

# 2014 Year-End Report

## Accessibility Plan 2013-2015

Endorsed by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility  
February 25, 2015



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CITY OF  
ST. CATHARINES

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

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## **Introduction**

Communities are changing throughout the Province of Ontario as the population ages. It is estimated that approximately 20% of Ontarians are likely to have a disability by the year 2025. A mandate set out by the Province to remove barriers by 2025, through the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities* (AODA), will require communities to become more accessible to an aging population, to persons with disabilities, to everyone.

### **2013-2015 Plan; year-end report for 2014**

Like other municipalities throughout Ontario, the City of St. Catharines has replaced its annual accessibility plan with a longer term strategy to clearly map the City's accessibility objectives. Within this long-term objective is a mandate to measure progress in an annual status report.

This annual status report includes accessibility highlights and AODA objectives met during 2014.

# **What's new under the Province's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)***

## **AODA Review; status**

Last year the Province actively undertook a review of the Act.

Recently, on February 13, 2015, Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, released a statement that Provost Mayo Moran's review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) has been completed and submitted to the Province.

This comprehensive review of the AODA is made every 5 years. This practice has motivated updates and streamlined commitments to building an accessible Ontario by 2025.

## **AODA Standards; a quick review**

### **Accessible Customer Service Standard**

Key elements:

- Accessible service
- Accessible communication
- Accommodating assistive devices
- Welcoming support persons
- Welcoming guide dogs or service animals
- Training all staff and volunteers
- Notification of any service disruption
- Act on feedback

The City of St. Catharines has complied with this requirement before the deadline of December 31, 2009. Supporting policies were developed and reviewed as part of the previous annual update. All staff and volunteers received training in the Fall of 2009 with new staff and volunteers receiving training as part of their orientation. Additionally, any subsequent training includes awareness and reference to accessible customer service.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards**

Key elements:

- General requirements including accessible procurement and self-serve kiosks
- Accessible information and communication
- Accessible employment
- Accessible transportation
- Accessible design of public spaces

There are various compliance dates within these various standards. The City continues its practice to implement elements as soon as possible and before deadlines. This helps to ensure that practices are in place prior to compliance deadlines.

The City's accessibility policies are attached as Appendix A.

## **Associated News**

- 2015 welcomed an updated Ontario Building Code (OBC) that focuses on accessible elements
- In the past 10 years the City has exceeded the OBC by using the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) for its own renovations and new builds
- This new OBC makes some criteria in FADS obsolete and the City is advocating with the Region to adopt an updated version
- The new OBC focuses on several key elements of accessibility;
  - Barrier-free paths of travel
  - Access to all storeys of a building
  - Visitable suites in apartments
  - Visual fire safety devices
  - Washrooms
  - Access to pools and spas
  - Accessible and adaptive seating
  - Renovations

## **Statement of Organizational Commitment**

The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines (herein after the “City”) is committed to developing, implementing, maintaining, and enhancing accessibility as set out under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 (AODA) and its Standards for people with a disability, in a manner that:

- Reflects the principles of dignity and independence;
- Seeks to provide integrated services; and
- Provides opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from its goods or services.

## **City’s accessibility compliance report to the Province**

The City filed its compliance report to the Province in 2013 and will do so again in 2015. The upcoming report will verify all compliance activities up to January 1, 2015.

The City met or exceeded all requirements with respect to its AODA mandate in areas such as;

- created and endorsed a statement of organizational commitment for accessibility
- approved accessibility plans and supportive policies
- implemented practices and procedures to support these policies
- ensured public emergency plans are available for its facilities
- ensured ongoing accessibility training for all staff and volunteers
- achieved compliance with all AODA requirements to-date
  - Accessible Customer Service Standard, fully compliant by Jan. 2010
  - Integrated Accessibility Standard, fully compliant with all elements required to-date Dec. 2014, as well as many elements not yet due
  - Refer to details on next page

# AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards

Broader  
Public Org.  
50+  
employees

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2020
<b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical requirements (purchased after July 1, 2011)</li> <li>• Fares (equal fares for persons with/without disabilities)</li> <li>• Pre-boarding and On-board announcements (verbal)</li> <li>• School transportation – accessible service</li> <li>• Public sector organizations</li> <li>• Ferries</li> <li>• Non-functioning accessibility equipment</li> <li>• Origin to Destination services</li> <li>• Storage of mobility aids (no charge)</li> <li>• Duties of Municipalities (taxicab – equal fares and fees)</li> </ul>	<b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency and public safety information</li> </ul> <b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit stops</li> <li>• Storage of mobility aids</li> <li>• Companions and Children</li> <li>• Duties of Municipalities (taxicab – registration ID and information)</li> <li>• Availability of information on accessibility equipment</li> <li>• General responsibilities</li> <li>• Emergency preparedness and response</li> <li>• Ferries</li> <li>• Courtesy seating</li> </ul> <b>Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace emergency information</li> </ul>	<b>General Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Accessibility plans</li> <li>• Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities</li> <li>• Kiosks</li> </ul> <b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational/training resources/materials</li> <li>• Training to educators</li> <li>• Public libraries</li> </ul> <b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical requirements (manufactured on/after Jan 1, 2013)</li> <li>• Accessibility plans</li> <li>• Coordinated services</li> <li>• Service disruptions</li> <li>• Visitors</li> <li>• Fare parity (within same provider)</li> <li>• Alternative accessible method of transportation</li> <li>• Hours of service (within same provider)</li> <li>• Service delays</li> <li>• Ferries</li> <li>• Duties of municipalities (bus stops/shelters)</li> <li>• Duties of Municipalities (accessible taxicabs)</li> <li>• Fares (payment options)</li> </ul>	<b>General Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> </ul> <b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible feedback processes</li> <li>• New internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A.</li> </ul> <b>Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Employees returning to work</li> <li>• Employee accommodation</li> <li>• Performance management, career development, and redeployment</li> </ul> <b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Trip restrictions</li> <li>• Fares, support persons</li> <li>• Eligibility application process (existing)</li> <li>• Booking</li> <li>• School transportation – policies</li> <li>• Emergency or compassionate grounds</li> <li>• Ferries</li> </ul>	<b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible formats and communication supports</li> <li>• Educational libraries – print based resources</li> <li>• Producers of educational or training material – textbooks</li> </ul>	<b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational libraries – multi-media/digital resources</li> <li>• Producers of educational or training material – supplementary print materials</li> </ul>
				2017	2021
				<b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-boarding and on-board announcements (electronic)</li> <li>• Fare parity (separate conventional and specialized providers)</li> <li>• Hours of service (separate conventional and specialized providers)</li> <li>• Categories of eligibility</li> </ul>	<b>Information &amp; Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, excluding live captioning and audio description</li> </ul>

Compliant ↑ Compliant ↑ Compliant ↑ Complaint ↑ Compliant or Planning ↑ Planning or Achieving ↑

## City: 2014 Highlights

- Implemented “closed captioning” in real-time for Cogeco broadcasts of Council meetings
- Continued corporate-wide accessibility training through orientation on all enacted Accessibility Standards for all staff; fulltime, part-time, casual, students and volunteers
- Renovated various facilities for improved accessibility; Dunlop Centre for Older Adults, West St. Catharines Centre for Older Adults
- Continued to require new buildings to be built to FADS criteria; FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Meridian Centre, exterior washroom structures at Lester B. Pearson Park and Happy Rolph’s Bird Sanctuary
- Continued to refer to the comprehensive 2008 City facility access audit to develop a renovation strategy or ensure deficiencies are addressed as part of any associated renovations
- Conducted daily business in compliance with accessibility standards and policies
  - o Accessible Customer Service Policy
  - o Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy
    - Developed a maintenance practice for accessibility elements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard to ensure on-going accessibility related maintenance and ensure notification of any service disruption (refer to Appendix B for details)
- Ensured accessible information and communication
  - o Provided further training sessions in April 2014 for new staff and staff who requested a refresher
    - Create documents in accessible formats
    - Create PDFs that are searchable
    - Post accessible documents and information to the website
  - o Provided accessible information and communication, upon request, in a format that is accessible to the requestor

- Provided detailed training to managers to support understanding of accessible hiring practices under the Accessible Employment Standard
  - o Developed a manager's guide containing comprehensive accessible employment related policies, practices and procedures to support employment accessibility and accommodations for people with a disability
- Initiated the development of an Adobe training program for staff that contains elements focusing on document uses such as accessible forms
- Provided supportive information and training webinar information to key staff relating to website accessibility and achieving WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance
- Developed compliance strategy relating to the new Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPSS)
  - o TES / PDS developed an action plan to amend various corresponding City documents to align; Zoning By-law, Urban Design Guidelines, Site Plan Manual, Downtown Streetscape, Construction requirements, etc. to comply with DOPSS requirements prior to 2015 year-end
- Added accessible parking information to the City's website parking lot information page
- Updated the accessible parking line painting at the Merritton Arena to current zoning requirements
- Continued awareness and information sharing relating to accessible procurement practices
- Continued outreach to businesses with accessibility tools, information and resources to encourage a more inclusive community
- Promoted fire safety and emergency evacuation benefits to the community
- Continued to resource accessibility expertise and opinions through public input and through on-going feedback from the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)

- Initiated a review of facility and park rental agreements to reflect accessible responsibility during the rental (similar to 3<sup>rd</sup> party sign off)
- Acquired a second Ubi Duo (device resembling 2 small laptops for 2-way, face-to-face, typed communication) to support communication off-site or at public meetings for people with a hearing or communication disability
- Developed 2 new City templates;
  - o Service disruption template
  - o Public consultation re specific accessible elements in the Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Communications staff developed and launched a new email signature for all staff emails that provides consistent corporate information using fonts that meet City best practices.
- Developed plans to offer information / awareness sessions for staff later in 2015 from Communication Disability Access Canada (CDAC )

## **Accessibility Committee: 2014 Highlights**

- Provided input on and endorsed the City's annual reports as part of the long-term Accessibility Plan (2013–2015) based on AODA requirements and on-going liaison with departmental staff access reps
- Updated Council at least annually on accessibility
- Available as a staff resource relating to accessibility
- Advised on election and polling location accessibility during 2014
- Endorsed real-time closed captioning of Council meetings
- Continued to advocate for play-by-play coverage through listening assistive devices at the Meridian Centre
- Advised on accessibility of various renovation designs at City facilities
- Advised on accessibility of new builds such as the Meridian Centre at various stages of design throughout the design process
- Reviewed and provided input on accessibility relating to Site Plans
  - o Followed up with PBS to promote inspection and enforcement to ensure site plan compliance with accessible design agreements
- Advocated for accessibility component within Community Investment Plans (CIP)
- Provided input and prioritization guidance on future accessibility renovations
- Attended March of Dimes' annual Breaking the Barrier Awards (BBA) event and hosted a public display for accessibility input and awareness
- Continued to advocate for connective and accessible sidewalks and pedestrian routes throughout the City and supported tactile surface walking indicators at new or replaced curb ramps
- Provided feedback on various City's webpages and tested the citizen application for committees with screen reading devices
- Supported the City's on-going accessibility training for its staff and volunteers by providing an introduction at these various sessions
- Reviewed and endorsed the 2014 Year-End Report on the Accessibility Plan and planned its presentation to Council

## **Library: 2014 Highlights**

- Continued to provide accessibility training on the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation for all staff; fulltime, part-time, casual, students and volunteers
- Became of a member of the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) a new national not-for-profit entity launched in 2014 providing equitable library access for all Canadians with print disabilities accessible through their local library
- Acquired downloadable magazine collections
- Continue to increase collection of downloadable books/music, large print, and DVD's
- Improved access to DVDs with descriptive video and closed caption by including these terms as searchable fields in the library's online catalogue
- Continued Visiting Library Service
- Followed AODA prescribed guidelines for the production of library public documents
- Installed Braille signage in elevator
- Updated accessibility policies to be current and comprehensive
- See Appendix C for complete details of the Library's annual accessibility report

## **Transit: 2014 Highlights**

The following information provides an update as of January 1, 2015 of the accessibility initiatives identified in our Accessibility Plan.

The St. Catharines Transit Commission (SCTC) is committed to developing, implementing, maintaining and enhancing accessibility as set out under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its Standards, for people with a disability in a manner that:

- Reflects the continual improvement of access to public transportation premises, facilities and services for passengers and employees with disabilities.
- The provision of high quality service which is accessible to all passengers and employees.

### **Report on Achievements in 2014:**

1. SCTC met all requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Transportation Standard having compliance deadlines on or prior to December 31, 2014.
2. Four new accessible buses were purchased as replacement of buses which were past their useful life and to increase the frequency of accessible service on Sundays.
3. Nine new bus shelters with accessible concrete pads and pathways to the sidewalk were installed on bus routes.
4. Twenty new bus benches were installed on bus routes.
5. Accessibility features were added to our website which include a new high contrast feature, navigation aids and the ability to increase or decrease the size of the font. Timetables were also added for each route to allow screen readers to properly identify the times buses arrive.
6. A smartphone APP was launched that will allow passengers with disabilities easier access to real-time information.
7. One new low floor Paratransit vehicle was purchased to replace an older vehicle which had passed its useful service life.

## **Acknowledgements**

### **2014 Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)**

**Councillor Matthew Harris** on behalf of **Mayor Sendzik**

**Shelley Stewart**, Co-Chairperson

**Diane Foster**, Co-Chairperson

**Bob Asham**

**Chantal Barrette**

**Steve Byers**

**Ian Crawford**

**Stephen Kurtic-Lentinello**

**Julie Morris**

**Linda Marie O'Hagan**

**David Reed**

**Mary Jane Waszynski**

Membership appointment is for a 4 year period concurrent to the term of Council. Current appointments are temporarily extended from 2015/01.

Anyone interested in membership is welcome to contact the Accessibility Coordinator or the City Clerk.

## **Corporate representatives**

### City of St. Catharines – Staff Resources & Roles

#### City of St. Catharines – Staff Resources

**Diana Lecinski**, Accessibility Coordinator, Corporate Support Services

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**Jeanette Pillitteri**, Corporate Support Services

**Chantal Switzer**, Human Resources, Corporate Support Services

**Cindy Upshall**, Corporate Communications, CAO's Office

**Wayne Racey**, Information Systems, Corporate Support Services

**Leah LaPlante**, Clerks Office, Legal and Clerks Services

**Marco Marino**, Economic Development, CAO's Office

**Linda Robinson**, Administration, Financial Management Services

**Chris Leonard**, Prevention, Fire & Emergency Management Services

**Margaret Josipovic**, Site Plan, Planning and Development Services

**Sam Carrera**, Building & Development, Planning & Development Services

**Phil Cristi**, Programs and Culture, Recreation and Community Services

**Kristen Sullivan**, Park Design, Recreation & Community Services

**Mauro Becchetti**, Parks Maintenance, Recreation & Community Services

**Christine Adams**, Engineering, Transportation & Environmental Services

**Henry Colyn**, Facilities, Transportation & Environmental Services

**Steve Bittner**, Transportation, Transportation & Environmental Services

## **Participant contact information**

### **City of St. Catharines**

PO Box 3012, 50 Church St.  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7C2  
905-688-5601, ext. 1510  
[www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca)  
TTY 905-688-4TTY (4889)

#### **Primary Contact:**

Diana Lecinski  
Accessibility Coordinator  
905-688-5601, ext. 1510  
[dlecinski@stcatharines.ca](mailto:dlecinski@stcatharines.ca)

### **St. Catharines Public Library – Central Branch**

54 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 7K2  
905-688-6103 [www.stcatharines.library.on.ca](http://www.stcatharines.library.on.ca)

#### **Primary Contacts:**

Lilita Stripnieks, CEO  
Jack Foster, Business Administrator

### **St. Catharines Transit Commission**

2012 First Street Louth, RR3  
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3V9  
905-685-4228 [www.yourbus.com](http://www.yourbus.com)  
905-685-9844 Para-Transit & TTY

#### **Primary Contact:**

David Sherlock, General Manager

# Appendix A: Accessibility Policies

## Accessible Customer Service Policy

(est. 2009, reviewed 2014)

### 1. PURPOSE

The “Corporation” of the City of St. Catharines is dedicated to providing high quality services for our community under the leadership of City Council. In doing so, we recognize the diverse needs of our community and strive to provide services and facilities that are accessible for everyone. As an employer and a provider of services, the City of St. Catharines is committed to providing services that are accessible.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to all City of St. Catharines employees; fulltime, part-time as well as volunteers. Third Party providers of goods and services to the City of St. Catharines are required to comply with all current accessibility legislation.

### 3. PRINCIPLES

The City of St. Catharines promotes accessibility through the development of the City’s policies, procedures and practices that are consistent with the core principles of integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. Reasonable efforts are made to ensure the following:

#### 3.1 SERVICE:

The provision of services to persons with and without disabilities are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from services.

Persons with disabilities will have opportunities equivalent to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from services.

#### 3.2 COMMUNICATION:

Communication will be provided in ways that take into consideration a person’s disability.

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A

### 3.3 ASSISTIVE DEVICES:

Persons with a disability can use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from services.

### 3.4 SUPPORT PERSONS:

Persons with a disability can be accompanied by a support person on City premises. (See 4. Expanded Principles)

### 3.5 GUIDE DOG / SERVICE ANIMAL:

Persons with a disability can be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on City premises unless otherwise excluded by law. (See 4. Expanded Principles)

### 3.6 TRAINING:

Training on customer service to persons with a disability is provided to all employees, volunteers or other third parties who provide customer service on behalf of the Corporation, and to those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. (See 4. Expanded Principles)

### 3.7 SERVICE DISRUPTION:

Notice of service disruption is provided in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services generally used by persons with a disability. This notice will include information about the reasons for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternatives.

### 3.8 FEEDBACK:

The City of St. Catharines welcomes feedback on all aspects of its customer service and provides the following formats to allow people with a disability to provide feedback on the provision of its customer service through the following; in person at City Hall Administration, electronically at [www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca) under Contact Us, via TTY at 905-688-4889, or contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 905-688-5601 ext. 1510.

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A

### 4. EXPANDED PRINCIPLES

Support Person (3.4) means;

A person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist that person with a disability for purposes of participation, communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services.

- a) Admission fees are waived for support persons who accompany a person with a disability, into facilities or programs where admission is charged;
  - Staff shall be notified by either of the parties of the presence of the support person.
  - Staff reserves the right to require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on City premises, but only if the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of other persons on City premises.

Guide Dog / Service Animal (3.5) means;

- a) A Guide Dog (as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Person's Rights Act*)
- b) A Service Animal for a person with a disability is recognized;
  - If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability; or
  - If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or authorized agency confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the person's disability;

If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by reason of law, rule or regulation from the City's premises, the provider of services shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's services.

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A

### Training 3.6

Customer service to persons with disabilities training will be held periodically and include;

- i) Purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
  - ii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
  - iii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a support person, guide dog or service animal
  - iv) How to use assistive equipment available at the Corporation
  - v) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing services
  - vi) Material on corporate policy, practices and procedures relating to the Customer Service Standard (This Customer Service Policy is supported by further practices and procedures that are developed in consultation with the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility).
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This Customer Service Policy is based on the Accessible Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The Province provides the following definition of disability.

**Disability** means;

- “a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).”

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A

### **Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy** (est. 2012, reviewed and updated 2014)

Includes Library, Transit has a separate policy

#### **Statement of Organizational Commitment**

The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines (herein after the “City”) is committed to developing, implementing, maintaining, and enhancing accessibility as set out under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 (AODA) and its Standards for people with a disability, in a manner that:

- Reflects the principles of dignity and independence;
- Seeks to provide integrated services; and
- Provides opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from its goods or services.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Ontario Regulation 191/11 which reflects a number of accessibility standards that organizations across Ontario, including the City, are required to comply with.

This document has been organized into the following sections:

- Part I – General Requirements; Accessibility Plans, Procurement and Training
- Part II – Accessible Information and Communications Standards
- Part III – Accessible Employment Standards
- Part IV – Transportation Standards
- Part V – Design of Public Spaces Standards

This policy is not intended to replace or supersede City’s Accessible Customer Service Policy (ACAO-01-09) that was approved by Council on March 30, 2009.

The requirements set out in this policy and the IASR are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the *Human Rights Code* nor do the standards or policy limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation.

## **2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A**

Terms are as defined by the AODA and its Standards and are referred to herein with that intent and contained at the end of this policy as reference.

### **Scope and Responsibility**

This policy applies to all City of St. Catharines employees; fulltime, part-time, volunteers as well as other third parties acting on behalf of the City for the provision of goods, services, programs and facilities.

### **Policy Principles and Requirements**

#### **Part I: General Requirements**

##### **4.1 Accessibility Plans**

The City will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan starting in 2013 that outlines its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meets its requirements under the IASR.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be:

- posted on the City's website and be provided in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as is practicable.
- reviewed and updated at least once every five years
- established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the St. Catharines' Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)

The City will:

- prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan
- post the status report on its website and provide the report in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as is practicable.

##### **4.2 Procurement**

When procuring or acquiring goods, services, self-service kiosks or facilities, the City shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the City shall provide an explanation, upon request.

## **2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A**

### **4.3 Training**

As required by the IASR, the City shall ensure that the following persons are provided training on (1) the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the IASR and (2) on the *Human Rights Code*, as it pertains to persons with disabilities:

- all employees and volunteers;
- all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and,

All other persons or third parties who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization shall continue to be trained or meet their obligations as part of the City's procurement process.

The training on the requirements of the IASR and the *Human Rights Code* shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons. Record of the training provided including the dates shall be kept of employees by the Human Resources Department.

## **Part II: Information and Communication Requirements**

### **4.4 Feedback**

Further to the City's Accessible Customer Service Policy (ACAO-01-09, Section 3.8) whereby it notifies the public of various formats and methods of communications, that it also, upon request, can provide accessible formats and communication supports when receiving and responding to feedback.

### **4.5 Accessible Formats**

The City will:

- notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports
- upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities:
  - in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs;
  - by consulting with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support; and,
  - at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

## **2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A**

**Exceptions**, the IASR does not apply to the following:

- product and product labels
- unconvertible information or communications
- information that the City does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship

If the City determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the City shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications. Information or communications are unconvertible if, it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications; or the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

### **4.6 Emergency Information**

The City shall provide publicly available emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as practicable.

### **4.7 Website Accessibility**

The City shall make their internet website and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA. By January 1, 2014, any new web content shall conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A. By January 1, 2021 all internet website and web content shall conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (exceptions; Captions (live), Audio Descriptions (pre-recorded)).

### **4.8 Public Library**

Public Library Boards;

- Shall provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist;
- Shall make information about the availability of accessible materials publicly available and shall provide information in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request;
- May provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections and rare books.

## **2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A**

### **Part III: Employment**

#### **4.9 Scope and Interpretation**

The Accessible Employment Standard applies to paid employees and does not apply to volunteers and other unpaid individuals.

#### **4.10 Recruitment and Notification**

The City shall notify;

Employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities during the assessment or selection process  
Job applicants selected to participate in an assessment or selection process relating to the materials or processes to be used that;

- accommodations are available upon request
- accommodations will take into consideration the applicants disability
- accommodations will be based on consultation between the employer and applicant

Successful applicants of City policies and any other additional supports pertaining to the accommodation of employees with disabilities

#### **4.11 Employee; Accessible Formats and Supports**

The City will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication job supports, upon request.

#### **4.12 Employee; Workplace Emergency Information**

The City will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, upon request.

#### **4.13 Accommodation Plans**

The City will develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

#### **4.14 Return to Work**

The City will develop and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

## **2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix A**

### **4.15 Performance Management, Career development, Redeployment**

The City's performance management will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.

The City's career development/advancement or redeployment will take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.

### **Part IV, Transportation (Transit)**

St. Catharines Transit Commission policy remains unchanged and is included in the 2013-2015 Accessibility Plan document.

### **Part V, Design of Public Spaces**

The City is committed to designing public spaces that are accessible to its residents and visitors. The City will provide opportunity for public consultation as stated in the regulation which includes the public, people with disabilities and the municipal accessibility advisory committee. Areas of consultation include; recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths and on-street parking.

The City will comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standards, Ontario Regulation 413/12, with respect to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped, including:

#### **4.17 Recreational trails and beach access routes**

#### **4.18 Outdoor public use eating areas**

#### **4.19 Outdoor play spaces**

#### **4.20 Exterior paths or travel**

#### **4.21 Accessible parking**

#### **4.22 Obtaining services**

#### **4.23 Maintenance (Best Practices attached as Appendix B)**

The City's accessibility planning includes procedures for preventative and/or emergency maintenance and temporary disruptions with respect to its accessible elements in outdoor spaces.

## **Appendix B: Accessible Maintenance Practices**

### **Maintenance of Accessibility Elements, Design of Public Spaces Standard**

#### **Purpose:**

To meet the requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), Design of Public Spaces Standard (Sec. 80.44) Maintenance of accessible elements.

#### **Practices:**

To ensure that any newly constructed or redeveloped elements provided for under the Design of Public Spaces (O. Reg. 413/12) will have procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces put in place.

#### **Scope:**

In addition to the accessibility plan requirements, obligated organizations such as the City of St. Catharines shall ensure that their multi-year Accessibility Plan includes procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces as required under this Part and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this Part are not in working order.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard (Sec. 80.2) applies to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped, that include;

- Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes
- Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas
- Outdoor Play Spaces
- Exterior Paths of Travel
- Accessible Parking

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix B

### Introduction:

1. Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in Public Spaces.
2. Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements of Public Spaces are not in working order.

### Application:

Departments that maintain elements listed under Scope;

- shall apply best practices in the preventative maintenance of accessible elements with periodic checks such as;
  - annual inspections, or more frequently,
  - after storms or events that might affect accessible elements,
  - as part of any reports of vandalism or complaints.
- shall apply best practices in the emergency maintenance of accessible elements with active response once notified.
- shall continue to provide public notification of temporary disruptions in keeping with compliance requirements under the AODA Accessible Customer Service Standard (O. Reg. 429/07) and the City's corresponding policy (Sec. 3.7);
  - *Notice of service disruption is provided in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services generally used by persons with a disability. This notice will include information about the reasons for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternatives.*
  - A service disruption template is available to all departments under City templates.

### Compliance:

As with all City of St. Catharines' active AODA compliance, this practice is effective as soon as possible and prior to January 1, 2016.

Effective: January 1, 2016.

### Appendix C: Library detailed summary

<b>ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY UPGRADES ANNUAL REPORT – 2014/2015</b>
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**Please find below a summary of the Library's Accessibility Upgrades in 2014.**

#### **Facilities Background**

In 2011, the Library Board approved a 5-year strategy developed by Library staff which addressed the deficiencies listed in the 2008 Accessibility Audit. The Audit was commissioned by the City and included the Centennial and Port Dalhousie locations. The estimated cost of improvements capital and customer service improvements was \$337,999 for Centennial and \$40,449 for Port Dalhousie. In 2013 Larisa Brodsky Architects Inc. prepared design and tender documents for the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) improvements at the Centennial Library. These were completed for a cost of \$110,147.20.

#### **Facilities Upgrades Centennial Library – 2014**

In April 2014, Larisa Brodsky Architects Inc. was engaged to prepare the design and tender documents for additional Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) improvements at the Centennial Library for a cost not to exceed \$10,000. The second stage of the FADS upgrades had been included in the 2014 budget with an estimated cost not to exceed \$48,600. The cost was \$42,500.

<b>Location – Centennial Library</b>	<b>Upgrade</b>	<b>Status</b>
Story Hour Room (1 <sup>st</sup> floor)	Widen doors and install power/lever handles. Paint	Done
Staff Washroom (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor)	Change 2 washrooms into 1 FADS accessible washroom. Paint	Done

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix C

Kiwanis & Trust Meeting Room	Widen doors. Paint	Done
	Retrofit current or Install new Information Desks and Circulation Desks on the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor to include lower access service counter.	Deferred to 2015

### **Collections / Services / Equipment& Software / Miscellaneous Upgrades 2014**

Many of the Library's goals in this section address the requirements of AODA 2005 and its regulations- Accessibility Standards for the Customer Service (O.Reg.429/07) and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg.191/11).

Library staff serve clients of various age groups and abilities on a daily basis. Before AODA came into effect libraries were providing alternate formats to their clients including - large print, audiobooks, videos and DVDs including described video and/or closed caption. Libraries provide a Visiting Library Services to shut-ins and arrange for inter-library loans for material from CNIB and other sources. In 2010 the Library started to acquire downloadable collections which now include audio books, e-books, magazines, music and DVDs.

In 2014 a number of large urban libraries which included St. Catharines Public Library partnered with CNIB to create the Center for Equitable Library Access (CELA). Membership in CELA allows our library patrons to access to over 85,000 audio books, magazines and described videos. Formats include digital narrated audio, text-to-speech, e-braille, and printed Braille including embossed Braille picture books and tactile books for early braille literacy intervention. CELA also provides a myriad of delivery options. Information on this service is available at the library and on its website.

All of the library locations have adjustable computer workstations, which include large screen monitors, large print keyboards, large trackball and mouse. The work stations also include ZoomText and BrowseAloud

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix C

software. Our Accessibility policy has been updated and expanded to include: accessibility plans, accessibility reports, procurement, accessible formats, accessible website, emergency plans, and employment. Training was included was covered with the customer service regulation. Please see the table below for 2014 upgrades/goals/activity.

Collections	In June 2014 the St. Catharines Public Library became a member of the Centre for Equitable Library Access a new national not-for-profit entity launched in 2014. CELA supports the provision of equitable library access for all Canadians with print disabilities accessible through their local library.	Ongoing
	Acquired HOOPLA a digital collection offering access to downloadable audiobooks, ebooks, music albums, as well as fiction and non-fiction DVDs.	Ongoing
	Continued to subscribe to Freegal for additional downloadable music and Overdrive for additional ebooks and audiobooks, and Zinio for downloadable magazines.	Ongoing
	In-house collections continued to include large print and DVDs (descriptive video and closed caption).	Done
	Improved access to DVDs with descriptive video and closed caption by including these terms as searchable fields in the library's online catalogue.	

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix C

Services	<p>Launched Online Teen Book club.</p> <p>Continued Online Reference Service.</p> <p>Continued Visiting Library Service.</p> <p>Maintained Website to be WCAG 2.0 compliant.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Equipment & Software	Installed Read Easy Equipment at the Central Library.	Deferred to 2015
Services	<p>Ensured that all public documents can be made available upon request in 12 point font or better.</p> <p>Following prescribed guidelines for the production of public documents.</p> <p>Installed Braille signage in elevator.</p>	<p>Done &amp;Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Done</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>Updated Accessibility Policy specifically sections on Customer Service and Training.</p> <p>Updated Accessibility policy to address IAR objectives for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessibility plans and reports</li> <li>• procurement</li> <li>• information and communication</li> <li>• emergency plans</li> <li>• employment</li> </ul>	<p>Done/Ongoing</p> <p>Done/Ongoing</p>

## 2013-2015 Accessibility Planning – Appendix C

Please find below a summary of the Library's Accessibility Goals for 2015

	<p align="center"><b>ST. CATHARINES PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY GOALS – 2015</b></p> <p>A provision of \$25,000 was included in the Proposed 2015 Operating Budget to address the Facilities Improvements.</p>
Facilities Central Library	<p>Mills Room Kitchen – Miscellaneous upgrades  Rotary Room - improve signage  Kiwanis and Trust Room - improve signage  Basement Stairs –paint and install contrast edge at nosings.  Lobby – Apply surface treatment to ramp to improve slip resistance.  Stairs/Stairwells – Install detectable warning surface and install colour contrasting and slip resistance strip at nosings.</p> <p>Retrofit current or Install new Information Desks and Circulation Desk on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to include lower access service counter.  (Carried forward from 2014)</p>
Collections	Continue to provide downloadable books and music, large print, DVDs (descriptive video and closed caption)
Services	Promote CELA services through outreach.
Equipment & Software	<p>Central - Install Read Easy Equipment .  Branches – Review all furniture/equipment</p>
Policy and Training	Review policy and continue ongoing training.

## Feedback on Accessibility

The City of St. Catharines welcomes all feedback regarding;

- accessible customer service,
- accessible information, communication,
- accessible facilities or services

The City of St. Catharines offers its documents in alternative formats and communication supports upon request.

You may contact us in person, by mail, email, website, phone, fax, TTY, or contact the Accessibility Coordinator directly.

**Visit Us:** City Hall, 50 Church Street  
Located at the corner of Church St. and James St.  
Accessible Main Entrance at James St. side of City Hall

**Mail:** City of St. Catharines  
P.O. Box 3012  
50 Church Street  
St. Catharines, ON  
L2R 7C2

**Phone:** 905-688-5601 extension #1510

**TTY phone:** 905-688-4TTY (4889)

**Fax:** 905-682-3631

**Email:** [info@stcatharines.ca](mailto:info@stcatharines.ca)

**Website:** [www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca)

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