

2019 Year-End Status Report ●

Accessibility Plan 2016-2020

Endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee on August 19, 2020

This document is available in alternate formats
upon request.

Visit: [The City of St. Catharines website](#)
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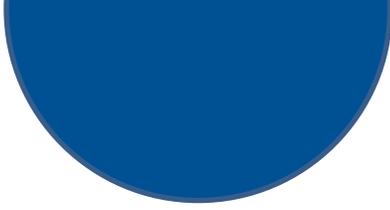


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Overview 2019 Year-End Status Report

This annual report provides an update on the status of the work by the City of St. Catharines in 2019, to fulfill the goals set out in its 2016-2019 Accessibility Plan, as required by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*,

This includes a detailed account of the improvements to City services, programs, information, communications, goods, and facilities through the completion of accessibility-related initiatives. In addition to meeting statutory requirements, this report demonstrates the City's commitment to including residents, employees and visitors with disabilities, in all the City has to offer.

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

In December 2019, the City reported non-compliance with Section 14 as it relates to websites and web content. Compliance with this complex standard has since been resolved and complies with Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 A). The City is actively working towards the next milestone in 2021, which will be complying with WCAG 2.0 AA.



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
- Provides opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from its goods or services.



Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Updates

Communication

- Offered Mental Health First Aid training to staff
- Trained new committee members on Accessible Customer Service and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) in June 2019 as part of new Committee of Council recruitment efforts
- Continued to train all new employees upon hire
- Trained all casual and student employees on the AODA and the IASR in May 2019
- Provided documents in alternate format, upon request
- Shared information about accessible services in St. Catharines at the Seniors' Day event
- Loaned City Mobi Mats to Brock University Student Union for Orientation Week



Transportation

St. Catharines Transit Commission

- Upgraded approximately 20 stops to improve accessibility
- Installed eight accessible shelters and five benches
- Expanded Paratransit service starting in September 2019
- Purchased and put into service one expansion Paratransit vehicle
- Three accessible platforms at the Downtown Bus Terminal
- Participated in the Niagara Region Specialized Transit review study
- Implemented region-wide Support Person Transit Pass



Employment

- Continue to notify the public that accommodations will be provided upon request
- Continue to promote and welcome accommodations throughout recruitment process and employment life cycle
- Provided training to new employees upon hire
 - Communications team participated in web compliance training

Projects completed in 2019

Physical Environment

Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) Policy Update

Update ensures all playground surfaces are firm and stable, constructed of material that does not separate or detach from the parent materials under pressure or stress, and meets the CSA Group's National Standard for ground surfaces.

Douglas Park Playground

Accessible/inclusive play features and concrete pathway connections added. Hard rubber surface installed as the base.

Eastport Park Playground

Once additional accessible swing included, in partnership with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

Bogart Street Park Splash Pad

Project involved construction of a new splash pad and sun shelter adjacent to the Port Weller Community Centre. Barrier-free spray features were implemented in the design.



Port Weller Community Centre

Project currently underway to address accessibility needs at the facilities including two new universal washrooms.

Sunset Beach

Project currently in development to address accessible/universal washrooms, accessible parking, hard surface pathway connections and an accessible/inclusive playground structure.

Memorial Benches

All new concrete slabs for memorial benches are accessible as the concrete slabs connect to hard surface pathways and include space for an accessible device/wheelchair.

Museum Interpretive Plan

The Museum Interpretive Plan was created to prioritize inclusivity and accessibility as the AODA was an important reference document throughout the plans development.

An example to demonstrate this, is that exhibit information is in more than one format to increase accessibility, as well as being aware of colour contrasts and heights of text panels.

Russell Avenue Community Centre

Installation of a universal washroom on the ground floor. An existing storage room was repurposed to accommodate a universal washroom complete with adjustable height adult-size changing table, and all other amenities to satisfy FADS.



Lake Street Service Centre renovations

Project involved interior renovations and small building addition including an elevator to ensure the facility is barrier free for the public and staff. In addition, accessible washroom facilities were added to the ground floor, and a universal washroom complete with barrier free shower on the second floor.

Accessible parking stalls were added to the site as well as barrier-free transitions from the parking area to the front entrance.



Victoria Lawn Cemetery

Construction of new administration building. Included barrier-free amenities throughout the building for public and staff, as well as barrier-free washroom accessible from the exterior of the building.

New barrier-free parking stalls and pavement to ensure a fully accessible path of travel. This building was constructed to replace the existing, outdated administration building on the south side of Queenston Street.

Lancaster Park Grandstands Washroom

Project involved repurposing existing storage and referees space to add barrier-free washrooms below the main grandstands.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The City of St. Catharines welcomed new and returning members to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) in June 2019, through the committee recruitment process.

The committee has provided accessibility comment and feedback on various projects throughout 2019, such as sidewalk, park and playground plans.

In addition, the committee worked together to create its first work plan which focuses on areas where the committee can contribute collaboratively with other committees and staff. It also highlights important projects in different areas of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR).





Relationship to City of St. Catharines Strategic Plan 2019-2028

Vision

Our vision for the future is for St. Catharines to be the most dynamic, innovative, sustainable and livable city in North America.

Guiding Principles

Our City will continue to achieve success through strategic decision-making that:

- Embraces innovation, ensures sustainability and improves livability for all residents
- Promotes operational and service excellence
- Demonstrates accountability and transparency
- Respects diversity, inclusiveness and equity
- Enables people to achieve success

Social Well-being Pillar

The St. Catharines' Strategic Plan is organized under four pillars of sustainability: Economic; Social; Environmental; and Cultural. Accessibility is included in the Social Well-being pillar.

The Strategic Goal of the Social Well-being Pillar is to build and support strong, inclusive neighbourhoods that provide high quality of life for residents of all ages.

Focus on accessibility

The City of St. Catharines strives to create an inclusive and barrier-free environment for those using services, and living in the City. In doing so, we recognize the diverse needs of our community and strive to provide services and facilities that are accessible for everyone.

The City promotes accessibility through the development of its policies, procedures and practices that are consistent with the core principles of integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.



Looking to the future

The City of St. Catharines' 2021-2025 Accessibility Plan, charts a course for the continued to work on meeting, maintaining and exceeding its obligations under AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

In keeping with our goal of becoming a barrier-free community the City, supported by the Accessibility Advisory Committee will:

- Explore the opportunity to develop and revise Universal Design Standards.
- Respond to requests for information in an alternative format.
- Continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents.
- Continue conducting accessibility audits on municipal buildings and facilities.
- Continue to review and update accessibility policies and perform a gap analysis of missing policies.
- Provide current staff and volunteers with updated information on changes to our accessibility policies and continue providing accessibility training to all new staff and volunteers.
- Continue to review by-laws to ensure they are consistent with the principles of the AODA and that they meet or exceed the minimum standards required under the AODA.
- Respond to public inquiries related to accessibility.
- Monitor accessibility trends, themes and actions at the community, provincial and federal levels.
- Continue advocating for greater accessibility within the community.
- Continue to seek out funding opportunities that support accessibility and inclusion.
- Explore assistive technology and devices to improve access to municipal facilities, programs and services.