

**TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE
MULTI-YEAR**

ACCESSIBILITY

PLAN 2021–2025



Executive Summary

The Town of Carleton Place Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025 outlines the initiatives the Town has taken or plans to take to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. The Plan also identifies steps taken to address the growing needs of the community as well as establishing strategies to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

Statement of Commitment

Statement of organizational commitment

The Town of Carleton Place is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. The Town is committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Town of Carleton Place believes in integration and Council and staff are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Corporation will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting its accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Training

The Town is committed to training staff and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

The Town will train employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Procurement

The Town will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, an explanation will be provided upon request.

Information and Communications

The Town will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, staff will provide information about the municipality and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports.

The Town will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

Employees, potential hires and the public will be notified that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.

The Town will also notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. The Town has a process for developing individual accommodation plans for its employees.

Where needed, customized emergency information will be provided to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.

Performance management, career development and redeployment processes will take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Design of Public Spaces

Carleton Place will continue to meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes;
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas;
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities;
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals;
- Accessible off-street parking;
- Accessible on-street parking; and
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas.

Procedures are in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of the Town's public spaces or to address them in the event that disruptions cannot be prevented.

Changes to Existing Policies

The Town will continue to modify or remove any existing policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The Town of Carleton Place Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Carleton Place Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) advises and assists Council and staff in promoting and facilitating accessible services and facilities. This is achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by people with disabilities.

The AAC is made up of between 5 to 7 members of the public, 1 member of Council, and the Mayor is an ex-officio member. AODA requires that a majority of the members of the Committee shall be persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Requirements

Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code ensures that all individuals have access to equal opportunities and rights. It prevents discrimination and unequal treatment against persons with disabilities.

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. The purpose of the ODA is to implement accessibility practices, allowing all individuals to fully participate within their community. The ODA requires all municipalities to prepare annual accessibility plans, which outline their commitment for accessible communities.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. The AODA is applied to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings. The target date for reaching this goal is no later than January 1, 2025.

O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards

- Information and Communications Standards
These standards ensure that all communication and information distributed by the Town is available in an alternative format or with communication supports.
- Employment Standards
These standards provide accessible employment opportunities for persons with disabilities during the recruitment process and throughout the duration of employment at the Town of Carleton Place.
- Design of Public Spaces Standards
These standards are critical for new construction projects and extensive renovations, as they eliminate environmental barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces.
- Customer Service Standards
These standards educate all organizations about the needs of persons with

disabilities.

The Town of Carleton Place's Plan and Multi-Year Initiatives

1. Customer Service

The Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy was updated in 2021. Accessible customer service means giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access the Town's goods and services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other people.

The Town of Carleton Place continues to:

- Provide updated accessible training to staff (training completion certificates are saved within the employee's personnel file); and
- Ensure that anyone who provides service on behalf of the Town has been trained on providing accessible customer service.

2021-2025 Customer Service Goals

- Continue to improve technological support to provide accessible customer service. Examples include using a tablet to facilitate communication for deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing visitors and non-English speaking visitors. The use of tablets may also be able to magnify information for people with low-vision and may be capable of accessing an on-demand sign language interpreter;
- Continue to identify and address potential barriers at public spaces;
- Use scheduled renovations as opportunities to improve accessibility of facilities;
- Identify additional employee training in a variety of formats which may include: in-class, events, and e-learning on O. Reg. 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards, also known as IASR; and
- Accessible 2022 Election
 - Evaluation of all voting locations and methods to ensure that locations are fully accessible and provides barrier free access to voters, candidates and employees; and
 - Ensure that all election materials are made available in a number of accessible formats.

2. Information and Communication

The Information and Communications Standard under the IASR requires that the Town communicates and provides information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Town continues to:

- Maintain accessible website and web content; and
- Municipal staff strive to communicate in accessible formats

2021-2025 Information and Communication Goals

- Ensure the website is regularly check the website for compliance;
- Undertake a thorough annual check completed by an outside party;
- Remind staff to check the accessibility of any documents that are created for online use;
- Ensure that documents uploaded to the Town's website are checked and corrected for compliance; and
- Permit staff to regularly attend workshops on creating accessible documents and assist new staff with meeting basic accessibility standards.

3. Employment

The employment standard under the IASR sets out accessibility requirements that the Town must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

The Town will continue to:

- Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process; and
- Advise successful candidates about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities.

2021-2025 Employment Goals

- Ensure that recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention processes are inclusive; and
- Accommodation – develop standard guidelines for performance management, career advancement, workplace accommodation and safe return to work

4. Transportation

Most of the requirements of the Transportation Standard relate to the operation of public transportation systems. The Town of Carleton Place licences taxis within the Town but does not own or operate a transportation system.

2021-2025 Transportation Goals

- Explore partnerships with local organizations that are able to provide accessible transportation; and
- Promote any accessible transportation services available in the Town.

5. Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the IASR requires that the Town ensure that newly constructed or significantly renovated public spaces are accessible.

The Town must also comply with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment.

The Town shall continue to:

- Conduct an annual inspection to identify barriers at all municipally owned facilities; and
- Consult with the AAC on all new designs for public spaces.

2021-2025 public space goals:

- Continue to prioritize accessibility in newly designed and significantly renovated public spaces;
- Explore community engagement opportunities during the project design phase;
- Enhance pedestrian safety;
- Identify and plan for the removal of barriers in Town owned spaces; and
- Incorporate accessible features into the Bridge Street Reconstruction project.

Accessibility Moving Forward

The Town of Carleton Place must comply with the statutory requirements identified in the AODA. The Town is committed to identifying and enacting on barrier-reducing initiatives to improve accessibility in the municipality.

Barrier reducing initiatives endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee include:

- Working with the County of Lanark to promote accessibility opportunities;
- Identify opportunities to improve accessibility within the Town and put forward the necessary budget requests;
- Town staff continuing to complete annual compliance reports which are to be filed with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario; and
- Town staff posting an annual Accessibility Plan Status Report as is required by legislation.



The Town of Carleton Place is committed to ensuring that accessibility is considered throughout the Town's services, facilities and business operations.

Stakeholder feedback is welcome and helps to identify areas for improvement.

Please contact staff with your questions, ideas or comments:

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