

2017 Accessibility Status Report

Region of Waterloo



Region of Waterloo

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2017 Region of Waterloo Accessibility Status Update

In 2012, Regional Council approved the Region of Waterloo multi-year accessibility plan (2013-2017) in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The plan outlined the Region's strategy over the next five years to identify, prevent, and remove barriers in Regional programs and services for people with disabilities.

The present report is the fifth status report of the Region of Waterloo's multi-year accessibility plan. In this report, you will find our progress on actions taken to meet the requirements of the AODA in 2017.

Under the AODA there are specific planning requirements for transit organizations. The status report for Grand River Transit's multi-year accessibility plan, fulfilling the AODA transportation requirements, is included in Appendix A of this document.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, (the "AODA") was passed in 2005 with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The AODA gave the Province the mandate to create sets of standards in accessibility which will apply to both public and private sector organizations. Five sets of standards in the areas of information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces, and customer service, are detailed in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) (the "IASR"). The standards and compliance deadlines are outlined in the table below.

Standard	Compliance Deadline
Information and Communication	July 1, 2011 – January 1, 2021
Employment	January 1, 2015
Transportation	July 1, 2011 – January 1, 2017
Design of Public Spaces	January 1, 2016
Customer Service	July 1, 2016 (as amended)

The accessibility of building interiors is beyond the scope of the AODA, falling under the *Ontario Building Code*. Effective January 1, 2015, amendments to the *Ontario Building Code* enhance the accessibility of paths of travel, apartments, hotels, doors and doorways, washrooms, renovations, and other provisions including telephones, fire alarms, grab bars, tactile indicators, universal washrooms, pools, and spas. This legislation is administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and enforced by municipal building departments.

Accessibility at the Region of Waterloo

The Region of Waterloo is committed to creating inclusive programs and services, served by a diverse workforce, that meet the needs of our growing and changing community. By removing barriers to services and programs across the Region of Waterloo and in the workforce, we will recognize the strength that comes with difference, embracing new ideas and perspectives.

This commitment to diversity and inclusion will be realized through processes that engage and support employees, creating a satisfying customer experience to those we serve. We do this because a satisfying service experience at the Region of Waterloo improves the quality of life for those we serve, and helps to secure their trust and confidence in the work that we do.

Accessible service is about providing service to meet diverse needs that is flexible to individuals whenever possible, and makes a satisfying service experience our primary focus. By identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in the accessibility of our services, the Region of Waterloo is achieving our commitments to diversity, inclusion, and service excellence.

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee

Public participation is an important feature of the work we do at the Region of Waterloo. Staff from the Region rely on feedback and input from the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) to ensure that we are working towards our vision of an inclusive Region of Waterloo. GRAAC advises Council and staff members on the accessibility of Regional services, programs, and facilities. Members of the GRAAC are appointed by Regional Council and by the Councils for the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, and the Townships of Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot and North Dumfries, all of which also seek the advice of GRAAC in matters of accessibility.

In 2017, the Region consulted with the Grand River Accessibility Committee on the following items:

- The Region of Waterloo's complaints management system;
- Accessibility during construction;
- Accessibility at ION stops;
- Design of the new Paramedic Services Headquarters;
- The Region's Multi-year diversity and inclusion plan;
- Proposed changes to the IASR Transportation Standard;
- Development of position paper on snow removal on sidewalks.

In addition to the items above, representatives from GRAAC sit on other Regional committees and groups like the Accessibility Fees for Taxis Committee, the Moving Forward Stakeholder Panel (Region's Transportation Master Plan), and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.

2017 Accessibility Status Report

The 2017 Accessibility Status Report includes the Region of Waterloo's commitment to removing barriers to our programs and services and the progress we have made on actions to meet the AODA.

Accessible Customer Service

Our commitment

We believe in providing citizen-focussed programs and services that are effective, efficient and accessible to all those we serve.

Our progress from 2017

Action	Update
Launched four online Accessible Customer Service training modules which are mandatory for all staff.	Complete
Launched a new accessible online form to collect public feedback and complaints, including feedback about the accessibility of Regional programs and services.	Complete
Identified key components to ensure the Region's approach to Complaints Management is accessible. All channels for receiving complaints will allow for alternate formats or accessible submission methods.	Complete
Community Services piloted an integrated service delivery team which involved co-locating related services to improve convenience and access for customers.	In progress
Community Services launched a test team of multi-disciplinary Employment and Income staff that are trying out new ways of doing business as a part of the Employment and Income support modernization project.	In progress

Action	Update
Staff from Child and Family Health and the Healthy Living divisions completed Mental Health first aid training to understand how to better serve customers with mental health issues.	Complete
Staff from the Waterloo Region Museum completed “Blue Umbrella” training to understand how to better serve people with dementia.	Complete
Implemented the Welcoming Spaces tool in the Elmira Children’s Centre and Family Centre.	Complete

General Requirements

The General Requirements of the AODA are regulatory requirements that apply across all standards in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. To meet the General Requirements, we developed and implemented an Accessibility Policy: Standards for Accessibility in 2012. We also developed and implemented our first multi-year accessibility plan in 2013 which spans a five year horizon.

Policy

Our commitment

We are committed to developing, implementing, and maintaining policies governing how the Region of Waterloo achieves accessibility through meeting the requirements set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, including policies on the provisions of goods, services, and facilities to persons with disabilities.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Communicated the updated Region of Waterloo Accessibility Policy to staff.	Complete.

Planning

Our Commitment

We are committed to developing, implementing, and maintaining a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines the ways in which the Region of Waterloo will identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities, including how we will

implement the standards developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Updated the Multi-year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion plan for 2018-2022.	In progress.

Training

Our commitment

We are committed to working with staff to develop awareness and the skills to meet the needs of all those we serve.

In addition to specific training programs that are focussed on the AODA and diversity and inclusion, we are also continually working to integrate inclusion messages into all our staff training programs.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Launched 24 mandatory job-specific AODA training modules for all employees.	Complete.
Provided in class training on accessible web content and plain language.	Complete.
Launched new Diversity and Inclusion training for managers and staff entitled, “Beyond Diversity: Putting Equity and Inclusion into Practice”.	Complete
Piloted the Working Mind program to educate staff in Human Resources and Citizen Service about mental health in the workplace.	Complete
Launched an anti-stigma campaign to raise awareness about mental health.	In progress

Procurement

Our commitment

We are committed to integrating accessibility into procurement policies and procedures.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Updated standard terms and conditions and supporting resources to strengthen requirements for accessible information and communication.	Complete
Updated Information Technology Services' Technology Acquisition List to incorporate accessibility requirements in the purchase of software.	Complete

Information and Communication

Our commitment

We are committed to ensuring information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Launched a new checklist on creating accessible Word documents.	Complete
Purchased new pdf remediation software for staff in Creative Services.	Complete
Launched a new process for accessible online forms.	Complete
Launched new websites, compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A guidelines, for the Region of Waterloo Libraries, Grand River Transit, Immigration Waterloo Region, and the Region of Waterloo Museums.	Complete
Launched monthly communications to educate staff about accessibility.	In progress

Employment

Our commitment

We are committed to inclusive employment practices that ensure the processes of recruiting, hiring, communicating with, and retaining employees with disabilities fulfills the intent of Ontario's Human Rights Code.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Updated the Accommodation in the Workplace and the Workplace related injury or illness policy to include mental health and clear roles and responsibilities for supervisors and staff.	Complete
Developed a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy to demonstrate the Region's commitment to embedding the principles of equity and inclusion into the way the Region does business, delivers service and provides opportunities.	Complete

Transportation

The requirements specific to transit services and plans for 2017 have been addressed in the Grand River Transit Accessibility Plan 2017-2018, which can be found in Appendix A of the Region's Multi-year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (2018-2022).

Our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring people with disabilities have access to accessible public transportation and accessible taxicabs.

Progress in Taxi Cab Accessibility in 2017

Action	Update
Created an Accessibility Fund from licencing fees specifically collected to enhance accessible services within the Region.	Complete
Establish a working group that includes people with disabilities, to determine the use of the Accessibility Fund.	Complete

Accessible Built Environment

To meet the requirements set out in the Design of Public Spaces Standards, the ways in which the provisions of the standard have been incorporated into Regional processes, including procedures used for preventative and emergency maintenance and service disruptions, are detailed in Appendix B of this document.

Our commitment

We are committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers in accessibility in all Regional facilities.

Progress from 2017

Action	Update
Finalized, approved, and implemented Accessible Design Standards.	Complete
Developed new checklists to prioritize accessibility improvements in Regional facilities.	Complete
Adopted the dynamic symbol of access in Regional buildings and facilities for new or replaced signage.	In progress
Commenced audit of Regional facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with the highest occupancy and public visitors.	In progress

Accountability and Reporting Compliance

The Region of Waterloo has developed a corporate-wide Compliance Work Plan that is used to direct actions and support departments as they fully meet the AODA standards. Each department receives resources and guidance from Citizen Service on how to meet the expectations under the AODA standards. Often departments are able to exceed expectations such as implementing standards on accelerated timelines.

Reviewing and Monitoring the Accessibility Plan

The Region of Waterloo Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Region of Waterloo's strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the 2017 Accessibility Status Report, and on the accessibility of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

Telephone: General Enquiries: 519-575-4400

TTY: 519-575-4608

Mail: Citizen Service
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150 Frederick St, 3rd Floor
Kitchener, ON N2G 4J3

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The 2017 Status Report is available online (www.regionofwaterloo.ca/accessibility) in accessible PDF and Full-Text Word formats.

Alternate formats, including paper copies of the 2017 Status Report are available upon request at no charge from:

Citizen Service
Region of Waterloo
150 Frederick St, 3rd Floor
Kitchener, ON N2G 4J3
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Email: access@regionofwaterloo.ca
Website: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/accessibility

Appendix A: Placeholder for 2018-2019 Grand River Transit Accessibility Plan

Appendix B: Design of Public Spaces Standard Compliance Summary

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes (Sect. 80.6-80.16)	Staff responsible for Regional forests and associated trails have been trained on DOPS requirements. DOPS specifications have been integrated in related procedures.	Trails undergo regular maintenance, and emergency maintenance as required. Procedures include mowing edges, keeping brush back, hazard removal, and required repairs.	All trail service disruptions are posted on site. Fencing is installed when necessary, and all repairs are completed as soon as possible.
Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas (Sect. 80.16-80.17)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Outdoor Play Spaces (Sect. 80.18-80.20)	Do not have public play spaces	Do not have public play spaces	Do not have public play spaces

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Sidewalks or Walkways (Sect. 80.21-80.23)	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Ramps (Sect. 80.24)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Stairs (Sect. 80.25)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Curb Ramps (Sect. 80.26)	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Depressed Curbs (Sect. 80.27)	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Sect. 80.28)	Ensured requirements are aligned with Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guidelines for pedestrian signals, followed by the Region of Waterloo.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Transportation and Design and Construction.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Rest Areas (Sect. 80.29)	Process for AAC consultation integrated in project plans as required.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Off-street Accessible Parking (Sect. 80.32-80.38)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
On-Street Accessible Parking (Sect. 80.39)	Consulted with AAC as required. Developed practices for identification and development of accessible on-street parking.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Transportation and Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Service Counters (Sect. 80.40-80.41)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Fixed Queuing Guides (Sect. 80.42)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Waiting Areas (Sect. 80.43)	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"