

2020
The Corporation of the City of Waterloo
Status Update on the Accessibility Plan

The City of Waterloo Accessibility Plan for 2018-2022 describes how the Corporation will continue to prevent and remove accessibility barriers. The Status update provides the progress on the implementation of the plan.

Highlighted below are the 2020 Status updates.

General Requirements Commitments:

Accessibility Policy

- The City of Waterloo Accessibility Policy was, updated in May 2017 and continues to be reviewed and updated as required.
- The Accessibility Policy is available to the public on the city website.

Accessibility Plan

- In 2018, Council approved The City of Waterloo Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2018-2022. The Accessibility Plan is available to the public on the city website.
- The annual status update is presented to the City of Waterloo's Accessibility Advisory Committee at the end of each year.
- The annual status update is available to the public on the city website.

Procurement

- In 2020, one on one Procurement training with new Project Managers continued with a section highlighting accessibility in the training.
- The City of Waterloo Buyer's Guide that is distributed to all new staff includes accessibility requirements to follow.
- The new Purchasing By-Law approved by council in 2019 also references the need to incorporate accessibility requirements.
- All City of Waterloo RFX's include an AODA clause.
- Project Managers are requested to include accessibility requirements in the RFP and RFT on a project specific basis.

Training

- New staff receives mandatory accessibility training through corporate orientation or through e-learning modules.

- Part time and seasonal staff receive mandatory accessibility training through an e-learning module created specifically for City of Waterloo staff.
- The Corporate accessibility training brochures for staff and volunteers, updated in late 2017.
- The City of Waterloo is providing training for staff in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and has an Introduction to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training program for all staff along with numerous webinars and workshops throughout the year addressing a variety of topics specific to DEI.

Standards Commitments:

Information and Communications Standards

- The City of Waterloo has statements on the website informing people that accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.
- Staff are, trained to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Resources to assist staff are, posted on the City of Waterloo intranet.
- In December 2018, The City of Waterloo launched a refreshed website in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA. Special attention was, given to the accessibility requirements and inclusive, easy-to-understand language.
- Staff that create documents for the web have been, trained on how to create accessible documents. Creating accessible document tutorials with an emphasis of adobe acrobat has been, created for staff as a toolkit. In 2015, City of Waterloo, updated accessibility training materials for Adobe Pro 11. Accessible templates have been developed and shared with staff for public documents required to be posted on the web.

Employment Standards

- Policies and practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis with respect to recruitment, hiring and interviewing as per the requirements under the employment standards.
- The City of Waterloo job postings advise applicants that accommodations are available through all stages of the recruitment process and candidates who are selected for an interview are advised again when invited for the interview.
- The City of Waterloo notifies successful applicants of accommodations available to them through the offer of employment letter.
- The City of Waterloo notifies all employees through mandatory staff accessibility training that if they do require an accommodation or accessible formats/communication supports to do their job that this can be available to them.
- Individualized workplace emergency response plans are created for employees with disabilities.
- The City of Waterloo has 2 procedures to support the early and safe return to work of employees recovering from non-occupational or occupational injury/illness (Sick Leave and Medical Accommodation Procedure and WSIB Return to Work Procedure).
- The City of Waterloo has establishing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee comprised of 5 Working Groups to review current practices and procedures related to accessing policies, procedures and to address systemic and structural barriers.

- In 2020, The City of Waterloo introduced the Respect in the Workplace Policy and Program which sets expectations of respectful behaviour and to prevent disrespectful, harassing, or discriminatory workplace behaviours.
- In 2020, The City of Waterloo introduced the Human Rights Accommodation procedure which outlines the process for requesting, reviewing, and implementing accommodations, supports and an accommodation plan.
- In 2021, The City of Waterloo will be developing, recruiting, and hiring a new Division; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion comprised of a 1. Director, Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity; 2. Indigenous Initiatives Advocate; 3. Anti-Racism and Social Justice Advocate; 4. Accessibility Advocate.

Design of Public Spaces Standards

- City of Waterloo staff consult with GRAAC, before constructing new or redeveloping existing municipal recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, and exterior paths of travel, rest areas and on-street parking spaces. GRAAC has developed an accessibility comments sheet for each of these areas to help staff with accessibility considerations.
- City of Waterloo public consultations are open to all members of the public.
- The City of Waterloo Accessibility Standards document, approved by council in June 2016 prepared to assist in implementing the Design of Public Spaces Standards, and is used under the City of Waterloo's Site Plan Approval process and shared with developers.
- Annually review and update the chart, the City of Waterloo procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

Customer Service Standards

- The customer service standards are included in the Accessibility Policy.
- The corporate training brochures for staff and volunteers include the customer service standards.
- The mandatory accessibility training for staff includes the customer service standards.
- Staff resources related to customer service standards are available on the staff intranet.

The Province of Ontario reviews all standards, which may require updates to existing policies, training, manuals, bylaws etc. Because of the reviews, revisions to current standards or new standards may be introduced which will include new requirements and compliance deadlines. Those revisions and any actions related to them will be captured in the City of Waterloo annual status update. No revisions to the current standards were introduced in 2020.

Consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC):

As municipal projects arise, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee review site plans and provide suggestions on how to best improve and achieve accessibility.

In 2020, GRAAC advised on:

- Waterloo Memorial Recreational Complex expansion
- City of Waterloo East Side Branch Library
- City of Waterloo Alexandra Park
- City of Waterloo Northdale Parks
- Municipal trail through the former Waterloo Inn Hotel
- City of Waterloo Button Factory elevator installation
- City of Waterloo Transportation Master Plan
- Waterloo Park guide strips to the washroom building
- City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Matching Grant Gaga Pit at a neighbourhood park
- Delegate at City of Waterloo Council regarding Longfellow drive sidewalk installation
- City of Waterloo Laurel Greenway Feasibility Study
- Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex interior signage

The impact of COVID-19 on GRAAC

The Government of Ontario declared its first provincial emergency in response to COVID-19 on March 17, 2020. To comply with the Region of Waterloo Public Health regulations and to keep members and staff safe during the pandemic, in person meetings were cancelled as of March 2020. GRAAC committee meetings resumed virtually in September 2020. The pandemic has provided opportunities for GRAAC to complete their work in different ways. The shift to virtual meetings has resulted in an increase in GRAAC committee member attendance as it has removed some barriers as it relates to transportation, childcare etc. In person site visits have also been cancelled and this has been a challenge in GRAAC members' ability to provide accessibility feedback for municipal built environment projects. The year 2021 will continue with virtual meetings until it is safe to return to in person.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Space Standard (DOPS) addresses accessibility in public access spaces. Items addressed include recreational trails, outdoor public use eating spaces, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel (e.g. sidewalks), on and off-street parking, service counters and fixed queuing guides. The DOPS includes technical specifications, public consultation, and maintenance requirements.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard, section 80.44, maintenance of accessible elements states that multi-year accessibility plans shall include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions. The chart below addresses all sections within the DOPS.

City of Waterloo

Design of Public Spaces Standard

80.44 - Maintenance of accessible elements

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
80.8, 80.9, 80.11, 80.12, 80.13, 80.14, 80.15	Recreational trails (means public pedestrian trails that are intended for recreational and leisure purposes)	Procedure for preventative maintenance of recreational trails involves the following general activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual inspection of recreational trails to assess condition - Routine scheduled maintenance activities are carried out, as required - Specific maintenance work associated with inspection findings - Planned operational and capital upgrades are carried out - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints 	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of recreational trails involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trail section and limit of work zone is cordoned off to secure construction area - Signs are posted indicating closure of trail - Repair work is carried out to appropriate standards - Trail is reinstated following completion of emergency work
80.21, 80.22, 80.23, 80.24, 80.25, 80.26, 80.27, 80.29, 80.30, 80.31	Exterior paths of travel (are outdoor sidewalks or walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and are intended to serve a functional purpose and not to provide a recreational experience)	Procedure for preventative maintenance of exterior paths of travel of sidewalks or walkways involve the following general activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual inspection of sidewalks to meet the MMS (minimum maintenance standard) - Annual inspection of sidewalk or walkways leading to the entrance of city facilities - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints - The City will clear city-maintained sidewalks and walkways in accordance to the Municipal Act - Property owners will clear sidewalks and walkways adjacent to their property in accordance to the City of Waterloo Snow Removal By-law 	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of exterior paths of travel of sidewalks or walkways involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas are closed off and or identified until work is complete - Signs are posted indicating closure of sidewalk or walkway - Repair work is carried out to appropriate standards - Sidewalk or walkway is reinstated following completion of emergency work

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter maintenance of sidewalks is the responsibility of the property owner 	
80.18, 80.19, 80.20	<p>Outdoor play spaces (consists of an area that includes play equipment, where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers)</p>	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of outdoor play spaces involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playground inspections as per CSA Standards. Refer to Z614-14, Children’s Play spaces and Equipment - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of outdoor play spaces involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow the CSA Standards for removal of damaged equipment and signage guidelines (i.e. unsafe equipment is removed, new piece of equipment is installed, sign is posted if the park will be closed)
80.16, 80.17,	<p>Outdoor public use eating area (consists of tables that are found in public areas, and are specifically intended for use by the public as a place to consume food)</p>	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of outdoor public use eating areas involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual inspection of tables at municipal outdoor public use eating areas - Routine scheduled maintenance activities are carried out, as required - Specific maintenance work associated with inspection findings - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of outdoor public use eating areas involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsafe tables are, removed and replaced.
80.32, 80.33, 80.34, 80.35, 80.36, 80.37, 80.38, 80.39	<p>Accessible parking – off-street parking facilities, accessible parking spaces, access aisles, signage, on-street</p>	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of accessible off-street and on-street parking involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routine maintenance activities are carried out, as required for off-street municipal parking lots (i.e. repainting lines) - Planned operational and capital upgrades are carried out - When severe snow is-expected a public notification is issued regarding a parking ban to clear the roads and no on-street parking is permitted so the roads can be cleared. 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of accessible off-street and on-street parking involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For (paid) municipal off-street parking lots when work is going to be-done. Permit holders are - notified. - For (no charge) municipal off-street parking lots when work is going to be-done signage is-posted. - For on-street parking during emergency maintenance work, the parking spot would not be available for use and signage is-posted.
80.40, 80.41, 80.42, 80.43	<p>Obtaining Services (requirements for obtaining services in respect of service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas apply whether the services are obtained in buildings or out-of-doors)</p>	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of municipal facility service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of municipal facility service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas involve:</p>

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planned capital upgrades are carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas are closed off and or identified until work is complete - Alternate service areas are identified - Repair work is carried out to appropriate standards - Area is reinstated following completion of work