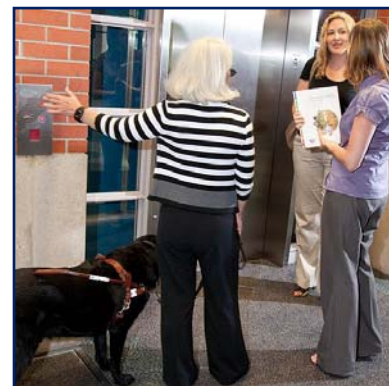
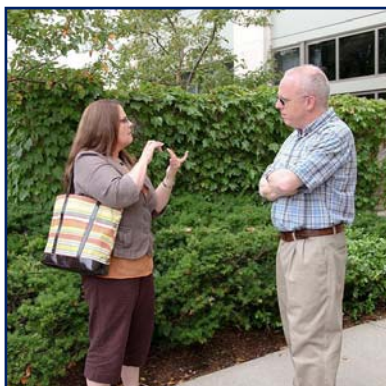


# 2011 Accessibility Plan



## Summary

### ***Background***

About 1.8 million people in Ontario or about 15.5% of the population report having a disability (Statistics Canada, 2006). People with disabilities are active participants in our communities, contributing to the local economy and accessing local goods and services. For this reason, it is important that the services and facilities of the Region of Waterloo are accessible and welcoming for people with disabilities.

Staff from all departments, from front-line to senior management, are involved in the development and implementation of accessibility planning at the Region of Waterloo. The 2011 Accessibility Plan provides an update on actions carried out in the past year and describes seven accessibility focus areas that will be implemented in 2011 to identify, reduce, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. In addition, the 2011 Accessibility Plan includes a broad description of the five accessibility standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The present summary of the Region of Waterloo's 2011 Accessibility Plan provides a snapshot of the Region of Waterloo's efforts to promote accessibility. Readers are encouraged to refer to the 2011 Accessibility Plan for more in-depth information, available at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/accessibility](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/accessibility)

***This document is available in accessible formats upon request. Please contact Vanessa Lopak at 519-575-4757 ex 3861, 519-575-4608 (TTY) or [access@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:access@regionofwaterloo.ca)***

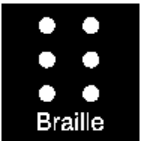
## Reporting Under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*

There are two broad pieces of legislation in Ontario that address accessibility for people with disabilities: the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The ODA directs municipalities with more than 10,000 residents to appoint an Accessibility Advisory Committee and to create and make publically available an annual Accessibility Plan. The AODA provided the province with the mandate to develop and implement accessibility standards for the public and private sectors.

To date, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is the only standard developed under the AODA to be made into law. The Region of Waterloo met the requirements outlined in this regulation by December 31, 2009. The Waterloo Regional Police Services must meet the Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2012. Other accessibility standards currently in development under the AODA include requirements for information and communication, employment, transportation, and the built environment.

Items for the Region's Accessibility Plan are gathered from five main sources:

- Legislative requirements.
- Accessibility Survey process.
- Accessibility Advisory Committees' feedback.
- Community feedback.
- Regional staff.



The following are a few highlights of the 2011 Accessibility Plan:

- 84% of the items planned for 2010 were either completed (50%) or will be continued in 2011 (34%). The remaining 16% of the planned items have been deferred, often to coordinate with other initiatives.
- 29% of items completed in 2010 were in addition to those outlined in the 2010 Accessibility Plan.
- All departments across the Region of Waterloo, along with the Waterloo Regional Police Services have participated in the accessibility planning process.
- A broad range of barrier areas have been addressed in the 2011 Accessibility Plan.

## Status Update of 2010 Accessibility Plan Actions

Some of the ways staff at the Region of Waterloo have made improvements in accessibility throughout 2010 include:

- Reflected best practices in accessible design of the new Christopher Children's Centre.
- Designed and installed an accessible coffee bar at the Sandhills Café at Sunnyside Home.
- Incorporating several accessibility features into the Waterloo Region Museum, including physical features along with the accessible design of print and audio visual materials and alternate formats of a number of documents.
- Expanded Commuter Bus Service project at Grand River Transit to include one additional agency.
- Expanded technology to allow Grand River Transit to announce and display bus stops on buses 12 years of age and younger, resulting in 80% of the conventional Transit fleet being equipped with the technology.
- Implemented a series of Abilities Awareness panel discussions, bringing together local community members and Regional staff to talk about a number of accessibility-related issues.
- Implemented a number of specialized Accessible Customer Service training sessions held for staff in Public Health, Planning, Housing and Community Services, and Social Services, beyond the standard training available to all staff.

## 2011 Accessibility Focus Areas

New for the 2011 Accessibility Plan, the Region of Waterloo has identified key, corporate-wide improvement plans. The accessibility focus areas are:

1. Improving telephone accessibility, focusing on technologies for people who are Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.
2. Implementing accessible website technology.
3. Documenting processes for customers with service animals or support persons.
4. Coordinating feedback processes, focusing on accessibility.
5. Reviewing procedures and needs for American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters.
6. Enhancing the processes for providing notification of service disruptions.
7. Implementing the AODA Customer Service Regulation at Waterloo Regional Police Services.

These focus areas were chosen because they go beyond program-specific everyday business in improving accessibility. They will impact most departments across the Region of Waterloo, and will result in consistent, meaningful improvements in accessibility across the organization.

## The Small but Mighty Actions

For over seven years Regional staff have been improving the accessibility of services and facilities through many actions, great and small. Identifying, preventing, and removing barriers has become a part of everyday business for many staff. For example, through the Accessibility Survey process and based on feedback from staff, the public, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, staff often notify the public of accessible formats of documents, include TTY information on materials, research accessible technologies, and improve the physical accessibility of facilities. And we know these actions make a difference. For this reason, Regional staff are committed to continuing to identify, prevent, and remove barriers in their everyday business for the people they serve.

## Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee

### GRAAC 2011 Members

Taposhi Batabyal  
Mike Begin  
Gail Brunson  
Anthony Cashin  
Gordon Cummer (Co Chair)  
Sharon Giles (Co Chair)  
Saul Herzog  
David Kuhn  
Katherine Nessner  
Ken Parker  
Amy Ross  
Paula Saunders  
Kurt Schneider  
Carrie Speers  
Sharon Ward-Zeller

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) is a joint committee of the Region of Waterloo, the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, and Woolwich. The Region works with this committee to seek advice on the annual Accessibility Plan and to coordinate areas of joint effort with the other committee participants.

**For more information about the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee visit [www.graac.ca](http://www.graac.ca)**

