



**The Corporation of the
City of Stratford**

**2011
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 3

1.1 Ontarians with Disabilities Act 3

1.2 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities 3

SECTION 2: MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN THIS PLAN 4

2.1 Municipality 4

2.2 Address 4

2.3 Key Contact 4

2.4 Population 4

2.5 Municipal Highlights 4

2.6 Council Organization 4

2.7 Sub-committees of Council 5

2.8 Committees of Council 5

2.9 Council Meetings 6

2.10 Departmental Organization 6

SECTION 3: CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES 9

3.1 Target Group 9

3.2 Consultation Activities 9

SECTION 4: PLAN DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE 10

Table 1: Accessibility Steering Group 10

SECTION 5: INITIATIVES TO IDENTIFY, REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS IN THE ORGANIZATION 11

5.1 Barriers 11

5.2 Types of Disabilities 11

5.3 Types of Barriers 11

5.4 Accessibility Achievements 12

5.5 Future Actions to Address Barriers and Enhance Accessibility 12

SECTION 6: ACTION PLANS FOR BARRIER ELIMINATION 13

6.1 Annual and Ongoing Reviews 13

6.2 Complaint Basis Review 13

Table 2: Summary of Departmental Operations Reviews for 2010 14

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1.1 Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (ODA)*, 2001 was established by the Province of Ontario to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities across Ontario. The legislation applies to all provincial and municipal governments, school boards, colleges and universities and hospitals. Municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more residents must establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee, prepare an annual Accessibility Plan and provide opportunity for community involvement through the Accessibility Advisory Committee in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for persons with disabilities.

1.2 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* was introduced by the Provincial government on October 12th 2004 and proclaimed June 13th, 2005. The purpose of the Act is to build upon some components of the *ODA*.

The AODA's purpose is to remove all barriers in the Province of Ontario by the year 2025 and create an accessible Ontario. The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee will remain in place; however the AODA requires the establishment of Accessibility Standards, and these standards will apply to both the public sector and private sector businesses. Individuals with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of Canada's population. According to Statistics Canada, about 1.8 million Ontarians have a disability - approximately 15.5% of the population. It is estimated that by the year 2021 Canadians aged 65 and older will number close to 6.7 million or 1/5 of the total population.

The primary purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to provide an opportunity for persons with disabilities to be involved in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to their full participation in life. The plan is intended to identify existing barriers to persons with disabilities to remove such barriers over time and help to prevent new barriers from being created.

SECTION 2: MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN THIS PLAN

2.1 Municipality

The Corporation of the City of Stratford

2.2 Address

City Hall, 1 Wellington Street
P.O. Box 818
Stratford ON N5A 6W1

2.3 Key Contact

Accessibility Steering Committee – David Carroll - Chair, Joe Salter, Joan Thomson, Heather Lovie, Brad Hernden and Rick Young.

2.4 Population

City of Stratford – 32,000 (2006 Census)

2.5 Municipal Highlights

Stratford is a southwestern Ontario community, with a population of 32,000 which lies approximately 160km west of Toronto. Situated in the centre of a rich, productive agricultural area, it has achieved a national and international reputation as the North American home of Shakespearean Theatre. In addition to being an internationally acclaimed cultural centre, Stratford is a significant manufacturing centre and a regional service centre. This combination is explicitly recognized by its motto, “*Industria et Ars*” (Industry and Art).

Stratford provides a range of municipal services to the residents, including but not limited to police, urban transportation, water, corporate, library, fire, recreation, garbage and recycling collection, snow removal, parks, building and planning, economic development , airport and engineering.

The City of Stratford is independent from the surrounding Perth County, however, the City and the County do have a joint relationship to provide certain services. These joint services are social services, child care, housing and land ambulance.

2.6 Council Organization

Stratford City Council is comprised of an elected Mayor and 10 Councillors who serve for four-year terms.

Stratford City Council uses a three-step decision-making process to conduct business

1. Sub-committee recommends to Committee
2. Committee recommends to Council
3. Council adopts final decision

2.7 Sub-committees of Council

Issues needing a decision of Council usually begin at the Sub-committee level. There are seven Sub-committees comprised of 4 members of Council and the Mayor. Each Sub-committee is responsible for specific policy areas in the City and provides recommendations to Committees and Council.

Presiding over a Sub-committee meeting is a member of Council appointed as Chair. The Vice-Chair acts in the absence of the Chair at Sub-committee and Committee meetings. The head of Council, Mayor Mathieson, is an ex-officio member and entitled to participate and vote at Sub-committee, Committee and Council meetings.

The Sub-committees meet once a month during the day in the Council Chamber. Sub-committee meetings are open to the public, except for in-camera sessions to discuss certain privileged matters.

The seven Sub-committees of Council are:

- Community Services Sub-committee
- Economic Development & Tourism Sub-committee
- Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
- Planning and Heritage Sub-committee
- Protection to Persons and Property Sub-committee
- Public Works Sub-committee
- Social Services Sub-committee

At the meeting, Sub-committee considers issues, background material and information and makes recommendations as to what action should be taken regarding various issues. A Sub-committee's recommendation regarding a specific issue is then forwarded to Committee.

2.8 Committees of Council

The second step in the decision-making process is Committees of Council. A recommendation made at a Sub-committee meeting is forwarded to Committee. Committees meet in the Council Chamber immediately following one of the two

regular Council meetings each month. Committee meetings are also open to the public.

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees are the same as the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Sub-committees. All members of Council, including the Mayor, sit on each of the seven Committees. The Committees have the same names as the Sub-committees.

A Committee may accept or amend a Sub-committee's recommendation. Once the Committee makes a recommendation, it is then forwarded to the next Regular Council meeting for adoption by Council. Occasionally, a matter of urgency discussed at a Committee meeting will receive formal approval that same night by Council reconvening at the end of the Committee meeting sessions.

2.9 Council Meetings

Council meets to consider reports and recommendations of the Committees, make decisions, adopt policies and pass by-laws. Adoption of Committee recommendations by Council is the third and final stage in the decision-making process. This three-step process can take 6 to 8 weeks to complete from when a Sub-committee first considers an issue to the adoption of the Committee's recommendation by Council.

The regular Council meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. Regular Council meetings are open to the public.

Special Council meetings are held from time to time at the call of the Mayor, or a majority of members of Council to consider matters of urgency. These meetings are also open to the public.

2.10 Departmental Organization

2.10.1 CAO's Office

The CAO is appointed by City Council. The CAO exercises general control and management of the affairs of the municipality for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the municipality and performs such other duties as are assigned by the municipality.

Under the direction of the CAO, each Director is responsible for managing their respective area.

2.10.2 Director of Building and Planning

The Director's service responsibilities include Planning Services (land use policy planning, development planning, Committee of Adjustment) and Building Services (building plans, building inspections, permits and

approvals, plans examination, property standards, Municipal By-law Enforcement)

2.10.3 Director of Community Services

The Director's service responsibilities include: Cemetery, Public Transit, Parallel Transit, Parks and Forestry, and Recreational Services.

2.10.4 Director of Corporate Services

The Director's service responsibilities include Information Technology, City Clerk's Office, Parking Enforcement, Crossing Guards, Purchasing, Financial Services, Tax, Payroll, Treasurer's Office.

2.10.5 Director of Economic Development

The Director's service responsibilities include business attraction and retention, real estate transactions, development and operation of the municipal airport.

2.10.6 Director of Engineering and Public Works

The Director's services responsibilities include roads, sewers, traffic services, GIS, traffic and municipal parking maintenance, storm and sanitary drainage, water, design, drafting, construction inspections, surveys, road occupancy permits, garbage and recycling programmes.

2.10.7 Director of Human Resources

The Director's service responsibilities include recruitment and selection of city employees, labour relations and negotiations and Health and Safety for the City.

2.10.8 Director of Social Services

The Director's service responsibilities include housing, social assistance, day care, child care, Ontario Works.

2.10.9 Fire Chief

The Fire Chief's service responsibilities include Administration, Apparatus, Equipment and Communications, Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention, Training and Public Education.

2.10.10 CEO – Stratford Public Library

The CEO is appointed by the Board of the Stratford Public Library. The CEO exercises general control and management of the affairs of the Library for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the Library and performs such other duties as are assigned by the Board.

SECTION 3: CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

3.1 Target Group

The target group includes persons with a disability and the general public within the City of Stratford.

3.2 Consultation Activities

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is an advisory committee to Council, first established in 2002 under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This Committee consists of residents with disabilities, a member of City Council and members of the public who have a direct interest in accessibility issues.

The AAC meets on a monthly basis to discuss disability issues and make recommendations to Council.

Prior to completing the first annual Accessibility Plan for the City of Stratford, the AAC determined that Accessibility Guidelines should be prepared with respect to design standards for municipal buildings and facilities. The Accessibility Guidelines were reviewed by the AAC and subsequently adopted by City Council as the design standards for municipal buildings and facilities. While not binding on the private sector, the Accessibility Guidelines are provided to developers, contractors, architects for assistance in addressing accessibility issues.

The City of Stratford has consulted with its Accessibility Advisory Committee in the preparation of this Accessibility Plan.

SECTION 4: PLAN DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

The body responsible for the development and preparation of the City of Stratford Accessibility Plan is the Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC).

The intent of the ASC is to assist the AAC to identify accessibility barriers that exist within the City and to come up with solutions to overcome these barriers. The barriers and recommendations for resolving them form the basis of this annual plan.

Table 1: Accessibility Steering Committee

Steering Committee	Department Represented	Telephone	Email
Heather Lovie	Social Services	519-271-3773 ext. 260	hlovie@city.stratford.on.ca
Brad Hernden	Community Services	519-271-0250, ext. 286	bhernden@city.stratford.on.ca
Rick Young	Fire Department	519-271-3212	ryoung@city.stratford.on.ca
David Carroll	Building and Planning	519-271-0250, ext. 219	dcarroll@city.stratford.on.ca
Joe Salter	Engineering & Public Works	519-271-0250, ext. 227	jsalter@city.stratford.on.ca
Joan Thomson	Corporate Services	519-271-0250, ext. 235	jthomson@city.stratford.on.ca

SECTION 5: INITIATIVES TO IDENTIFY, REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS IN THE ORGANIZATION

5.1 Barriers

A barrier is defined in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* 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 information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

5.2 Types of Disabilities

Barriers exist as a result of various forms of disability. A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively hard to perform everyday tasks.

A disability means:

- (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 diabetes 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*;

5.3 Types of Barriers

A number of different barriers can exist. 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 information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a policy or a practice obstacle.

5.4 Accessibility Achievements

As part of the City's commitment to creating a progressive community, the City has already implemented a number of initiatives to eliminate and reduce barriers and to make the City of Stratford more accessible. The following are highlights of these initiatives:

- Mayor's Task Force for the Disabled (1980's)
- Established Steering Committee to work with the AAC Committee and prepare Accessibility Plan
- Established Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Completed Accessibility Guidelines for City buildings, facilities, parks and playgrounds
- Access to City Buildings – power assist mechanisms have been installed on a number of doors leading into City Buildings;
- Customer Services Counters – Reception counters for several departments have been installed during office renovations to make it easier for people with physical disabilities to meet with City staff and to conduct required business
- Access over curbs – a number of drop curbs have been retrofitted on existing curbs and are now a design standard for City roadways to eliminate barriers for people in wheelchairs.;
- Voting locations – accessibility is considered when selecting voting locations to be used during municipal and school board elections;
- Electronic voting equipment – The City implemented the use of electronic voting equipment for municipal and school board elections that provides large print ballots for people with visual impairments and/or audio system to facilitate confidential voting without the assistance of another individual.

5.5 Future Actions to Address Barriers and Enhance Accessibility

Barriers continue to exist that can be addressed to improve accessibility in the future. Each department will review the existing barriers to identify and budget for removing these barriers within The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

SECTION 6: ACTION PLANS FOR BARRIER ELIMINATION

Creating a community that is barrier free will benefit residents and visitors to Stratford. The investment of time, resources and funds that the City makes toward the elimination of barriers will benefit everyone.

The ODA requires that changes to accessibility take place using existing resources. As part of the accessible planning process, methods, practices and policies need to be put in place to ensure that expenditures have regard to accessibility.

As part of its Accessibility Plan, the City of Stratford will conduct operational reviews in two ways.

6.1 Annual and Ongoing Reviews

Annual and ongoing accessibility reviews will be conducted as part of annual updates to this plan. Areas requiring improvement will be identified by department and these will be updated and removed as they are addressed on an annual basis. Part of the annual review of this plan will involve prioritising issues to be addressed in the upcoming year. These priority issues will be identified by the AAC and then forwarded to the appropriate subcommittee of Council for consideration in the annual budget process.

6.2 Complaint Basis Review

This plan will also provide for accessibility complaints/concerns to be received and reviewed as part of the review process. The City has a process for receiving complaints from the general public regarding accessibility. These complaints are forwarded to the appropriate department and the AAC is advised of the status.

The following table outlines the actions that City Departments plan to undertake in 2010 subject to budget approval, to address barriers within the City of Stratford. Many of the action items listed will require the involvement of several City departments and staff from throughout the organization. Items that require the expenditure of funds will be included in departmental budget submissions which are subject to City Council approval.

Table 2: Summary of Departmental Operations Reviews for 2011

Engineering and Public Works Department			
AAC Recommendations	Barrier to Accessibility	Methodology	Time Frame
<p>Improve pathways such as sidewalks and curb cuts. Budget planning must be considered for curb cut improvements, improved sidewalks around town and accessible walkways in park areas should be available to people with strollers, walkers, wheelchair and scooter users. Many of our sidewalks and curb cuts have areas that are in a desperate need of repair. This is dangerous for those who use them.</p> <p>Recommendation – an annual allocation of dollars should be for improvements of existing curbs, curb cuts and sidewalks for the purpose of improving accessibility. A survey should be done to identify situations where portions of a street do not have curb cuts and an action plan to eliminate these issues within three years or less.</p>	<p>See AAC Recommendations column</p>	<p>Budget Planning</p> <p>A. <i>Sidewalk Repair Program</i> Annual program for removing and replacing deficient sections of sidewalk city wide. A budget request (\$75,000) will be made to Council for the 2011 budget.</p> <p>B. <i>Core Area Brick Repair Program</i> Annual program for removing and replacing deficient sections of brick pavers in the downtown core area. Annual budget request (\$50,000) will be made again to Council for 2011.</p> <p>C. <i>Sidewalk Maintenance Program</i> Under the operating budget, “toe trippers” are ground out annually primarily in core area and then city wide. Council budget approval is required.</p> <p>Engineering has developed a plan (“<i>Accessibility Master Plan</i>”) to be used for addressing right-of-way (R.O.W.) barriers, and Engineering related facility parking barriers. Assuming an ongoing Accessibility budget, the <i>Accessibility Master Plan</i> utilizes a 10 year span to rectify existing barriers. The <i>Accessibility Master Plan</i> includes two tracking lists. The first list is for R.O.W. barriers, and the second list relates to parking barriers. Each list tracks future and completed works. The tracking lists will continue to be updated with additional locations brought forward by the AAC, residents, and City staff. New R.O.W. barrier locations from AAC are to be noted in the AAC regular minutes. All new locations should continue to be reviewed and given a priority rating by the AAC.</p>	<p>A. Funds allocated for the <i>Sidewalk Repair Program</i> will be used throughout the 2011 construction season.</p> <p>B. Funds allocated for the <i>Core Area Brick Repair Program</i> will be used throughout the 2011 construction season.</p> <p>C. Funds allocated for the <i>Sidewalk Maintenance Program</i> will be used throughout the 2011 construction season.</p> <p>D. The <i>Accessibility Master Plan</i> will continue to be updated annually.</p> <p>The two tracking lists will continue to be updated and forwarded to the AAC.</p>

2011 Accessibility Plan

AAC Recommendations	Barrier to Accessibility	Methodology	Time Frame
<p>All municipal parking lots that were inspected do not meet the requirements in the city by-laws or the accessibility guidelines.</p> <p>Handicapped parking signage must comply to the provincial standards in the <i>Highway Traffic Act</i> in order for the violator to be ticketed. The signage must be visible, clear from tree branches, obstructions, etc. Signs must also be erected at appropriate heights, clearly visible to the drivers of the vehicles. With many of these lots, there are not designated spaces or very little compared to the size of the lot.</p> <p>Pathways from parking spaces to sidewalks must also be accessible. We recommend a review of all city lots and compliance to city by-laws within one year. Over the years there has been very poor monitoring of the city complying with its own parking by-laws for handicapped parking spaces.</p>	<p>See AAC Recommendations column.</p>	<p>Parking Lots</p> <p><i>Accessibility Improvements:</i></p> <p>2011 budget of \$25,000.00, presented to Council for approval, as part of the 2011 capital budget.</p> <p>Designated Parking Spaces</p> <p><i>Core Area Designated Parking Spaces on City Streets inventory</i> Engineering will update the drawing showing existing designated parking space locations on City streets.</p>	<p>Funds allocated for the <i>Accessibility Improvements</i> budget will be used for accessibility improvements to improve parking throughout the 2011 season.</p> <p>In 2011, Engineering will continue maintaining the <i>Core Area Designated Parking Spaces on City Streets</i> drawing.</p>

2011 Accessibility Plan

Fire Department			
Fire Station #1 The lavatories are too low and there are no grab bars around the toilets.	Toilets are too low and there are no grab bars which limit accessibility	Replace toilets with new low flush raised units and install grab bars (three toilets)	Spring 2011
Fire Station #2 The lavatories are too low and there are no grab bars around the toilets.	Toilets are too low and there are no grab bars which limit accessibility	Replace toilets with new low flush raised units and install grab bars (three toilets)	Spring 2011
Community Services Department			
Fixed cafeteria style tables in the Rotary Complex require tables for those who use a wheelchair / scooter	Existing tables do not provide an appropriate space for wheelchair users.	Add additional cafeteria style tables suitable for wheelchair / scooter use (in compliance with section 4.3.7 of the Stratford Accessibility Guidelines).	Fall 2011