

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



2019

A summary of Woodstock's accomplishments towards inclusion in 2019, and looking ahead to 2020. In compliance with the 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 2018-2022 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, 2019 to allow the public to have the opportunity to participate in a review and to provide feedback regarding the Status Report on the current City of Woodstock Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in accordance with Section 4(2) of *O. REG 191/11 (The Integrated Accessibility Standards)*. The City of Woodstock's 2018-2022 Municipal Accessibility Plan can be found online at:

<https://www.cityofwoodstock.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/PDFs/Clerks/Accessibility/2018-2022-Multi-Year-Accessibility-Plan-Final-accessible.pdf>

The City's Vision and Commitment to Accessibility:

- To promote public awareness and sensitivity towards 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 incorporates persons with disabilities and aging population statistics;
- To ensure that the City receives the maximum economic benefits from building an accessible City;
- To encourage public participation and civic engagement in community accessibility matters.

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

The Legislation

The Government of Ontario created the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, with the aims to ensure accessibility practices were implemented in order to fully allow individuals to participate in their communities. It requires all municipalities to produce an annual accessibility plan, to consult with people with disabilities on the planning, make the plan available publicly, and create an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

In 2005, the Government of Ontario committed to the development of five accessibility standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. 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 *O.REG 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation is comprised of five (5) standards. 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.
- The Employment Standard will help Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of their recruitment, hiring and supporting of employees with disabilities.
- The Transportation Standard will make travel more accessible in Ontario.
- The Design of Public Spaces Standard will make it easier for persons with disabilities to move through, use and enjoy our community public spaces.
- The Customer Service Standard will make it easier for persons with disabilities to obtain services, and have their needs met accordingly.

Update on the Design of Public Spaces

Effective 2016, the City of Woodstock must meet all 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 Province of Ontario's Website.

Highlights of 2019

The below list highlights the planned accessibility action items for 2019 that were outlined in the 2018-2022 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
Southside Park: <input type="checkbox"/> Create pathway in Southside Park from playground to West diamond to allow area to walk off of the park drive	Complete
Concession playground in Southside Park: <input type="checkbox"/> Remove old play equipment and design new equipment with accessible features	Complete
Pattullo Woodlot Trail System: <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of 1-2km of recreational trail which includes accessibility features	Complete
Various Parks <input type="checkbox"/> Acquire accessible picnic tables	Complete
Construction of paved pathways at Cowan Park: <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of paved pathways to enable better access to park fields	Complete
Para-Transit: <input type="checkbox"/> The City of Woodstock collaborated with Para-Transit to create an online booking option via email for registered users. This provides customers with hearing impairments or those who are non-verbal, a more accessible way to book transportation services	Complete

Accessibility Improvements Above and Beyond the Original Plan

Art Gallery

The Woodstock Art Gallery is seeking to access funds to continue accessibility measures and capital projects in 2020 and onwards, and will continue efforts to create a barrier-free space for persons with disabilities. The Art Gallery hosted the Joint Oxford County Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting in October and provided members with a tour of the gallery in order to receive feedback on how to improve accessible features of the exhibits.

Parks & Recreation Department

The Parks & Recreation Department undertook a renovation project of the washrooms at Cowan Park Sportsplex to make them fully accessible. The renovations allow for full access by the public and also allows accessible usage by the numerous campers who participate in summer camps at the facility.

Fire Department

In 2019, the Fire Department continued to undergo renovations at the Fire Hall. These renovations included completing the accessible access point at the new front end of the building which will be the main entrance. Accessible parking spaces are being completed and will provide better access to the building. The route between the parking spaces and new entrance is well underway and will be finished this year.

Clerks Department:

The City of Woodstock Clerks Department is committed to supporting the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and has hired an Accessibility Research Student to review accessibility policies, update brochures, and ensure that the information remains current on accessibility legislature and procedures.

Looking Ahead to 2020

- **Edgewood Park and Park Row Park-** Create 6 foot wide pathways from the city sidewalks to play feature to Edgewood Park and to Park Row Park tennis courts
- **Broadview and Cree-** Remove old play equipment and design new equipment with accessible features
- **Lions Trail-** Installation of walking bridge to join Lions Trail to Burgess Trail network

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 has an Accessibility Advisory Committee (WAAC) that provides insight on matters regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers;
- All departments must make the Clerk's Department aware of changes to facilities or services which increase accessibility so that the annual update reports can remain current documents;
- 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; and
- The City provides education to the general public on accessibility issues faced by persons with disabilities.

Employment, Training, and 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 Accessibility Standards, O.REG 191/11* and the *Customer Service Regulation, 429/07*; and
- We continue to uphold employment equity policies and procedures;

Engineering:

- An Accessibility Advisory Committee member is designated as the site plan reviewer to ensure 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;
- Designated accessible parking spaces are created 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;

Transportation:

- 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:
 - There is never a charge for storing mobility aids.
 - Support Persons for persons with disabilities are not charged a fare.

Communication:

- The City is in the process of making the website and web content fully accessible to conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, s. 14, to be completed by 2021;
- The City can be contacted for access to other accessible formats or communication supports, available upon request;
- The City has posted and communicated all policies on Emergency procedures and public safety information; and
- Educational training and resources have been made accessible by the City.

Customer Service:

- The City offers customer service to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- The City documents all accessibility related policies, practices, and procedures and makes them available to the public for viewing at any time; and
- The City provides proper training/orientation for all persons on the best practices to use when serving persons with disabilities

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, as well as viewing the identified ones as opportunities for improvement. Barriers will be addressed on an ongoing basis and public feedback is encouraged.

Monitoring Progress and Audit Function

The status report of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is required on an annual basis and reviewed by the Staff Accessibility Advisory Team prior to the budget preparation cycle each year. The purpose of an annual review of the Multi-Year 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 and the annual status report. This includes consultation on services provided by conventional and specialized transit along with Parks & Recreation.

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 provides Accessibility Funding to assist municipalities in the implementation of barrier-free services and facilities. For more information on the City of Woodstock's 2019 Status Report contact the City Clerk or Deputy City Clerk:

- In person at City Hall, 500 Dundas St Woodstock
- By phone 519-539-1291 (TTY: 519-539-7268)
- Via email at accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca