and school board elections.
- Implemented a program whereby vehicles displaying a valid accessible parking permit can park without having to pay the parking meters.
- Implemented more pay by license plate machines, so that drivers do not need to return to their vehicles to update the receipt on their dashboards.
- Participated in the GoHere Washroom program in the downtown core and expanded hours that public washrooms are open to the public.

2019-2022 Goals for Accessible Customer Service

The Human Resources Department will be working towards streamlining online accessibility training for new employees.

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.
- 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.

2018 Initiatives for Accessible Information and Communications

- Human Resources Department updated the Workplace Emergency Response form for accessibility, as well as several employee Return to Work forms/documents.
- Information Technology Services - ran 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.
- Stratford Public Library: "Kanopy" streaming movie service began in July and is free to all card holding members. There are more than 12,000 titles,

distributed roughly between 25% featured films, 50% documentaries, and 25% instructional films. "Kanopy" also meets full accessibility standards for film. Each movie has both captions and transcripts available, and is compatible with visual impairment technologies such as JAWS. Customers can also set up their profile via the downloadable app and tailor special features (which will automatically play captions, for example). Content includes over 12,000 titles, distributed roughly between 25% featured films, 50% documentaries, and 25% instructional films.

- Information Technology Services installed phone system upgrades/enhancements utilizing accessible technologies currently available on the market, including:
 - Hearing-Impaired Accessibility Features
 - Vision-Impaired and Blind Accessibility Features
 - Mobility-Impaired and Blind Accessibility Features

2019-2022 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 (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 for accessibility.
- Continue to consider accessibility needs when planning meetings and events.
- Information Technology Services (ITS) to biannually run accessibility checker for every tab of the City of Stratford website and fix any errors to ensure the website meets legislative requirements.
- ITS to review current website features and future website upgrades to utilize all accessibility tools available, and provide full training (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 to accommodate 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.

2018 Initiatives for the Employment Standard

- Replaced the filing system in the main Corporate Services office with a system that is more ergonomically functional for staff.

2019-2022 Goals for the Employment Standard

- The Human Resources Department will continue to review and update the Return to Work and Individual Accommodation Policies, Plans and Processes.
- The Human Resources Department will continue to ensure that all online recruitment is in an accessible format, and provide the option for alternate formats upon request.

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.

Transit Accessibility

- The City Community Services Department holds an annual public consultation on transit accessibility. The most recent session was held on October 3, 2018 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 City of Stratford now has eight Nova buses (conventional) with rear facing seats available for persons with disabilities. They have one belt, instead of the four strap harness used in the older buses. This promotes independence for those customers with different needs.
- Two new Nova buses were ordered in 2017, and delivered in June 2018. They have rear facing seats for persons with disabilities.
- Parallel Transit has ordered another van to help meet the increased demand for Mobility buses. The expected delivery date is April 2019.
- 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.

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.
- Two new accessible taxis vans were added to a local taxi fleet to help meet the demand for on-demand accessible taxis in the City.

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 and beach access routes
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services
- Maintenance planning for above public spaces

2018 Initiatives for Design of Public Spaces Standard and Built Environment

a) Infrastructure & Development Services

- As recommended by the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (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. In 2018, there were nine newly identified areas and they were all completed, including:
 - 128 Erie Street – City parking lot – added sidewalk at the pay and display parking;

- 182 Perth Street – added accessible crossings at the intersection and extended the sidewalk to Borden Street;
 - 161 Front Street – removed and replaced sidewalk (1.5 m wide), with a reduced width at a tree;
 - 343 Huron Street – improved accessibility at crossing ramp;
 - 9 Thomas Street – installed sidewalk between existing sidewalk and curb at the intersection of O’Loane Avenue and Thomas Street;
 - 156 Waddell Street – City added some curb work at the Wightman Site;
 - 218 Bedford Drive – pedestrian ramp added at Bedford School;
 - 348 Forman Avenue – improved accessibility at crossing ramp;
 - 99 Downie Street – removed and replaces ramp at the Avon Theatre.
- During design of the Ballantyne Avenue reconstruction project, the AAC was consulted and a designated pedestrian rest area was included. A six foot garden bench was to be supplied and installed according to the City’s specifications and lagged into a concrete pad.
 - A new accessible on-street parking area was designated near Hamlet School on Church Street. This space provides a designated accessible parking area closer to the school than what the school was able to provide in their parking lot.
 - The design and tender have been prepared for a universal washroom at City Hall with construction planned for 2019. The AAC was consulted for feedback.
 - The design and tender have been prepared for 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.

b) Community Services

- A fully accessible family change room was installed at the Agriplex as per Building Code.
- A fully accessible unisex washroom was built on the north shore of the Avon River along William Street.
- Replaced the Monteith Play Structure with a full accessible structure, including an accessible pathway.
- Construction of accessible transit terminal began (Phase 1).
- Installation of nine accessible transit shelters.

c) Stratford Public Library

- The front stairs officially opened on February 6th, 2018. The completely redesigned steps are equipped with a special textured nosing along with a bright (yellow) stripe, to allow better grip and higher visibility.

d) Social Services

- Completed modifications to three apartments in Stratford at 45 Buckingham Drive to improve accessibility options for tenants, including wider doorways, kitchens and bathrooms.

e) Corporate Services

- Added more accessible parking spaces in the downtown core

2019-2022 Goals for Design of Public Spaces Standard and Built Environment

a) Infrastructure and Development Services

- Construction of new universal washroom at City Hall to begin in 2019.
- Construction of the accessible reception counter with enhanced security in the Clerk's office to begin in 2019.
- 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 2019, which will be in line with a new Zoning Bylaw.

b) Community Services

- Accessible aids installed in viewing areas as well as on floors and stairs in each facility.
- New accessible play structures to be added to new subdivision parks annually (number per year is budget dependent).

- Continue to purchase and replace picnic tables for accessible use (ratio of 5:1).
- Continue to rehabilitate and repair existing paths, as required, keeping in mind accessibility and consulting with the AAC.
- Continue to hold annual transit public meetings.
- Planning to install permanent waiting room/washroom at the new transit terminal.
- 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

- Will continue to add more accessible parking spaces in the downtown core, where possible.
- 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.