

# 2017 Year-End Report

## Accessibility Plan 2016-2020

Endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee  
March 28, 2018



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## **2016-2020 Plan; year-end report for 2017**

This annual status report includes accessibility highlights and AODA objectives addressed during 2017 along with some 2018 initiatives.

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

#### **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**

Key elements:

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

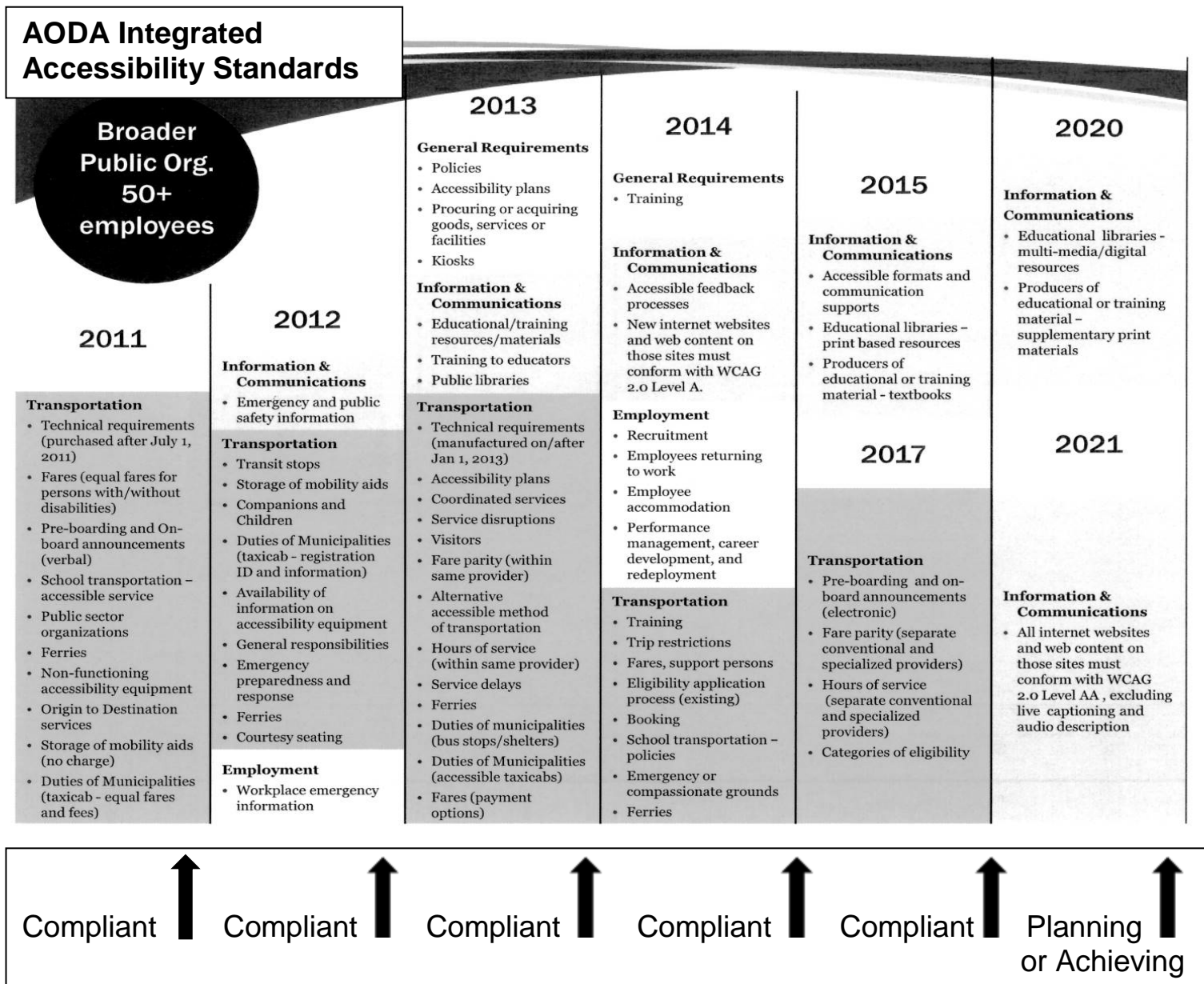
There are various compliance dates within these Standards. The City continues its practice to implement elements as soon as possible and before deadlines. This helps to ensure that practices are in place prior to compliance deadlines.

In 2016 the existing Customer Service Standard was repealed, updated and reissued under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.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



## **2017 Accessibility Accomplishments**

### **Physical Environments**

- Examined plans and provided input on numerous 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
- Designs, builds and renovations included FADS accessibility at;
  - o New Lake Street Service Centre includes accessible entry and an elevator
  - o Ontario Street Parking Garage stairway, lobby, elevator renovations
  - o Victoria Lawn Cemetery, new administration building
  - o Lancaster Park, changeroom upgrades include barrier-free designs
  - o Russell Community Centre, universal family washroom design and installation prep
  - o West Park, new playground, splash pad and washroom building
  - o Lakeside Park, new washrooms/changerooms with 2 universal washrooms and a concession, playground with inclusive activity elements and adaptive swings, bandshell, beach sun shelter and newly painted parking lot with additional accessible parking spaces
  - o Centennial Park, new sun shelter, connective trails with new packed surface, slope improvements wherever possible, 3 meter trail width, wooden stairs replaced by sturdy stone slabs with a railing
- Reviewed playground tenders and design for comprehensive accessibility, such as cognitive, vision, physical perspectives
- Provided accessibility input on the Welland Canal Fallen Worker's Memorial design
- Provided listening assistive devices, UbiDuo communication, audio and Braille in elevators, accessible seating and alternative formats to patrons of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
- Continued long-term preparations for connective sidewalk installations along the west side of Ontario St. between the QEW and Carlton St.
- Identified and included access issues on the annual list of sidewalk repairs

- Identified and reviewed various accessible features during general maintenance procedures
- Installed a large smart-board screen in the Burgoyne Woods meeting room at City Hall
- Provided courtesy wheelchairs at various recreational facilities, including 1 new courtesy wheelchairs at Garden City Arena
- Provided several new water walking-assistive floaters for Kiwanis Aquatics Centre
- Reviewed site plans relating to accessibility elements using the Zoning By-law criteria and accessibility best practices
- Repainted accessible parking to align with sizes and ratios of the current Zoning By-law at Lancaster Park, Lakeside Park, etc.
- Installed curb ramps and accessible drop-off areas in the bus layby and in front of the FirstOntario Performing Arts 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, 2017
  - o increased paratransit hours of service to start at 6 am,
  - o increased paratransit with one additional Sunday assignment
  - o successfully applied for grant to retrofit 4 buses with rear-facing accessible seating design, retaining the entire 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 16 (sixteen) new bus shelters with accessible pads and pathways to sidewalks on various bus routes
  - o installed 6 (six) waiting benches at various bus stops
  - 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 open gateway security scan and removed old check-point turnstile
  - o installed new way-finding signage at Central Library
  - o completed basement level re-flooring at Central Library that considered accessibility, contrast, glare, etc.
  - o undertook ramp review of the Port Dalhousie branch

### **Training and Knowledge**

- Continued to ensure policies, practices, procedures and training support are updated and provided through employee orientation and various focused training sessions, including accessible accommodations, alternative formats, communication supports, evacuation chairs, etc.
- Connected key staff (I.T. and Communications) with the on-line Assistive Technology Conference provided by the Network of Ontario Assistive Technologists, March 2017
- Arranged training refresher for all Citizens First staff relating to customer service for people with hearing disabilities, and use of TTY and UbiDuo communication devices
- Arranged communication training for all other front-line staff throughout city services using e-module certification developed by Communication Disabilities Access Canada
- Continued communication certification for all new Citizens First staff using e-module training relating to customer service for people with a communication disability not due to hearing loss
- Organized detailed management training on the Accessible Employment Standard and included reps from community employment supports for awareness of resources and supports when employing people with a disability
- Undertook comprehensive training program that included AODA for FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre staff and volunteers
- Incorporated AODA requirements into City policies and employment orientation



- Provided accessible customer services or accommodations for citizens when requested
- Launched new form-builder program, along with staff training, to ensure online forms and surveys are accessible for the public
- Coordinated corporate-wide training on creating accessible documents along with trainers from the City's Information Technology and Communications Departments
- Continued to promote awareness of the AODA with businesses through Economic Development opportunities
- 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 technologies

### **Other**

- Filed the City's 2017 AODA compliance report with the Province
- Undertook a comprehensive corporate review and update of the FADS
- Acquired a grant from the Rick Hansen Foundation for a beach sun shelter to compliment beach access mats as part of the comprehensive accessibility renovations made at Lakeside Park
- Acquired a grant from the Rick Hansen Foundation to host a community event to promote the many accessible renovations at Lakeside Park
- Continued to audit website and content for AODA compliance
- Launched a search module for park and trail amenities on City's website
- Installed accessibility-checker tool on all City computer toolbars
- Continued to update City templates for accessibility
- Responded to community programming or accommodation requests and implemented trial recreational programming
- On-going research for best practices and technology that is universally accessible
- Continued to provide a variety of options in contacting the City's centralized customer service; phone, TTY, fax, mail, email, electronically, in-person

- Continued to use a variety of tools, such as media releases, ads, e-newsletters, social media posts, etc. to promote City information and accessibility highlights
- Reviewed technology options to provide description and closed captioning on City videos
- Provided 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
- Ensured all customer service, documents, meetings and facilities provide inclusive access
- Ensured that universal access as outlined in the City's Strategic Plan and the City's Official Plan is met
- Continue to provide large print booklets further to display signage as part of special exhibits at the St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre
- Updated the audio-tour at the St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre when displays are changed
- Provided low-vision playing cards at older adult and recreation centres
- Provided ASL interpreters as accommodation for program participation as requested
- Assigned ushers to provide support as requested by patrons of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
- Undertook review and update emergency procedures and safety plans of city facilities, Fire & Emergency Management Services to approve
- Monitored all opportunities for funding opportunities relating to accessibility
- Prepared Accessibility Plan updates and informed Council of undertakings and AODA compliance
- Coordinated AAC vacancy replacements, orientation, and related community outreach
- Continued open discussion, outreach and engagement with community stakeholders and partners relating to City accessibility, programming, services and awareness

## **AAC undertakings**

- Active member of, and resource to Council's Social Sustainability Pillar
- Hosted community accessibility awareness at the opening event for Lakeside Park
- Engaged youth with disabilities from the Next to Lead program to participate in the Lakeside Park event
- Supported a grant for a beach sun shelter to be placed beside the beach access mats at Lakeside Park and endorsed designs of numerous other improvements at the park
- Participated in Ontario's AODA event for AACs in May 2017
- Participated in the City's Seniors Day in May 2017
- Participated in the City's Older Adult Forum in November 2017
- Submitted a Canada one-five-oh piece for the Museum's 'living time capsule' highlighting accessibility on the new Burgoyne Bridge
- Met regularly throughout the year to actively promote and support accessibility and to support Council and staff
- Provided expertise on accessible design for numerous facility renovations, park renovations and new builds
- Reviewed and endorsed design plans for a universal family washroom to be constructed in the Russell Avenue Community Centre
- Commented on site plans relating to accessibility elements such as; accessible parking location, signage, curb ramps, pedestrian connectivity, further to Zoning By-law compliance
- Endorsed the need for more comprehensive site development inspection of accessible parking installations, including appropriate and enforceable signage, parking and aisle widths, ratios, sidewalk connectivity, etc.
- Reviewed and endorsed re-grading proposed for St. Paul @ Carlisle intersection to connect sidewalk grades to a business entry
- Endorsed designs for several accessible drop-off/pick-up locations connected to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
- Requested courtesy wheelchairs to be provided at various city facilities including the Garden City Arena

- Continued to engage community stakeholders with disabilities on access issues, including older adults and youth
- Created several “community friendly reminders” to support barrier-free access throughout the City
- Promoted Stop-Gap initiative to staff

## **Glimpse into 2018**

- Renewed FADS will be posted on the website, promoted with staff and stakeholders as well as shared with the Region and its municipalities
- Review and update comprehensive corporate orientation program for all new employees
- Undertake renewed AODA training for all City staff using the corporate Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation e-module
- Complete renovations at Russell Community Centre, Lancaster Park, Ontario Street Parking Garage, Lake Street Service Centre, Victoria Lawn Cemetery
- Install a service animal relief area beside the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and an adult table in a universal washroom
- Finalize review of emergency procedures & safety plans for City facilities
- Ensure all aspects of the municipal election are open and accessible for voters
- Install a new splash pad at Port Weller Community Centre and undertake a master plan review of Sunset Beach
- Look to create more accessible recreation programming through partnerships
- Transit route increased to include service to the St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canal Centre

- Receiving 16 new accessible buses (12 for replacement, 4 for new routes), 3 new replacement vehicles for paratransit and 2 new replacement paravan vehicles
- Construct and/or renovate multiple transit stops for improved accessibility
- Create fillable forms for Paratransit applications
- Continue to repaint accessible parking spaces in City lots to conform to the latest zoning by-law for sizes, aisle access, ratios, affixed signage
- Connect key staff to e-learning awareness relating to disability assistive technology such as autism spectrum disorder communication
- AAC to consider the inclusion within Accessibility Plan reports for a “kudos” promotion of businesses who recently made accessibility related improvements

## **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**

2018 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) membership

**Shelley Stewart, Co-Chairperson**

**Diane Foster, Co-Chairperson**

**Melissa Abrams**

**Bob Asham**

**Ian Crawford**

**Tracey Findlay**

**Barbara Legg**

**Bob Mahony**

**Linda Marie O'Hagan**

**David Reed**

**Amy Romeo**

**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**

**Shelley Chemnitz**, Chief Administrative Officer

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

**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

**Cherise Titus**, Customer Service, Corporate Support Services

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

**Heather Salter**, Legal, Legal and Clerks Services

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

**Nathan Melin**, Prevention, Fire & Emergency Management Services

**Aaron Butler**, Site Plan, Planning & Building Services

**Gord Vis**, Building, Planning & Building Services

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

**Stuart Green**, Park Design, Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

**Kathleen Ross**, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, PRCS

**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](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  
Karen Smith Curtis, Business & Facilities 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  
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](mailto:info@stcatharines.ca)

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

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