



# 2025-2030 Multi-year accessibility plan



## **Background: Accessibility and the Province of Ontario**

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standard) public and private sector organizations in the Province of Ontario must develop a multi-year accessibility plan to identify and address barriers to information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service for people with disabilities.

The City of Welland is continuing its proactive approach to accessibility planning by developing its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) for 2025–2030. The Plan includes a public engagement process and includes consultation with its Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff. Welland remains committed to meeting the accessibility needs of its citizens and staff.

This Plan identifies the steps Welland has taken and will continue to take to ensure the City's goods and services are accessible to all people of all abilities. The City of Welland is committed to providing excellent customer service to all its citizens. Welland is committed to compliance with AODA and its accessibility standards and will provide accessibility and accommodation for persons with disabilities through AODA's customer service standard, integrated accessibility standard and all other standards as they are developed, and in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Welland wishes to thank its community partners, stakeholders and service partners in helping the city to achieve its accessibility goals.

## Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of the City of Welland, I am proud to present our 2025–2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan—a roadmap that reflects our city’s unwavering commitment to building a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable community for all.

Accessibility is not just a regulatory requirement—it is a fundamental value that shapes how we serve our residents, design our spaces, and deliver our services. It is part of the objectives of City’s Strategic Plan (Charting Our Future: Welland Strategic Plan 2023-2026).

This plan outlines the steps we will take over the next five years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in areas such as customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation, and the design of public spaces.

The development of this plan was informed by meaningful public engagement, the insights of our Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the dedication of City staff. It builds on the progress we’ve made and sets ambitious, actionable goals, such as: improving sidewalk accessibility, enhancing customer service training, expanding inclusive recreation opportunities, and ensuring our digital and physical environments are welcoming to everyone.

We recognize that accessibility is a shared responsibility. I want to thank our community partners, stakeholders, and residents who contributed their voices and experiences to this plan. Your input has helped shape a vision of Welland where everyone, regardless of ability, can participate fully in civic life.

Together, we will continue to move forward with purpose, compassion, and a clear focus on removing barriers and creating opportunities. I invite all residents to join us in this important journey.

Sincerely,

Frank Champion  
Mayor, City of Welland

## **General Requirements**

General Requirements under the AODA include the establishment of accessibility policies addressing all aspects of operations, the accessibility plan and addresses needs related to accessible procurement.

This section of the AODA also communicates training requirements for greater understanding of the AODA and accessibility needs of clients and customers.

## **What We Will Continue to Do**

- Prepare and share publicly our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlining our commitment to accessible facilities, goods and services for citizens within the City of Welland.

## **2025-2030 Goals**

- Review accessibility policy, procurement policies, and other related policies to ensure accessibility needs are addressed adequately.
- As part of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, assess city owned and occupied facilities, including parks and recreational facilities so they are accessible to people with disabilities
- Provide annual updates to City Council and the public on the implementation progress of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Support the development of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) by enacting a targeted, multi channel and ongoing recruitment process to strengthen representation at the committee table. Assign expertise from the Human Resources department to achieve AAC recruitment goals.
- Provide immediate training for new hires and refresher training to existing staff and the AAC every 3 years on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Commission requirements, other Accessibility Standard requirements as necessary and the customer service experience.

## **Customer Service**

The Customer Service Standard establishes customer service policies. With the welcoming of service animals and support persons, the Standard allows for an effective customer service experience. It also addresses communication needs through the development of an accessible feedback process and the need for accessible formats for information. Staff increase their customer service effectiveness through customer service training.

### **What We Will Continue to Do**

- Welcome service animals and support persons on City premises to support the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
- Review the Customer Service Policy to ensure it is current and reflects any internal changes/updates.
- Receive feedback using multiple accessible methods to improve customer service.
- Provide alternate formats of customer service information upon request.

### **2025-2030 Goals**

- Provide additional training on accessible customer service so that front line staff gain further awareness to better respond to the accessibility needs of the public. Customer service training refreshers for staff will emphasize the face-to face customer service needs of people with disabilities and the difficulties found during in-person customer service encounters.
- Improve the customer service experience by ensuring that staff have accessibility information through a city-specific Accessibility Guide. The guide would also be useful to the public, enabling them to find accessibility features in the city and would be helpful to staff in addressing enquiries or customer service needs with accurate, up-to-date information.
- Explore the expansion of senior classes at the Welland Community Centre to be opened to people with disabilities.
- Improve internal communication as to who to contact with accessibility issues.

## Information and Communication

The Information and Communications Standard guarantees municipal information and web-based communication is accessible and provides for alternate formats upon request. It ensures that public emergency information is accessible and focuses on information available through public libraries.

### What We Will Continue to Do

- Ensure web-based information is compliant with WCAG 2.1 Accessibility Standards, to Level AA: <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>.
- Provide alternate formats for all City information upon request.
- Provide improvements to the website through City IT staff, especially keeping information current.
- Detail municipal accessible parking on the City website through City IT staff
- The public library will:
  - Provide access to or arrange for accessible materials where they exist.
  - Provide information about the availability of accessible materials and provide this information in an accessible format upon request.
  - Provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections, rare books and donations.

### 2025-2030 Goals

- Have City IT staff ensure accessibility information is easy to find increasing it's prominence on the front page of the website
- Increase awareness among staff through training on the barriers faced by people with disabilities in using the internet.
- Add the Accessibility Guide to the accessibility section of the City's website and distribute it city-wide to all staff and volunteers.
- Review how the organization communicates and informs the public about the availability of emergency plans and policies, provides accessible materials where they exist, and provide communication support upon request.
- Develop resources for employees on accessible public engagement and consultations.

## **Employment Standards**

The Employment Standard attempts to reduce and eliminate barriers to employment for people with disabilities. It approaches accessibility throughout the employment life cycle through recruitment to redeployment. It requires the development of accommodation plans and emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. It ensures accessibility is considered in all employment related functions.

## **What We Will Continue to Do**

- Ensure accessibility is addressed throughout the employment life cycle from recruitment to re-deployment.
- Develop employment accommodation plans as needed for employees.
- Develop emergency response plans for employees with disabilities

## **2025-2030 Goals**

- Review employment letter templates to ensure the availability of accommodations is clearly stated.
- Ensure job postings indicate the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment process.
- Carry out an outreach recruitment plan to reach candidates with disabilities.

## **Transportation**

The Transportation Standard examines accessibility in both conventional and specialized transit systems. It requires fare parity, accessible features on buses and requires a specific accessibility plan for transit services. The Standard also addresses accessibility in municipal taxi services.

While the transportation system is now managed by Niagara Region, Welland will continue to work with the Niagara Region Transit to ensure the needs of Welland citizens are met.

### **2025-2030 Goals**

- Work with Niagara Region Transit to have those with visual disabilities recognized as needing specialized transit.
- Work with the Niagara Region Transit to ensure the needs of Welland citizens are communicated and met to ensure good service.
- Work with the Region to add a bus stop at the Welland Community Centre which would be advantageous to both people with disabilities and seniors.
- Work with the Region to add benches at more bus stops.
- Review all bus stops in Welland and take steps to address accessibility problems.

## **Design of Public Spaces**

The Design of Public Spaces Standard reduces barriers to public spaces through specific requirements in exterior design elements, recreational trails, outdoor play spaces and accessible parking. Also considered are service counters in customer service interior and exterior areas.

## **What We Will Continue to Do**

- Refer to the completed Accessibility Audit of facilities to identify areas for improvement and implement recommendations from the project report.
- Continue to improve the physical environment of city owned and leased spaces by implementing recommendations found in the Accessibility Audit project report.
- Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on the design for new or refurbished public spaces.
- Work to ensure new buildings, and facilities as well as those under renovation are accessible to people with disabilities.

## **2025-2030 Goals**

- Initiate an educational campaign to address the need for appropriate snow removal.
- Conduct a survey of sidewalks to determine if barriers exist and develop a rehabilitation plan as appropriate.
- Lengthen crosswalk timing and investigate the installation of audible crosswalk signals at high traffic crossings.
- Investigate the installation of benches at trails and public paths of travel.
- Install lowered service counters at City Hall (the Finance counter) and other City owned properties, as identified by the recent Accessibility Audit.
- Repair and redevelop walkways at front and rear of City Hall.

- Investigate its policy on the availability of public washrooms in City facilities, specifically keeping public washrooms open and easily available.
- Consider installing a park that is fenced. This would reduce barriers for children with disabilities and improve safety.
- Conduct a study to determine braille signage needs at city-owned facilities and install braille and tactile signage as needed.

## **Conclusion**

The Accessibility Plan enables the City of Welland to address accessibility issues proactively. Through the Plan, Welland aims to provide accessible goods and services to all citizens. The Accessibility Standards serve as a guide for accessibility improvement initiatives and offer a framework for achieving universal access. Welland looks forward to collaborating with the community to achieve accessibility.