



2017 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

**A summary of progress achieved in 2017 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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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Update - 2017

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 last status update to the 2013-2017 Accessibility Plan. The 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan is under development, and will reflect 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.

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 2017.

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, 2017 the Master List shows that the City of Stratford is in compliance with all currently applicable requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Compliance Overview for 2017

The following outlines the City of Stratford's commitments and progress in 2017 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 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. A report was submitted by December 31, 2017. 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.

Phone: 519-271-0250 Ext. 237
Email: accessibility@stratford.ca
Mail: Accessibility Coordinator
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.

2017 Initiatives for Accessible Customer Service

- The Stratford Public Library held a Staff Development Day, which included a seven-hour mandatory training session by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The focus was on the creation of a welcoming, equitable environment for all, including customers with mental health and/or addiction concerns.
- The Stratford Public Library saw a 30% increase in home deliveries of library materials to people with accessibility needs.
- An Election Accessibility Report was prepared by the Corporate Service - Clerks Department.
- The Corporate Service – Clerks Department completed an Accessible Parking Permit Policy.

- Employee training records were consolidated by the Human Resources Department in order to improve the tracking and monitoring of employee training.

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.

2017 Initiatives for Accessible Information and Communications

- A Sensory Storytime pilot project was initiated by the Stratford Public Library for families living with Autism.
- The Human Resources Department are reformatting all new Collective Agreements for accessibility, following settlement.

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. The Police Services Board completes AODA compliance reports separately from the City of Stratford.
- The Police Services Board worked on an update to the City of Stratford Taxi Bylaw in order to ensure it reflects changes in legislation.

b) Transit Accessibility

- The City Community Services Department holds an annual public consultation on transit accessibility. The most recent session was held on October 3, 2017. Thirteen citizens, two councillors, one employee, the Accessibility Coordinator, 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.
- 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, with an expected delivery in August 2018. They will have rear facing seats for persons with disabilities.
- New bus cards were created for support persons that look like a regular bus pass, so that they do not stand out from other passes. This eliminates the identification of people as support persons in front of other riders.
- Parallel Transit added one van to the fleet in 2016 to help meet the increased demand for Mobility buses.
- 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.

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

2017 Initiatives for Design of Public Spaces Standard and Built Environment

a) Infrastructure & Development Services

- In 2012 the City developed a list of 177 street intersections that, as recommended by the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), 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. These Accessibility Priority Projects are now completed, and in addition, several other newly identified areas were completed in 2017. The AAC and City staff will continue to identify new projects as they are identified over time.
- The Market Square Redevelopment project completed in 2017 incorporated numerous accessible design features.
- 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 2018.

b) Community Services

- The Community Services Department replaced existing playground equipment with accessible playground equipment and accessible flooring at Greenwood Park. As well, new ramps were designed with input from the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee, for arena access during events at the Rotary Complex. New ramps were built in 2017.

- A curb cut and walkway from the street were added for increased access to the tennis court at Shakespeare Park.
- Cowan Soccer Field – an accessible viewing area was installed.
- An additional play structure with accessibility features and an asphalt pathway was added to the inventory in the Bromberg subdivision.
- An accessible play structure replaced old play equipment in Avalon Park.
- Twelve new accessible picnic tables were purchased and distributed throughout park areas.
- The Parks Division worked with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority to rehabilitate an area of the North Shore of the Avon River to allow for path widening from three to six feet.

c) Public Library

- The front/main entrance stairways were replaced, and now include traction and visibility strips and new railings.
- The auditorium was renovated, and features the addition of an automatic door opener.

d) Social Services

- Installed automated door entry at 304-270 Queen Street, St. Marys
- Converted two apartments at 45 Buckingham Drive in Stratford to accessible units, including wider doorways, and changes to the kitchens and bathrooms to make more accessible.
- Installed wider doorways and automated door entry, as well as larger washrooms for easier access for children and parents at Anne Hathaway Day Care.

e) Fire Department

- Identified a lack of appropriate washrooms for wheelchair access in both fire stations. Due to the age of the buildings and lack of actual space to make them accessible, plans will be made in the future to address this issue.