



City of Stratford 2023 – 2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan





Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Stratford is positioned on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. As we gather, we are reminded that the City of Stratford is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on land that was shared between the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.





Introduction

The 2023-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) is a roadmap to creating an accessible and inclusive city for everyone. The Province of Ontario mandates municipalities with fifty (50) or more employees to develop a MYAP and to update it every five years. This is the City's third multi-year plan, and it provides action items to support the City's commitment to removing barriers for people with disabilities.

The City of Stratford's Commitment

The City of Stratford is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities concerning the use and benefit of services, programs, goods, and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, and integration; and is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors, and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities.

The City will continue to make 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 everyone unless an alternative accommodation measure is necessary.
- The City will prevent and remove barriers that block 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.
- 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 City can only mandate the accessibility of facilities and services owned, operated, leased, or funded by the City. The City of Stratford encourages members of the public to have discussions with owners and managers of restaurants, stores, and other private sectors about improving their accessibility standards and services. The City can provide incentive tools to assist in the enhancement of accessibility within Stratford.



Legislation

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), became law on June 13, 2005. The purpose of this legislation is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The AODA applies to all levels of government, nonprofits, and private-sector businesses in Ontario that have one or more employees.

O.Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The AODA provides guidelines under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) for the development of an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory standards of the following:

- Customer Service Standards
- Information and Communication Standards
- Employment Standards
- Transportation Standards
- Design of Public Spaces Standards

The general requirements surrounding the five standards consist of the development and enactment of an accessibility policy, accessibility plan, and training for employees and volunteers.

Ontario's Human Rights Code

In addition to complying with the AODA and the IASR, the City has a duty to accommodate under the Ontario Building Code and Ontario's Human Rights Code. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to freedom from discrimination and harassment based on seventeen (17) protected grounds, including disability. The purpose of the Code is to provide equal rights and opportunities without discrimination and to create a "climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and the Province."

The City of Stratford's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The Province of Ontario has mandated municipalities of more than 10,000 residents to form an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The committee consists of an appointed member of Council, and nine (9) volunteers, with most of the members being persons with disabilities. The AAC meets approximately ten times a year on the first Tuesday of each month (excluding July and August) unless otherwise posted. Committee agendas and minutes are posted on the City of Stratford's website, and



members of the public are welcome to attend meetings. Alternate formats regarding agenda packages are available upon request.

City of Stratford's Past Accessibility Accomplishments

Improved the City of Stratford's services by:

- Installing accessible service counters in various City buildings.
- Forming an internal Accessibility Steering Committee to help raise accessibility across the organization.
- Continuously train and ensure accessible documents are uploaded to the City's website.
- Publishing a Municipal Election Plan, outlining the measures implemented to ensure all voters and candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in the 2022 Municipal Election.

Provided inclusive employment opportunities by:

- Implementing a new recruitment system to assist in the proficiency of recruitment demands and provide a greater scope of accessibility for job applicants.
- Hiring an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) consultant to assist and provide recommendations on the City's recruitment and promotion practices.
- Continuing to implement and document return-to-work processes. Supporting employees who have been absent due to non-occupational or occupational illness/injury (Sick Leave, and WSIB Return to Work Procedure).
- Creating accessible job postings and informing applicants that accommodation is available upon request during all recruitment stages.

Eliminated physical barriers in City facilities and public spaces by:

- Continuing to enhance the accessibility of new and redeveloped parks and playgrounds.
- Purchasing accessible public tables at a 5:1 ratio.
- Installing two ramps and railings at Memorial Gardens.
- Developing and utilizing the City's Facility Accessibility Design Manual.
- Continuously improving and replacing tactile warning plates and sidewalks.
- Introducing requirements for accessibility and barrier-free development into the City's zoning by-law.

2023-2028 Accessibility Plan

The five-year accessibility plan consists of new and continuous initiatives that will help the City's commitment to providing an inclusive City for all residents, visitors, and



employees. The objective of this plan is to increase opportunities for people with disabilities who are seeking employment and allow all members of the public to fully engage and participate in City services, programs, and facilities in a manner that promotes independence, and dignity.

Please note that the projects listed in this multi-year accessibility plan are dependent on the City's annual budget allocation.

Customer Service Standards

Purpose

The Customer Service Standards legislates the City to provide services for people with disabilities in an equitable, seamless, and dignified manner. City staff are required to be trained and have access to resources supporting accessible customer service.

Projects

- Revise and update the City of Stratford's Accessibility Policy.
- Renew and enhance mandatory accessible customer service training.
- Develop the 2026 Municipal Accessibility Plan, outlining the measures the City will implement to ensure all voters and candidates have an equal opportunity to engage in the 2026 Municipal Election.
- Continue to assess City programs and services to guarantee accessible and equitable participation for all members who participate and are interested in joining.
- Implement a Decodable Book Collection at the Stratford Public Library. Designed specifically to help readers with dyslexia understand how to connect sounds with letters.

Outcome

To ensure employees are trained and equipped to provide accessible customer service and ensure all members of the public receive the service they require in an efficient and timely manner.

Information and Communication Standards

Purpose

The Information and Communication Standards require the City to provide information and communication in a format that is accessible for people with disabilities. City staff are provided with the tools to develop documents in an accessible format. The City is also required to continually conduct due diligence so that employees and members of the public are provided with equitable access to City information.



Projects

- Implement a strategy to ensure the City's website is in compliance with the Web Content Accessible Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level AA).
- Monitor and correct website content for accessibility.
- Develop and provide training on website accessibility to all employees who update and publish documents to the City's website.
- Conduct quarterly audits of the City's website to ensure digital accessibility.
- Continue to train staff on creating and remediating accessible documents.
- Explore options to improve the accessibility of Council committee meetings specifically in technology, physical layout, and work model. Ensuring the communication that is being released from Council meetings is accessible to all members of the public.
- Continue to refresh and update items from the Stratford Public Library, obtaining an inventory of large print books, audiobooks, and electronic collections.

Outcome

To ensure all methods of communication are delivered in a timely and accessible manner to all City staff and members of the public.

Employment Standards

Purpose

The Employment Standards highlights the City's obligation to provide accommodation to candidates during the entire recruitment process. As well as ensuring employees with disabilities have the support to accomplish tasks and to experience opportunities for advancement during their employment.

Projects

- Explore, select, and implement a learning platform that can be used to launch virtual training for new employee orientation, Health and Safety, management, employee development, AODA, and other legislative compliance training. Human Resources will create training modules for Health and Safety (WHIMIS, Workplace Harassment, AODA, and Accessible Customer Service). Once established the learning platform can be used by other departments to launch work-specific training.
- Provide training in "Managing Bias Hiring" to all managers and supervisors. Developing an equitable and inclusive lens during all recruitment stages.



- Updating Attendance Management and Workplace Accommodation Programs, Forms and Policies. Provide training on inclusive workplace accommodation practices for management, staff, and union executives.
- Continue to update all outstanding Human Resources (HR) policies that have not been amended in 2023. The HR Department has identified some new policies that are missing for employees that are foundational including Human Rights Accommodation and Employee Leave of Absence.
- Digitize all remaining paper employee files to integrate them into our secure electronic employee file records system.
- Working on Health and Safety Forms and Policies to make them accessibly compliant.

Outcome

To ensure clear, consistent, and equitable practices are applied regarding recruitment, accommodation, employment, and policies and procedures.

Transportation Standards

Purpose

The Transportation Standards illustrate the City's duty to prevent and remove barriers regarding public transportation. Ensuring members of the public have access to accessible, affordable, and safe transportation.

Projects

- To work in collaboration with MagnusMode to develop "Magnus Cards" for the City's transit division. Magnus Cards is a mobile app designed to help individuals with autism or who are neurodiverse gain independence and confidence in utilizing the City's transit services.
- Continue to organize information sessions for members of the public and allow time to receive feedback on accessibility concerning the City's transit services.
- Continue to train parallel transit staff on the following: tie-down operation, boarding, off-boarding customers, and positioning the bus for pick up and drop off.

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

Outcome

To increase awareness and integration of accessibility in the City transit services planning, policies, and strategies.



Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for Built Environment)

Purpose

The Design of Public Spaces Standard focuses on the removal of barriers in public spaces such as City facilities, parks, trails, and exterior paths of travel. The City follows the guidelines under the Ontario Building Code (OBC), and the City's Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM) for accessibility in the built environment.

Projects

- Hire a consultant to audit the accessibility of the City's social housing.
- Redevelop play structures at the following locations: Marsh Pond Play Park, Milton Park Play, Inverness Park Play, and Willow Park Play.
- Install an accessible entrance at 17 George Street West - Stratford Police Headquarters.
- Utilize the FADM for the construction of 789 Erie Street – Stratford Police Services.
- Install accessible parking spaces at Lions Pool and Gallery Stratford.
- Conduct an accessibility audit of all City facilities and renovate any barriers that are identified through the audit.
- Complete the renovation of two (2) gender-neutral, accessible restrooms at Stratford Public Library.
- Continue to conduct sidewalk repairs, specifically leveling sidewalks that require accessibility improvements, ensuring repairments are in compliance with AODA.
- To enhance and incorporate new policies into the City's Official Plan and other City planning documents, in hopes of maximizing the potential of accessibility being incorporated into new private developments of all land use types.
- Gradually install accessible pedestrian signals at intersections that require replacements or new installations.

Outcome

To improve the accessibility of City facilities and public spaces for all members of the public. This will involve applying an inclusive lens into the initial stages of the design, and the renovation of indoor and outdoor facilities.



General

Purpose

In addition to the five (5) specific standards established by the IASR, General requirements ensure that governance, reporting, and training are provided and completed within the organization.

Projects

- Review and update the City's Accessibility Policy.
- Review and update corporate training brochures for staff and volunteers.
- Provide annual status reports to the AAC, and Council and post them to the City's website.
- Ensure all City purchases include an accessibility lens in acquiring, procuring, and in design.
- Continue to celebrate and promote National AccessAbility Week on an annual basis with the AAC.
- Improve, uphold, and supervise accessibility guidelines and tools to support legislative compliance.
- Train staff in applying an equity and accessibility lens on all City initiatives and projects.
- Continue to celebrate small businesses that demonstrate a commitment to accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities by presenting the Accessibility Awards Program on December 3rd – International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Outcome

To ensure accountability is distributed at all levels of the organization and to monitor the accessibility progress listed in the MYAP. As well as provide support for employees to establish a culture of inclusivity and accessibility where all are welcome.

Conclusion

The City of Stratford is committed to meeting the initiatives of multi-year accessibility plans and will continue to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers. The City will continue to monitor and report the progress and results of the MYAP through annual status updates and compliance reports that are sent to the Province every two years. These reports will be available on the City's website.

Contact Information

For more information about the 2023-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan or to obtain a copy of this presentation in an alternative format, contact the Accessibility, Diversity,



and Inclusion Coordinator.

Phone: 519-271-0250 ext. 5294

Email: DEI@stratford.ca

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

Reporting an Issue

If you encounter a barrier or an issue regarding accessibility, the City of Stratford encourages you to submit your concern through the City's [Report an Issue webpage](#), and the City will follow up with your concern in a timely manner.



Appendix A

City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Survey

The City of Stratford is currently updating its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) and would like your feedback.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), standards were developed in five key areas: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service. These five standards are used to help identify and eliminate barriers for individuals with disabilities and create an inclusive City to serve all community members as a whole. Your feedback and comments from this survey will be used in the development of the (MYAP). For further information on the five standards please visit: [Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

1. What is your age?

- 17 or younger
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 49
- 50 to 69
- 70 to older
- Prefer not to answer

2. Tell us about yourself (please check all that apply)

- I am a person with a disability
- I have a family member, friend, or caregiver of a person with a disability
- Employee or volunteer at an organization that provides services to people with disabilities
- Resident of the City of Stratford
- Business owner or merchant
- Other (please specify)



3. How often do you visit City-owned facilities or buildings? (For example: City Hall, City Hall Annex, Rotary Complex, Avondale Cemetery, landfill site, parks)

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Several times a year
- Never

4. How often do you access City-led programs and services?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Several times a year
- Never

5. When seeking information or accessing services at the City of Stratford, has your experience been fully accessible in the following areas:

	Accessible	Not accessible	Sometimes accessible	Not applicable
Using the City of Stratford website to seek information on programs and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the online Report an Issue form at https://forms.stratford.ca/Report-an-Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking information involving your taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applying for a permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in programs run by the City of Stratford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



	Accessible	Not accessible	Sometimes accessible	Not applicable
Using the City's transit and parallel transit services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in Council, Committee, and Sub-committee meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Overall, how would you rate the City of Stratford for being accessible?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

7. Have you encountered barriers to participating in city-led programs or activities?

- No
- Yes

8. If you have encountered a barrier to participating in City-led programs or activities, and would like to tell us about it, please specify below.

9. What changes do you think would help the City of Stratford to be a more accessible community?

Share an idea:

What is an accessibility project or initiative that may benefit the City of Stratford?

Notice of Collection:

Personal information requested in this survey is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of



Privacy Act (MFIPPA) s. 28 and 29. The personal information requested will be used by Staff and Council as part of the public consultation process regarding the development of the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The personal information collected may be included in material available to the public in accordance with MFIPPA. Questions regarding the collection and use of this information should be directed to the City Clerk, 1 Wellington Street, P.O. Box 818, Stratford ON, N6A 6W1; or by telephone at 519-271-0250 extension 5329 during business hours.