



TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

Accessibility Plan

AAAC

**AMHERSTBURG ACCESSIBILITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**





Mayor's Message

I firmly believe that in Amherstburg, our greatest strength is our people. We succeed when everyone in our Municipality can reach their full potential. That's why we're working hard to make sure it is the most accessible it can be.

Our government's passage of the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005*, ushered in a new era of accessibility in Ontario. It will help ensure that all Ontarians have the same opportunity to succeed at work, at home and at school.

Council and Administration, along with our Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee are working together to identify, remove and prevent barriers and we are achieving great results. Over the past years, we have added new accessibility features to our website, and we have accomplished great strides with the addition of our new fully accessible United Communities Credit Union Complex and a fully accessible playground at Toddy Jones Park.

We are committed to building on that success by continuing to look for new ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, whether they are employees, residents or tourist to this fine Town.

Working together, I'm confident we can make our Municipality even stronger by helping everyone to achieve their best.

Yours truly,

Mayor Aldo DiCarlo



AMHERSTBURG ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAAC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

William Whittall, Chair

Ken Houston, Vice Chair

Marie Allen

Andrew Bolley

Angela Kelly

Justine Silvaggio

Rick Fryer, Council Liaison

Dawne Homenuik, Staff Liaison

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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee commenced in early 2002, and presently meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. We are an “Advisory” Committee reporting to Town Council for final decision making on various accessibility issues concerning the Town of Amherstburg. Together we have begun to see change in the way accessibility is recognized, not only here in the Town of Amherstburg but throughout the world.

We are extremely proud of our accomplishments over the past few years and will continue to work with local businesses and the Administration of the Town of Amherstburg to provide feedback on accessibility issues. We all feel very privileged to be a part of this Committee and remain dedicated to providing Council with sound advice regarding accessibility in this Town we call home.

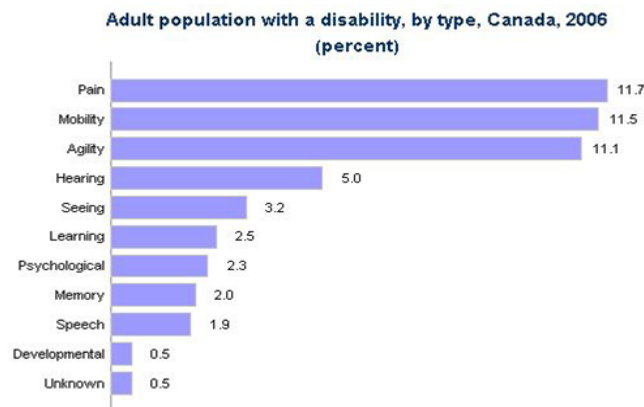
The Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee is pleased to present the Multi-year Accessibility Plan, as mandated by the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

Persons with disabilities represent a significant part of the population in the Province of Ontario. Statistics Canada reports that approximately 1.9 million Ontarians have disabilities, which represents approximately 16% of the population. The number of persons with a disability tends to increase as the population ages. As the baby boom generation reaches retirement age, it is estimated that approximately 20% of the population will have disabilities within the next 20 years.



The Town of Amherstburg strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Our organization is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This accessibility plan outlines the steps the Town is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan shows how the Town of Amherstburg will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

Procuring and Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

Town of Amherstburg will use accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. Except where it is not practicable to do so, and if required, an explanation will be provided.

Information is also available on the Town of Amherstburg website at www.amherstburg.ca or by contacting the Town Clerk at 519-736-0012.

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

On December 14, 2001 the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) received Royal Assent. The purpose of the ODA is to increase the opportunities for persons with disabilities through identification, removal and prevention of barriers, to participate in life throughout the Province. Improving accessibility in communities is a shared responsibility between municipalities, business owners, province and residents. Municipal governments play a significant role at the local level with planning in such areas as streets, parks, libraries, housing, emergency service, public buildings and the administration of elections.

The ODA sets out a number of requirements that all municipalities in Ontario are required to adhere to, to ensure that we move towards removing barriers for persons with disabilities are removed over time and that no new barriers are created.

All municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish accessibility advisory committees (a majority of which must be persons with disabilities) and prepare an annual accessibility plan which is available to the public.

The ODA requires that annual municipal accessibility plans address barriers in the following manners:

1. Report on the measures that the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for bylaws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities.
3. The Accessibility Committee will review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings that the Committee selects as described in section 41 of the Planning Act.
4. List the bylaws, policies, programs, practices and services that the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to persons with disabilities.
5. Describe the measures that the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
6. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

ontarians with
disabilities
act

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Following extensive public consultations across the Province in early 2004, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration drafted new legislation to benefit all Ontarians by establishing a goal of achieving accessibility for people with disabilities by the year 2025. To achieve this goal, the AODA legislates the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards concerning goods, services, accommodation, facilities, buildings and employment. Improvements will be phased in, in stages of five years or less, moving towards an accessible Ontario in 20 years. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, was passed by unanimous vote by the Ontario Legislature on May 10, 2005. On June 14th, 2005 it received Royal Assent and came into force. The AODA applies to both the public and private sectors. It also applies to the legislative assembly.

The AODA includes standards that set out the measures, policies, practices and other steps needed to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The standards address the full range of disabilities – including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. That is, both visible and invisible disabilities are included. They are mandatory and include time periods for implementing accessibility requirements in stages of five years or less. Standards cover such areas as: accessible buses, safe pedestrian routes into buildings, automatic doors at entrances, lower counter heights at cash registers, large-print menus, accessible washroom facilities, staff training in serving customers with learning disabilities, and adaptive technology in the workplace.

Accessible Standards Development Committees have been formed, including persons with disabilities, representatives of industries or sectors to whom the standards apply, the Ontario government and others to develop standards. Committees submit proposed standards to the government for approval as regulations. Once standard has been adopted as a regulation, all affected persons and organizations are required to comply within the timelines set out in the standard. The government is taking a modern, transparent approach to enforcement. Organizations covered by standards are obliged to file accessibility reports annually or as required, confirming compliance, and make them public. Spot audits will verify the contents of reports, and there will be tough penalties for non-compliance. To strengthen accountability, the Minister will prepare an annual report on progress in removing and preventing barriers. In addition, the government has appointed a person to undertake a comprehensive review of the Act's effectiveness.

The annual report and the comprehensive review will provide timely information on the measurable results achieved under the Act.



Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR)

ONTARIO REGULATION 191/11 (ISAR) was filed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 in June of 2011. This regulation was established to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025.

Customer Service Standard

The first of the accessibility standards developed and to become law was the Customer Service Standards. The Customer Service Standard (Regulation 429/07) required the public sector organizations to comply with the standards by January 1, 2010. Private sector organizations were given until January 1, 2012 to comply.

The Town of Amherstburg completed the following under the Customer Service Standards:

- Council adopted the Town's Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy on November 23, 2009.
- Established policies and procedures for providing services to persons with disabilities, pursuant to the Customer Service Standard.
- Provided Council, Town staff, Committee members and volunteers with Accessible Customer Service training.
- Posted a reminder advertisement in the local paper for Private Businesses.
- Removed architectural and physical barriers at Town Hall to employees, residents and visitors by installing a customer service kiosk on main floor.
- Developed an ongoing sensitivity training program as part of new employee orientation.

The Town has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are provided in an accessible format and with communications support, upon request. The Town will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Information and Communications Standard

- Advertised in the local paper concerning Customer Service compliance requirements by January 1, 2012.
- Completed accessibility plan for 2011, approved by Council and posted on website.
- Completed a pamphlet on accessibility in the Town of Amherstburg.
- Signage for access to Town Hall—Installed sign at Town Hall front entrance indicating entrance area for persons with disabilities.
- Website—Improvements made to Town website.
- TTY Town Hall—TTY (hearing assistive device) installed at Town Hall and training provided to staff.
- Information on Accessible sites from Tourism—Work with Special Events Committee to compile a list of accessible sites. Provided information on accessible sites to visitors of Amherstburg on the Town's marketing materials. 2009 marketing material completed with Discover Amherstburg Tourism Brochure.

Employment Standard

- Hiring Policy—Review hiring policy for accessibility initiatives. Completed December 2010.

Other Past Initiatives

- Participated in Amherstburg Hero's finale basketball game.
- Committee members attended the Essex County Accessibility Workshop.
- Liased with school board concerning General Amherst accessibility concerns.
- Visited all local high schools for accessibility tours.
- Addressed accessibility concerns at Amherstburg Farmers Market (ie: accessible port-a-johns and parking lot)
- Completed municipal building audits and provided suggestions for Top 5 Priorities to Administration for inclusion in 2013 Budget Deliberations. Barriers identified and removed as budget permitted.
- Supported ERCA (Essex Region Conservation Authority) in their quest to make the John R. Park Homestead Gift Shop more accessible by adding a ramp for wheelchair access.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on a number of new site plans.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on purchase of new accessible playground equipment for Kingsbridge Park.
- Formatted and adopted a new building audit template.
- Amherstburg Library—elevator installed and lot paved with accessible parking spots.
- Removed architectural barriers at Toddy Jones Park. Completed summer 2008.
- Accessible door installed at Fire Department entrance indicating entrance area for persons with disabilities.
- The old Amherstburg arena was made more accessible through minor modifications—main door repaired and signage for accessible parking spaces.
- By-law for snow removal (2005-04) passed requiring removal of snow from sidewalk abutting their property.
- By-law 2005-22 Disabled Parking—committee consulted on disabled parking by-law.
- Golfview Park—Walkway installed to playground equipment.
- Sidewalk locations identified and corrected to remove barriers and increase accessibility.
- McCurdy Park—Accessibility addressed through the removal of entrance fencing at either end of track complex in 2005.
- Grant received and improvements made to Tourism Booth in 2010.
- Grant Policy—Event group provided information on grant application of “how” they will include barrier free initiatives in their event and have audits performed as deemed necessary by the AAAC. Evaluation of events are ongoing.
- Removed physical barriers by providing accessible trash receptacles, drinking fountains and benches to residents and visitors. Committee completed inventory of trash receptacles, drinking fountains and benches to determine if improvements can be made. Inventory was forwarded to Administration for input and review as to when changes may be made (budget).
- Police Department began an annual accessible parking space blitz in cooperation with the Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee
- By-law Enforcement and Licensing Department performed an audit of the accessible parking spaces of businesses within the Town limits
- Accessibility updates were made to municipal facilities through the building audits completed in 2015 and 2016
- In 2016, Council approved \$50,000 for the Accessibility Committee to promote accessibility in municipal buildings

DEFINITION OF BARRIER

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act defines a barrier as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

BARRIER TYPE	
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body mobility and strength
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Information printed in font too small to be read by a person with low vision
Communicational	A person who talks too loudly when addressing a person with a hearing impairment
Attitudinal	A receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair
Technological	A paper tray on a computer printer that requires two strong hands to open the paper tray
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.



DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act has defined disability as:

- (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 diabetic 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.



Section Two: Town Strategies and Actions

Customer Service Standard

The Town of Amherstburg is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Customer Service Initiatives:

- Sensitivity training program as part of employee orientation—ongoing for new employees
- Provide training to all Town staff and Committees on providing Accessible Customer Service—ongoing for new employees
- Provide additional in depth training to employees of the Libro Credit Union Centre—ongoing for new employees

Information and Communications Standard

The Town of Amherstburg will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities, where practicable.

If the Town determines that it is not technically feasible to convert the information/communications, or does not have the technology available to convert the information/communication, the Town will be obligated to provide the person that requires the information with:

1. An explanation as to why the information/communications are unconvertible.
2. A summary of the unconvertible information/communication.

Emergency Information

When the Town prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information, Administration will make the information available to the public, as soon as practicable. The Town shall provide information in an accessible format or with the appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

Feedback

The Town has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are provided in an accessible format and with communications support, upon request. The Town will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.

Accessible Formats and Communications Supports

The Town shall be obligated to provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities:

1. Upon request in a timely manner that takes in to account the person's accessibility needs due to the disability.
2. At a cost that is no more than the regular cost that is charged to others.
3. Consult with the person making the request and determine suitability of an accessible format or communication supports.
4. Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, where available.

Website Accessibility

The Town shall make its internet website and web content conform with WCAG 2.0 initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA. By January 1, 2014, any new web content will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A. By January 1, 2021 all internet website and web content will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Information and Communications Initiatives:

- Continue to educate businesses in the community of accessibility issues through education and educational materials—ongoing.
- Advocate, educate and create awareness with respect to accessibility issues in all areas of Town; best practices information through advertising “do you know” in local papers—ongoing
- Implementation of Transportation and Information & Communication as per AODA released on June 3, 2011—ongoing through to 2025

Employment Standard

The Employment Standard builds upon the existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code in relation to how to accommodate individuals with disabilities throughout the job application process and the employment relationship. It applies to employees and does not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals. The requirements of the employee standard shall be met by Town of Amherstburg by January 1, 2014 unless otherwise specified.

Recruitment and Retention

The Town shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities:

- During the recruitment process when job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process;
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Town shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for provisions of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability;
- Notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Employee Notification

The Town shall inform employees of the policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability;

- As required to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment;
- Whenever there is a change in policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Accessible Formats

Where an employee with a disability requests an accessible format, the Town will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job;
- Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace; and
- Consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)

The Town has a written process for the development of a documented individual accommodation plan for employees with a disability. The process shall include:

- The employees participation in the development of the IAP;
- Assessment on an individual basis;
- Identification of accommodations to be provided;
- Timelines for the provision of accommodations;
- The Town may request an evaluation by a medical or other expert at our expense, to assist with determining the required accommodations and how to achieve the accommodation;
- Employee may request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent where represented, or otherwise a representative from the workplace where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent;
- Steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- Frequency with which the IAP will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;
- If denied, the reason(s) for denial are to be provided to the employee;
- A format that takes into account the employee's disability;
- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports will be provided;
- Identification of any other accommodations that is to be provided.

Return to Work

The Town has in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work. Such processes must be documented and must outline steps that the Town will take to facilitate the return to work and include an IAP plan.

Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, Redeployment

The Town takes into account the accessibility needs and/or individual accommodation plans of employees when:

- Using performance management processes;
- Providing career development and advancement information; and
- Using redeployment procedures.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Town provides individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability;

- If the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of needs for accommodations due to the employee's disability;
- If the employee that received individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance, the Town shall provide, with the employees consent, information to a person designated by the Town to provide assistance to the employee;
- As soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability;
- A review of the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves into a different location in the organization, when overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The Town uses accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. If required, an explanation will be provided.

Training

The Town ensures that training is provided to all employees and regular fee for service staff, on the requirements of accessibility standards referred to in the regulation and on the Human Rights Code, as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training is provided as soon as practicable; if any changes to these policies occur, training is also provided. Administration maintains a record of training dates and the number of individuals that were in attendance.

Training Initiatives:

- Sensitivity training program as part of employee orientation—ongoing for new employees
- Provide training to all Town staff and Committees on providing Accessible Customer Service—ongoing for new employees
- Provide additional in depth training to employees of the Libro Credit Union Centre—ongoing for new employees

Design of Public Spaces

The Town of Amherstburg will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

Public Space Initiatives:

- Sidewalk locations identified and corrected to remove barriers and increase accessibility—ongoing

The Town of Amherstburg provides preventative maintenance of accessible elements through routine maintenance and inspections. Emergency maintenance is provided, as needed, to address significant disruptions to accessible services. The Town notifies members of the public of temporary disruptions through the use of signage, the Town website, social media and/or the local newspaper.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard will make it easier for people to travel in Ontario, including persons with disabilities, older Ontarians and families traveling with children in strollers.

The Town of Amherstburg will:

- Consult with the AAAC, persons with disabilities and the public to determine proportion of accessible taxis required in the community, including steps to meet the need;
- Ensure taxicabs do not charge higher fees or additional fees to persons with disabilities;
- Ensure taxicabs do not charge a fee for storage of assistive devices;
- Ensure taxicabs have appropriate information displayed on the rear bumper and available in an accessible format to passengers.

Other Initiatives

- Events Policy—Event groups provide information on “how” they will include barrier free initiatives in their event and have an audit performed as deemed necessary by the Town’s event committee —evaluations of events are ongoing.

For More Information....

If you would like further information on the
Town of Amherstburg's Accessibility Plan, please contact:

Paula Parker, Municipal Clerk

Phone: 519-736-0012 ext. 238

TTY: 519-736-9860

Email: pparker@amherstburg.ca

www.amherstburg.ca

Standard and accessible formats of this accessibility plan
are provided upon request.

