

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2019-2023



WHITEWATER
— REGION —

Introduction

Disabilities affect people of all ages and background. Some people are born with one or more disabilities. Many others develop disabilities through illness, injury or aging. People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. 1 in 7 people in Ontario has a disability. That's almost 2 million Ontarians. By 2036, that number will rise to 1 in 5 as people age. Over the next 20 years, aging Ontarians and people with disabilities will represent 40% of total income in Ontario. That's \$536 billion. People with disabilities are a growing market that businesses can't afford to overlook.

Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on future prosperity in Ontario.

The law requires that barriers are identified, and removed, in order to provide customer service that is more accessible to people who have disabilities. The Province of Ontario recognized that accessibility is a shared responsibility and passed the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) on December 14, 2001 to require provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations to review their policies, programs and services.

In June 2005, the Province of Ontario furthered its commitment to accessibility by expanding previous legislation to include the private sector with the goal to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities in five important areas of their lives within specified time limits:

- customer service
- transportation
- access to information
- outdoor public spaces
- employment

The multi-year plan sets out strategies to identify and remove barriers to accessibility as required by the AODA. It also positions the Township as a leader in accessibility matters in the community.

Multi-Year Strategies

2019 – Westmeath Arena and Website Compliance

Strategy 1: Include accessibility as a component of the repairs at the Westmeath Arena

Measures

- Replace existing ramp and stairs at the community hall entrance.
- Project managed by Westmeath & District Recreation Association.

Strategy 2: Support the provision of an Accessible Website.

Measures

- Assess accessibility as a part of development of a new website organization and content.
- Internet websites and web content conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
- Post a notice on the website and of premises that information is available in a variety of accessible formats.
- Establish a plan/familiarize with sources and time-frames for formatting that is not feasible to do in-house. i.e. captioning, video-description and conversion to Braille or audio and any other formatting.

2020 – Focus on Asset Management and Legislative Compliance

Strategy 1: Ensure accessibility continues to be a part of asset management planning

Measures

- Ensure appropriate staff have received the Design of Public Spaces Standard training.
- Review sidewalk requirements.
- Review accessible on street parking requirements.

Strategy 2: Beachburg Arena

Measures

- Implement accountability audit recommendation from space needs review.

2021 – Focus on Training, Policy Review and Grants

Strategy 1: Review training programs.

Measures

- Review and develop accessibility training for full time, part time, seasonal staff, and volunteers.
- Incorporate accessibility considerations in other corporate and departmental training.

Strategy 2: Review existing accessibility policies.

Measures

- Review the integrated accessibility standards policy.
- Review guidelines and processes for service disruptions, customer feedback and request for alternative formats.

Strategy 3: Cobden Astrolabe Arena & Community Centre

Measures

- Complete, subject to funding, accessibility improvements at the centre.

2022 – Focus on Elections and Facility Accessibility Audits

Strategy 1: Provide advice with regard to accessibility and the 2022 municipal and school board election.

Measures

- Develop an election specific accessibility plan.
- Review accessibility features of the voting system.
- Provide outreach to the community.

Strategy 2: Complete Facility Accessibility Audits

Measures

- Building on condition audits, undertake accessibility reviews for all corporate buildings.

2023 – Focus on the Next Multi Year Plan

Strategy 1: Prepare for the next Multi-Year Plan.

Measures

- Review progress undertaken in 2019-2023
- Develop the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Plan.
- Undertake community consultation prior to adoption of the Plan.

Publication and Availability

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2019-2023) will be available on the municipal website. Paper copies of the plan are available at the Township Office. This document is available in alternative accessible formats and with communication supports as soon practicable and upon request.

Contact / Inquiries

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