

# Town of Hawkesbury's Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2025 -2030

## Specifications

**Related Policies:** This multi-year accessibility plan (the Plan) is supported by the Accessibility Standards Policy and the Human Rights Policy.

**Related Laws:** The Plan is supported by the following laws: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*, *Ontario Building Code*, et *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

## Intent

This Plan outlines the Town of Hawkesbury's strategy to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities and comply with the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

This Plan is reviewed and updated at least once every five years. The Plan is in effect from 2025 to 2030.

## Scope

This Plan applies to all departments, divisions or sections within the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury:

- Applies to all employees, whether unionized or non-unionized;
- Applies to all job candidates;
- Applies to all volunteers who interact with the public on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury, with the exception of sections on the subject of employment, for which this plan does not apply to volunteers or other individuals who are not paid.

## Definitions

**Accessible format:** Includes but not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Barrier:** means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a

physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**Communication support:** Includes but not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

**Guide dog:** A dog trained as a guide for a blind person that has completed a training program at a designated training facility as set out in the *Guide Dogs Regulation*.

**Person living with a disability:** A "disability" is defined based on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as:

- i. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- iii. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- iv. a mental disorder, or
- v. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ("handicap")

**Redeployment:** The reassignment of an employee to another department or job in the municipality as an alternative to layoff when their job or department has been eliminated by the municipality.

**Service animal:** For the purposes of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- vi. The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators, such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- vii. The person provides documentation from a designated regulated health professional college confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support person:** In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, and facilities.

## Statement of Commitment

The Town of Hawkesbury is committed to providing an accessible environment for all clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an organization, we respect and comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, and its associated regulations. We strive to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone by identifying and removing barriers in our workplace and ensuring that new barriers are not created. The Town ensures that persons living with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities. We are committed to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and integrative manner that respects their dignity and independence.

To achieve this goal, the Town of Hawkesbury:

- Implements policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people living with disabilities, in accordance with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.
- Describes measures taken and to be undertaken, to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers to accessibility, both now and in the future.
- Identifies existing barriers and solutions to improve accessibility for people living with disabilities.
- Develops a multi-year accessibility plan at a minimum every 5 years, including the tools, strategies and actions needed to achieve our accessibility objectives, in line with our Statement of Commitment.
- Ensures that all people, regardless of their disability, can benefit from the same services as the general population, without discrimination.
- Informs the public and its employees of the resources and mechanisms in place to improve accessibility, in compliance with current regulations.

We pursue our commitment by collaborating with the community and adapting our practices to ensure equitable access for all.

## Accessibility Committee's Mandate

### Objectif

As per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, the mandate of the Town's Accessibility Committee is to support the Town of Hawkesbury in identifying, eliminating and preventing barriers to accessibility in

order to ensure equal opportunity for people living with disabilities. It ensures that the Town meets its obligations under the AODA and its regulations.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Duty of Accessibility Committee:

- Makes recommendations to Council on the implementation and revision of policies, practices and procedures to improve the accessibility of facilities, services, programs and communications.
- Participates in the review and approval of the multi-year accessibility plan, helping to identify priorities and measures to be taken to eliminate barriers.
- Makes recommendations on the accessibility of buildings, public spaces, infrastructures and transportation systems, in compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS).
- Makes recommendations concerning construction, renovation and development projects for municipal buildings and infrastructures to ensure their compliance with accessibility requirements.
- Can, where necessary, examine complaints and concerns raised by residents and recommends appropriate solutions as needed.

### Duty of Council

The Council shall seek advice from the committee on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises :

- that the council purchases, constructs or significantly renovates;
- for which the council enters into a new lease; or
- that a person provides as municipal capital facilities under an agreement entered into with the council in accordance with section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

### Composition

The Committee is made up of representative members of the community, the majority of whom are people living with a disability, or their representatives, and a member of the municipal administration or their representative.

### Meetings and Function

- The Committee meets at a frequency determined by the Town, generally at least once a quarter.

- Meetings are open to the public and allow for citizen participation. A public notice will be issued prior to the meeting.
- An annual report is presented to Council on the Committee's progress and recommendations.

## The objectives identified in the 2025-2030 Plan

The Town is committed to implementing concrete initiatives to comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

Five major standards have been identified:

1. Information and communications - Ensuring equitable access to information and communication technologies for people living with disabilities.
2. Employment - Promote inclusive workplaces by eliminating barriers to hiring and retention.
3. Transportation - Improve the accessibility of transportation services in compliance with AODA regulations.
4. Design of public spaces - Design and develop public infrastructures and installations that are accessible to all.
5. Customer service - Offer inclusive municipal services adapted to the needs of people living with disabilities.

The Town of Hawkesbury continues its commitment to working with the community, implementing accessible solutions and complying with legal requirements to ensure the full participation of all citizens.

### 1- Information and communications

Information and communications standards aim to ensure the creation, dissemination and accessibility of information for all. The Town of Hawkesbury is committed to implementing these objectives as part of its multiyear accessibility plan.

- Creation of a website compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA, ensuring equitable access to municipal information for all residents.
- Creation of a web page dedicated to accessibility and the actions undertaken by the municipality in collaboration with the Accessibility Committee.

- Accessibility of public documents: ensure that all documents intended for the public are available in accessible formats, on request, according to citizens' needs.
- Public display of accessibility resources: clearly indicate in strategic locations where to find information and how to access alternative formats.
- Continue to offer an accessible feedback system to allow residents to comment on the accessibility of municipal communications. This system is defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy.
- Adaptation of public documents: ensure that all documents related to the health and safety of residents are offered in accessible format as a priority, with other documents available on request.

The Town of Hawkesbury will continue to improve its practices to ensure inclusive, effective and accessible communication for the entire population.

## 2- Employment

Accessible employment standards require employers, including the Town of Hawkesbury, to adapt the work environment for employees with disabilities, where necessary.

- Revise internal policies and procedures to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities.
- Support the continuous training for all employees to make them aware of the barriers faced by people with accessibility needs.
- Ensure the possibility of accommodation measures as of the hiring process, taking into account the specific needs of new employees.
- Inform job applicants that accommodations are available to facilitate their integration and work within the Town.
- Guarantee an inclusive and equitable environment, ensuring that no employee is discriminated against because of a declared disability.

The Town of Hawkesbury is committed to promoting an accessible, inclusive and respectful workplace, in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

## 3- Transportation

Accessibility standards for transportation stipulate that the Town must put in place measures to guarantee access to certain transportation for all people, including those with disabilities:



- Public transportation: The Town of Hawkesbury does not currently provide public transportation services but is committed to ensuring that any future municipal initiatives meet applicable accessibility standards.
- Taxi licenses: When issuing taxi licenses, the Town will ensure that operators comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

The Town of Hawkesbury will continue to monitor legislative developments and ensure that any new transportation services comply with the IAS to guarantee equal access to travel.

## 4- Design of public spaces

The Accessibility Standards for design of public spaces set out the requirements for new construction and renovation of public spaces to ensure their accessibility.

- Accessibility in new construction: All new municipal construction must be accessible to all and comply with the requirements of the AODA and all applicable by-laws.
- Accessibility in the development of new spaces: Accessibility requirements will be implemented in new developments and recreational trail installations.
- Review of installations plans: All municipal installations plans, as well as major renovations, will be reviewed and approved by the Accessibility Committee. This committee will be able to provide feedback that will become standards for future projects.
- Continual vigilance: In collaboration with the Accessibility Committee, the Town will participate in a continual vigilance of municipal infrastructures to ensure that they comply with accessibility standards.

The Town of Hawkesbury will continue to adopt proactive practices to ensure the accessibility of its public spaces and installations, in accordance with the requirements of the AODA.

## 5- Customer Service

The goal of the Accessible Customer Service Standards is to ensure fair and equitable access to the Town of Hawkesbury's services and installations for all people, including people living with disabilities.

- Document accessibility: Make related materials available on request.
- Annual training: Offer annual customer service training to all staff.
- Accessibility Committee feedback: Encourage the Accessibility Committee to provide feedback on best practices for offering inclusive service.

- Accessibility of public facilities: Ensure that public installations used for customer service meet accessibility requirements, and prioritize any necessary adjustments based on the Accessibility Committee's recommendations.
- Accessible feedback: Provide several accessible means to enable all people to offer feedback on the accessibility of municipal services or facilities.

The Town of Hawkesbury is committed to providing inclusive customer service and meeting the needs of all its citizens, while respecting the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

## Alternative format support

The Town shall, on request, provide this document, or the information contained in this document, to any person in an accessible format or with communication support ;

- in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

The Town shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

The time required to transfer the information depends on the chosen medium, size, complexity, quality of source material and the number of documents to be converted. Information will be provided as soon as possible taking into consideration the factors noted above.

Requests for alternative formats or supports may be submitted to the Town verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (handwritten, delivered, website, or e-mail) as follows:

- Communicating with the department Director responsible for providing the goods and services about which they require an alternative format
  - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1
  - by e-mail, addressed directly to the department Director
  - by completing a request for information specific to the department in question, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
  - by telephone, 613 632-0106
  - by making an appointment to meet in-person with the department Director
- Communicating with the Town Clerk
  - by mail posted to 600 Higginson Street, Hawkesbury ON K6A 1H1



- by e-mail, addressed to [infogreffe@hawkesbury.ca](mailto:infogreffe@hawkesbury.ca)
- by completing a request for information to the Clerk's Office, via the Town's website's contact page, or the Town's mobile application's request module
- by telephone, 613 632-0106
- by making an appointment to meet in-person with the Clerk at Town Hall