

# 2022 Annual Status Report on Multi-year Accessibility Plan

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.  
Please visit: [The City of St. Catharines website](#) or call 1-905-866-5600 to  
speak with a representative from Citizen's First

## **Accessibility Legislation in Ontario**

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025 by creating, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards. These standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that people living with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. The standards are contained in one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR. Currently, the IASR is made up of five standards and several general requirements that apply to the City's business in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) work together to promote equality and accessibility. The Code states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and that their needs must be accommodated. Under the Code, the City of St. Catharines has a legal obligation to accommodate any person with a disability regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer, resident, or visitor. The duty to accommodate means that wherever unequal treatment or discrimination exists, it must be remedied unless the remedy would cause undue hardship. The Code has primacy over the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its regulations.

## **Compliance**

As required under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) section of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), the City of St. Catharines prepares annual status reports on the progress of the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The City's 2021-2025 Accessibility Plan outlines the City's current strategy.

This annual report provides a status update on the corporation's progress achieved in 2022 towards that strategy. This includes a detailed account of the improvements to City services, programs, information, communications, and facilities through the completion of accessibility-related initiatives. In addition to meeting statutory requirements, this report demonstrates the City's commitment to the inclusion of persons living with disabilities, be they residents, employees or visitors in all the City has to offer.

The City is currently compliant with provisions under the standards of Customer Service, Information and Communication, the Design of Public Spaces, Transportation, Employment and General Standards.

## **Statement of Organizational Commitment**

The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines 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.

## **Project updates in 2022**

### **New play equipment**

- Bogart Street Park and Valleyview Park were presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.
  - Bogart Street Park is now complete
  - The Valleyview Park playground is complete and the multi-use court construction is in-progress
- The new play equipment structures exceed all minimum accessibility requirements with highlights below:
  - Accessible/Inclusive Play Feature
  - At grade activity panels promoting free play
  - At grade control panels promoting social play
  - One Accessible swing
  - Transfer table to access elevated elements
  - Accessible play surface and route through the play space
  - Accessible hard surface connecting municipal sidewalk

## **Bogart Street Park**

### **Bogart Street Park - Before**

The photos below show that the previous design of the play structure, ground surface, and connectivity to other areas needed improvement with accessibility.

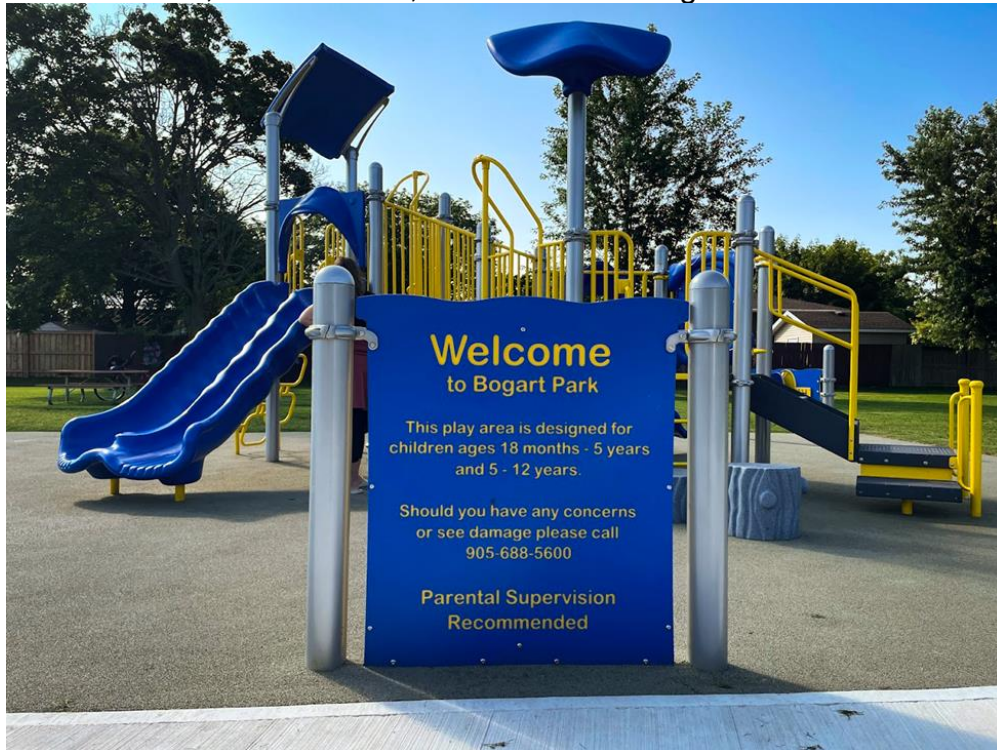


Pavement in need of repair and no connection to other elements in the park



## **Bogart Street Park - After**

Hard surfaces, transfer table, and inclusive design.



Accessible swing, accessible whirl, and accessible route through the play space.



## New tennis courts



## Valleyview Park

### Valleyview Park - Before

- Play structure with no hard surface connections and little to no accessible elements
- Paved area in need of repair



## **Valleyview Park - After**

New playground is complete with hard surface and connecting path, accessible whirl, swing, and other elements.



## **St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre**

### **Interpretive Plan Implementation**

- Introductory Gallery – A town Growing Into Note
  - Our new permanent introduction gallery focuses on the key elements of what makes St. Catharines and introduces the people who walked this land and shaped into the place it is now
- This exhibit was designed and developed with accessibility considerations from the Interpretive Plan
- Large format print guide also available



## Interpretive Plan Implementation – continued

On-going gallery development – new W.H. Merritt Welland Canals Gallery in planning and development for early 2023.

All new galleries designed to improve the visitor experience for visitors of all abilities.



## Recreation

### Niagara Brock Penguins

Brock Niagara Penguins is a sporting program for youth and young adults with a disability. In partnership with City of St. Catharines, our staff assist with registration and these programs are taking place in St. Catharines facilities.

- Indoor Hand Cycling
- Seated Volleyball
- Boccia





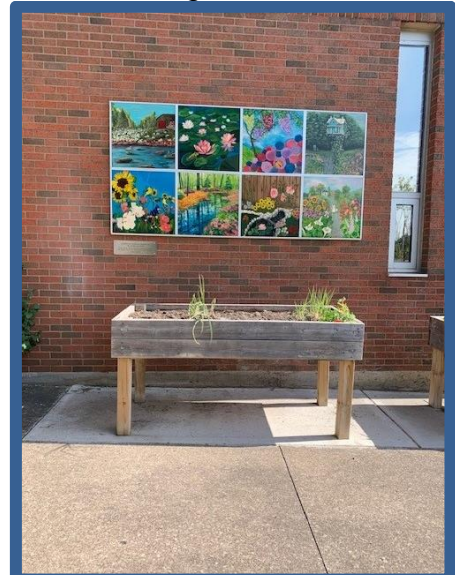
## **Aquatics**

### **Angel Fish (Ages 4-14 years)**

- This program focuses on developing water safety habits and basic swimming skills for children with learning, physical or intellectual difficulties.
- Each child must be accompanied in the water by a caregiver or volunteer.

### **Dunlop Older Adults Centre**

In 2022 accessible garden beds were put into this community space. These garden beds are at a reachable height for someone using a wheelchair or someone who can work at standing height and not having to bend over or work on the ground.



An accessible picnic table was also installed at the facility. This inclusive design allows users to sit at the picnic table along with individuals using a wheelchair so that people can eat comfortably at the same table.

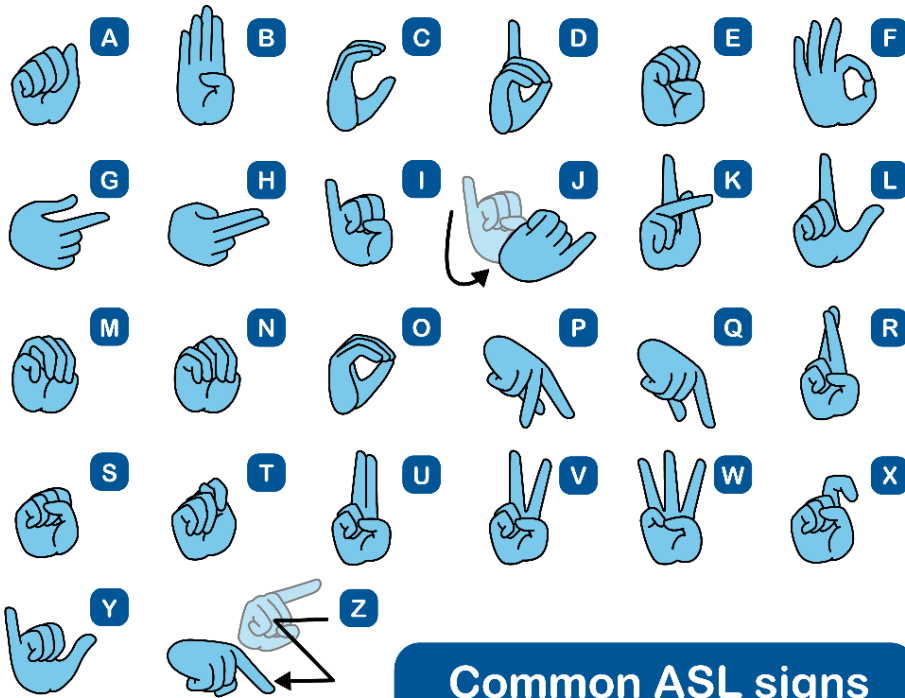


### **American Sign Language (ASL) Pilot Project**

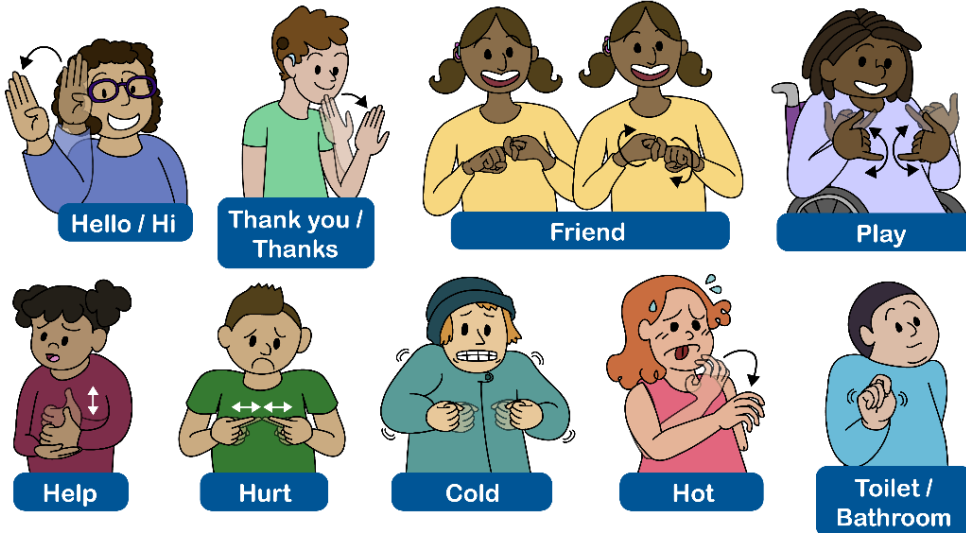
The City of St. Catharines has worked with a third-party artist to develop an ASL poster for recreational facilities. The project involves the introduction of signs that depict the ASL alphabet and common phrases within various City facilities. These posters are designed to enhance accessibility and bridge communication gaps for individuals who use ASL as their primary mode of communication. By complementing existing written signage, the project aims to create a more inclusive environment for all visitors.

The City is collaborating with artist Carlisle Robinson, a Canadian-American comic creator and illustrator with a deep commitment to sharing stories from historically underrepresented groups, particularly the deaf community. With a strong background in education and illustration, Robinson brings a unique perspective to this initiative, aligning perfectly with our objective to enhance inclusivity through meaningful representation.

# American Sign Language (ASL) Alphabet



## Common ASL signs



[stcatharines.ca/accessibility](https://stcatharines.ca/accessibility)



## Public Spaces and Facilities

### George Taylor Field

- Completed accessible washrooms design and construction
- Accessible ramps constructed for bleachers



## Sunset Beach accessible washrooms and parking

Accessible washrooms with change table



Accessible parking area and accessible ramp from the parking area to the beach



Mobi-Mats added on the beach to provide accessibility to the water's edge



Automated public washroom with self-cleaning features



**Recreational Trails and Multi-use paths**

The table below lists the trails and paths that were updated or installed in 2022. To the right of the location list shows whether it is newly constructed or an upgrade to an existing trail, and whether or not funding was received from the federal “Investing in Canada Infrastructure” (ICIP) program.

Location	New Trail	Upgrade Existing	Federal ICIP Funded
Grantham Rail Trail		✓	
Malcolmson Park Trail		✓	
Lakeside Park		✓	✓
Merritt Trail – Connection to Glengarry Park	✓		✓
Merritton Mills Multi-use Path (Hartzel Road to Ellis Avenue)	✓		

**Employment and Communications at the City**

The City of St. Catharines is committed to accessible communications for all who visit and use our services or facilities. For people employed with the City, we offer an inclusive employment experiences for all our employees, starting with a barrier-free recruitment and selection processes, on-boarding, and supportive work environments.

The City has continued to:

- Notify the public that accommodations will be provided upon request while accessing our facilities and services
- Promote and welcome accommodations throughout recruitment process and employment life cycle
- Offer training to staff:
  - Citizen's First staff attended training offered through Mohawk College with a focus on customer centered focus, including awareness of additional needs and supports a customer may have when requesting services.
  - Accessibility and accommodations training was provided to our supervisors and staff in leadership positions. With a focus on customer service, accommodations, and their role and responsibilities as supervisors
- Support staff and Committees to meet virtually on platforms like zoom and Microsoft Teams
- Offer LanguageLine services in person and over the phone to assist our residents in over 240 different languages.

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The City of St. Catharines held regular meetings January 2022 through November 2022. The Accessibility Advisory Committee provided comment and feedback on various projects throughout the year including facilities, and parks/playground, trails, plans for the 2023/24 season.

## **Looking to the future in 2023-2025**

### **Parks renewal projects:**

- Elma Street Park multi-use court
- Port Dalhousie Pool Park multi-use court
- Louis Avenue Park multi-use court
- Burgoyne Woods Park play equipment
- St. Patrick's Park multi-use court
- Bartlett Park play equipment and multi-use court
- Alex Mackenzie Park play equipment and basketball court

### **Trails:**

- Fairview Park – at the Labyrinth – new trail
- Pearson Park – South Trail Improvements – upgrades to existing path
- Rennie Park - North Trail Improvements - upgrades to existing path