



# 2021 Accessibility Status Update

## 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



## The City of Stratford's Annual Status Update: 2021

### Accessibility Status Report

This Accessibility Status Report serves as an update on the progress toward meeting the initiatives listed in the City of Stratford's 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integration Accessibility Standards Regulations– Ontario Regulation 191/11.

### The City of Stratford's Accessibility Commitment

The City of Stratford will make 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, service animal, and/or a support person to access information, goods, and services.
- The City will continue to meet the requirements for consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee as established under various sections of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

### The Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic has created a shift from meeting in person to online. AAC was able to proceed with its scheduled meetings for 2021 via Zoom. It has been proven that attendance is higher with virtual meetings as barriers related to transportation are removed. The City will continue holding virtual meetings to maintain flexibility.

### Compliance Overview for 2021

The following outlines the City of Stratford's progress in 2021 in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas as per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment



- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

## General Requirements

General requirements apply to all five standards of IASR.

- The City of Stratford's Accessibility Policy is available to the public on the city website.
- Filed 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report to the Province.
- Continued to implement the City's 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which has been posted on the City's website and is available in an accessible format, upon request.
- The Corporate Accessibility Policy is updated to reflect changes to any of the standards, and training is provided to ensure an understanding of any changes.
- Managers are required to include accessibility requirements in Release for Proposals (RFP) to comply with AODA on project specific basis
- All new employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal) receive mandatory accessible training through e-learning modules
- Accessible Customer Service Training Brochure was developed in 2019. This brochure is provided to volunteers and it is available on the city website.
- Continued to carry out The City of Stratford's purchasing policy, which requires suppliers and their teams to comply with AODA when procuring goods, services, and facilities.
- The City of Stratford hired an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) consultant to gather information by reviewing policies, and conducting surveys, interviews, and assessments to assist the City in where they stand with IDEA.

## Customer Service Standards

- The Accessible Customer Service Training Brochure has been posted on the City's website and an alternate format will be provided upon request.
- The clerks' division obtained wireless Moneris terminals to better serve customers at the front desk.
- Infrastructure and Development Services Department developed a new Facility Accessibility Design Manual that was adopted by City Council on July 2021.
- Provided alternative facilities or services where possible.



## Information and Communication Standards

- The 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report was submitted to the Government of Ontario in December 2021.
  - a. The City of Stratford's website is required to comply with the World Wide Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA. There are considerable challenges in achieving and maintaining WCAG 2.0 Level AA. With the intricacy of websites municipalities manage, the City of Stratford did not report compliance with the AODA requirement for websites.
  - b. The City of Stratford has plans of hiring a consultant to assist employees in educating and auditing the City's website
- Continuously work to ensure that documentation uploaded to the City Website is in an accessible format.
- The City has statements on its website communicating to people that communication supports and accessible formats are available upon request.
- 2021's annual public meeting regarding the accessibility of the transportation system was held on November 2021.
- Began the first phase of the wayfinding project. This project aims to improve the existing wayfinding signs to be fully accessible.

## Employment Standards

- The City of Stratford is committed to reasonably accommodating the needs of people with disabilities throughout the employment cycle.
- The City's website employment page and job postings inform applicants that accommodations are available upon request during all recruitment stages.
- Continue to implement and document a return-to-work process to support employees who have been absent due to non-occupational or occupational illness/injury (Sick Leave, and WSIB Return to Work Procedure).
- The City hired an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) consultant to assist and provide recommendations on the City's recruitment/promotion practices and policies.
- The Human Resources department issued an RFP in search of a recruitment system to assist in the proficiency of recruitment demands and provide a greater scope of accessibility for job applicants.
- Worked with employees who may need individualized workplace emergency response assistance.
- Worked with employees in developing and documenting an individual accommodation plan that considered their needs.



## Transportation Standard

- In 2021, the City installed fourteen new five-by-ten accessible bus shelters, that included solar-powered lighting.
- All transit and parallel transit operators must complete the training required by the Transportation Standards of IASR
- New hired parallel transit staff is required to complete hands-on training on tie-down operation, loading and unloading of customers, use of the lift, and how to position the bus for pick up and drop off.
- The transit division held its annual meeting to discuss the accessibility of the City's transit system to the public.

The Stratford Police Services Board is responsible for licensing taxis in the City of Stratford.

## Design of Public Spaces Standard

- The playground at Optimist Park was replaced with a new accessible play structure and surface.
- The paths at Millennium Park and Gallery Stratford were widened to five feet allowing more space and accessibility.
- Continue to purchase accessible tables at a 5:1 ratio when needed.
- Housing project, Britannia Phase Two (200 Britannia Street) has begun. This project will include a LULA lift (elevator), barrier-free suites, and power-operated doors.
- The Perth-Stratford Housing Corporation (PSHC) properties in Listowel and Stratford were renovated. Upgrades included reducing barriers in units, increasing scooter storage, and increasing wheelchair access to buildings.
- The Stratford Public Library renovated the cobblestone pathway located adjacent to the parking lot to a smooth concrete surface.
- The Stratford Public Library updated its front garden and added walkways and sitting areas. The Library consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on path material and seating layout.
- The City will continue to ensure that new curb cuts are located only where they are safe; for example, where there are traffic lights or an established crossing.
- An accessible counter reception with enhanced security was installed in the Clerk's office.
- A new signalized pedestrian crossing was installed at the intersection of Huron Street and Huntingdon Avenue.



- The new Facility Accessibility Design Manual was finalized in 2021, which is in line with the City's Zoning By-Law.
- A total of 26 tactile warning plates were installed
- New tactile warning plates were installed at TJ Dolan Multiuse Trail, Lakeside Drive North, Redford Crescent, Mornington Street, and West Gore Street.
- The City will continue to complete annual and ongoing reviews through public feedback and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The appropriate departments will forward and respond to identified barriers and required actions.

### Contact Information

For more information about accessibility initiatives within the City or to obtain a copy of this presentation in an alternative format, contact the Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator.

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### Feedback

The City of Stratford welcomes input from the public to help identify ways to improve accessibility to facilities, goods, and services. Members of the public are encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator at the City of Stratford or complete the Contact Us section on the City of Stratford website.