

2016 Year-End Report

Accessibility Plan 2016-2020

Endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee
March 22, 2017



This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

This page is blank for printing purposes

2016-2020 Plan; year-end report for 2016	1
AODA Standards; a quick review	1
2016 Accessibility Accomplishments	3
Relationship to the Strategic Plan.....	8
Acknowledgements	9
2017 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	9
Feedback on Accessibility	12
Appendix A; Integrated Accessibility Standards Reg. Policy.....	13

2016-2020 Plan; year-end report for 2016

This annual status report includes accessibility highlights and AODA objectives addressed during 2016.

AODA Standards; a quick review

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

Key elements:

- General requirements include; accessible procurement, self-serve kiosks
- Accessible information and communication
- Accessible employment
- Accessible transportation
- Accessible design of public spaces
- Accessible customer service

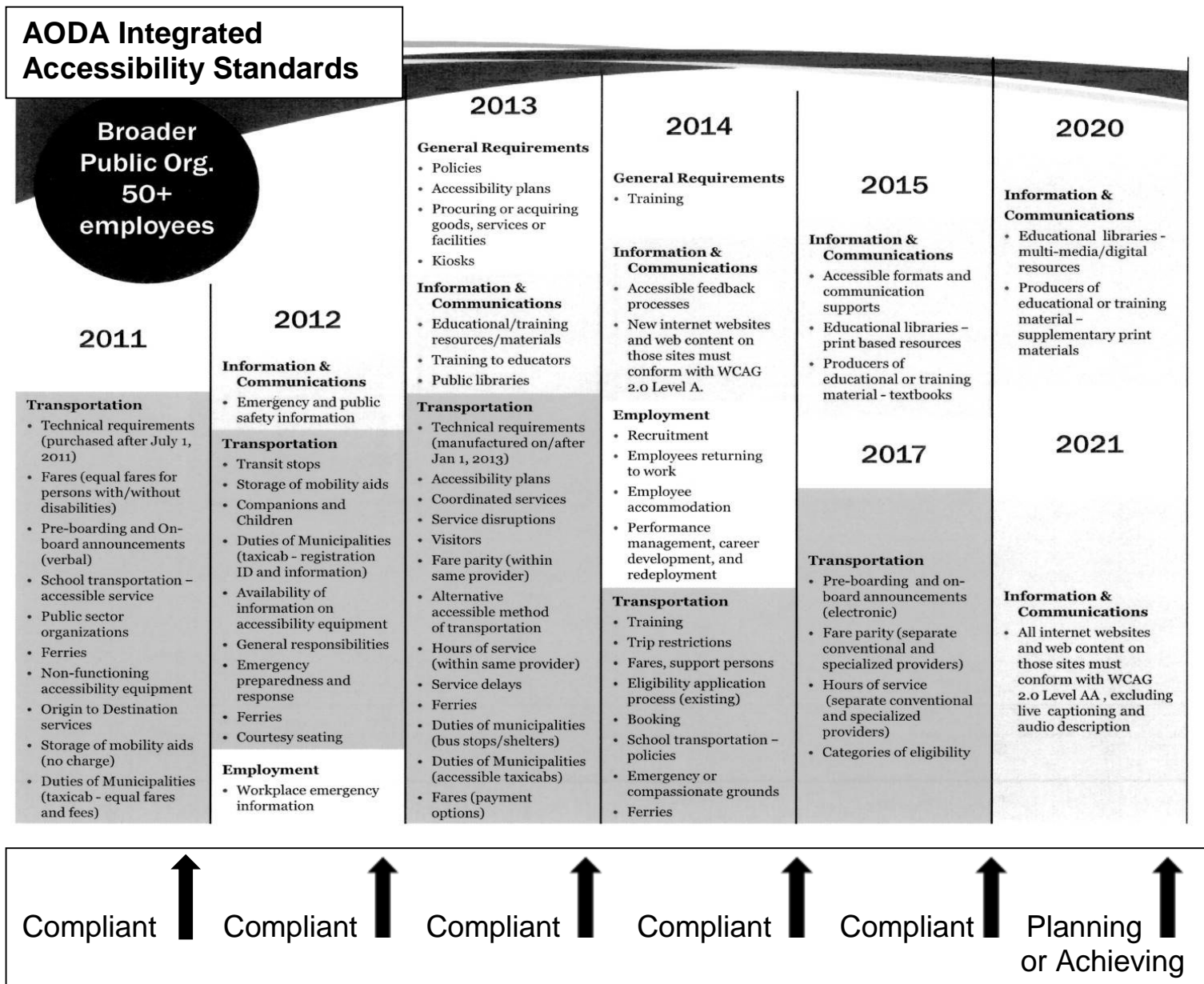
There are various compliance dates within these Standards. The City continues its practice to implement elements as soon as possible and before deadlines. This helps to ensure that practices are in place prior to compliance deadlines.

In 2016 the existing Customer Service Standard was repealed, updated and reissued under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The City's accessibility policy was updated as well to reflect these changes. Although much remained the same, added details included a specific list of regulated health professionals who can confirm that a person requires a service animal for reasons relating to the person's disability. A regulated health professional is member of Ontario's College of;

- Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists
- Chiropractors
- Occupational Therapists
- Optometrists
- Physicians and Surgeons
- Physiotherapists
- Psychologists
- Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists

AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards

Broader
Public Org.
50+
employees



2016 Accessibility Accomplishments

Physical Environments

- Reviewed site plans relating to accessibility elements and ensure Zoning By-law compliance
- Developed an repainting plan to update City facility accessible parking to align with sizes and ratios of the current Zoning By-law
- Examined plans and drawings of City builds and renovations for barrier-free compliance using the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) which is over and above the Ontario Building Code's (OBC) minimum requirements
- Realigned numerous barriers (parking meters, traffic signs, hydro poles, etc.) to create a straight and intuitive path of pedestrian travel in front of 55 King Street in a consolidated partnership of various City departments and Horizon Utilities
- Added tender criteria that all new or renovated playgrounds are to include an adaptive swing
- Installed adaptive swings at Catherine and Cindy Parks
- Reviewed an alternative crossing proposal for the intersection of St. Paul and Carlisle Streets with the AAC advocating for the intersection to remain signalized
- Installed beach access mats over the beach surface at Lakeside Park to provide beach access to people who use a mobility device
- Constructed a new more accessibly sloped pathway in Montebello Park at the Rose Garden as an alternative to an existing steep path on the west side of the washroom building
- Constructed 2 accessible on-street parking spaces at Montebello Park
- Increased street sign font size at signalized intersections and update as practicable for secondary streets
- Provided accessibility input on the Welland Canal Fallen Worker's Memorial design
- Completed a survey along the west side of Ontario Street between the QEW and Carlton Street to promote opportunities to install a connective sidewalk along this Regional Roadway

- Identified and included access issues on the list of annual sidewalk repairs
- Identified and reviewed various accessible features during general maintenance procedures
- Installed additional drop-down grab bars in washroom at Russell Community Centre
- Provided courtesy wheelchairs at various recreational facilities, including 3 new courtesy wheelchairs at facilities with older adult programming
- Provided input on sign design and location of the Merritton volunteer firefighter memorial plaque
- Provided a large print booklet further to display signage as part of special exhibits at the St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre
- Undertaken by St. Catharines Transit Commission;
 - o met all requirements under O. Reg. 191/11 Transportation Section having compliance deadlines on or prior to December 31, 2016
 - o added 5 (five) new accessible buses as replacement of buses which reached the end of service, keeping the entire of conventional fleet with low floor accessible buses
 - o added 1 (one) new Paratransit vehicle as a replacement for a vehicle which reached the end of service
 - o installed 7 (seven) new bus shelters with accessible pads and pathways to sidewalks on various bus routes
 - o installed 15 (fifteen) waiting benches on various bus routes
 - o upgraded bus stop accessibility as part of road construction projects
 - o constructed an accessible customer service counter at the downtown bus terminal
- Undertaken by the St. Catharines Library Board;
 - o installed new way-finding signage throughout the Central Library
 - o completed installation of non-slip and contrasting stair-nosing at the Central Library
 - o renovated the information desk at the Merritton Branch for better accessibility

Training and Knowledge

- Continued to ensure policies, practices, procedures and training support was updated and provided through employee orientation and various focused training sessions, including accessible accommodations, alternative formats, communication supports, evacuation chairs, etc.
- Arranged training for all Citizens First staff using a trainer from the Canadian Hearing Society relating to customer service for people with hearing disabilities, and use of TTY and UbiDuo communication devices
- Arranged communication certification for all Citizens First staff combining a leader using e-module training relating to customer service for people with a communication disability not due to hearing loss
- Arranged communication training for all other front-line staff throughout city services using e-module certification developed by Communication Disabilities Access Canada
- Arranged for management training relating to mental health awareness by the Human Resources Dept.
- Ensured the Employment Standard was recognized during all phases of hiring, employment and accommodation as organized by the Human Resources Dept.
- Ensured that the AODA and related City policy was incorporated into orientation
- Provided accessible customer service for citizens as requested
- Coordinated corporate-wide training on creating accessible documents along with trainers from the City's Information Technology and Communications Depts.
- Arranged access awareness sessions from a business and employment perspective for all Economic Development Dept.
- Coordinated AAC vacancy replacements, orientation, and related community outreach
- Updated corporate accessibility e-module training to align with AODA changes

- Participated in external webinars, e-conferences and training opportunities on various accessible information or applications by related staff

Other

- Prepare to file the City's mandatory AODA compliance report with the Province in 2017
- Installed accessibility-checker tool on all City computer toolbars
- On-going research for best practices and technology that is universally accessible
- Continue to provide a variety of options in contacting the City centralized customer service; phone, TTY, fax, mail, email, electronically, in-person
- Continue to use a variety of tools, such as media releases, e-newsletters, social media posts, etc. to promote City information and accessibility highlights
- Provide virtual-tours of various parks and facilities, and a list of facility accessibility features are both available on the website for visitors to preview before visiting
- Ensure all customer service, documents, meetings and facilities provide inclusive access
- Ensure that universal access as outlined in the Garden City Plan and the City's Official Plan is met
- Develop protocols to support access; e.g. towels hung on pool railings are not permitted
- Arranged for a CNIB trainer and client with a guide dog to train on way-finding on a pool deck
- Update audio-tour at Museum when displays are changed
- Arranged for transportation to public meeting that was not on a regular bus route
- Provide low-vision playing cards at older adult and recreation centres
- Provide ASL interpreters as accommodation for program participation if needed

- Undertake review and update emergency procedures and safety plans for city facilities once Fire & Emergency Management Services finalizes
- Undertake access review of parks, playgrounds and trails
- Monitor all opportunities for funding opportunities relating to accessibility
- Prepare Accessibility Plan updates and information Council of undertakings and AODA compliance
- Undertake an update of FADS to remain current with various AODA and OBC updates

AAC undertakings

- Participated in a Provincial AODA access event hosted by Fort Erie in June 2016
- Participated in the City's Seniors Day in May 2016
- Participated in the City's Older Adult Forum in November 2016
- Met regularly throughout the year with active undertakings for accessibility and to support staff
- Provided expertise on accessible design for numerous city facility and park renovations
- Commented on site plans relating to accessibility elements such as; accessible parking location, signage, curb ramps, pedestrian connectivity, further to Zoning By-law compliance
- Supported 2.4m wide sidewalks on both sides of the new Burgoyne bridge for safety and to accommodate people who use a mobility device
- Reviewed an alternative proposal for St. Paul @ Carlisle intersection and advocated for signalized intersection to remain
- Requested courtesy wheelchairs to be provided at various city facilities including the Older Adult Centres
- Supported an accessible grant request for a beach sun shelter to be placed beside the beach access mats at Lakeside Park and will organize an associated access awareness event to promote the various upgrades
- Continue to engage community stakeholders with disabilities on access issues, including older adults and youth

Relationship to the Strategic Plan

Accessibility parallels to multiple aspects of goals and actions under the City's Strategic Plan.

Social Sustainability;

- **Strive for the highest quality of life for all citizens**
 - Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with a focus on balancing recreation services for all ages, demographics and abilities
 - Establish an annual quality of life report to measure and monitor impacts on bettering the lives of those living in our community
 - Implement the objectives of the *A City for All Ages*, the City's older adult plan to build age-friendly community program and services
 - Expand implementation of accessibility planning
 - Design annual youth and older adults forums to include benchmarks and metrics on how to continuously improve the city
- **Connect people, places and neighbourhoods**
 - Embrace connectivity between people, places and neighbourhoods
 - Enhance livability through property redevelopment opportunities
 - Accelerate transportation networks that link people with community
 - Work with local organizations to support an inclusive community
- **Provide excellent customer service and communication with citizens**
 - Develop and implement a plan using innovative new technologies to enhance two-way communications between residents and the City
 - Identify opportunities to expand the Citizens First initiative and conduct performance reviews to ensure continuous improvement of customer service
 - Re-image city hall to demonstrate it is warm and welcoming to residents and visitors alike.

Acknowledgements

2017 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Shelley Stewart, Co-Chairperson

Diane Foster, Co-Chairperson

Melissa Abrams

Bob Asham

Steve Byers

Ian Crawford

Tracey Hrick

Bob Mahony

Linda Marie O'Hagan

David Reed

Mary Jane Waszynski

Membership appointment is for a 4 year period concurrent to the term of Council.

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

Dan Carnegie, Chief Administrative Officer

Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office

Evan McGinty, Corporate Communications, CAO's Office

Marco Marino, Economic Development, CAO's Office

Bob Cornelius, Human Resources, Corporate Support Services

Wayne Racey, Information Systems, Corporate Support Services

Trish Cardwell, Customer Service, Corporate Support Services

Leah LaPlante, Clerk's Office, Legal and Clerks Services

Stacey Wells, Legal, Legal and Clerks Services

Linda Robinson, Administration, Financial Management Services

Frank Donati, Prevention, Fire & Emergency Management Services

Aaron Butler, Site Plan, Planning & Building Services

TBA, Building, Planning & Building Services

Lori Mambella, Programs, Culture, Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

Kristen Sullivan, Park Design, Parks Recreation & Culture Services

Christine Adams, Engineering, 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
TTY 905-688-4TTY (4889)

Primary Contact:

Diana Lecinski
Accessibility Coordinator
905-688-5601, ext. 1510
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

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
905-685-9844 Para-Transit & TTY

Primary Contact:

David Sherlock, General Manager
Graham Morrison, Manager of Transit

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

Website: www.stcatharines.ca

Primary Contact: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator
dlecinski@stcatharines.ca
905-688-5601 extension #1510

Appendix A; Integrated Accessibility Standards Reg. Policy

 CITY OF ST. CATHARINES	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer ~ Accessibility			
	SUBJECT:	Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy	POLICY #:	ACC-2012-01
	APPROVED BY:			
	ISSUE DATE:	2012-03-19	REVISION DATES:	2014-04-14 2016-07-01
	REVIEW DATE:	Upon provincial amendment or review	PAGE:	13 of 8

1. 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.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Ontario Regulation 191/11 (as amended) 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, Kiosks and Training
- Part II – Information and Communications Standards
- Part III – Employment Standards
- Part IV – Transportation Standards
- Part IV.1 – Design of Public Spaces Standards
- Part IV.2 – Customer Service Standards

Ontario Regulation 191/11 amended to add O. Reg. 413/12 (Design of Public Spaces Standards) and O. Reg. 165/16 (Customer Service Standards) which revokes O. Reg. 429/07 and 430/07.

The requirements set out in this policy and the IASR are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* nor do the standards or policy limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation. Terms are as defined by the AODA and its Standards and are referred to herein with that intent.

3. Scope and Responsibility

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

4. Procedures: 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 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 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

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.

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 and meet AODA 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

The City welcomes public feedback on the accessibility of its goods, services and facilities through various formats and methods of communications and, 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.

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.

Part III: Employment Requirements

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 has a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

4.14 Return to Work

The City has 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.

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 Requirements**4.16 The Transportation Standard**

The Transportation Standard policy is written and approved by the St. Catharines Transit Commission (approved by Council 2012-03-19).

Part IV.1: Design of Public Spaces Requirements

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 pathway rest areas and on-street parking.

The City will continue to apply the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) and/or the Design of Public Spaces Standards, whichever is greatest.

The City will comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standards 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

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.

Part IV.2: Customer Service Requirements

4.24 Scope, interpretation and policies

Further to the aforementioned requirements within this Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy, the City applies definitions and creates policies relating to accessible customer service as follows:

4.25 Service animals and support persons

4.25.1 Service animals

Persons with a disability can be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on City premises, unless otherwise excluded by law.

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 good, services or facilities.

- A Guide Dog (as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Person's Rights Act*)
- 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 documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the person's disability.
 - A regulated health professional is member of Ontario's College of;
 - Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists
 - Chiropractors
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Optometrists
 - Physicians and Surgeons
 - Physiotherapists
 - Psychologists
 - Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists

4.25.2 Support persons

The City welcomes a person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist that person with a disability for purposes of communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Both are welcome together and a person with a disability shall not be prevented from having access to the support person while on a City premises.

City staff;

- may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on City premises based on consultation and consideration of available evidence;
 - that a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of other persons,
 - that there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of other persons.
- shall be notified by either of the parties of the presence of a support person
- shall waive admission fees for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability, into facilities or programs where admission is charged.

4.26 Notice of temporary disruptions

The City will provide notice of service disruption in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in services or facilities usually used by persons with a disability. This notice shall include information about the reasons for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternatives.

4.27 Training

Further to Sec. 4.3, 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 City policies, practices and procedures.

Training on customer service to persons with disabilities will be held at orientation and periodically or upon AODA changes, and shall include;

- purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or support person
- how to use equipment or devices available at the City or otherwise provided by the City to help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability
- what to do if a person with particular type of disability is having difficulty in accessing goods, services or facilities
- resources on corporate policy, practices and procedures relating to the AODA and Customer Service Standards

4.28 Feedback process

Refer to 4.4 of Information and Communication requirements

4.29 Format of documents

Refer to 4.5 of Information and Communication requirements

Application:

Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) includes municipalities, all paid staff, volunteers and third parties.

Compliance:

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.