



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SARNIA

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2021-2026

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If this information is required in another format, please contact the **Accessibility Coordinator** at **access@sarnia.ca** or **519-332-0330** ext. **3307**

ACCESSIBILITY PLANS

As part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), municipalities with 50 or more employees must create a written multi-year accessibility plan and update them at least once every five years. An accessibility plan outlines what steps a municipality will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and when it will do so.

The City of Sarnia Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is designed to complement and to be an extension of past plans and accessibility updates. It will be implemented within the provisions mandated by the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR); specifically, under the Customer Service, Information and Communication, Transportation, Employment, and Design of Public Spaces Standards.

This document also includes strategies that are not directed by the standards but will make the City of Sarnia more accessible to all its citizens and visitors. Furthermore, the strategies within this document will ensure that accessibility is at a high standard for all programs, services, facilities, and outdoor spaces.

This plan will be reviewed once every two years to coincide with the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC) term and will be made public via the City of Sarnia website.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Sarnia City Council, I am pleased to share with you the City of Sarnia's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2021-2026). As our population ages and more people acquire disabilities, it is becoming increasingly important that planning for accessibility will help make our City more inclusive for all residents and visitors to enjoy. I want to recognize the hard work of the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee for the progress made since the first accessibility plan was created for the City. The goals outlined in this plan will provide direction to the committee to continue to move forward and create a City that is fully accessible to all.

Mayor Bradley



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

As the Chief Administrative Officer at the City of Sarnia, I want to recognize the hard work of staff and the volunteers that participate on the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers at our public spaces and programs. This Plan affirms the City's commitment to continuing the efforts to provide accessible, equitable, and barrier-free services to all residents, visitors and employees that enhances the capacity to meet service excellence, legislative and policy obligations, and make Sarnia a more equitable, inclusive and prosperous place for all.

Chris Carter, Chief Administrative Officer

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SARNIA ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAAC)

As the Chair of the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee, I want to thank both staff and my fellow committee members for their dedication to an inclusive and barrier-free Sarnia! As a team, we have accomplished significant achievements in accessibility; however, there is much more work to be done to ensure everyone can access the City of Sarnia equally. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, along with our annual plans, will provide us direction in completing our mission of creating a barrier-free municipality where all can participate.

Debbie Draganits, SAAC Chair

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO CITY STAFF

A special thank you is extended to the staff members at the City of Sarnia for all their hard work, time, and commitment to identifying and removing barriers and developing barrier free programs, services and facilities.

LEGISLATION

Bill C-81 Accessibility Canada Act

The Government of Canada consulted with Canadians to find out what an accessible Canada means to them. On June 20, 2018, the Government introduced Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada (the Accessible Canada Act) in Parliament. The Accessible Canada Act received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, and came into force on July 11, 2019. It is important to note that Bill-C-81's purpose is to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction. Members of the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff participated in providing the government information for the Act in 2017 in London, ON.

ONTARIO WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ODA)

The ODA was established and became law in 2001. The purpose of the Act is to achieve a barrier-free Ontario for people with disabilities. The Act called for all municipalities to assist in the identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

The AODA was established in 2005 and was created to compliment the ODA and address discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario. The purpose of the Act is to "develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities in respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025." (Service Ontario, 2006)

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR)

The IASR standards were created as part of the AODA. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunity to participate in everyday life.

The IASR is broken down into five standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces



GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A MUNICIPALITY UNDER THE IASR

This section is organized under the five standards identified in the IASR for municipalities and includes strategies outside of the standards meant to create a more accessible community.

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
The IASR requires municipalities to :	
Develop a policy on how the City of Sarnia will achieve accessibility and a statement of the commitment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete in 2016
Develop Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and post annual reports on the City's website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Accessibility Progress Reports were completed for years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and posted on the City of Sarnia website
Organizations shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The City has incorporated language into the Procurement Policy and any agreements between the City and third-party contractors that goods and services acquired by the City must be accessible
Train staff on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All current employees have completed the training, and all new employees are required to take the training as part of their employment with the City of Sarnia. To accomplish this, the City created on-line modules in AODA and Human Rights and Creating Accessible Documents.
Report compliance to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Successful reports to the Province were filed in 2017 and 2020 with no issues

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Develop Corporate Customer Service Policy for people with disabilities	☑ The Corporate Customer Service Policy was revised in 2018 and changed to the "Corporate Accessibility Policy." This policy incorporated the changes made by the Province in 2017 in the areas of support persons and service animals.
Provide customer service training to all staff, volunteers and representatives that make decisions on behalf of the City	☑ All current staff, volunteers and decision-makers have received training. Training is ongoing for new representatives and staff members of the City of Sarnia as part of the orientation process.
Incorporate accessibility and the needs of people with disabilities when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities	☑ Ongoing. A statement has been added to the City of Sarnia's procurement policy. An updated policy occurred in 2017 that will ensure third party contractors are familiar with the City of Sarnia's Accessibility Policy. Update every year.
Provide feedback process in an accessible format and accommodate individuals needs upon request	☑ Ongoing
Provide emergency information in formats that are accessible and take into account the disabilities of members of the public requesting information	☑ Ongoing
Give notice of temporary disruptions that include the reason and duration to the public to provide information in alternative formats	☑ Ongoing
Permit all service animals in City of Sarnia premises unless the animal is excluded by law	☑ Ongoing



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Provide information that is produced and controlled by the City of Sarnia in alternate formats and take into account the disability of the member of the public requesting information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing and upon request from the public
Achieve compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level AA (excluding captioning and pre-recording audio descriptions) to ensure the website is accessible to people with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The City of Sarnia website is in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements and is reviewed by staff regularly. City videos are produced with closed captioning. Sarnia City Council is broadcast, webcast and archived with open captioning.
Creating accessible documents and contents to ensure documents posted to the website and available to the public are accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff have been trained on developing content for the City of Sarnia website and all public information detailed job-specific employee training
Emergency plans and related procedures are available in alternative formats and take into account visitors with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All emergency plans are available in alternate formats upon request

EMPLOYMENT

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Ensure that the recruitment, selection, and notification processes are as inclusive and accommodating as possible to build a diverse and effective workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The City of Sarnia has developed the Disability Management Policy that outlines the inclusion of people with disabilities in the recruitment, selection and notification through personalized accommodation. This policy is made clear when posting jobs and working with new employees who may require accommodation.
Continue to accommodate current employees who have or acquire a disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included in the Disability Management Policy is the responsibility to develop individualized Employment Accommodation Plan (EAP) for each employee who comes forward with a disability, and develop a Workplace Emergency Plan for each employee who develops an EAP also included. There is a dedicated staff member who is responsible for these accommodations.
Retain current employees with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All EAPs will be considered in the performance management process when the employee advances, is redeployed or changes positions



TRANSPORTATION

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Provide taxi registration and identification in accessible formats	☑ Worked with Sarnia City Policy to ensure this captured as part of the requirements for Taxis
Make available to the public current information on accessibility equipment and features of their vehicles, routes and services	☑ All information is available on the City of Sarnia website
If the accessibility equipment on a vehicle is not functioning and equivalent service cannot be provided, riders with disabilities must be accommodated	☑ The City of Sarnia has included “change over procedures” to ensure all non-functioning buses are not active and replaced with functional buses
Conduct employee and volunteer accessibility training	☑ All City of Sarnia transit employees have taken job-specific training on accessibility training on topics such as customer service, accessible features and equipment in buses and emergency procedures
Establish, implement, maintain and document emergency preparedness and response policies that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities	☑ All policies have been created, and new transit employees receive training on each policy. All policies can be found on the City of Sarnia website under Sarnia Transit.
No fares will be charged to support persons accompanying a person with a disability where the person with a disability has a need for support	☑ City of Sarnia has a policy that supports that no support person is charged a fair in any service or program
Retrofitting conventional buses	☑ All City of Sarnia conventional buses are completely accessible as of 2016

TRANSPORTATION Continued

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Transportation service providers shall identify the process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback	☑ The City of Sarnia, including Sarnia Transit, has a process to receive customer feedback
No provider can charge extra fares for a person with a disability	☑ The City has never charged more for specialized transportation or for people with disabilities
Service providers must ensure that people with disabilities can board and deboard a bus at the closest safest location	☑ The City of Sarnia has committed to adding over 100 bus pads throughout the City to ensure people with disabilities can board and deboard safely ensuring connectivity to sidewalks
Ensure clearly marked courtesy seating for persons with disabilities on its vehicles	☑ The City of Sarnia has had a courtesy seating policy that has been implemented on all transit buses since 2012. All courtesy seating is near the entrances of the buses.
Make available alternative arrangements to transfer persons with disabilities to their route destination if the original route is changed	☑ The City of Sarnia makes arrangements for people with disabilities if the original route is changed and communicates this information to the person
Pre-boarding announcements and audible verbal announcement of all destination points on all buses	☑ Pre-boarding announcements and the audible announcements are on every City-owned bus
Technical Requirements of all buses	☑ The City of Sarnia meets the technical requirements of the AODA on all conventional and specialized buses
Allocated Mobility Aid Space	☑ The City of Sarnia provides enough space for all mobility aids on all buses



DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES (DOPS)

*Implementation of DOPS will occur when adding new or replacing existing infrastructure

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes	<p>☑ The City of Sarnia follows all the technical aspects of the requirements to trails and beach access routes as outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Requirements. This includes boardwalks and ramps. All major trails not deemed “wilderness” trails now meet the Design of Public Spaces requirements thanks to a Provincial grant received in 2016.</p> <p>☑ All trail signage possesses information about the technical aspects of the trail at a high tonal contrast. This information is also included on the Bluewater trails website through the County of Lambton located at (http://www.lambtoncountytails.com/Pages/Default.aspx.)</p>
Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas	<p>☑ A minimum of 20% of outdoor tables are accessible to those using mobility aids by having knee and toe clearance underneath the table. The surface leading to and under the tables is firm and has enough clear space for mobility devices.</p>
Outdoor Play Spaces	<p>☑ All new and redeveloped outdoor play spaces consist of an area that includes play equipment that enhances the play opportunities and experiences of children and caregivers with various disabilities. Consultation with people with disabilities on the amenities of the park including sensory components and active play, the surface of the park will be firm, stable and help prevent injuries and be accessible.</p>

DOPS Continued

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Exterior Paths of Travel	<p>☑ The City of Sarnia follows the technical aspect of paths of travel as outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standard, including width, surface, slope, the height of overhead obstacles, and tactile walking surface indicators. The City of Sarnia has adopted the "City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards" that outlines these standards that staff members must follow.</p> <p>☑ The technical requirements of ramps, stairs, curb ramps, and depressed curbs as outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standard are followed by the City of Sarnia when building new or doing a major renovation. The City of Sarnia has developed design standards for depressed curbs, and the other areas are outlined in the "Ottawa Design Accessibility Design Standards."</p> <p>☑ All technical and dimensions of accessible pedestrian signals are installed as outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standard. The City of Sarnia has received funding from both the Province and Federal governments to install accessible pedestrian signals at key intersections. The City of Sarnia has worked with both the White Cane Society and the AAC to determine the locations.</p> <p>☑ The City of Sarnia has consulted with people with disabilities regarding the location of rest areas on paths of travel. The City has partnered with the AAC to develop standards for trails.</p>



DOPS Continued

WHAT IS REQUIRED/PLANNED	WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED
Accessible Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ The City of Sarnia changed the local by-law to include Type A and B accessible spaces for off-street parking that includes access aisles and is on an accessible path of travel ☑ The City of Sarnia implements the requirement of having 4% of parking lot spaces be accessible, and the ratio outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standard ☑ All accessible parking spaces will have signage displayed at each parking space in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act ☑ The City of Sarnia will consult regarding the need, location, and design of accessible on-street parking spaces with persons with disabilities, and all these spots need to be approved by the AAC
Obtaining Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ The City of Sarnia will comply with the requirements outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standards when building or redeveloping service counters, fixed queuing guides, and waiting areas
Maintenance Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ The City of Sarnia is active in keeping existing public spaces and elements in good working order and within their original condition

ACTION ITEMS OUTSIDE OF THE AODA REQUIREMENTS

Access to parks, playgrounds, facilities and all outdoor spaces is an integral part of the quality of life of the citizens of Sarnia. These elements keep people active, healthy and social. That is why the City of Sarnia is making it a priority to make changes to these areas to ensure that all residents have access, are included and can participate equally.

ACCESSIBILITY REVIEWS

As of 2020, the following facilities have undergone Accessibility Reviews:

- Progressive Auto Centre Arena
- Clearwater Arena
- Errol Russel Park
- Tecumseh Park and Playground
- Cox Youth Centre, Pool and Splashpad
- Norm Parry Park
- Sarnia Arena
- City Hall
- Strangway Centre
- Canatara Park Paths and Playground
- Bright's Grove Library (Faethorne House)
- City of Sarnia Library

These accessibility reviews, and future reviews, are created to accompany this City of Sarnia Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and

are meant to assess and identify potential barriers to accessibility and make improvements on the recommendations listed in the reviews. In addition, accessibility issues identified by the public are encouraged in a feedback process on the City of Sarnia website or by contacting the City of Sarnia's Accessibility Coordinator.

*All recommendations listed in the accessibility reviews are a priority for the City of Sarnia. However, improving these recommendations is based on funding and Sarnia City Council approval. Major renovations are recognized as an accessibility issue based on the recommendations but require significant preparation and are usually part of larger renovations and may not occur until significant planning occurs.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Sarnia strives to create accessible and inclusive spaces where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy and participate fully.

ACCESSIBLE CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH

In 2020, the City of Sarnia installed an accessible Canoe & Kayak Launch. This highly used launch is located in the bay at Centennial Park and includes both accessible and non-accessible launches.



CITY OF SARNIA LIBRARY

The City of Sarnia Library underwent significant accessibility improvements, including the addition of an accessible entrance and access to the elevator and three fully accessible washrooms.

COX YOUTH CENTRE, POOL & SPLASHPAD

A fully accessible washroom was added to the splashpad. This will allow people using the splashpad access to a fully accessible washroom that is close and on an accessible path of travel.

CANATARA PLAYGROUND

In 2019, the City of Sarnia installed a first-of-its-kinds accessible playground in Canatara Park thanks to a donation from the Rotary Clubs of Sarnia. The playground includes wheelchair accessible ramps to the play-structure, and a poured rubber base and is for everyone to enjoy.

SARNIA & CLEARWATER ARENA

Both arenas went through a major renovation to install accessible doors and washrooms. Sarnia Arena added an accessible ramp to the seating area, improved entrance, and fully accessible concessions stand.

BUS SHELTER AND PADS

Over 70 accessible bus pads and shelters were added throughout the City to improve the transit infrastructure.

CITY HALL

New accessible doors to all public entrances and improved access to the accessible washrooms was added.

STRANGWAY CENTRE

New accessible door added to Strangway Centre.

SARNIA TRANSIT

Sarnia Transit is now fully accessible by adding eight accessible buses and four Care-A-Van.

SIDEWALK RAMPS

Over 90 sidewalk ramps were installed throughout the City with a plan to be completely barrier-free by 2022.

ADOPTION OF ACCESSIBLE DESIGN STANDARDS

The City of Sarnia has adopted the City of Ottawa Accessible Design Standards to improve the accessibility of all new and renovated public spaces.

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

One of the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee objectives is to increase education and awareness about the need for inclusion and accessibility in our community. To accomplish this, the committee hosts annual and semi-annual events attended by 100s of people from all over Southwestern Ontario.

ACCESSIBILITY SUMMIT

In 2019, the City of Sarnia hosted the Accessibility Summit that included internationally known speakers such as the Unstoppable Tracy Schmitt, and the Director of Accessibility and Senior Affairs for the Province of Ontario, Alfred Spencer. Over 130 people attended from all over Southwestern Ontario.

ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS

Since 2017, the City of Sarnia has given 24 Accessibility Awards to businesses and individuals in the City of Sarnia that have gone above and beyond for people with disabilities.

MAINTENANCE

The City of Sarnia will reasonably maintain public spaces as per the “Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways” (2001). In addition, all trails, playgrounds, paths and beach access will be maintained from May to October unless otherwise stated or posted. Elements such as playgrounds and walkways/sidewalks will be continuously maintained, within reason, by the City of Sarnia to ensure the safety of the citizens of Sarnia and to prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

If a public space is temporarily disrupted or not functioning, the public will be notified in a variety of formats to educate about the scope of the disruption.

Members of the public are encouraged to notify the City of Sarnia if a function or maintenance issue occurs in a public space.

REVIEW PROCESS

The City of Sarnia is committed to reviewing the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an annual basis to determine the progress and to make changes based on new information and changes to the AODA and/or the IASR,

RESPONSIBILITIES

City Council, employees, volunteers and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the City’s behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of this accessibility plan and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the City’s goods, services, programs, and facilities.





THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SARNIA

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2021-2026

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION - HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

sarnia.ca

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