



2014 Status Update: City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

**A summary of progress achieved in 2014 on the City's
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013 – 2017)**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Stratford’s Accessibility Commitment	4
The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	4
The Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC)	4
Compliance Status	5
Compliance Overview for 2014	5
1. Customer Service Standard	5
2. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)	5
General Requirements	5
Introductory Training on the Integrated Accessibility Standard	6
Employment Standard Training	6
Transit-specific Training	7
Accessible Documents Training	7
Training Records	7
Information and Communication Standard	7
City web site compliance	7
Availability of Accessible Formats	7
Employment Standard	8
Accommodating the needs of people with disabilities throughout the employment cycle	8
Transportation Standard	8
Public Consultations	8
a) Accessible Taxis	8
b) Transit Accessibility	8
Design of Public Spaces Standard	9

City of Stratford

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Update - 2014

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 Policy¹](#)
- [Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2013 to 2017²](#)
- [2012 Accessibility Plan³](#)
- [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy⁴](#)

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.

1

<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

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

This second status update on the Multi-Year Accessibility plan summarizes actions taken in 2014 to address the various requirements of AODA regulations.

Perhaps more importantly, 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. The AAC has taken training on the requirements of the AODA Customer Service Standard, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 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 11 times in 2014.

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. The list is updated quarterly.

Compliance Status

As at December 1, 2014 the Master List shows that the City of Stratford is in compliance with all currently applicable requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The single exception is the increase in the hours of availability of Stratford Parallel Transit to match those of Stratford Transit, scheduled for implementation in 2015.

Compliance Overview for 2014

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.
- 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. The next report is to be submitted by December 31, 2015.
- 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.

Introductory Training on the Integrated Accessibility Standard

- 100% of City staff, eligible volunteers, the Mayor and members of Council have now completed introductory training on Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the City of Stratford Multi-Year Accessibility plan, for a total of 1,375 person-hours of training.
- 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.

Employment Standard Training

- The City's Corporate Leadership Team participated in a live training session on the requirements of the Employment Standard. This comprises most staff who require this training. Other staff and new hires who require Employment Standard training will take the on-line version of the training course, which is posted on the City web site Accessibility page.

Transit-specific Training

- 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 will take the on-line version of this training, which is posted on the City web site Accessibility page.

Accessible Documents Training

- Because the City web site is compliant with Level A of the WCAG 2.0 web site accessibility standard, as required by the IASR, all documents added to the web site must also meet this standard and comply with City style guidelines.
- 30 City, Library and Police Service staff have taken specialized training on creating and testing accessible documents.

Training Records

- The City maintains a master list of all AODA required training, such as Introductory IASR Training, and Transit Operator Training, as well as AODA-related recommended training. This list currently documents 573 completed training sessions by City staff, Council members, and volunteers, for a total of 1,621 person-hours.

Information and Communication 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 site accessibility standard.

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 24, 2014. Twenty-four citizens, two 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. A report on the proceedings was submitted to Stratford City Council.

- As of June 1, 2015, Stratford Parallel Transit will be available at all hours when Stratford Transit is available, completing the one outstanding Transportation Standard compliance requirement.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- Although requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard are not applicable to the City until 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. As of December 2014, 112 of these 117 priority curb ramps have been completed.
- The new Ontario Building Code is 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.