

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON MARCH 19, 2013
FROM:	WILLIAM C. COXHEAD MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION
SUBJECT:	ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT UPDATES

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Parks and Recreation, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- a) The attached proposed City of London Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy required for the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) **BE ADOPTED**;
- b) The attached City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013-2017 required under the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards **BE APPROVED**.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- “City of London Response to the Final Proposed Transportation Accessibility Standard for Public Review” Report to Board of Control, March 25, 2009
- “City of London Response to the Employment Accessibility Initial Proposed Standard” Report to Board of Control, April 29, 2009
- “City of London Response to the Initial Proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard” Report to Board of Control, September 30, 2009
- “City of London Response to the Draft Standards for the Design of Public Spaces in the Built Environment” Report to the Community Services Committee October 22, 2012

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Provide an update on recent changes under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”);
2. Provide an overview of the new Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy;
3. Provide an overview of the City’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Provincial Government enacted the AODA in 2005. The Act lays the framework for the development of province-wide mandatory standards to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by January 1, 2025. Standards have been developed in five areas: Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communication, Employment, and Public Spaces (Built Environment). These have become law in two Regulations:

1. Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (O. Reg. 429/07)

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into effect on January 1, 2008, making them the first to become law under the AODA. These standards put guidelines in place for accommodating customers with disabilities, enabling them to receive services with independence and dignity. The City has reported compliance with these standards and will continue to make inclusive customer service commonplace. Ongoing obligations under this standard include conducting training, maintaining policies, and overseeing compliance.

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

The Integrated Accessibility Standards came into effect on July 1, 2011. The requirements of this standard will be phased in over time from 2011 to 2021. The standards apply to all public, private, and not-for-profit organizations in Ontario, and cover the following areas:

- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Public Spaces (Built Environment)

The City has made many accessibility improvements to its policies, by-laws, facilities, and services, and more work is underway to meet this standard. The new City website will be launched in 2013, which includes accessibility upgrades. The City's Procurement Policy has been amended to ensure that accessibility is considered when purchasing goods, services, and facilities. Further, training is being developed for staff on the new standard, including the revised purchasing guidelines, and how to create accessible documents.

On January 1, 2013 the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation was amended to include accessibility requirements for the Design of Public Spaces. Beginning in 2016, the City will be required to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas for public use
- Outdoor play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on- and off-street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

Organizations do not have to retrofit their public spaces. The standard only applies when building new or making major changes to existing public spaces.

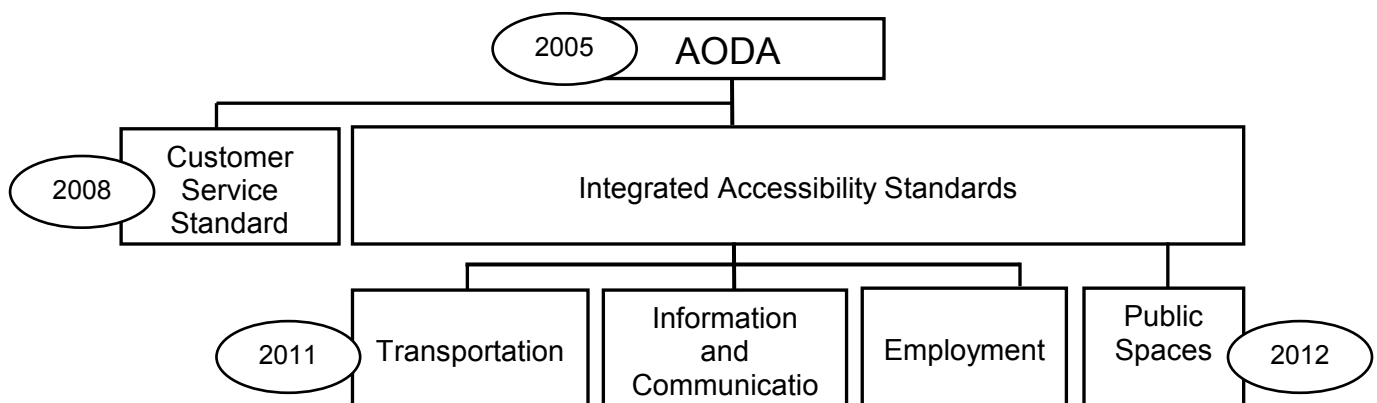


Chart: Provincial Accessibility Legislation

Accessibility requirements in the built environment inside buildings will be addressed with changes to the Ontario Building Code. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released the proposed changes for public comment by March 1, 2013. Administration responded in support of many of the proposed changes, as London's *Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)* already meets or

exceeds the majority of the proposed standards. It is expected that these changes to the Building Code will come into effect in 2014.

The City must file an accessibility report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario every two years, with the first report being due December 31, 2013. Administration is actively engaged in meeting these standards and is committed to working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACCAC) to identify and remove barriers.

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS POLICY

The Integrated Accessibility Standards require that “*every obligated organization must develop, implement, and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements referred to in this Regulation*”.

The proposed City of London Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy ([see Appendix A](#)) being recommended for approval and implementation is intended to satisfy the policy requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards. It was created with the input of ACCAC, which reviewed the policy at its January 31st, 2013 meeting. The policy addresses the City’s obligations under the standard areas of Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and Public Spaces.

The policy will be communicated to staff through “*It Starts with Me*” training, which also includes information on the *Human Rights Code*. This training is a requirement under the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

CITY OF LONDON MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Integrated Accessibility Standards require that designated public sector organizations must “*establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the regulation*”. While previously organizations were required to develop an accessibility plan each year, the new standard requires a multi-year plan to be created at least every five years, with a status report completed each year.

The City of London’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013-2017 ([see Appendix B](#)) provides an overall view of how the City will continue to reach its goal of becoming more accessible. This plan includes a summary of work that was done in 2012, as well as new activities to be completed over the next five years. Objectives identified within this plan are both long and short-term, several of which being ongoing throughout the life of the plan.

To identify barriers to be addressed by municipal accessibility plans, each municipality is required under the AODA to consult with their Accessibility Advisory Committee. This plan was developed with input from ACCAC, and consultation with each of its three sub-committees.

While the plan’s main focus is on meeting the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, it also highlights accessibility work done by Administration that goes beyond the minimum standards to ensure that the City is a leader in creating accessible communities.

The 2013-2017 Accessibility Plan is the City’s first multi-year plan. It is a living document that will continue to be refined and improved as accessibility work continues.

CONCLUSION

The City of London continues to support the intent of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and is furthering its efforts to comply with all requirements. Administration has been actively engaged with the Province in the standard development process with all five AODA

standards to date. Administration supports the proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code and will revise its FADS document to reflect the changes once they become law.

The approval and implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy are intended to satisfy the policy compliance requirements of the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards for the City of London. This regulation also requires that public sector organizations create a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Administration will continue to work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and all service areas to implement this plan and integrate accessibility as a part of regular business practices. Status updates on the plan will be completed annually.

Administration will continue to monitor the development, implementation, and impact of the AODA Standards. Regular updates will be provided to the Corporate Services Committee and City Council as the standards evolve and the City of London works towards compliance.

PREPARED BY:
JENNIFER LAJOIE SPECIALIST, MUNICIPAL POLICY

SUBMITTED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
KATE GRAHAM MANAGER, CORPORATE INITIATIVES	WILLIAM C. COXHEAD MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION

Appendix A: Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

Appendix B: City of London Accessibility Plan 2013-2017

cc. Art Zuidema

