



Rideau Lakes

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2029

Adopted By the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Township of Rideau Lakes on January 6, 2025 by By-Law 2025-04.

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Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Township of Rideau Lakes is committed to providing programming and services that consider the diverse needs and abilities of the people we serve. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will guide Rideau Lakes as we strive to provide services that go beyond compliance and improve the experiences of the public, staff and anyone who interacts with the Township of Rideau Lakes.

By removing barriers to services and programs across the Municipality and in the workforce, we will recognize the strength that comes with embracing new ideas and perspectives.

This commitment to inclusion will be realized through processes that engage and support employees and create a satisfying customer experience to the public. Providing a satisfying service experience at the Township of Rideau Lakes improves the quality of life for those we serve and helps to secure their trust and confidence in the municipality.

Accessible service refers to providing flexible services to meet diverse needs whenever possible, and ensuring a satisfying service experience as our primary focus. By identifying, removing and preventing barriers to our services, the Municipality is continuing to commit to diversity, inclusion and service excellence. The Township of Rideau Lakes is committed to creating inclusive programs and services that meet the needs of our community.

The Municipality is continuously making improvements in the accessibility of programs, services and facilities. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to achieving accessible and inclusive services in the years to come.

Legislative Summary

There are several pieces of Provincial and Federal Legislation that impact accessibility for our residents.

Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (*ODA*), was enacted in 2001 and requires municipalities to develop an annual accessibility plan aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was passed in 2005 with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. This is to be achieved through mandatory standards that public, private, and not-for-profit organizations need to meet. Rideau Lakes needs to meet the deadlines and requirements of the large public sector organization description under the *Act*.

AODA Standards include:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg 191/11)

On July 1, 2016, the Province combined the Customer Service Regulation into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11. Requirements of the Standards were to be phased in from 2011 to 2021. The standards are listed above under the *AODA* heading.

The Ontario Human Rights Code

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and their needs must be accommodated to the point of undue hardship. The *Code* has primacy over the *AODA*. The *Ontario Human Rights Code* is complaints-based legislation.

The Ontario Building Code

The *Ontario Building Code (OBC)* includes requirements with respect to accessibility. The *OBC* was updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces of buildings are accessible.

Accessible Canada Act

The *Accessible Canada Act*, adopted in 2019, is Federal law that aims to identify, remove and prevent barriers facing people with disabilities in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction. The goal of the *Act* is to create a Canada without barriers by 2040.

Rideau Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Council of every municipality with a population of more than 10,000, must establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Township of Rideau Lakes has established an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) with a majority of members who are persons identifying as having a disability. The AAC shall advise Council about the requirements and implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, and other matters for which Council may seek advice.

The Rideau Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee is made up of one (1) member of Council, five (5) non-council members who self-identify as having a disability, one (1) member from a Health Care Profession and the Municipal Clerk as a resource staff person.

The Committee's role is to provide recommendations, advice and information to the Municipal Council on matters relating to:

- Under Part VII of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

- Advise the Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice under subsection 5;
- Review in a timely manner, the site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act*; and
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.
- Access to a public building, structure or premise, or part of a building or structure that Council purchases, constructs or significantly renovates;
- Access to any building, structure or premise that the Council enters into a new lease for;
- Other accessibility related issues;
- Monitor federal and provincial directives and regulations;
- Liaise with other municipal accessibility advisory committees;
- Facilitate public input to Council on programs and ideas and to assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community;
- Provide advice to Council on programs, policies and services provided to persons with disabilities and seniors;
- Review on an annual basis the Policy Statement for Accessible Customer Service.

Message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Township of Rideau Lakes's Accessibility Advisory Committee is made up of passionate people from different parts of our community, with diverse areas of expertise and a lot of different perspectives. Together with the Municipal Council and staff, we are committed to achieve barrier free accessibility for persons with disabilities living, visiting, and working in our beautiful Municipality. Our vision is that services, programs, infrastructure and buildings across the Municipality will be equally accessible to all. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will serve as a tool to assist the Municipality in achieving its accessibility goals.

Consultation Process

The Township of Rideau Lakes's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was updated with the participation of the Rideau Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee.

2025-2029 Priorities

The following represents the accessibility priorities of the Township of Rideau Lakes for the period 2025-2029:

- Continue with collaboration between departments to remove barriers by adding accessible features to facilities, parks and public spaces where the public accesses services;
- Continue to research grant opportunities to provide further accessible upgrades to public spaces;
- Update Job postings to include accessibility requirements specific to each role;
- Continue to provide information on Municipal programs and services using the widest variety of communication tools possible to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to stay informed;

General Requirements

Under the General Section of the IASR, public sector organizations must establish accessibility policies, plans, and incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. Public sector organizations must ensure training is provided on the IASR and the Human Rights Code for employees, volunteers, persons developing the organization's policies, and persons providing goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Policies

- **Annual Reports** – Council to receive Annual Status Report regarding progress in accessibility at the Municipality, as well as progress related to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- **Compliance Reports** – Continue to file Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Province every other year, as required.
- **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Update** – Continue to review and update the Multi-Year Plan every four (4) years.
- **Accessibility Policy Refresh** – Review and refresh the Municipalities' Policies related to Accessibility.

Procurement

- **Proponent Reports, Plans in Accessible Formats** – Increase communication with proponents to ensure documents, reports, and plans submitted to the Municipality are provided in an accessible format.
- **Promoting Accessible Procurement at Senior Management Level** – Increase communication with Senior Management with respect to the obligations the Municipality has with respect to accessibility in the procurement acquisition of goods, services or facilities.

Expand on Accessible Procurement in the Municipality's Procurement Policy –

Expand the information and instruction included in the Procurement Policy with respect to accessibility and the obligations of those providing goods, services, and facilities to or on behalf of the Municipality.

Vendors/Proponents

Ensure that all standard contract agreements include a provision for AODA compliance and provide proof their employees have received the requisite training under the *AODA*.

Customer Service

The requirements set out under the Customer Service Standard apply to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties that have at least one employee in Ontario. The Customer Service Standard addresses service animals, training for staff, a feedback process, and the format of documents.

Service Animals

- **Service Animal Policy** – A detailed service animal policy for the Municipality is established through the Accessible Customer Services policy adopted by By-Law 2024-16.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions

- **Increase Communication Regarding Temporary Disruption Practices** – Increase communication to staff regarding temporary disruptions to accessible elements, services or programs used by persons with disabilities, and what steps must be taken to provide notice of the temporary disruption. Details of providing Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions are established through the Accessible Customer Services policy adopted by By-Law 2024-16.
- **Create Standard Form** – Use the Standard form to provide notice of a planned disruption and unplanned disruption and when services are anticipated to be restored.

Feedback Process

- **Feedback Process More Prominently Displayed** – Increase the promotion of the Municipalities' Feedback Process at its public facilities through the posting of signs setting out how to provide feedback with respect to accessibility.

Information and Communication

The Information and Communication Standard contained in the IASR sets out the manner in which information is to be provided to persons with disabilities. This extends to accessible formats and communication supports, emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, and accessible websites and web content. The Municipality is committed to meeting the communication needs of persons with disabilities in accordance with the IASR.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- **Accessible Formats Available Upon Request** – Increase the prevalence of the statement “accessible formats available upon request” in documentation created by the Municipality.
- **Accessible Document Design** – Update existing templates and provide additional accessible document design instructions to all employees of the Municipality and volunteers with responsibilities that include creating documents, posting to social media, and posting to the Municipal social media outlets. This may include instruction in colour contrast, plain language, use of fonts, when to use tables, and the proper use of headings in a document, etc.
- **Document Remediation** – Provide training to appropriate staff in the use of document remediation software to bring existing inaccessible documents up to an accessible standard.

Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information

- **Rideau Lakes Emergency Plan** – Continue to provide the Rideau Lakes Emergency Plan, as created under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, in an accessible format and with appropriate communications supports, where necessary.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

- **Remediation of the Municipal Website** – The Clerk’s Department will continue working to ensure all website content conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA and transition the Municipal Website to WCAG 2.0 level AAA when possible.
- **Remediation of Legacy Documents** – The Clerk’s Department work to remediate or remove legacy documents on the Municipal website that do not meet accessibility standards.
- **Accessible Social Media Training** – Investigate and implement accessible social media training for applicable staff.

Employment

The Township of Rideau Lakes is committed to fair, equitable and accessible employment practices that ensure the processes of recruiting, hiring, communicating and retaining employees with disabilities which fulfills the intent of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Though the Employment Standard applies in respect to employees only, the Municipality will extend this, wherever practicable, to elected officials and volunteers.

Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process

- **Accommodation Availability** – Continue to include information about the availability of accommodation both in the internal and external job postings.

Notice to Successful Applicants

- **Offers of Employment** – Incorporate clear wording regarding workplace accommodation for persons with disabilities into written offers of employment.

Informing Employees of Supports

- **Onboarding Practices** – Continue the distribution of information regarding the availability of accommodation, and the existence of accommodation policies, as part of the onboarding process.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

- **Strengthen Distribution** - Improve communication to employees regarding the availability of communication supports and accessible formats for information provided to employees.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

- **Communicate Availability of Emergency Response Supports** – Create an individualized workplace emergency response plan for any worker with a disability who needs assistance during an emergency.

Transportation

The Township of Rideau Lakes does not provide public transportation, nor does it regulate taxis.

Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality is committed to designing public spaces that are free from barriers and accessible to all persons. The Design of Public Spaces Standard applies to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped.

Trails, Including Consultation

- Work with area Organizations to ensure there are a number of rest opportunities along trails located within the Municipality, with the installation of items such as benches.

Beach Access Routes

- **Sand Lake Park Beach Access** – Evaluate the access from the parking area to the water at Sand Lake Park with respect to the technical requirements for Beach Access Routes as set out in the *AODA* in the event of new construction or redevelopment of the access route.
- **Portland Beach Access** – Evaluate the access from the parking area to the water at the Portland Beach with respect to the technical requirements for Beach Access Routes as set out in the *AODA* in the event of new construction or redevelopment of the access route.

- **Beach Access Routes** – continue to investigate grant opportunities for the installation of accessible mats to improve access to the water at the Municipal Beaches.
- **Municipal Dock Access** – Evaluate the access from the parking areas to the municipal docks in Portland and Newboro Harbour to ensure barrier free access.

Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

- **Municipal Owned Parks** – In the event new eating areas are created within a municipal park, ensure accessible tables are installed as set out in the technical requirements as set out in the IASR of the AODA.

Outdoor Play Spaces

- **Establishment of Outdoor Play Spaces at Municipal Parks/Facilities** – Liaise with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure any newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces (whether traditional or natural) include accessibility in the design.

Exterior Paths of Travel

- Ramps constructed as part of building renovations or new construction will be constructed in compliance with the requirements under the *Ontario Building Code*.
- In the event of constructing new or reconstructing sidewalks, consideration shall be given for a depressed curb and the technical requirements as set out in the IASR of the AODA.

Accessible Off-Street Parking

- In the event of constructing new or redeveloping off-street parking facilities. The Township will follow all technical requirements as set out in the IASR of the AODA.

Service Counters

- **New Counters or Replacing Existing Counters** - In the event service counters are constructed or existing counters are replaced, the technical requirements as set out in the IASR of the AODA will be taken into account.

Fixed Queuing Guides

- **When Constructing New Queueing Guides** - In the event new queueing guides are constructed, the technical requirements as set out in the IASR of the AODA will be complied with.

Waiting Areas

- **Waiting Areas at Public Buildings** – In the event of new construction or redevelopment, where there are waiting areas in public buildings where seating is fixed to the floor, a minimum of three per cent of the seating will be made accessible by leaving a space where an individual using a mobility aid can wait.

Maintenance of Accessible Elements

In accordance with the *AODA*, Multi-Year Accessibility Plans must include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces, and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are required.

- **Public Facilities** – The Facilities & Parks Department is responsible for maintenance of accessible elements at Municipal owned facilities and parks. Preventative maintenance schedules are to be developed to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable.

Notices of service interruptions will inform the public of any disruption in accessible elements due to a planned or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its expected duration, and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place, such as a front entrance, and on the Municipality's social media outlets.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repair, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

Review and Monitoring

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Municipality's strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Feedback

The Township of Rideau Lakes welcomes feedback on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and on the accessibility of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

Availability of the Plan

The Multi-Year Plan will be available online at the Municipal website, rideaulakes.ca or by contacting the Township of Rideau Lakes as set out below. The Plan is available in alternate formats upon request.

Contact Information

For more information or to obtain an alternate format of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan please contact:

Email: mtruelove@rideaulakes.ca

Tel. 613-928-2251 ext. 293 or toll free 1-800-928-2250

Mail: Clerk
Township of Rideau Lakes
1439 County Road 8
Delta ON K0E 1G0

Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions

Accessibility

Accessibility is a general term describing the degree of ease that something (ex. device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to deliver barrier-free experiences for persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population by making things more useable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

Barrier

Barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. The traditional definition of a barrier has been expanded to include many types of barriers.

- **Physical Barrier:** Buildings, public spaces or features that restrict or impede physical access. Example: A doorway that is too narrow to accommodate a person in a motorized scooter.
- **Communication Barrier:** An obstacle in providing information. Example: Documents with text too small to be read.
- **Attitudinal Barrier:** Judgements or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Example: Assuming all persons with low vision can read Braille, or treating a support person as if they are the client.
- **Technological Barrier:** When technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices or software. Example: A website that does not provide increased text sizes or does not support screen reading software.
- **System Barrier:** Policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. Example: Requiring a valid driver's license for a position that does not involve driving prevents a person with visual impairment from applying for the job.

Municipality

Means the Township of Rideau Lakes

Disability

A disability is defined per Section 2 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Human Rights Code* as:

- a) 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 a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997.