Draft Copy

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Now to 2026

Accessibility Services

City of Guelph

Draft

Table of Contents

Realizing an accessible community through our commitment 3
Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers 4
Customer Service 4
Information and Communications 4
Feedback 4
Emergency public safety information 5
Accessible Website 5
Accessible Content 5
Employment 5
Procurement 6
Training 7
Design of Public Spaces 7
Transportation 7
Strategies and Actions 8
Customer Service 8
Information and Communications 8
Feedback 8
Emergency public safety information 8
Accessible websites 9
Accessible web content 9
Employment 9
Procurement 9
Training 10
Design of Public Spaces 10
Transportation 10
Contact 11

For more information or to request accessible formats contact Accessibility Services 519-822-1260 extension 2670, TTY: 519-826-9771, Text: 226-821-2132, accessibility@guelph.ca

Draft

Realizing an accessible community through our commitment

For the City of Guelph, accessibility means everyone can equally benefit. From designing what we build, how we approach policies and programs, to improving the customer experience. We take into account and value the diversity of our community.

Our work to remove barriers to our services, programs and facilities began in the 1990s. Our commitment has evolved over the years to match, and often exceed, the requirements of Provincial accessibility legislation. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the current Provincial accessibility legislation, along with universal design principles, has guided the City to become a corporation that recognizes people rather than groups of people.

This new way of thinking began in 2005 and is still evolving. At the core are Universal Design Principals:

- Principle 1: Equitable Use
- Principle 2: Flexibility in Use
- Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use
- Principle 4: Perceptible Information
- Principle 5: Tolerance for Error
- Principle 6: Low Physical Effort
- Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

These principles, or similar principles based on the universal design way of thinking, are incorporated into our workforce training materials.

About the City of Guelph's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The City of Guelph Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Now to 2026, continues the strategies set out in previous Multi-year Accessibility Plans. This plan is a roadmap that describes how we build on our accessibility-related successes and looks to our past to learn and grow. Our community is evolving quickly. We understand the importance of keeping up with current trends and being one step ahead where possible. Technology is advancing quickly. As a result, this plan is a high-level snapshot of what is to come but also allows us to check in with our community and pivot to stay as current as possible.

The City of Guelph strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

We are committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Several other opportunities will present themselves over the coming months and years between now and 2026 that are not included in this plan as this plan is focused on recent City work related to the AODA.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

Measures were put into place as a result of the pandemic, such as protective screens at all customer service counters at City facilities. The protective screens resulted in difficulty for both customers and employees to hear during transactions.

During 2022 and 2023 service counters at all City facilities with customer service counters were equipped with amplified sound systems that included "T-coil" induction loops. Customers and employees can hear far better than before the system was installed because the microphone and speakers remove the barrier of the sound not efficiently travelling through the screens. The induction loop part of this system connects to a person hearing device when they are within 2-1/2 feet of the service counter.

Information and Communications

Feedback

When the City provides opportunities for feedback, the organization's processes are accessible. If it is identified that a process has a barrier, the department responsible for the feedback opportunity engages those with the concern to resolve

the barrier. Various department, including Accessibility Services, are available to support the department with the request to ensure that the feedback is addressed in a timely manner.

Emergency public safety information
The City's emergency management information is located on Guelph.ca on the Emergency Management and Preparedness page. Customers will find a link on Guelph.ca to content specifically prepared for People with Disabilities and Special Needs under the Preparedness Information. The content on this page is reproduced from Emergency Management Ontario's brochures in an accessible format.

Accessible Website
During the last plan period, the City continued to review its compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA by purchasing the SiteImprove tool. This tool identifies compliance risks as well as rating how compliant the website is. The website was scanned weekly and results were monitored and risks were a priority to resolve.

Further, Web Service employees attended the annual University of Guelph Accessibility Conference with the view of staying current with the ever-improving trends by learning from experts in the field of accessible web content design.

Accessible Content
Employees who are responsible for the development of materials to be published on a City website must ensure that the materials are compliant with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA. Employee training on preparing accessible documents as well as accessible presentations has taken place regularly since 2014.

The training has been offered several times each year to ensure that employees who are new to the City, employees who have moved into a position where they are preparing or overseeing the preparation of materials, as well as employees who choose to take the training or for a refresher can attend.

The training includes materials that give a clear understanding as to why documents must be accessible as well as best practices in meeting the WCAG and understanding usability, in other words, how a person navigates a document while using assistive technology.

Employment
In an effort to connect accessible, inclusive and diverse hiring practices, the City has formed a Welcome Workplace committee aimed at creating a work environment that is welcoming and everyone feels support.

Committee members, along with the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access group, organize and participate in events and gather employee education material that is shared on the internal internet and during events.

Procurement

Procurement directives and guidelines have been updated to give more substance to the Corporate requirements under the accessibility standards. Specifically, the accessibility requirements within the IASR have been incorporated into the existing Accessible Customer Service directive in the City's procurement process.

Whenever possible, City employees will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, and facilities. When it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, City employees will provide, upon request, an explanation for this action.

During the period of the last plan, Purchasing further developed the AODA requirements statement in their documents. The following statement is included in Request for Proposal and contract documents:

> City of Guelph Purchase of Services Agreement Accessibility-related wording – January 2021
>
> Please note that the following requirements are included in the front-end of the Purchase of Services Agreement. If there are questions, please contact Leanne Warren, Accessibility Project Specialist extension 2670.
>
> **Article 6: Compliance by supplier with laws and policies**
>
> 6.4 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
>
> 6.4.1 The Supplier shall comply, to the extent applicable, with the AODA in respect of all Services provided by the Supplier on behalf of the City.
>
> 6.4.2 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Supplier shall:
>
> 6.4.2.1 ensure that the Supplier and all of its Representatives supplying the Services are in full compliance with the training requirements of section 7 and section 80.49 of Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards, made under the AODA; and
>
> 6.4.2.2 provide all final Work Product and any other Work Product identified by the City as intended website content in an accessible format that complies, at a minimum, with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA and the City's guidelines for accessible documents. Drawings shall be made accessible in accordance with the requirements of the Contract Documents and the City's guidelines for accessible documents. Notwithstanding the foregoing, provided the Supplier has complied with section 3.5 of this Agreement regarding format of Work Product, if the City Representative agrees that any Work Product cannot be provided in accessible format due to unavailability of commercial software or tools, an equitable accessible alternative shall be coordinated between one of the City's Representative and the Supplier.
>
> **6.5 City Bylaws and Policies**

6.5.1 Without limiting the generality of Section 6.1, the Supplier shall comply with all applicable City bylaws and policies, including building and planning bylaws, and policies relating to conflict of interest, workplace safety and insurance, occupational health and safety, contractor safety, human rights, accessibility (including the City's Facility Accessibility Design Manual, where applicable), and such other policies as may be specified by the City. The City shall make copies of all applicable City policies available to the Supplier.

6.5.2 If the City gives Notice that the Supplier is not complying with any applicable bylaw or policy of the City, then the Supplier shall promptly correct the noncompliance.

We regularly encourage employees preparing purchasing document to highlight that consider the accessibility requirements of the resulting purchase and to therefore include details in document terms of reference, for example.

Training

All City employees and volunteers received AODA training as they work through all of the onboarding material at the City. Further, employees are trained when policy changes.

The training requirements within the AODA are covered with further training according to the duties of the employee's position with the organization. For example, employees who prepare materials for the public, attended the Accessible Document training, Transit drivers receive training on operating the accessible features on the buses, and so on.

Design of Public Spaces

In 2005 the City developed a manual that the corporation uses to design its buildings. The following Universal Design Principals are at the core of that manual.

- Principle 1: Equitable Use
- Principle 2: Flexibility in Use
- Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use
- Principle 4: Perceptible Information
- Principle 5: Tolerance for Error
- Principle 6: Low Physical Effort
- Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Several building projects have taken place since the previous Plan, including the historic Water Services building. This fully accessible facility is now office space for City employees that includes innovative accessible workspaces, collaboration space, kitchenette and other amenities.

Transportation

During the last plan, Guelph Transit purchased accessible electric buses. These buses have the capacity to seat 2 wheelchairs with the assistive device securement system, and in addition, 3 wheelchairs without the securement system.

The City's strategy to ensure a proportionate on-demand accessible taxicab service was developed a multi-faceted approach in 2005 initially and re-confirmed in 2012, and 2017. The Taxi ByLaw includes provisions to encourage accessible taxi license purchases, the City offers a taxiSCRIP program to Guelph Mobility passengers to take an accessible taxi at a discounted price, and the City purchases accessible taxi services to augment passenger overflow for their parallel transit service.

Strategies and Actions

The following section identifies many of the projects and programs the City plans to accomplish to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

It's important to note that several projects outside of this list will include engaging the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee early in their project planning. These projects don't always have requirements to engage the committee, however employees appreciate the input from the committee members.

Customer Service

The City is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services, and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Customer service at City service counters will become more universally available as employees learn how to communicate with customers with a disability that impacts their communication abilities. Beginning with communication books, employees will receive training that also includes writing and drawing to confirm messages as well as gestures and communicating with customers using their own communication tools. This training will begin during 2023 and will become part of the training for employees who work at City customer service counters.

Information and Communications

We are committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Feedback

During 2023 the organization will work through adding a feedback opportunity specific to identifying barriers related to accessibility on their Report a Problem webpage. Even though this tool uses a map system that is not compliant with the WCAG 2.0, the City provides an alternate workflow before entering the map system. This workflow includes an accessible form.

We will continue to look for ways to receive feedback regarding accessibility and all City services, programs, and facilities.

Emergency public safety information

During each year of this plan, the City will reach out to Emergency Management Ontario and Public Safety Canada, Emergency Management to confirm the

information for people with disabilities is current and accurate and updated as identified.

As the City participates in public information recognition days related to emergency management and preparedness, the most current information available regarding emergency planning and people with disabilities will be made available.

Accessible websites
Streamlining the current Guelph.ca website will be a focus during the latter half of this plan period. We will continue to use tools such as SiteImprove to quickly address accessibility issues that may inadvertently take place. The City is committed to comply with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA as required in the AODA however we are also striving where we can to meet the WCAG 2.1 Level AA and to continually work toward true usability for people accessing the website using assistive technology.

Accessible web content
Technology as it relates to accessibility tools in Microsoft Word and Adobe software has made substantial advances over the past 18 months. As these tools become more focused on prompting document authors to create accessible materials, our employee training will also evolve to help employees understand the significance of the new tools.

We will be monitoring these advancements in software closely to ensure that employees receive the most up to date content in the training.

Employment
The City is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

We will continue to comply with the AODA. The practices and policies regarding recruitment, assessment or selection process, notice of successful applicants, informing employees of supports, accessible formats and communication supports for employees, workplace emergency response information, documented individual accommodation plans, return to work process, performance management, career development and advancement, and redeployment will be reviewed during 2024 and annually after that.

Accessibility continues to have priority. For example, the AODA Employment policies, practices and procedures will be regularly reviewed beginning in 2024

Procurement
The City is a major purchaser of goods and services. It is important that procurement processes are inclusive so that all customers can participate, and all vendors are aware of the need to provide accessible goods and services.

We believe that the availability of accessibile options is a high priority in the procurement process. Through awareness campaigns by the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, the vendor community is aware of and

understands the need to demonstrate leadership in removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

The purchasing statement will be reviewed annually during this plan period.

Employees who prepare materials for purchases will continue to be encouraged to include the accessibility requirements of the resulting purchase in the terms of reference of the purchasing document.

Training

The City is committed to providing training on the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

Further training is offered to employees that focus on applying the AODA to their position. This training is not the same for all job requirements, for example, employees who do not produce information materials for the public would not take the Accessible Document training however their job description may include communicating with the public at a customer service counter within their job description. These employees would attend the upcoming Accessible Communication Training to learn how to use the communication tools.

Training will continue to be a focus for the organization as we look for new opportunities to help our employees stay current in how we provide accessible customer service, programs and facilities.

Design of Public Spaces

As industry leaders in public facility accessible design, the City not only meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces at every opportunity we will exceed the accessibility expectation in these minimum requirements, where possible.

As we build the new main branch library and the new recreation centre in the south end of the city, the same Universal Design Principals will be applied to these project as with other City facilities.

We will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Transportation

We are committed to accessible transportation services.

As the fleet of vehicles (Conventional, Community bus and the Mobility Service vehicles) are replaced with electric vehicles, Guelph Transit will continue to purchase accessible electric buses that meet the requirements in the AODA.

The City will continue to promote its strategy to ensure a proportionate on-demand accessible taxicab service. The Taxi ByLaw includes provisions to encourage accessible taxi license purchases by offering taxiSCRIP coupons to those registered

to ride the Mobility Service to be able to access alternate transportation, an accessible taxi, when they choose to do so. The taxiSCRIPS are $40 worth of coupons for $20. The strategy not only offers flexibility for passengers but also supports the use/demand for the accessible taxicabs. Further, Guelph Transit City purchases services from accessible taxicabs to augment passenger overflow for the parallel transit service.

Contact

For More Information on this accessibility plan, please contact at

Leanne Warren at:

519-822-1260 extension 2670; TTY 519-826-9771 or Text 226-821-2132

Leanne.warren@guelph.ca

Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at Guelph.ca>Living>Accessibility

Draft