



Municipality of
Leamington
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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024 – 2029

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Please contact clerks@leamington.ca

Background: Accessibility and the Province of Ontario

The 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan acts as our accessibility road map, outlining the Municipality's strategy and key actions to continue to meet, and where possible, exceed our requirements under Ontario's accessibility legislation. The plan is intended to support and strengthen the Municipality's commitment to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to ensure that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, visit and invest in our community. The plan was developed to align with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equity of opportunity in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and other applicable accessibility legislation.

The Municipality of Leamington's 2024 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the Municipality will continue to remove barriers and improve accessibility to the Municipality's goods, services, and facilities over the next five years.

An accessible Leamington means:

- Persons with disabilities receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.
- Information and communications are available in accessible formats to all municipal employees, residents, visitors, and customers.
- Persons with disabilities can participate fully and meaningfully as municipal employees.
- There is greater accessibility in municipal facilities and public spaces.
- Municipal employees can continually identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them.

The AODA is made up of five (5) parts called Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (IASR):

1. Customer Service
2. Information and Communications
3. Employment
4. Transportation
5. Design of Public Spaces

Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for everyone, supporting dignity and independence for all. We believe in integration and are dedicated to meeting the needs of our community in a timely manner.

The Municipality of Leamington will ensure equal access and participation for people with disabilities by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and Ontario’s accessibility laws.

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, respecting non-discrimination.



Guiding Principles

Underlying the plan is a set of accessibility principles that all Municipality of Leamington employees will follow. Staff must use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, programs, and services—including procedures and practices established to provide accessible services to persons with disabilities—reflect these principles.

Dignity

The principle of respecting the dignity of persons with disabilities means treating people as valued customers who deserve high-quality and timely service as any other customer. Persons with disabilities should not have to accept lesser service, quality, or convenience. The delivery of goods and services must consider how persons with disabilities can access and use them.

Independence

Sometimes, independence means freedom from the control or influence of others and the freedom to make your own choices. It can also mean freedom to do things your own way. We must not deny people with unique abilities the opportunity to participate in a program or service. For example, people with disabilities must take the time they need without being rushed or taking a task away from them.

Integration

The provision of goods or services must be integrated so that persons with disabilities may benefit from the same services in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. Integration means that policies, programs, services, practices, and procedures must be created to be accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity means that persons with disabilities have the same access as others to get, use, and benefit from goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access services, and they should not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience than any other customer.

2024-2029 Priorities and Commitments

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes both new and continuing initiatives that will assist the Municipality in meeting its commitment to an inclusive community where all residents and visitors have integrated access to municipal services, programs, and facilities, promoting dignity and independence.

The Plan is based on best practice research and input from the Municipality's Accessibility Advisory Committee, persons with disabilities, accessibility stakeholders and staff. It is organized around the five IASRs and general requirements of the AODA.

Message from the Mayor

The Municipality of Leamington's 2024 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, is a clear reflection of our commitment to building an inclusive community for all. This plan is not merely about meeting legal obligations under the AODA; it's about embracing our collective responsibility to ensure dignity, independence, and equal access for people with disabilities.

Our goals are ambitious yet achievable: establish a solid framework for accessibility governance, raise awareness, and continually improve our practices and policies to exceed the standards. Developed with insights from our Accessibility Advisory Committee, community members with disabilities, and municipal staff, this plan outlines our roadmap to enhance access to municipal services, programs, and facilities.

We are committed to removing barriers and fostering a culture of inclusivity, with regular updates on our progress. Together, we will make Leamington a model of accessibility, where everyone feels valued and can participate fully in community life.



- **Mayor Hilda MacDonald**

Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AODA requires municipalities with a population of over 10,000 people to establish an accessibility advisory committee to advise the council on preparing accessibility plans and achieving the actions within them.

The Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee (the Committee) is a legislated Committee of the Leamington Council. The membership of the Committee includes:

- One (1) member of the Leamington Council; and
- Four (4) members of the public,

the majority of whom must be persons with disabilities.

Committee members are appointed by Council concurrent with the term of Council for their knowledge, experience, and dedication to eliminating barriers and promoting universal accessibility.

The Committee is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free environment for all persons, regardless of needs, to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of community life. Committee members represent or provide a general knowledge of a wide range of disabilities, including physical, visual, and hearing impairments, intellectual and mental health issues, seniors' issues, and communication.

A municipal staff member works with the Committee to help facilitate the process. The Committee also assists with developing protocols related to AODA on various topics, including site plan applications, construction of new municipal facilities, and renovations to municipally owned facilities. The Committee is committed to working with staff and the community to develop standards that reflect the community's needs.

The Committee welcomes and encourages comments, input, and feedback in the continuing effort to make Leamington an accessible and welcoming community for all.

For more information, please contact:

Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee
c/o Legislative Services
111 Erie Street North, Leamington, Ontario
clerks@leamington.ca
Phone: (519) 326-5761

General Requirements

The general requirements of the IASR under the AODA require the Municipality of Leamington to have accessibility policies, a statement of commitment, and a multi-year accessibility plan. In addition to the Standards under the IASR, the Municipality is committed to going beyond the legislated requirements to ensure that barriers to accessibility are identified and addressed across the organization.

The Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Develop a multi-year accessibility plan outlining strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and review the plan once every five years.

2024-2029 Goals:

- Establish a corporate accessibility governance structure and accountability framework within the organization to oversee the implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan.
- Promote accessibility awareness within the organization and community.
- Continue to demonstrate leadership in accessibility by meeting or exceeding timelines of provincial legislation.
- Review and update accessibility policies.
- Provide annual status updates on the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to the Accessibility Committee and Council and post on the Municipality's website, as legislation requires.
- Submit Provincial Accessibility Report as prescribed.
- Review incorporating accessibility criteria processes and features when procuring and acquiring goods, services, or facilities.
- Continue to communicate and define to vendors their obligations to meet accessibility requirements.
- Evaluate compliance with the Standards through the undertaking of an accessibility compliance review with implementation of the resulting recommendations.

Expected Outcomes:

- An organization which fosters a culture where everyone feels like they belong, that values and includes employees, residents and visitors with disabilities.
- Municipal employees, residents, and visitors are aware of available resources and accommodations when accessing municipal goods, services, and facilities.
- Clear roles and accountability at all levels of the organization.
- Employees are supported in identifying barriers to accessibility and actively seeking solutions to prevent and remove them.
- A procurement program that considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement process to help ensure that goods and services at government facilities are accessible.

Customer Service

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the IASR requires the Municipality to provide accessible services for people with disabilities and to have policies and procedures in place to support accessible customer service.

The Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Provide Accessible Customer Service Training for all staff, volunteers, and third-party agencies to continue complying with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation under the AODA.
- Review and refine training annually to ensure that it meets legislative requirements.
- Monitor customer service to ensure we are maintaining and improving the accessibility of our programs, services and facilities.
- Provide notice of service disruptions promptly.
- Review and refine accessibility policies (where needed).
- Continue to assess recreation programming options to increase participation in recreational programs that accommodate individuals with special needs.

2024-2029 Goals:

- Train all volunteers, committee members, board members, third-party agencies, and anyone who is providing goods, services, or facilities to customers on behalf of the organization on Accessible Customer Service to continue complying with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation under the AODA.
- Seek feedback from the Accessibility Committee on the 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan regarding the conduct of an election by identifying, removing and preventing barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.
- Seek feedback from the Accessibility Committee on the Post Election Accessibility Report prepared by the municipal Clerk.
- Evaluate municipal programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in municipal programs.
- Provide a formal process for responding to feedback regarding the way goods and/or services are provided to persons with disabilities.
- Through the Accessibility Committee, recognize businesses making strides in accessibility.
- Distribute and promote the Planning Accessible Events Resources to those holding special events within the Municipality.

Expected Outcomes:

- People with disabilities receive municipal goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives.
- Employees can access tools, resources, policies, and procedures to support accessible customer service.
- Businesses in the community are recognized for their efforts in creating an accessible Ontario.

Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standard under the IASR requires the Municipality to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to the public.

The Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request.
- Ensure that the Municipality's websites and web content conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA in accordance with the timelines set out by the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.
- Include closed captioning of video records of Council meetings.

2024-2029 Goals:

- Review how the organization communicates and informs the public about the availability of emergency plans and policies, provides accessible materials where they exist, and provides communication support upon request.
- Develop resources for employees on accessible public engagement and consultations.
- Develop and implement accessible information, communication, and technology guidelines and standards to ensure the Municipality provides clear, accessible, appropriate, and timely information and communication.

Expected Outcomes:

- Municipal employees have the tools and resources to develop and provide information in accessible formats.
- Employees, residents and visitors with disabilities will have equal access to municipal information through communication supports, alternate formats, accessible websites and digital content.
- By delivering information and communications in accessible formats to all municipal employees, residents, visitors and customers, the Municipality will support the effective delivery of services

Employment Standards

The Employment Standard under the IASR sets out accessibility requirements that the Municipality 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 Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Review and ensure the application process for potential employees is barrier-free.
- Continue to ensure the Municipality of Leamington's employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities by:
 - Ensuring all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available supports and accommodations.
 - Ensuring applicants with disabilities are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment, and selection processes.
 - Consulting with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports.
 - Providing individualized workplace emergency response information to employees upon request and advising employees of their availability through internal communication.
 - Maintaining a return-to-work process and providing individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when required.
 - Ensuring the needs of employees with disabilities are considered for performance management, career development, advancement, and redeployment.
 - Advising successful applicants about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Make policies on accommodating and supporting employees with disabilities available to all employees.
- Promote the Employee Assistance Program to support employees in the areas of mental health and wellness through a wide range of supports and resources.

2024-2029 Goals:

- Review human resources policies in consultation with the Human Resources Manager to prevent or remove systemic employment barriers, ensure compliance with legislation, and reflect best practices.
- Document and continue the practice of preparing individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for municipal employees with disabilities.

Expected Outcomes:

- Ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully and meaningfully as municipal employees.

Transportation

The Transportation Standard under the IASR sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to make public transportation and related services more accessible to everyone in Leamington.

The Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Train new and current employees on the most current Transportation Standards, as defined by the AODA.
- Inform the public about accessible features of the local transit system, routes, and applicable services.
- Not charge a fare to a support person accompanying a person with a disability when that person requires a support person.
- Ensure public transportation equipment the Municipality purchases meets or exceeds all provincial and federally legislated requirements.
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- Continue to receive and address feedback from the public about accessibility issues on conventional and specialized transit routes.
- Support access to accessible regional transportation through the South Essex Community Council.
- Facilitate a strong link between public works and local transportation to ensure bus stops are accessible to persons with disabilities or service providers are aware of stops where accessibility is temporarily restricted, and a greater level of service may be required to maintain access for persons with disabilities.
- Conduct an ongoing review of the requirement for the availability of accessible taxi services for the public within the Municipality by:
 - Consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in Leamington and demonstrate progress toward meeting that need; and
 - Ensuring that no person with a disability is charged additional fees or is charged a fee for storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.



2024-2029 Goals:

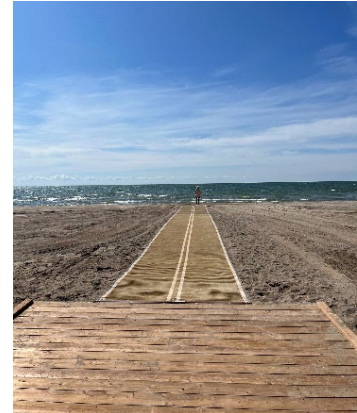
- Consult with the public, people with disabilities and Leamington's Accessibility Advisory Committee to determine what is needed to make local bus stops more accessible.
- Upgrade existing bus stops to address accessibility concerns identified through consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Review design standards for directional, street name, and information signs to improve accessibility, considering visibility, legibility, consistency, colour contrast, surface (glare), and positioning.
- Update the Ministry Transit Accessibility Plan.

Expected Outcomes:

- New bus stops and retrofitted stops are constructed to meet or exceed AODA standards and the expectations of the local Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Access to a range of accessible transportation services to meet the needs of all residents and visitors.

Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the IASR requires the Municipality to ensure that newly constructed or significantly renovated public spaces (e.g., beach access routes and accessible parking) are accessible. The Municipality also complies with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment, often exceeding the requirements.



The Municipality of Leamington continues to:

- Provide appropriate staff members with the Design of Public Spaces Standard training.
- Consult the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public, and people with disabilities before redeveloping or constructing new public spaces under this Standard.
- Ensure, in reviewing new development applications, that all new developments comply with the current standards and regulations set by the AODA by applying the checklist developed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Incorporate public consultations into existing processes, wherever possible.
- Meet or exceed the technical requirements set out by the AODA in designing and constructing new or redeveloped public spaces within the municipality.
- Improve the physical accessibility of our service areas, removing barriers and providing accessible alternatives, wherever possible.

2024-2029 Goals:

- Explore the inclusion of mobility device charging stations in new and redeveloped public spaces.
- Explore potential improvements to accessibility at road crossings through the planned transportation master planning exercise.
- Promptly address requests for accessible pedestrian signals or enhanced accessibility at existing pedestrian crossings.
- Installation of tactile walking surface indicators at all crossings addressed through maintenance, improvement, or through new planned projects.
- Continue to enhance accessibility at newly developed and redeveloped play areas throughout the municipality.
- Include an accessibility clause in a request for proposal (RFP).

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved accessibility of municipal facilities and public spaces. This includes incorporating accessibility retrofits where possible during renovations.
- Prevention and removal of accessibility barriers within municipal facilities.
- Improvements to accessibility concerning pedestrian crossings within the municipality, wherever requested or necessary.

Conclusion

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration and are committed to promptly meeting the needs of people with disabilities. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be updated in 2029 in consultation with employees and the Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee.

For inquiries about this plan, or to request an alternate format, please contact clerks@leamington.ca or phone us at 519-326-5761.