



# EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL

TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan  
2021-2026

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

## Executive Summary

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026 outlines the initiatives the Township continues to take and plans to take to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal is committed to ensure that persons with disabilities share the same rights, freedoms and obligations so that they may live as independently as possible and able to participate in all that the Township has to offer. This plan represents and plays an important role in recognizing the needs of persons with disabilities that reside in Edwardsburgh Cardinal.

The multi-year plan sets out strategies to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. It will also assist to position the Township as a frontrunner in accessibility matter in the community.

## About Edwardsburgh Cardinal

In January 2001, the Corporation of the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal was created by an amalgamation of the former Township of Edwardsburgh and Village of Cardinal. The Township is a diverse community with a population of approximately 7,000.

Statistics Canada information indicates that 22% of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over (or approximately 6.2 million individuals) have one or more disabilities and the prevalence of disability increased with age, from 13% for those ages 15 to 24 years to 47% for those aged 75 years and over. Based on Edwardsburgh Cardinal's population and Canada's average number of individuals with an identified disability, there would be approximately 1,540 residents living with a disability in the Township.

## Legislation

What is accessibility? It simply means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

In 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) was passed by the Province of Ontario to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities. Under the legislation, all municipalities are required to prepare accessibility plans addressing the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. Certain sections of the ODA were rescinded in 2015 that applied to municipalities. This was done to streamline the accessibility requirements across various accessibility laws.

In 2005, the Province of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to recognize the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities and to provide for the development, implementation, and enforcement of mandatory standards for accessibility in all areas of life. The AODA sets out the road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with the focus on 5 areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Public Spaces

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) was enacted by the Province of Ontario in 2011 and establishes accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service. These standards set out mandatory legal requirements for organizations, businesses, and municipalities.

## Accessibility Moving Forward

### 1. Customer Service

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal developed and continues to maintain the requirements set out in the accessible customer service policy. Accessible customer service means giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access the Township's goods and services and allow them to benefit from the services, in the same place and in a similar way as other people.

The Township continues to:

- Review customer feedback
- Provide accessible training to staff (records of training are saved and filed within the Township's record database)
- Ensure that staff who provides service on behalf of the Township has been trained on providing accessible customer service.

2021-2026 Goals:

- Encourage the public to provide feedback on concerns surrounding accessibility
- Identify opportunities to reinforce and promote enhancements to accessible customer service
- Continue to identify and address potential customer service barriers

- Explore the opportunity to utilize technologies to support accessible customer service, such as acquiring a tablet to facilitate communication for deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing visitors. The tablet may also assist in magnifying information for people with low-vision and capable of accessing an on-demand sign language interpreter.
- Identify future employee training in a variety of formats which may include: in-class, events, and e-learning
- 2022 Election:
  - Evaluation of all voting locations and methods to ensure that locations and voting methods are accessible to provide barrier free forms of access to voters
  - Ensure that election materials are made available in accessible formats.

## **2. Information and Communication**

The information and communications standard under the IASR require that the Township communicates and provides information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Township continues to:

- Ensure process for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible
- Staff strive to communicate in accessible formats with the public.

### 2021-2026 Goals

- Develop a new Township website through eSolutions Group to meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements and continue to ensure new content is created in an accessible format
- Full implementation of eScribe electronic agenda management and report writer software system, which produces fully accessibility-compliant content, including agendas and minutes
- Provide video recording of Committee of the Whole and Council meetings
- Ensure all print documents are accessible.

## **3. Employment**

The employment standard under the IASR sets out accessibility requirements that the Township must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with

disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

The Township continues to:

- Inform applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
- Inform applicants and employees of accessible hiring practices
- Training program for new employees
- Advise successful candidates about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities
- Support employees absent from work because of a short or long-term disability, through the return to work process as outlined in our return to work policy
- Consider and incorporate accessibility needs of employees during relocation and/or advancement.

2021-2026 Goals:

- Continue to review policies to prevent or remove barriers, ensure they are compliant with legislation and to reflect best practices
- Ensure that documentation of individual employee accommodation plans is filed.

#### **4. Transportation**

Most of the requirements of the transportation standard relate to the operation of public transportation service systems. The Township currently does not own or operate any transportation system.

2021-2026 Goals:

- Explore partnerships with local organizations and municipalities that may be able to provide accessible transportation
- Promote any accessible transportation services that may be available for the public within the Township.

#### **5. Public Spaces**

The design of public spaces standard under the IASR requires that the Township ensure that newly constructed or significantly renovated public spaces are accessible. The Township must also comply with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the build environment.

The Township continues to:

- Engage Township employees to provide feedback identifying potential barriers
- Train new employees in the areas of accessible customer service
- Conduct and review annual identification of accessibility and barriers at Township owned facilities
- Consultation with the senior management team on potential and identified barriers and review possible solutions.

2021-2026 Goals:

- Continue to prioritize accessibility in newly designed and significantly renovated public spaces
- Enhance pedestrian safety through the continued maintenance and upgrades to sidewalks and crosswalks
- Incorporate accessible features with the Cardinal Waterfront Improvement project
- Installation and maintenance of accessible power doors at the Township Office to gain access to the reception area as well as the council chambers
- Regular and continued maintenance of the elevators located within Township facilities
- Installation of accessible features within the Township Office and washrooms to meet accessibility requirements of the Building Code (light sensors in washrooms, and ensuring the maintenance of accessible washroom stall(s))
- Installation of accessible lip ramp at the front entrance of the Township Office
- Installation and maintenance of accessible walking trails in community areas
- Installation and maintenance of new accessible play structures within Township owned facilities (parks)
- Explore options to make dressing rooms at arenas accessible
- Explore options to make the access to the skating rinks accessible
- Explore options for accessible water play (splash pad).

## Accessibility Moving Forward

The Township must comply with the requirements identified in the AODA; however, the Township is committed to identifying and implementing barrier reducing initiatives to improve accessibility in the Township.

Barrier reducing initiatives and goals for 2021-2026:

- Continue accessibility renovations on Township facilities
- Create an accessibility reserve that would be used to help create accessible barrier reducing improvements to Township assets/facilities, such as buildings, recreation facilities, or other indoor/outdoor spaces.