Corporation of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc

Accessibility Plan 2013 – 2015

Introduction

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

In June 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) was enacted into law. The AODA is more comprehensive and prescriptive than the Ontarians with Disabilities Act from 2001 and applies to the public sector, as well as private and non-profit organizations. The AODA requires the development of accessibility standards, compliance deadlines, and administrative penalties for non-compliance.

The fundamental purpose of the AODA is to ensure that Ontario is accessible by 2025. Ontario is the first and only Canadian jurisdiction to regulate accessibility standards.

Standards Development Committees were established in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

Each standard has established implementation targets and compliance requirements for obligated organizations.

The AODA requires accessibility of goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment as well as information and communications.

Implementation Strategy

Strathroy-Caradoc (Municipality) supports the spirit and goals of the AODA to make the Province of Ontario accessible by 2025. The Municipality is striving to become more accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities by ensuring accessibility is a reality throughout all facilities and business operations. Ensuring accessibility is integrated into all Municipal initiatives, business practices, boards, committees departments and divisions. The Municipality and all participating municipalities in the County of Middlesex are committed to fulfilling the requirements.

Participating Municipalities

This multi-year accessibility plan is prepared jointly between the County of Middlesex and the municipalities in the County.

Statement of Commitment

The Municipality is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The Municipality recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. The Municipality is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AODA requires municipalities to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee, where the population exceeds 10,000.

The Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee is a public committee that is comprised of people with disabilities and staff members from the County and local municipalities. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice to Councils on the removal and prevention of barriers.

Monitor and Review

This 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 strategy and meet the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Plan coordination

The County's Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of a consolidated plan in consultation with the participating municipalities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Timelines and Deliverables

Outcomes

- People with disabilities will have access to accessible services
- People with disabilities will have access to alternate formats and communication supports for any information that the Municipality produces
- A barrier-free recruitment process
- Greater accessibility in municipally-owned facilities
- Municipal staff able to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent and remove barriers

Approach

- Develop policies and procedures
- Incorporate accessibility into planning processes
- Train staff
- Engage the public in feedback
- Work to remove barriers to employment
- Continue to make facilities accessible
- Ensure there is access to information and communications

Timelines

2013

The Municipality ensured compliance is met in relation to:

- The development of policies and commitment statement
- Developing a multi-year accessibility plan
- Emergency information (public and workplace)
- Taxi-cab requirements (equal fares, on-demand accessible taxis)

2014-2016

The Municipality will ensure compliance is met in relation to:

- Employment (recruitment, assessment, selection, return to work, accommodation plans, performance management, etc.)
- Training
- Purchasing and kiosk requirements
- Feedback process
- Accessible formats and communication supports
- Accessible websites and web content
- Built environment

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Requirement	Compliance	Actions Taken To Date	Goals
Establish, maintain and implement accessibility policies outlining how the organization will achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements referred to in the Regulation	Large: January 1, 2013	• Developed Corporate Accessibility Policy (To Council in November, 2013) • Developed Accommodations and Emergency Response Workplace Policy (November, 2013)	1. Review existing policies to ensure they are consistent with the four principles of accessibility.
Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organizations strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.	Large: January 1, 2013	• Plan taken to Council in November 2013.	1. Develop a plan 2. Consult with the public 3. Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee 4. Post the plan on the website.
Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it's not practicable to do so.	Large: January 1, 2013	• Developed accessible procurement guideline • Updated purchasing policy (early 2014) • Sign off sheet developed for all Contracted Services	1. Amend Purchasing policy and procedures to include statement. 2. Develop purchasing resource for staff. 3. Train staff on making accessible purchases.
Ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standard and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.	Large: January 1, 2014	• Training will be ready in early 2014 for staff. • Training will be provided on the regulations and the OHRC	Develop and train staff accordingly.

• Training is required for: • All employees and volunteers • Persons providing goods or services on behalf of the organization and; • All persons involved in developing the organizations policies.			
Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback take into account the needs of people with disabilities. This requirement is in addition to the requirements made under Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)	Large: January 1, 2014		1. Review current processes 2. Work with Accessibility Coordinator to determine next steps.
Develop (or expand upon) a procedure to accept requests from the public regarding accessible formats or communication supports.	Large: January 1, 2015		1. Review and amend existing procedure 2. Communicate procedure to staff
Ensure that the Emergency Plan is available in accessible formats, upon request.	January 1, 2012	• Included statement on website indicating that the emergency plan is available upon request.	1. Include a statement in the Emergency Plan outlining this.
Ensure websites and web content are compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Level A – January 1, 2014 Level AA – January 1, 2021	• Working with IT to ensure website update is WCAG accessible. • Anticipate training staff on accessible documents in 2014.	1. Develop a procedure to assess existing web content. 2. Develop a training program for staff to understand how to create accessible web documents. 3. Work with IT to ensure new website is accessible

			4. Audit website and content on a regular basis to ensure the website/content is still compliant.
All employment requirements	January 1, 2014		1. Assess current employment processes to determine gaps related to compliance 2. Develop resources, policies and materials as necessary to ensure compliance
All design of public spaces requirements	January 1, 2016		1. Consult with building department staff to clarify requirements