

**2015-
2019**

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



WOOLWICH
TOWNSHIP



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Township of Woolwich Strategic Plan | 3 |
| Provincial Legislation | 4 |
| Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11..... | 4 |
| Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)..... | 6 |
| Accessible Services and Facilities in the Township of Woolwich | 6 |
| Accessible Council Meetings..... | 6 |
| Accessible Events (Gore Park)..... | 7 |
| Accessible Playground (Kate's Place) | 7 |
| American Sign Language Interpreter Services | 7 |
| Personal Attendant for Leisure (PAL) Card Program..... | 8 |
| Township of Woolwich Website | 8 |
| Snowclearing and Windrows (Elmira)..... | 9 |
| Parking Spaces | 9 |
| Township Owned Facilities..... | 9 |
| Township Emergency Plan/Emergency Evacuation Plans..... | 10 |
| 2007 Accessibility Audit - Township of Woolwich..... | 11 |
| Multi-Year Accessibility Initiatives 2015 - 2019 | 12 |
| Initiatives for 2015 | 12 |
| Initiatives for 2016 | 13 |
| Initiatives for 2017 | 14 |
| Initiatives for 2018 | 15 |
| Initiatives for 2019 | 15 |



INTRODUCTION

The Council and staff at the Township of Woolwich are committed to developing and planning for an inclusive community by identifying and removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan focuses on the initiatives Council and staff are carrying out to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

In meeting these requirements, the Township of Woolwich continues to move towards building and fostering a more inclusive community for all those that access Township facilities, programs and services. This Plan is intended to provide information on the ways in which the Township of Woolwich is working to improve accessibility within our community.

According to the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), approximately 4.4 million Canadians have a disability. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of people who reported having a disability increased by three-quarters of a million people. In Ontario there are approximately 1.85 million people with a disability. This represents approximately 15.5 per cent of Ontario's population and this number will continue to grow as the population ages. By 2025, it is expected that the number of Ontarians with disabilities will increase to three million people, or 20 per cent of Ontario's population.

By removing barriers for persons with disabilities, we are removing barriers for everyone!

TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH STRATEGIC PLAN

The Township of Woolwich is committed to working hard to preserve, protect and grow the lifestyle elements and amenities that make Woolwich a desirable community to live in. With a dedication to providing for inclusive and accessible communities, the Township will continue to implement the legislated requirements in accordance with the AODA with the goal of



improving and expanding opportunities for persons with disabilities, and identifying, removing and preventing barriers for their full participation in the life of the community.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario has been working to develop mandatory accessibility standards to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

The accessibility standards are the building blocks Ontario will use to make real, measurable and effective changes to accessibility. Accessibility standards focus on five key areas:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Accessible Information and Communications
- Design of Public Spaces
- Employment Accessibility
- Accessible Transportation

The Accessible Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07, was the first accessibility standard that was passed by the Provincial Government and came into effect January 1, 2008. The standard states the requirements regarding providing customer service to persons with disabilities. The Township is required to ensure that all staff, including third party contractors, are trained in providing accessible customer service.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, establishes accessibility standards and introduces requirements for Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and Design



of Public Spaces. The Integrated Accessibility Standards apply to all public, private and not-for-profit organizations with at least one employee. The requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards are being phased in between 2011 and 2025.

Accessible Information and Communication standards address the removal of barriers with respect to access to information. These standards could include information being provided in person, through alternate print format, a website or other means which meet the needs of an individual.

Employment accessibility standards address employment practices relating to employee-employer relationships including matters such as recruitment, hiring and retention policies and practices.

Accessible transportation standards have been identified as essential for people with disabilities. Access to transportation is needed for going to work, school, shopping and other aspects of daily life. This standard applies to accessible public transportation.

The goal of the accessibility standards for the design of public spaces and the built environment is to remove barriers in public spaces and buildings. These requirements have been incorporated under the Ontario Building Code and will only apply to new construction and renovation in buildings. The design of public spaces address outdoor public spaces such as accessible parking, paths of travel such as sidewalks, ramps, stairs, playground equipment and picnics areas.

The AODA requires that the Township of Woolwich's Accessibility Plan be made available to the public. The 2015-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Township of Woolwich will be made available on the Township's website at www.woolwich.ca. Upon request a paper copy or an alternate format which meets the needs of the requester will be made available.



GRAND RIVER ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GRAAC)

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) is an advisory committee serving the Region of Waterloo, the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo and the Townships of Woolwich, Wilmot, Wellesley and North Dumfries. Staff representatives of each municipality participate in a joint recruitment process annually to fill GRAAC vacancies and each Council passes a resolution to appoint new members to the committee. GRAAC is made up of 15 volunteers and advises the Councils of all the municipalities it serves on accessibility issues including their accessibility plans.

GRAAC may provide advice and guidance to Council in the following ways:

- Review of site plans for new and existing municipal buildings;
- Review of plans for parks and trail ways;
- Review of significant renovations in municipal buildings;
- Review of accessibility policies and procedures including those required by the standards made under the AODA

More information on the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee may be found on their [website](#).

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

ACCESSIBLE COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Committee of the Whole and Council meetings are held in the Council Chambers on the Second Floor of the Administration Office at 24 Church Street West in Elmira. The Administration Office has an elevator, automated door paddles, and an accessible washroom on the main floor.
- Committee of the Whole and Council agenda cover sheets are available in large print at the meetings.
- Council uses microphones during Committee of the Whole and Council meetings.



- Assistive listening devices are available for use in the Council Chambers at the Administration Office for persons who are hard of hearing or who use hearing aids. The assistive listening devices are easy to use and are available to the public at no charge.

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS (GORE PARK)

- An accessible portable washroom is provided annually at Gore Park in Elmira from May through to September. This is funded through the Recreation and Facilities Services annual operating budget. This ensures that accessible washrooms are available at the Township's annual Canada Day Celebration and Summer Concert Series.

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND (KATE'S PLACE)

- Kate's Place is available for children with all levels of abilities to enjoy at Gibson Park in Elmira. Kate's Place has a variety of equipment including a sensory wall, zip lines, accessible swings, ramps, climbing equipment and slides. An accessible washroom is also available at Kate's Place annually from May until the first snow fall. The washroom is funded through the Recreation and Facilities Services operating budget. Kate's Place was funded through a community fundraising campaign.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES

- Upon request, the Township of Woolwich will schedule an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter for Council and Committee meetings. All requests are subject to the availability of an Interpreter.
- The Council and Information Services Department budgets \$500.00 annually in order to be able to respond to requests. The fee for an Interpreter is approximately \$60.00 per hour. Each meeting typically requires two Interpreters.
- During the 2014 Municipal Election, ASL Interpreter Services were made available at the first two advance polls for 3 hours (October 7th



and October 9th) and at the last advance poll for 5 hours (October 18th). The Township also made available an AutoMARK ballot marking machine at each of the three advance polls. The AutoMARK was also available in Elmira and in Breslau on Election Day. For the Municipal Election in 2018, the Township will continue to explore opportunities and options to increase election accessibility.

PERSONAL ATTENDANT FOR LEISURE (PAL) CARD PROGRAM

- The Township of Woolwich offers a Personal Attendance for Leisure (PAL) Card program for services at the Woolwich Memorial Centre including the Fitness Centre and fitness classes, swimming and skating. The PAL Card program runs on a reciprocal basis with the Cities of Kitchener, Guelph, Waterloo and Cambridge.
- Woolwich residents that obtain a PAL Card are made aware that the card may be used in other municipalities. The PAL Card program is advertised on the Accessibility page of the Township of Woolwich's website, the Community Guide, the Township's Community Page and social media.

TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH WEBSITE

- Council and Information Services department is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the Township's website and for ensuring that the website is maintained in accordance with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards. An accessibility check is completed each month of the Township's website in accordance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements. IT Services staff review the accessibility check and makes necessary adjustments to address any items which are found to be non-compliant.



SNOWCLEARING AND WINDROWS (ELMIRA)

- Each winter, the Township of Woolwich hires an independent contractor to remove snow from the sidewalks in Elmira. Elmira residents pay the costs associated with this service. The average cost to an Elmira homeowner to have their sidewalks cleared of snow each season is \$15.00.
- The Engineering and Planning Services department includes the removal of windrows in the snow clearing contract.
- Villages, other than Elmira, in the Township of Woolwich are regulated by a sidewalk snow clearing By-law. Residents are required to clear sidewalks of ice and snow within 24 hours of the end of a snowfall. Enforcement staff responds to complaints of sidewalks that have not been cleared.

PARKING SPACES

- The Township's Zoning By-law includes standards for accessible parking spaces. Accessible parking spaces have been installed by the Township of Woolwich or the Region of Waterloo in the core of Elmira and St. Jacobs.
- The Township responds to requests for additional accessible parking spaces on a case by case basis.
- There are accessible parking spaces in all municipal lots owned by the Township of Woolwich.

TOWNSHIP OWNED FACILITIES

- Woolwich Memorial Centre: The Township of Woolwich operates the Woolwich Memorial Centre (WMC) at 24 Snyder Avenue South in Elmira. The facility has two ice pads, a swimming pool and therapy pool, a fitness centre, walking track, a senior's centre and a youth centre. It has 10 accessible parking spaces, an accessible front entrance and Senior's centre entrance (2015), an elevator, accessible change rooms and washrooms. The facility accommodates sledge hockey, fitness classes and community events.



- Administration Office: The Township's Administration Office is a two-storey building with an elevator, automated door paddies and an accessible family washroom on the main floor that is available for use by the public.
- Breslau Community Centre: This facility has accessible entrances, washrooms, automatic door paddles and accessible parking. Recreation and Facilities Services staff have been investigating options to install a lift and an elevator at this facility to make use of the upper and lower levels of the community centre (2015).
- Maryhill Heritage Community Centre: This facility has accessible entrances, accessible washrooms and parking.
- Floradale Fire Hall: This facility has accessible entrances, accessible washrooms and parking.
- Elmira Library: The Region of Waterloo operates the Elmira Library. This building is owned by the Township of Woolwich. The Elmira Library has received an accessible entrance, elevator and washrooms.
- St. Jacobs Library: The Region of Waterloo operates the St. Jacobs Library. This building is owned by the Township of Woolwich. The building is not accessible. Staff is aware of the need to develop a retrofit plan for this facility to make this building accessible. Staff will be looking for possible funding opportunities to make improvements to this facility.
- Woolwich Township Arena: This facility has accessible entrances, accessible washrooms and parking.

TOWNSHIP EMERGENCY PLAN/EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS

- The Township's Emergency Plan is available in alternate formats upon request. Requests may be submitted to the Council and Information Services Department.



- All designated reception areas in the Township's Emergency Plan are fully accessible.
- Emergency Evacuation Plans are available for the Township Administration Office. Fire Safety Plans are available for the Woolwich Memorial Centre, Woolwich Township Arena, Breslau Community Centre and Maryhill Heritage Community Centre. These plans are available in alternate formats upon request.
- The Emergency Procedures for the Township of Woolwich Administration Office includes an appendix which provides guidance to those assisting a person with a disability during an emergency. The Township of Woolwich volunteer fire fighters receive specified training on assisting persons with disabilities during an emergency, particularly relating to how they assist in moving a person with a disability.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation at any facility, designated staff checks all areas of a building before exiting. Upon exit, they alert emergency response personnel of any situations which require attention. The Township will be working on Emergency Evacuation Plans for other Township facilities over the next couple of years.
- As part of the Township of Woolwich's Emergency Preparedness Education Week, the Township includes information on emergency preparedness for persons with disabilities for members of the public.

2007 ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT - TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

In 2007 an Accessibility Audit of all Township of Woolwich facilities was completed. The audit provided the Township with recommendations as they relate to improving the accessibility and barrier free design of Township owned facilities. The Township continues to make facility upgrades as identified in the Accessibility Audit within approved operating and capital budgets.



MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES 2015 - 2019

With the Integrated Accessibility Standards of the AODA being passed in 2011, the Township's primary focus moving forward for accessibility planning will be on the implementation of the requirements in the legislation. The new legislation covers general requirements, accessible information and communication, employment accessibility, design of public spaces and transportation requirements.

Within the general requirements section, there is reference to Accessibility Plans. Accessibility Plans are to be reviewed at least once every five years, and municipalities are to prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the Accessibility Plan. This multi-year Accessibility Plan represents the Township's response to this requirement and details our commitment to providing public services in an accessible manner.

As new municipal projects arise, Township site plans will be requested to be reviewed by the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee for suggestions on how to best improve and achieve accessibility.

INITIATIVES FOR 2015

- The Township will continue to contribute financially, up to \$500.00 each year based on the Committee's expenses, to the operation of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- The Township will continue to provide staff support to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee through attendance at monthly meetings and as requested by members of the Committee and staff representatives.
- The Township will continue to review and monitor Provincial accessibility legislation.
- The Township will continue to review and monitor content on the Township's website in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.



- Provide updated training and website editing guidelines to staff to ensure that content conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
- IT support staff to continue training with respect to accessible websites and online documents.
- Review the Township's Procurement By-law to include accessibility considerations.
- Develop and adopt an employment accommodation policy.
- Prepare an employee accommodation needs survey.
- Prepare and maintain a list of alternate format providers for the Township's use (to include ASL services, alternate formats (audio recording and Braille)).
- Develop an information sheet for all staff with respect to the Design of Public Spaces requirements (effective January 1, 2016).
- Review and update the Township of Woolwich Accessible Parking By-law.
- Recreation and Facilities Services staff intend to look at funding opportunities to install an elevator at the Breslau Community Centre to make use of the basement for additional programming opportunities. Recreation and Facilities Services staff will also be reviewing the accessibility needs of the upper level of this facility.

INITIATIVES FOR 2016

- Continue to contribute financially to the operation of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee up to \$500.00 each year based on the Committee's expenses.
- Continue to provide staff support to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee through the attendance at monthly meetings and as requested by members of the Committee and staff representatives.
- Continue to review and monitor Provincial accessibility legislation.



- The Township will continue to review and monitor content on the Township's website in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.
- IT support staff to continue training with respect to accessible websites and online documents.
- Review and update as necessary the Township's Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- Provide updated accessible customer service training for staff.
- Review the accessible parking provisions contained within the Township of Woolwich Zoning By-law when completing the general provisions update (2016).

INITIATIVES FOR 2017

- Continue to contribute financially to the operation of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee up to \$500.00 each year based on the Committee's expenses.
- Continue to provide staff support to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee through the attendance at monthly meetings and as requested by members of the Committee and staff representatives.
- Continue to review and monitor Provincial accessibility legislation.
- The Township will continue to review and monitor content on the Township's website in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.
- Complete a full Township website redesign to be in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.
- Provide training to staff on creating accessible word and PDF documents.
- The Township will review and consider alternative voting options to increase accessibility during the 2018 Municipal Election.



INITIATIVES FOR 2018

- Continue to contribute financially to the operation of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee up to \$500.00 each year based on the Committee's expenses.
- Continue to provide staff support to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee through the attendance at monthly meetings and as requested by members of the Committee and staff representatives.
- Continue to review and monitor Provincial accessibility legislation.
- The Township will continue to review and monitor content on the Township's website in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.
- The Township will review and consider alternative voting options to increase accessibility during the 2018 Municipal Election.
- The Fire Department is planning to add accessible entrances at the St. Jacobs Fire Hall. This facility already has accessible washrooms.
- A new Fire Hall in Breslau is planned for 2018. This will be an accessible facility in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and the AODA.

INITIATIVES FOR 2019

- Continue to contribute financially to the operation of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee up to \$500.00 each year based on the Committee's expenses.
- Continue to provide staff support to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee through the attendance at monthly meetings and as requested by members of the Committee and staff representatives.
- Continue to review and monitor Provincial accessibility legislation.
- The Township will continue to review and monitor content on the Township's website in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.



- A new Fire Hall in Elmira is planned for 2019. This will be an accessible facility in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and the AODA.
- Begin reviewing and drafting the Township's next Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.