



Title:
Multi-year Accessibility Plan

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M7

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Applies to:
All employees and members of the Council of the Municipality of Casselman

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Mayor's Remarks

Dear Residents of Casselman,

As your Mayor, I am committed to fostering an inclusive, accessible, and equitable community for all. The launch of our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a significant milestone in our journey towards this goal. This plan is not just a document; it is a promise to break down barriers and create a Casselman where every resident can participate fully, regardless of their abilities.

Accessibility is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right. This plan outlines our strategic approach to ensure that services, facilities, and information are accessible to everyone. We will focus on improving physical infrastructure, enhancing digital platforms, and training our staff to serve you better.

I am proud of the collaborative effort that has gone into creating this plan, and I am excited about the positive change it will bring. Together, we will make Casselman a model community that values the dignity, independence, and contributions of each of its residents.

Thank you for your support and engagement in this critical initiative. Let's build a Casselman that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,
Genevieve Lajoie
Mayor of Casselman



Policy Statement

2.1. Introduction

The Municipality of Casselman is a thriving community that preserves its roots and charm. It boasts captivating natural spaces and several public parks, providing residents and visitors of all ages with places for sports, leisure, or relaxation. Casselman is also known for serving the region with its many services, restaurants, and businesses.

2.2. Provincial Standards

To make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 requires designated public sector organizations and large organizations to develop, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines their strategy for preventing and removing barriers and meeting the requirements of the Provincial regulation through appropriate strategies and measures.

2.3. Statement of commitment

The Municipality of Casselman recognizes the right of every person living with a disability to live a lifestyle based on dignity, independence, integration, equal opportunity, and the right to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

Consequently, the Municipality of Casselman declares its commitment to work with its citizens on an ongoing basis to eliminate existing barriers for people living with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being created by:

- Adopting an annual budget that aims to improve the accessibility to services;
- Improving accessibility to buildings, facilities and services for people with functional limitations;
- Ensuring equitable access to employment within the municipality;
- Ensuring quality services for all members of the community living with a disability;
- Incorporating accessibility standards and criteria into the process of acquiring products and services for the municipality;

2.4. Guiding Principles

Responsibility

A municipality has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all members of its community have equal access to public facilities and services. In addition, municipalities must also prioritize the implementation of provincial accessibility legislations, including the adoption of policies and

practices that promote integration and social inclusion, such as accessible communication and information on employment opportunities.

Commitment

A municipality's commitment to accessibility is essential to ensuring that all residents have equal access to public facilities, services, and opportunities. The Municipality of Casselman has chosen to value accessibility and create a more inclusive and equitable community that benefits all residents.

Dignity and Fairness

Dignity is a fundamental human right that should be accorded to all residents, visitors, and employees of the Municipality of Casselman. Accessibility plays an essential role in respecting this right by ensuring that people with disabilities are not excluded or marginalized in their participation in daily life. By ensuring that everyone has equal access to resources, services, and opportunities, we can create a fairer and more equitable society in which everyone is valued and respected.

Policy Definitions

3.1. People with Disabilities

For the purposes of this policy, "disability" is defined according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as:

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,

A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

A mental disorder, or

An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

3.2. Service Animal

For the purposes of this policy, "service animal" means any of the following:

A guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act;

A service animal for people with disabilities. For the purposes of this policy, an animal is a service animal for people with disabilities;

If it is clear that the animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability; or

If the person provides a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the person needs the animal for reasons related to his or her disability.

3.3. Support Person

For the purposes of this policy, a support person is defined as a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical care or access to goods and services.

Policy Application

4.1. Application

This policy applies to the employees of the Municipality of Casselman. For questions or comments, the Municipal Clerk is the primary contact.

4.2. Accessibility Working Group

Considering that accessibility is everyone's responsibility, the following people are part of the working group: the Mayor, the CAO, all department heads, and any other parties who may need to be consulted.

At a minimum, the group meets annually to record achievements in accessibility and to identify areas for improvement. Suggestions will be put forward during the annual budget process.

The Clerk acts as coordinator of this plan and is responsible for its renewal.

Policy Requirements

5.1. Implementation of Departmental Requirements

- Communications will be conducted by taking into account the needs of the person with a disability;
- People with disabilities which are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal are allowed to enter areas of premises owned or operated by the municipality that are generally open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law;
- People with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be allowed to be accompanied by this support person on premises normally open to the public;

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- Notice will be given when the facilities or services on which people with disabilities depend to access the services of the Municipality of Casselman are temporarily disrupted;
- The Municipality of Casselman uses barrier identification methods, including installation audits and more;
- The Municipality of Casselman maintains a procedure for citizens to provide feedback on the accessibility of goods and services provided by the municipality;
- The Municipality of Casselman recognizes that people with disabilities may choose to use their own assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from services offered by the Municipality;
- Provide training to municipal staff.

5.2. Feedback

Anyone may comment, send a request or file a complaint regarding the Municipality of Casselman's accessibility program. The following methods are available to those concerned:

- Fill out the form about the accessibility of facilities and services at the following address: www.casselman.ca;
- Send an e-mail describing the nature of the complaint or concern to the following e-mail address: info@casselman.ca;
- Contact the Accessibility Coordinator by telephone at 613-764-3139, or by mail at the following address Municipality of Casselman, 751 St-Jean, Casselman, Ontario, K0A 1M0.

Regardless of the method used to route the request, a response will be provided within 30 days;

The Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for processing requests. If the Coordinator, or his delegate, cannot agree on the resolution of the request, the matter is forwarded to the CAO for decision. If the CAO is unable to reach a solution, the matter may be presented to the Municipal Council for a final decision.

5.3. Service Interruption

The Municipality must give advance notice to the public of any planned interruption, partial or total, of services or facilities offered to people with disabilities. In the case of unplanned interruptions, the Municipality will notify the public as soon as possible;

The public notice must include the reason for the interruption, its expected duration, and proposed alternatives.

5.4. Document Format

If the Municipality of Casselman is asked to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Municipality must give that person the document or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability;

The duration of the conversion process varies according to the size, complexity and quality of the source documents, the number of documents to be converted and, if applicable, the budget allocated for the conversion. Documents are returned within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the above-mentioned factors;

Wherever possible, conversion is an internal process. Where conversion is carried out externally, the costs are assumed by the department budget and/or the administration budget, not the applicant.

Customer Service

As a designated public sector organization, we must meet all the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

In January 2008, the municipality implemented its Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy, which aims to ensure the provision of goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities, and to adapt these services/facilities to comply with the customer service standards set out in Part IV.2 of Ontario Regulation 191/11.

6.1. Past Achievements

- Replacement of nine entrance doors at the Town Hall, the Paul-Émile Lévesque centre, Richelieu Park and the public work office;
- Design of a new website in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA to ensure accessibility of information for our residents (launch date: early 2024);
- Replacement of the ramp at the Town Hall.

6.2. Strategy and actions

- Continue to guarantee the accessibility of services to our residents and visitors by complying with AODA Standards;
- Continue to renovate facilities or construct new buildings, striving to improve and incorporate accessibility features for our residents;
- Continue the evaluation and review of parks and recreation facilities in conjunction with the development of a master plan to increase participation in recreation programs for people with special needs;
- Update the policy on accessibility standards for customer services set out in Part IV.2 of Ontario Regulation 191/11.

Information and Communications

In accordance with the AODA Information and Communication Standards, the municipality is required to provide documents in accessible formats and communication assistance when providing information to people with disabilities who request it. We will communicate with people with disabilities, taking their needs into account.

We will also meet the internationally recognized requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, in accordance with Ontario accessibility legislation, and ensure that they are kept up to date.

7.1. Past Achievements

- The design of a new website in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA to ensure accessibility of information for our residents (launch date: early 2024);
- The introduction of an online form enabling residents to give their views on accessibility;
- The use of emergency alerts, offering a flexible notification solution to our residents, who can opt for text messages or emails.

7.2. Strategies and actions

- Increase promotion of municipal accessibility initiatives on social media;
- Continue to ensure that the municipality's website and web applications are AODA compliant;
- Ensure that the reception process meets the needs of people with disabilities.

Employment

As an employer in Ontario, the municipality must comply with the Ontario Accessible Employment Standards to meet the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities.

8.1. Past Achievements

- Renovation of the tourist office to include accessible facilities to accommodate summer employees with disabilities.

8.2. Strategies and Actions

- Continue to ensure that the municipality's employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities;
- Expand human resources policies relating to the provision of accommodations on the basis of disability and accessible employment, setting out the municipality's commitment to the prevention and elimination of barriers for people with disabilities, as well as the

establishment of procedures by which people with disabilities can request accommodations;

- Maintain a return-to-work process.

Purchases

We will integrate accessibility criteria and features into the contracting and acquisition of goods, services and facilities.

9.1. Past Achievements

- For our tenders, we use the application Bids &Tenders, which provides accessible digital solutions in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
- We publish tenders through our website, which complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.

9.2. Strategies and Actions

- Continue to ensure that accessibility criteria are essential requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities;
- Continue to work with suppliers and community partners to meet or exceed accessibility requirements;
- Update the Purchasing Policy.

Training

The Municipality of Casselman is required to provide appropriate training on the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities to all employees, volunteers and persons who participate in the development of municipal policies or who provide services or goods on behalf of the Municipality.

10.1. Past Achievements

- Mandatory training for current and new employees;
- AODA customer service training;
- Training on understanding human rights.

10.2. Strategies and Actions

- Ensure that mandatory accessibility training is offered to employees;

- Encourage employee registration for training activities to increase knowledge of accessibility.

Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality of Casselman will comply with the accessibility standards for the design of public spaces if it makes major modifications to an existing public space - or builds a new one - that is covered by these accessibility standards.

11.1. Past Achievements

- Installation of a magic eye (splash pad), a ramp, three new structures, a safety surface, a washroom, an accessible door and automated button at Parc Richelieu as part of major renovations in 2021;
- Creation of a fully accessible park (Parc Tchou Tchou) on Barrage Road;
- Addition of an accessible structure at Hydro Park and Optimist Park;
- Replacement of entrance doors and addition of automatic buttons at the Town Hall, J.R. Brisson Complex, Paul-Émile Lévesque centre, Richelieu Park and the Public Works Office;
- Fully accessible ramps at the Town Hall, 750 Principale and the Tourist Information Center;
- Installation of two pedestrian crossings on rue Principale;
- Installation of six (6) platforms with benches that take into account the needs of sidewalk users (2020-2022);
- Installation of additional handicapped parking spaces at the public parking lot located on St-Isidore street, the Tourist Information Center, J.R. Brisson Complex, the J.R. Brisson Community Hall and at 750 Principale;
- Installation of accessible pedestrian crossings:
 - 2021: Brébeuf Street between Laurier and St-Isidore Streets;
 - 2022: Laurier Street between Brébeuf Street and the entrance to École St-Paul;
 - 2022: Intersection of Principale Street, Lafèche and Racine Streets;
- Sidewalks improvements including ramps and tactile paving since 2020:
 - Brébeuf Street between Laurier and St-Isidore Streets;
 - Principale Street in front of the A & W;
 - Dollard Street between the railroad tracks and St-Joseph Street;

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- Principale Street (east side) between Paul-Émile Lévesque bridge and St-Isidore Street;
- St-Joseph Street between Dollard and Yvon Streets;
- Principale Street between Montcalm Street and St-Isidore (west side);
- St-Isidore Street between Brébeuf and St-Joseph Streets;
- Rue Brébeuf between Dollard Street and behind the No Frills parking lot.

11.2. Strategies and Actions

- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through regularly scheduled monitoring and preventive maintenance of accessible elements;
- Continue to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order, by informing the public and prioritizing corrective measures;
- Ensure that restoration and new infrastructure construction projects include provisions for accessibility;
- Provide a completely accessible Town Hall.