



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2019 Status Update

Objective

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal is committed to enriching the quality of life for persons with disabilities. The Township recognizes that it is a long-term process and that communication is important for moving to full accessibility. The Township continues to strive to remove barriers that limit inclusion within the community.

In 2013, the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal released a multi-year accessibility plan, which was updated in 2015, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations. The plan outlined the strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which included how the Township will meet phased-in requirements under the AODA.

Background

The AODA is the first law of its kind in Canada. Under the AODA, the Province of Ontario is developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. The goal of the Act and the standards is to make for a fully accessible province for all people by 2025.

Since 2005, two regulations outlining accessibility standards have been made under the AODA. The first regulation was the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (O.Reg. 429/07). The second was the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg. 191/11) (IASR). Between them, they establish standards for accessible customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces in the built environment, and for overall training, planning and reporting of accessibility initiatives.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal makes every effort to ensure that its programs, services and facilities are barrier-free and continues to support the goal of an accessible Province by 2025. The Township strives to meet regulations made under the AODA by ensuring equal opportunities are provided to people with disabilities and that

goods and services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Highlights from 2018-2019

- Staff administered the 2018 Municipal Election. Staff completed a detailed Municipal Election Accessibility Plan and a subsequent Accessibility Report following the completion of the election, which highlighted specific accessibility measures that the Township took to ensure an equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. As noted in the post election Accessibility Report, staff made great efforts in promoting a barrier free election by including barrier free voting stations, as well as accessible online/telephone voting.
- Continued efforts were made to generate more user-friendly documents through converting documents to PDF to make them more easily accessible on the Township's website.
- The Township's Waterfront Improvement Subcommittee has proposed new design concepts for the Cardinal Galop Canal waterfront to assist in making the area more accessible and user friendly. These are only concepts to be further discussed in 2020.
- On-going maintenance of the Township's sidewalks continues in an effort to make them barrier free and accessible. Replacement of some 140 m of very uneven and narrow asphalt sidewalk was completed in 2019 with a concrete sidewalk of appropriate width.
- The Township completed the installation of new directional and asset signage throughout sections of the Township to improve and provide a greater understanding of the characteristics and locations of specific facilities and areas within the Township.
- The Township installed lighted bollards posts along the walkway leading into the Township Office to increase visibility.
- At the end of 2019 the Township purchased eScribe agenda and report management software which will increase accessibility capabilities when publishing public agendas and minutes in both PDF and HTML in 2020.

Accessible Customer Service

In 2019, Township employees and Council received additional training for Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and were made aware of the Human Rights Code as it relates to disability.

Information and Communication

The Township is committed to ensuring that universal design principles and best practices are considered when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products.

What we have done:

- Continued to ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible and that the public is notified of the existence of these processes.
- Continued to provide accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.
- Continue to update the municipal website to meet the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements and continue to ensure that all additional content is created in an accessible format. The Township has included additional funds in the 2020 budget to further update the municipal website.
- Provision of the Township's Emergency Plan in an accessible format, upon request.
- Staff continue to make every effort to generate more user-friendly and accessible documents. Staff continues to promote best practices for creating accessible documents by converting Word documents to PDF for posting to the Township's website.

Employment

The Township is committed to ensuring the process of recruiting, obtaining and maintaining an employee is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce.

What we have done:

- Accommodations continue to be available throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle.
- Continued to inform applicants and employees of our accessible hiring practices and policies.
- Continued to support employees absent from work because of a short or long-term disability, through our return to work policy and process.

Transportation

The Transportation Standard does not apply to the Township as neither public transportation nor taxi cab licensing is provided.

Next Steps

The Township will continue to identify, prevent and remove barriers where we find them. We will engage in the ongoing process of reviewing and refining our policies and practices to better serve our community. The Township plans to complete a fulsome review of the Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Plan in 2020.