



Town of Tillsonburg

2014-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

(Last Updated: November, 2016)

Accessible Format

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact Donna Wilson, Clerk at dewilson@tillsonburg.ca 519-688-3009 ext. 3224.

Background and Legislation

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) was passed by the provincial government to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. The ODA stipulates the following municipal obligations to the Act:

- Municipalities are required to prepare annual accessibility plans;
- Municipalities shall have regard to the accessibility of persons with disabilities when purchasing goods and services;
- Municipalities will improve access to municipal elections by giving greater consideration to accessible voting locations;
- Municipalities will increase the minimum penalty for misuse of designated parking, under municipal by laws, to \$300.
- Municipalities, with a population greater than 10,000, are required to establish accessibility advisory committees. In addition, the legislation stipulates that the majority of committee members must self-identify as a person with a disability.

Based on public consultation, new legislation was developed. In June 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) was enacted into law with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The Act is more comprehensive and prescriptive than the ODA and its requirements now apply to the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Under the AODA the Province has committed to developing and implementing standards in:

- Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

The first standard, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) was passed in January, 2008. The Town of Tillsonburg has been required to comply with the Standards for Customer Service since January 1, 2010.

The next three standards, Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation (Ontario Regulation 191/11), have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR came into effect July 1, 2011, which provides requirements that are to be phased in over time, which, for the Town of Tillsonburg, means implementing standards from 2011 to 2021.

The last accessibility standard identified under the AODA, Design of Public Spaces Standards (Built Environment) (Ontario Regulation 191/11), was most recently enacted. This standard is intended to help remove barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces for persons with disabilities.

Although the AODA is in place, until all accessibility standards have been enacted into law, the ODA will remain in force. Therefore, municipalities will be obligated to comply with two pieces of legislation.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), created under the AODA, came into effect July 1, 2011. It requires organizations to develop a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the IASR. This plan establishes goals and objectives for the next five (5) years, beginning January 1st, 2014 to December 31st, 2019. The plan will be reviewed annually and as progress is made with the removal of barriers to people with disabilities, revisions will be made accordingly. Annual updates of the Multi-Year Plan will also be considered to fulfill the requirement of an Annual Plan under the ODA.

Commitment Statement

The Town of Tillsonburg is committed to promoting a barrier-free Town for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in Tillsonburg. With this report, the Town of Tillsonburg is proud to present its findings and report on the development of innovative strategies to remove and prevent future barriers for people with disabilities and our significantly maturing population.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) shall be appointed by Council for a four year term. The Committee is comprised of a member of Town Council, a Town staff liaison, and stakeholders within the community. Legislation stipulates that a majority of Committee members must self-identify as a person with a disability. The meetings are open to the public and are held at the Corporate Office (200 Broadway). For agendas, or to be notified of a meeting, please contact the Clerk's Office at clerks@tillsonburg.ca, 519-688-3009, ext. 3221.

Committee Members: 2014-2018

Citizen Members: Peter Staley, Chair
Mike Cerna
Robert Doerr
Michael Kadey
Margaret McCrimmon
Scot Richardson

Council Representative: Councillor Brian Stephenson
Staff Liaison: Tricia Smith, Deputy Clerk

Accomplishments to Date

The Town of Tillsonburg has been actively developing innovative approaches to addressing accessibility issues, including:

- An Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was formed to advise and assist the Town of Tillsonburg on matters, issues and policies pertaining to accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premise. Also, a Terms of Reference was created to help guide the Committee.
- The AAC undertook an initiative in 2012-2013 to tour Town-owned facilities and identify where barriers exist. A number of barriers have been identified and documented, and solutions are being explored.
- The AAC has also identified and documented a number of outdoor locations in town which are unfriendly to persons with disabilities, most of which can be addressed by cutting curbs or fixing sidewalks. The Roads department has been notified of these issues and changes have been made as necessary.
- A Town Accessibility Policy was created and made available to the public to address the guidelines for dealing with accessible customer service for the municipality;
- A new Town website was launched in May, 2016 which integrated accessibility features within its design. The site includes Browsealoud, a tool which reads text out loud to individuals with vision impairments, or users who have difficulty reading.
- A landing page has been dedicated on the new website to Accessibility and includes information on the Tillsonburg Accessibility Advisory Committee and Accessibility Resources, including the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Accessibility Plan, Accessibility Policy, and links to the AODA and relating regulations.
- Business cards, corporate letterhead and templates are being redesigned to ensure they comply with accessibility requirements.
- An improved feedback mechanism has been incorporated into the new website so that members of the public can bring accessibility issues and concerns to the Town's attention via an on-line Comment/Complaint form.
- The Customer Service Centre provides additional ways for people with mobility

disabilities to obtain municipal services 24 hours a day e.g. phone, fax, email, web-site, automatic bill payment, internet banking bill payment etc.

- Several measures were taken by municipal staff to ensure increased accessibility during the 2010 municipal election. These included accessibility audits of all polling locations, and allowing staff to assist persons with disabilities who required assistance filling out forms, filling out a ballot, or accessing a voting location. The Town also offered roving polls.
- AODA Training is given to all new employees and volunteers of the Town as part of their orientation and a copy of this training video is now available on the new Town website on the Accessibility landing page.
- The Central Business District Design Study was created with consideration to accessibility issues throughout the process.
- All job postings now include a standard statement to express the Town's desire to accommodate individuals with disabilities during the hiring process and leading into successful employment.
- Accessibility features were considered when designing self-service kiosks.
- Staff met with Tillsonburg Taxi Companies regarding complying with the requirement to post their fees and provide a fare card in an accessible format.
- Staff posted a survey to the public in order to determine accessible taxicab needs within the community and forwarded that information to the taxi cab companies;
- Accessibility was considered in the development of a new Town procurement policy and a process was included to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities.
- Facilities have been updated to include ramps with handrails, sliding entrance doors, grab bars, and door operators wherever possible.
- A sidewalk inspection program is completed annually to identify and repair deficiency's such as trip ledges.
- In July, 2016, a new unisex barrier-free public washroom was installed in the north end of the Tillsonburg Community Centre to improve the accessibility features on the main floor.
- Additional enhancements made to the Community Centre since 2014 include:
 - The installation of power assist doors at the north entrance; power assisted entrance doors, and an accessible main desk for the Health Club;
 - Elevation of toilets at the Senior Centre;
 - Installation of (3) accessible water fountain/refill stations at the TCC and one at the OPP station;
 - Installation of grab bars in both pool change rooms for hairdryer use at TCC;
 - Installation of power assist door and accessible paddles on pool doors and arms for the pool life chair;
 - Replacement of doorknobs with handles at the Corporate Office (September, 2016).
- In November, 2016, the Accessibility Advisory Committee in partnership with the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce introduced the Accessibility Achievement Award to recognize the outstanding contributions by an individual, business, organization or school for their efforts in reducing/eliminating barriers in the community for people with disabilities.

- Application of accessible sidewalk crossing design in all 2016 road reconstruction projects as per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation O.Reg. 191/11 Part IV.1) Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) Exterior Paths of Travel.
- Accessible upgrades at the Mid-block pedestrian crossing on Broadway at Town Centre Mall including:

Sidewalk and Curb Ramps

- Low slope curb ramps for easier navigation
- Flared curb ramps for positional awareness
- Tactile walking surface indicators for positional awareness

Accessible Pedestrian Signals

- Locator and walk indicator tone for positional awareness
- Maximum installation height and distance from the curb for ease of access
- Tactile directional arrows to indicate crossing location for easier navigation
- Audible and vibro-tactile walk phase indication for easier navigation

Goals for 2014-2018

Accessibility Advisory Committee

- The AAC will provide an advisory role for all corporate projects to ensure that accessibility is considered;
- In 2014, the AAC will finish reviewing Town-owned facilities and identify where barriers exist. The Committee will forward these results to senior staff as they arise;
- The AAC will conduct inspections of private business, upon their request, to help raise awareness for accessibility in the Town;
- Work in partnership with the various Accessibility Advisory Committees across Oxford County for the purpose of heightening awareness in relation to improved accessibility.

Design & Public Spaces – Built Environment

- Accessibility will continue to be considered when reviewing planning applications;
- The Town will continue committing to encouraging the private sector, when undergoing material alterations, to retrofit existing buildings for accessibility and developing suitable policies and procedures.
- Annual sidewalk inspection program will continue as needed to evaluate cracks, offset joints, and holes in sidewalks. Problems will be fixed as they arise.
- Continue accessible sidewalk crossing design in all road reconstruction projects.
- Implementation of a new accessible pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Broadway & Glendale including:

Sidewalk and Curb Ramps

- Low slope curb ramps for easier navigation
- Flared curb ramps for positional awareness

- Tactile walking surface indicators for positional awareness

Accessible Pedestrian Signals

- Locator and walk indicator tone for positional awareness
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Facilities

- Staff will evaluate barrier issues addressed through site tours by the AAC to determine further accessibility issues and how they can be incorporated into various Town facilities;
- Renovations will be conducted at the Community Centre in the pool change room and health club to create a fully accessible entrance to the pool as well as accessible showers and change area;
- Lever handles will be added to doors at multiple Town locations to increase accessibility at entrances;

Employment

- Staff will continue to be made aware of the Town's Accessibility Plan, and the Town's Accessibility Policies;
- Staff will notify new employees of existing policies for accommodating persons with disabilities;
- Should existing employees express an interest in obtaining an accessible format or communication support in order to perform their job, the request will be handled by the Clerk.

Customer Service

- The Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy will continue to be complied with, and reviewed by staff to ensure the Town is providing an adequate level of Accessible Customer Service to the public;

Information and Communication

- Continuing efforts are being made by the Town to make more information available to the public to promote accessibility and transparency in municipal operations. A searchable portal has been incorporated into the new Town website which includes a number of public documents (i.e. Council & Committee Agendas and Minutes, By-Laws, Policies, Strategic Plans, etc.).
- Multiple formats of Town policies and procedures will be made available upon request;
- There are an expanded number of forms included on the new town website to allow for alternative means to submit comments, complaints and feedback, as well as to apply for volunteer positions on Council Committees; as well as on-line payment options for expanded service.
- The new Town website has been evaluated to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA – web content accessibility guidelines;

- Elections manuals, technology and software will be reviewed and amended if necessary in preparation for the 2018 Municipal Election.

Transportation

- Accessibility requirements have been integrated into the taxicab by-law and appropriate accessibility requirements have been included.
- Tillsonburg Town Council supported the formation of the Transportation Pilot Steering Committee and the development of a transportation pilot program to provide cost effective transportation to the community. The program was launched in April, 2016 and offers Mon-Fri. accessible van service for residents going to and from work, appointments and shopping. Enhancements are being made to expand the program to include service on Sundays and Norfolk Mall has been added to the service route.

Conclusion

The Town of Tillsonburg is committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing future barriers to allow people with disabilities full participation in our community. The Town encourages input from all Town of Tillsonburg residents. The Town of Tillsonburg is of the opinion that this legislation should improve accessibility in workplaces and public spaces and improve access to employment, customer service, communication and transportation. However, as the financial impact of this legislation on municipal taxpayers is significant, the Town also recommends that the province assume some financial responsibility for these requirements.

Feedback on the accessibility of the Town's facilities, programs, and services is always welcome. Please contact the Town Clerk with any inquiries regarding this Accessibility Plan:

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