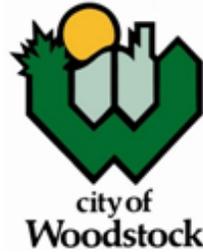


# The City of Woodstock's Annual Status Report of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



# 2013

A summary of Woodstock's accomplishments towards inclusion in 2013, and looking ahead to 2014. In compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

# Background and Purpose

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The purpose of this status report is to make the public aware of the City of Woodstock's progress with regards to our 2013-2017 Accessibility Plan to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). An open public meeting was held on November 13, 2013 to allow the public to have the opportunity to participate in a review and provide feedback regarding the accessibility plan. The City of Woodstock's 2013-2017 Municipal Accessibility Plan can be found on our [website](http://www.cityofwoodstock.ca) (www.cityofwoodstock.ca). We have been investing resources to remove barriers, and will continue to build on this momentum to improve accessibility.

## **The City's vision on accessibility:**

- To promote public awareness and sensitivity to all persons with disabilities;
- To encourage co-operation between all service and interest groups;
- To identify and document relevant matters and concerns;
- To create a community that provides opportunities for barrier-free access to housing, transportation, education, recreation, health care and employment;
- To embrace the concept of universal design to include both persons with disabilities and the increasing aging population;
- To ensure that policies and practices are maintained in relation to the development and redevelopment of services and facilities that have regard to persons with disabilities and aging population statistics;
- To ensure that the City receives the maximum economic benefits from building an accessible City including an increased potential for tourism, retail business and accommodating conventions;
- To encourage public participation and civic engagement in community accessibility matters.

The City of Woodstock is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free City for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in Woodstock. With this plan, the City is proud to present its findings and report on the development of strategies to remove and prevent future barriers for people with disabilities and the maturing population.

# The Legislation

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The purpose of AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. These standards outline the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers so that people with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was the first standard to become law as a regulation. The City has fully implemented all requirements of this standard.

The next three (3) Standards have been combined as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. This is now law and requirements are being phased in each year.

- The Information and Communications Standard will help Ontario businesses and organizations make their information accessible for people with disabilities.
- The Employment Standard will help Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.
- The Transportation Standard will make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario.

## **Update on the Built Environment Standard**

A Built Environment Standard for the design of public spaces has now been introduced. The Design of Public Spaces Standard focuses on removing barriers in public spaces. Beginning in 2016, the City of Woodstock will be required to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas and play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on- and off-street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will happen at a later date through Ontario's Building Code, which governs new construction and renovations of buildings.

For more information please visit the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment [website](#)

# Other Updates

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## **Bus Stops and Shelters**

All existing bus shelters now meet our accessibility criteria. All new bus shelters will be built to the same standard. Our focus moving forward will now be turned to bus stops. Our goal is that all bus stops meet our accessibility criteria by December 31, 2014.

## **Accessible Taxicabs**

The City Clerk submitted a follow-up report to Council on April 4, 2013 regarding the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community. Council passed a resolution requiring all licensed brokers to have a minimum of 5% of their licensed taxis be accessible, starting in the 2014 licensing year.

## **Specialized (Para) Transit**

Our specialized transit service was changed to a shared ride service in December of 2012. A centralized dispatch service was introduced as well as a more robust Para-Transportation policy. The City of Woodstock would like to thank our transit users for their patience during the transition time.

# Accessibility Feedback Policy

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The City has in place a system for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback regarding the City's delivery of accessible goods or services. Feedback may be provided either:

- In person at any City of Woodstock facility
- Via email to [accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca](mailto:accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca)
- Via telephone at 519.539.1291 or TTY 519.539.7268

All feedback will be investigated, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked within seven (7) days. Feedback will be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required.

If your feedback is regarding immediate service problems with conventional or specialized transit, please contact the Transit Supervisor at 519.539.1291 extension 3130.

# Continuous Achievement in Accessibility

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## In General...

- The City offers customer service to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- All departments must make the Clerk's Department aware of changes to facilities or services which increase accessibility so that the *Access Guide* remains a current document available to the public;
- The Accessibility Committee is consulted on matters of accessibility for major renovations and design of new City buildings;
- The Accessibility Committee is consulted on issues of accessibility for equipment replacement or asset improvements for services used by the public;
- The Accessibility Committee develops key messages to communicate with and educate the general public and staff;
- Evacuation procedures are in place for persons with disabilities at municipal facilities;
- The City provides education to the general public on accessibility issues faced by persons with disabilities.

## Human Resources

- The City continues to train all new staff, volunteers, contractors and any other third parties who interact with the public on the City's behalf, about the requirements of the Integrated Standards, 191/11 and the Customer Service Regulation, 429/07; and
- We continue to uphold employment equity policies and procedures.

## Engineering

- Accessibility is considered when reviewing site plan approvals;
- When planning sidewalks and walkways, the City implements accessibility features such as curb cuts, ramps, grate design, and location and grade elevations;
- The City is committed to encouraging the private sector, when undergoing material alterations, to retrofit existing buildings for accessibility and developing suitable policies and procedures. An asset to achieving this goal is the adoption of the Technical Accessibility Guidelines;
- Create and maintain curb cuts which are accessible to persons using mobility devices and persons with visual impairments;
- Create designated accessible parking spaces at municipal facilities; and
- Where feasible, all steps at municipal facilities will be maintained so that they are cane detectable with contrasted nosings and treads.

## Transit

- The City continues to provide a transit system that respects people's dignity and offers equal service to everyone, including those with a disability. All City staff are made aware of the City's Accessibility Plan and the City's vision on accessibility;
- Fare and hours of service parity between the conventional and specialized transit services exists:
  - The same fare is charged for persons with disabilities as passengers without disabilities, and there is never a charge for storing mobility aids.
  - Support Persons for persons with disabilities are not charged a fare.

# Highlights of 2013

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This list highlights the planned accessibility action items for 2013 that were outlined in the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Plan. Many of the AODA requirements for 2013 were already complete and implemented by the City of Woodstock prior to 2013 in an effort to strive towards a barrier-free city. If a requirement has been completed in a previous year, it has not been listed here.

<b>Planned Action Item</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p>Training s.7 Train employees, volunteers and all persons who participate in development of policies and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City on ISAR, as well as OHRC as it relates to people with disabilities.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Accessible feedback processes s.11 Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Launch a new municipal website and any <i>new</i> web content that conforms at least with WCAG 2.0 Level A s.14  *We are continuing to work on the older content on the site.</p>	<i>Complete</i> (our new website actually conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA)
<p>Accessible formats and communication supports s.12 Provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request, at no additional cost than the regular price and in consultation with the person making the request.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports s.11</p>	<i>Complete</i> (posted on our website and at City service counters)
<p>Add an audible traffic signal at Dundas and York intersection</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Accessibility upgrades to the main floor of Southside Pool</p>	<i>Underway</i> – Customer service counter is being lowered and the signage in front lobby is being updated. Project to be complete in 2014
<p>Installation of an accessible washroom at the Sea Cadets Building in Southside Park</p>	<i>Complete</i>

<b>Planned Action Item</b>	<b>Status</b>
Upgrade to accessible washrooms at Goff Hall at the Community Complex	<i>Complete</i>
Work on improving the accessibility of bus shelters throughout the city	<i>Complete</i> (all bus shelters have been made accessible, including the installation of a bench)
Create new, accessible bus shelters	<i>No new shelters were created in 2013</i>
Purchase a new fully accessible conventional bus to replace existing back-up bus	<i>Complete</i>
Install an accessible automatic door at the Red Pad of the Community Complex (to compliment the ramp installed in 2011 to allow full, independent access to the 3rd floor)	<i>Complete</i> (also lowered windows of both doors)
<p>Recruitment s.22-24</p> <p>Notify the public and employees about availability of accommodations for job applicants who have disabilities; Inform applicants that accommodations for people with disabilities are available on request for interviews and other selection processes; and</p> <p>When making offers of employment, notify the successful applicant of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Employee accommodation s.25, 26, 28</p> <p>Ensure the availability of supports to employees with disabilities; Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports; and</p> <p>Develop and implement a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Employees returning to work s. 29</p> <p>Put processes in place for employees returning to work requiring disability-related accommodations.</p>	<i>Complete</i>
<p>Performance management, career development and redeployment s.30-32</p> <p>Take into account accessibility needs of employees with disabilities in performance management and career development processes; and</p> <p>Take into account accessibility needs of employees with</p>	<i>Complete</i>

Planned Action Item	Status
disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploing employees with disabilities.	
Accessibility training (conventional and specialized transit) s.36 Provide employees with training, including how to use accessibility equipment features, acceptable modifications to procedures for temporary barriers or vehicle failures, and emergency response procedures that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities.	<i>Complete</i>

## Accessibility Improvements Above and Beyond the Original Plan

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### New Transit Terminal

A new, central, more accessible and safer transit terminal was open in 2013 with the following accessibility features:

- Total of 4 curb cuts onto the terminal, two on the north end, and two on the south end, making it wheelchair accessible
- Both bus shelters are wheelchair accessible, with a level grade at one end and opening of 44 ½"
- Tactile strips at the entrance/exit of each bus
- One level surface makes it safer for all customers
- Lowered map and placed it under a roof for those customers in wheelchairs, and those that have sight impairment
- Contrasting strip around perimeter of platform
- Customers can transfer safely from bus to bus without crossing traffic
- All buses are assigned to a specific spot, making it easier for customers to find their bus
- Traffic/pedestrian light to cross Dundas to provide visual and audible crossing
- Lots of seating both inside and out for waiting customers
- Platform is well lit for safety during hours of darkness
- Audible traffic signal at Dundas and Young (to cross Young Street)

### Dog Parks

The City was informed that paving in our dog parks was not permitted due to flood plain restrictions. The Parks Department continues to investigate different options and plans to add additional fill to make the surfaces more level.

### **Accessible Playground Equipment**

Accessible Playground Equipment was installed at David Lowes Memorial Park and Les Cook Park.

### **Curbs Cuts**

Curb cut improvements were made to the intersections of Dundas and Huron, Dundas and Douglas as well as Dundas and Broadway.

### **Transit**

Bus stop closed signs have been lowered and posted in larger font for readability for those with disabilities. Also, the service area for para-transit has been extended to the City limits rather than within 1000m of a bus stop.

## **Looking Ahead to 2014**

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This section outlines goals the City of Woodstock plans to work toward in order to continue to improve accessibility.

- Make accessibility improvements to City Hall (Note - this project might be postponed);
- Purchase a new fully accessible conventional bus to replace existing bus;
- Increase the Para-Transit dispatch hours on Saturdays;
- Create new, accessible bus shelters; and
- Continue to work towards the goal of all bus stops being made accessible by December 31, 2014 (see bus stop accessibility criteria in the Multi-Year Plan).

# Methodologies

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## **Review of Current Activities to Identify Barriers**

A review of current activities to identify barriers is ongoing with the goal of creating policies and procedures to prevent future barriers from being created and viewing the identified ones as opportunities for improvement. Barriers will be addressed on an ongoing basis.

## **Monitoring Progress and Audit Function**

As a status report of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is required on an annual basis and reviews by the Staff Accessibility Advisory Team will occur prior to the budget preparation cycle each year. The purpose of an annual review of the Multi-Year Municipal Accessibility Plan is to evaluate whether or not targets are being met and to adopt a plan to meet current expectations. The Staff Accessibility Advisory Team and the Accessibility Advisory Committee meet in May of each year to discuss the current year Accessibility Plan and to consider the upcoming year's accessibility capital budget. An annual public meeting shall be held involving persons with disabilities to review and collect feedback on the Plan, including conventional and specialized transit, as well as the annual Status Report.

## **Communication of Plan**

The availability of the Multi-Year Municipal Accessibility Plan and any Status Reports are announced publicly at the televised City Council meeting. Additionally, plans and reports as well as technical guidelines are posted on the City's [website](#) .

# Conclusion

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The City of Woodstock is committed to continuously addressing accessibility barriers and to being progressive in developing innovative solutions to accessibility matters. We believe in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The City recommends that the Province co-ordinate the preparation of uniform Municipal Accessibility Guidelines so that the guidelines can be implemented in a consistent manner and that the Province provides Accessibility Funding to assist municipalities in the implementation of barrier-free services and facilities.

For more information on the City of Woodstock's 2013 Status Report contact Amy Humphries or Louise Gartshore:

- In person at City Hall, 500 Dundas St Woodstock
- By phone 519.539.1291 (TTY: 519.539.7268)
- Via email at [ahumphries@cityofwoodstock.ca](mailto:ahumphries@cityofwoodstock.ca) or [lgartshore@cityofwoodstock.ca](mailto:lgartshore@cityofwoodstock.ca)