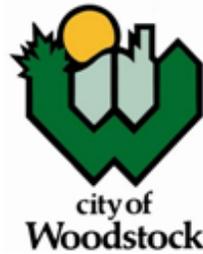


The City of Woodstock's Annual Status Report of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



2014

A summary of Woodstock's accomplishments towards inclusion in 2014, and looking ahead to 2015. In compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Background and Purpose

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 December 17, 2014 to allow the public to have the opportunity to participate in a review and to 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 aging population.

The Legislation

The purpose of AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by the year 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 their recruitment, 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

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

Update on the Building Code

On December 27, 2013 Ontario Regulation 368/13 was filed to amend the new Building Code, O. Reg. 332/12. The amendments to the Building Code target specific requirements that seek to enhance accessibility in newly constructed buildings and existing buildings that require extensive renovations. The newly amended Building Code came into force on January 1, 2015.

The amended requirements of the Building Code cover a wide range of areas which include:

- Requirements for visual fire alarms to be installed in all public corridors of multi-unit residential buildings and in all multi-unit residential suites
- Requirements for all smoke alarms in all buildings, including houses, to include a visual component
- Requirements for an elevator or other barrier-free access to be provided between storeys in most buildings, with some exemptions for small residential and business occupancy buildings
- Requirements for power door operators to be provided at entrances to a wider range of buildings, and at entrances to barrier-free washrooms and common rooms in multi-unit residential buildings
- Updated requirements for barrier-free washrooms and universal washrooms
- Requirements for barrier-free access to public pools and spas
- Updated requirements for accessible and adaptable seating spaces in public assembly buildings such as theatres, lecture halls and places of worship

In 2005, the Government of Ontario committed to the development of five accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. As a result, the amendments to the Building Code work together with the Design of Public Spaces standard, introduced in 2012, to finalize the government's commitment to an accessibility standard for the built environment.

For more information on the new requirements, please visit the Building Code website at www.ontario.ca/buildingcode.

City of Woodstock Updates

Bus Stops and Shelters

In 2013, all of the existing bus shelters were retrofitted to meet accessibility standards within the City of Woodstock. Additionally, the City of Woodstock was able to successfully convert a large majority of bus stops to accessible bus stops within the City (10 remaining that require concrete to be poured when the weather is warmer). More than 60 of the approximately 250 bus stops were not in compliance. In cases of non-compliance, the City moved the bus stop to within 3 meters of a hard surface, and in cases where there was no driveway or entrance; concrete pads were poured. In addition, the City is currently undergoing a Transit Ridership Study which may propose new bus routes. Proposed changes to bus routes may result in new bus stop locations which may require cement pads or curb cuts to be installed in early spring.

Recreational Facilities

Accessibility upgrades to the main floor of Southside Pool were completed. The customer service counter has been lowered and new accessible signage is being installed on an ongoing basis.

Accessible Taxicabs

All taxicabs within the City of Woodstock now have at least 5% of their taxicab fleet accessible.

Highlights of 2014

The below list highlights the planned accessibility action items for 2014 that were outlined in the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Plan. These items are a representation of the City's commitment in striving towards a barrier-free city. If a requirement has been completed in a previous year, it has not been listed here.

Planned Action Item	Status
Make accessibility improvements to City Hall	<i>Contrasted nosings and treads were installed on the interior stairs. Further upgrades have been postponed until a final decision on renovations has been made</i>

Planned Action Item	Status
Continue improving the accessibility of bus stops throughout the city	<i>A large majority of City bus stops have been made accessible and we will continue to work towards this goal in 2016 – See above</i>
Create new, accessible bus shelters	<i>All bus shelters are now accessible</i>
Purchase a new fully accessible conventional bus to replace existing bus	<i>Complete</i>
Increase the Para-Transit dispatch hours on Saturdays	<i>Hours were extended to 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays</i>

Accessibility Improvements Above and Beyond the Original Plan

Parks

Accessible updates were made to Southside, Southwood, Armstrong, and David Lowes Memorial Park. The accessible updates at Southside Park included the re-grading of the parking lot resulting in increased drainage, greater mobility, and the installation of flat curbs. Additionally, an accessible pathway was installed at Southwood sports field creating greater accessibility to the track and multi-use field. Accessible playground equipment was also installed at Armstrong Park. Lastly, the David Lowes Memorial Park has been made fully accessible. These above noted accessibility upgrades have allowed for the greater integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities within the City’s municipal parks.

Website

In order to further assist persons with disabilities, the City of Woodstock has recently upgraded the software program BrowseAloud Plus to their Municipal Website. The BrowseAloud program adds speech and reading support tools to online content which assists individuals with dyslexia, learning difficulties, cognitive disabilities, mild visual impairments and those with English or French as a second language. The BrowseAloud Plus program includes a full page translation tool, page simplification tool, and customizable setting features. The integration of the BrowseAloud Plus software will further enhance the interaction and accessibility of the City of Woodstock’s website for persons with disabilities.

Recreational Facilities

Additional accessibility features were added to Southside pool. These features included replacing the pool lift with a mobile pool lift further allowing greater accessibility in and out of the pool for persons with mobility issues. Further, several barriers were removed in order to create greater access to the women's and family change rooms. The customer service counter height was also lowered at the Lions pool.

Looking Ahead to 2015

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

- Continue to replace aging buses with accessible buses
- Continue improving the accessibility of bus stops throughout the city and the Next Stop Announcement System

Above and beyond the original 2013-2017 Multi-year Plan

- Improve the accessibility for access at Henry St. Dog Park and Southside Park
- Continue to improve accessibility at Southside pool
- Improve accessibility at South Gate Centre

Accessibility Feedback Policy

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
- 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.

Continuous Achievement in Accessibility

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 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;
- 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;
- 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.

Methodologies

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

The 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 are posted on the City's [website](#) .

Conclusion

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 2014 Status Report contact Chris Gauthier or Amy Humphries:

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