



The Corporation of the Town of Perth

Accessibility Plan

2020 – 2025

1.0 Introduction

It is estimated that one in five Canadians (or 6.2 million) aged 15 years and over have one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities (2017 Canadian Survey on Disability). For many, the challenges and obstacles in their day-to-day lives may limit their full participation in society. Understanding the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in their personal, employment, or economic situations helps inform government policy.

The prevalence of disabilities among Canadians tends to increase with age. However, more than 540,000 youths aged 15 to 24 years (13%) have one or more disabilities. This compares with 20% or 3.7 million of working age adults (25 to 64 years), and 38% or 2 million of seniors aged 65 and over. Women (24%) are more likely to have a disability than men (20%).

The Corporation of the Town of Perth's Accessibility Plan 2020 - 2025 represents the Town's commitment to improving the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to our community. It recognizes that our municipal government plays an important role in the development of our community and the delivery of important public services. Streets, parks and public spaces, recreation facilities, public buildings, programs, services, elections are all within the responsibility of the Town of Perth. It is critical that these services and responsibilities are reviewed and evaluated to ensure barriers to accessibility are removed.

This Multi-Year Plan is based upon requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations O. Reg 191/11*. This legislation sets the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. It contains standards in the following five (5) areas:

1. Customer Service;
2. Information and Communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation, and;
5. Built Environment.

The Corporation shall endeavor to demonstrate leadership for the business and non-profit sectors within our municipality. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services and facilities. The Corporation will continue to remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing our facilities and services.

The Corporation does not currently provide Transportation Services and does not license Taxi's, therefore that section of the Ontario Regulation will not be specifically addressed in this Plan.

1.2 Corporate Accessibility Policy

The Corporation adopted and implemented Accessibility Standards for Customer Service in 2009 per By-law 3940. This Accessibility Plan is consistent with that By-law.

The proposed plan for 2020-2025 builds on the commitments in the previous multi-year accessibility plan approved by Council in February 2015 for the period 2015-2020.

These commitments consisted of the following:

- Updating the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility for people with disabilities;
- Ensuring compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) and Regulations (O. Reg 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASA)) including accessibility training;
- Review development proposals which require *Planning Act* approval to ensure and encourage accessibility design features;
- The encouragement of community awareness of accessibility needs and the AODA;
- The identification and the encouragement of the removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

The commitments also included staff participation at the Lanark County Accessibility Committee however that Committee is no longer active.

2.1 The Accessible Customer Service Standard

The Corporation of the Town of Perth is committed to ensuring that all employees and volunteers receive accessible services in a timely manner. The Corporation will make reasonable efforts, based upon the needs of the community to provide an equitable customer service experience. The definition of what is reasonable shall be based on the frequency of the expressed need for service, the availability of the service requested, the relative cost compared to the overall municipal budget, best practices recognized by the other local municipalities and Provincial regulation.

Unfortunately the impacts of the COVID-19 virus have significantly changed or curtailed many of the services that are normally offered by the Corporation. Although the Corporation is still committed to the provision of accessible services, there may be necessary modifications to conform to public health guidelines.

Projected future activities include:

- Continued training of staff and volunteers in accessible customer service;
- Reviewing current processes to receive feedback from the public;
- Modifying the Corporation's procurement policy to include the principle of accessibility;
- Evaluating all voting locations for the 2022 election to ensure that locations are fully accessible and provide barrier free access to voters, candidates and employees;

- Ensure that all election materials are made available in a number of accessible formats;
- Particularly to conform to public health guidelines, explore the opportunity to utilize technologies to support accessible customer service.

2.2 Information and Communications

The Corporation of the Town of Perth is committed to providing information to persons with disabilities in a format which is accessible to them, when practical. The Town shall upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communications support shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the persons' accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

This policy does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that the Town does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are unconvertible, the Town shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with an explanation as to why the information is unconvertible along with a summary of the unconvertible information.

Projected Future activities include:

- Making the necessary upgrades to the Town website to ensure WCAG 2.0, level "AA" compliance;
- Providing video recording of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings;
- Adopting governance software which facilitates the creation of accessible Council documents.
- Providing training to staff and Council regarding accessible document standards;
- Reviewing emergency procedures, plans, public safety information and emergency operations centres to ensure accessibility.

2.3 The Employment Standard

The Corporation of the Town of Perth shall continue to be compliant with Employment Standards Regulations, ensuring that the process of recruitment, selection and notice to successful applicants is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce. The Town includes the following statement in all job postings:

"The Corporation of the Town of Perth is an equal opportunity employer. We thank all candidates for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act 2001, and will be used only for the purpose of candidate selection. The Town of Perth will provide accommodation for individuals with accessibility needs."

- The Town is committed to its Human Resources Policy and Health and Safety Policy Manual continuing to incorporate the following statement:

“That the Town of Perth shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Corporation is aware of the need for accommodation due to the disability.”

2.4 The Built Environment Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standards in O. Reg. 191/11 addresses accessibility requirements/considerations in a variety of public spaces including: recreational trails and public beach, outdoor eating areas, play spaces, accessible parking, exterior paths of travel including sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas.

Projected future activities include:

- An evaluation by an external consultant as to whether or not Corporation of Town of Perth meets built environment accessibility standards;
- Increasing the number of automatic door openers to encompass all washrooms and entrances to facilities operated by the Corporation;
- Ensuring all new sidewalks include slope and width for wheelchairs, accessible curbs, painted crosswalks;
- Ensure a continuing program of shaving sidewalks;
- Ensure that future recreational trails to meet O. Reg 191/11 accessible standards;
- Develop design to make Stewart Park more accessible;
- All future green space to meet accessible standards;
- Future environmental services initiatives will comply with the Built Environment Standard of O. Reg 191/11.

2.5 Training

The Town of Perth shall continue to ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the integrated accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to,

- (a) All employees, and volunteers;
- (b) All persons who participate in developing the organization’s policies; and
- (c) All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

The training will be providing both at the start of the individual’s interaction with the Town and on an on-going basis in respect of any changes to policies on an ongoing basis.

2.6 Maintenance of Accessible Elements

The Corporation will maintain the following procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in its public spaces:

- Staff will perform regular monitoring and checks of accessible elements of Corporate public spaces; and
- Staff, upon identification of any issue impacting accessible elements in the Corporation's public spaces, will report any findings to Facilities Management as soon as reasonably possible for timely remediation and/or emergency maintenance, where necessary.
- In addition, in the event of any temporary disruptions affecting the accessible elements in the Corporation's public space, due to maintenance or otherwise, the Corporation will notify the public through the following procedure:
 - a. In the event of a planned service disruption to facilities and services that are relied upon by persons with disabilities to access Corporate goods, services or facilities, including accessible elements of Corporate public spaces that are not in working order, notice of the disruption shall be provided in advance.
 - b. In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be provided as soon as is reasonable under the circumstances.
 - c. Notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration (if known), and if applicable, and a description of alternative facilities and services that may be available.
 - d. Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Corporation, at customer service counters located at Town Hall or regional sites, and/or posted on the Corporation's website or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

3.0 Summary

This Plan represents the goals and actions that support accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services and facilities. The Corporation of the Town of Perth's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed annually by Staff and Council. As progress is made with the removal of barriers to people with disabilities, the Plan shall be revised accordingly. The actions identified in this report shall be reviewed as part of the annual budget deliberation process to prioritize future investment in making the Town more accessible.