



## **2015 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

**A summary of progress achieved in 2015 on the City's  
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013 – 2017)**

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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# City of Stratford

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Update - 2015

### 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. The first standard to be published was the Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07) in 2007. In 2011, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) was published as Ontario Regulation 191/11.

The IASR requires a multi-year accessibility plan, as well as annual status updates to the multi-year accessibility plan. The City of Stratford approved its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013 – 2017 in 2012. The plan outlines the City's strategy over the next five years to identify, prevent, and remove access barriers for people with disabilities in City programs, services and facilities.

Using a web browser you may follow these links to the City of Stratford accessibility policy documents published on its web site Accessibility Page:

- [The Accessible Standards for Customer Services Policy<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2013 to 2017<sup>2</sup>](#)
- [2012 Accessibility Plan<sup>3</sup>](#)
- [2014 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-year Accessibility Plan<sup>4</sup>](#)
- [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy<sup>5</sup>](#)

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<https://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/accessiblestandardsforcustomerservicepolicymanual.pdf>

2 <https://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/multiyearaccessibilityplan2013to2017.pdf>

3 <https://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/2012accessibilityplan.pdf>

4

[http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/Accessibility/Stratford\\_2014\\_Status\\_Update\\_on\\_Multi\\_Year\\_Accessibility\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/Accessibility/Stratford_2014_Status_Update_on_Multi_Year_Accessibility_Plan_FINAL.pdf)

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<https://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/integratedaccessibilitystandardsregulationpolicy.pdf>

These documents outline how the City will meet or exceed the regulations set by the Province of Ontario in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

This third status update on the Multi-Year Accessibility plan summarizes actions taken in 2015 to address the various requirements of AODA regulations. Furthermore, it documents the City's ongoing progress on its commitment to an accessible Stratford, in which people with disabilities have equal opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

## **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 and/or a support person to access information, goods and services.

## **The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**

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

## **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 2015.

The ASC maintains the AODA Compliance Master List of the 170 AODA requirements the City is committed to meeting in a timely manner. Each entry has a summary of the applicable regulation, implementation deadlines, the department(s) most directly concerned, and the current compliance status.

## **Compliance Status**

As at December 31, 2015 the Master List shows that the City of Stratford is in compliance with all currently applicable requirements of the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

## **Compliance Overview for 2015**

### **1. Customer Service Standard**

- All City staff and volunteers have received AODA Customer Service Training.
- A self-study training module on the AODA Customer Service Standard is available on the City web site, and is required to be taken by all newly hired employees and volunteers.
- The City of Stratford will continue to ensure that all agents and contractors hired by the city have received the required Customer Service Standard training.
- The City of Stratford will continue to gather feedback on the goods and services it provides and will act on that feedback to improve services to persons with disabilities.
- Notices regarding service disruptions will continue to be posted.
- The City of Stratford will review and amend the Accessible Customer Service Policy as required. Since the Accessible Customer Service Standard is to become part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, policies will need to be updated to reflect this change.
- Any new policies that are created with regards to customer service will take into account the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all persons.

### **2. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)**

#### **General Requirements**

The City of Stratford will continue to:

- Produce and post an annual status report update on the multi-year accessibility plan, and revise the multi-year accessibility plan every five years.

- File a bi-annual Compliance Report with the Accessibility Directorate of the Province of Ontario. A report was submitted by December 31, 2015. The next report must be completed by December 31, 2017.
- Update all corporate accessibility policies, as required.
- Comply with the procurement requirements, including the consideration of accessibility features when procuring goods and services.
- City tenders and requests for proposals now set requirements that personnel providing goods and/or services to the City have received all legally required accessibility training, including Introductory IASR and Customer Service Training.
- Firms providing documents to the City that may be published on the web or distributed to the general public are required to ensure that they pass the Microsoft Word Accessibility Checker with no errors.
- Train all employees, volunteers and all others who participate in developing the organization's policies, and all others who provide goods and services on behalf of the organization, about the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.
- The City maintains a master list of all AODA training, such as Introductory IASR Training, and Transit Operator Training, as required in the legislation.

### **Training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)**

- 100% of City staff, eligible volunteers, the Mayor and members of Council have completed introductory training on Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Newly hired employees must complete the on-line version of this training, which is posted on the City web site Accessibility page.
- Providers of services to the City are required to certify that their employees have taken this training or an equivalent course.
- The City's Corporate Leadership Team participated in a live training session on the requirements of the Employment Standard when the IASR was introduced. This includes most staff who require this training. Other staff and new hires who require Employment Standard training must complete the on-line version of the

training course. A link to the training is posted on the City web site Accessibility page.

- All Stratford Transit and Stratford Parallel Transit operators have completed the training required by the Transportation Standard which covers accessibility features, procedures when accessibility features fail, and emergency procedures.
- Newly hired transit staff must complete the on-line version of this training, which is posted on the City web site Accessibility page.
- Newly hired staff for Stratford Transit and Parallel Transit must also complete hands-on training 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.
- 30 City, Library and Police Service staff completed specialized training on creating and testing accessible documents. More training is scheduled for 2016.

## **Information and Communications Standard**

### **City Web Site Compliance**

- The City of Stratford web site, the Stratford Public Library web site and the Stratford Police Services web site are compliant with Level A of the WCAG 2.0 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Because the City web site is compliant with Level A of the WCAG 2.0, all documents added to the web site 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.

## **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.

## **Transportation Standard**

### **Public Consultations**

#### **a) 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.

#### **b) Transit Accessibility**

- The City Community Services Department holds an annual public consultation on transit accessibility. The most recent session was held on September 29, 2015. Twenty-six citizens, several members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and two representatives of the Community Services Department, which is responsible for transit, attended. 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.

- As of June 1, 2015, Stratford Parallel Transit was available at all hours when Stratford Transit is available, completing the one outstanding Transportation Standard compliance requirement.
- 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.
- Parallel Transit will be adding one van to the fleet in 2016 to help meet the increased demand for Mobility buses.

## **Design of Public Spaces Standard / Built Environment**

The compliance date that applies to the City of Stratford for the Design of Public Spaces Standard is January 1, 2016, and consists of the following Public Spaces:

- 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
- Although requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard were not applicable to the City until 1 January 2016, the City has been an early adopter of accessibility improvements to sidewalks, which are important exterior paths of travel.
  - In 2012 the City developed a list of some 177 street intersections that, as recommended by the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee, should have priority to be retrofitted with curb ramps. 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 great majority of the projects were completed in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, thirteen (13) Accessibility Priority Projects (low, medium and high priority) were completed, leaving twelve (12) projects remaining on the list, six of which are slated for 2016.

- The new Ontario Building Code was effective January 1, 2015. In preparation for this, the City Infrastructure and Development Services department held an orientation session for Architects, Engineers, Designers and Builders on November 6, 2014, to acquaint them with the new requirements that become applicable in 2015. The session was attended by about 50 professionals from the building sector in Stratford.
- The City of Stratford Accessibility Guidelines for Barrier Free Design from 2004 is in need of updating based on updates to the Ontario Building Code and the introduction of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Guidelines from other municipalities are under review, and a decision will be made whether to update the existing Guidelines, or adopt the updated Guidelines from another Municipality.
- Reference information for architects, designers, engineers and builders is now available through a [link](#)<sup>6</sup> on the Accessibility page of the City web site.

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[http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/Accessibility/Accessibility\\_Resources\\_for\\_Designers\\_Builders\\_Architects\\_and\\_Engineers\\_V3.pdf](http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/resources/Accessibility/Accessibility_Resources_for_Designers_Builders_Architects_and_Engineers_V3.pdf)