



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 - 2028





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to promoting and providing barrier-free services and an environment for its citizens, employees, as well as any other individual who lives, works, visits, or invests in the community. The Township of Fauquier-Strickland's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028 outlines the goals the Township intends to achieve to ensure compliance with the accessibility legislation set by the Province.

The Provincial Government has set out five (5) accessibility standards which specify rules and deadlines for governments, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations to follow. The current plan will outline the Township's compliance to date with respect to the accessibility legislation and will also outline how the municipality will continue working towards the removal of barriers for all residents by outlining new priorities.

CORPORATE VISION STATEMENT

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland's Vision Statement as outlined in the Township's Strategic Plan states:

"Fauquier-Strickland will make every effort to contribute to society, where every citizen will have access to healthcare services and can live in a wholesome environment."

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

There are currently two active pieces of legislation in Ontario that specifically address accessibility.

1. The Ontarians with disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA); and
2. Accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities Act, 2006 (AODA)

The purpose of the ODA is to improve the quality of life and experiences of persons with disabilities by identifying, preventing and removing any barriers that may limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in society.

The OADA advances the goals of the ODA by requiring public, private and non-profit organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in order to make the Province of Ontario fully accessible to persons with disabilities by 2025. Through the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11), the Government of Ontario has identified key areas for the development of common accessibility standards that are intended to ensure all sectors and organizations can provide fully accessible services and environments for Ontarians. The goal of these standards is to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities in society.

The five (5) key areas identified under the AODA are:

1. Customer service;
2. Information and Communication;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of Public Spaces



The AODA Standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR includes, in addition to requirements specific to each standard, the following general requirements:

1. Accessibility training for staff and volunteers;
2. Developing an accessibility policy;
3. Creating a multi-year accessibility plan and updating it every 5 years; and
4. Considering accessibility in procurement and when designing or purchasing self-service kiosks.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Since 2004, all municipalities in Ontario have had a legal obligation under the ODA to prepare annual Accessibility Plans. Under the AODA, accessibility planning requirements shifts from annual to multi-year plans which outline an organizations strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

This Plan identifies:

- a) The measures that the Township has taken over the years to remove barriers to people with disabilities;
- b) The process by which the Township is identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities;
- c) The continuing and new actions the Township will take during the coming years to remove barriers to persons with disabilities; and
- d) The communication of this Accessibility Plan.

A LOOK BACK

General Requirements Successes

- Accessibility Policies have been developed to reflect the Township's commitment in achieving Customer Service Standards and Integrated Standards Regulations;
- An established multi-year accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent existing barriers for people with disabilities and indicates progress being made in accomplishing future legislative requirements;
- Accessibility features, services and facilities are more inclusive to people with disabilities;
- All Township employees are trained on the requirements of the IASR and the relevant portions of the Ontario Human Rights Code.



Customer Service Standard Successes

- Continued awareness and education on the Accessible Customer Service Standard to ensure that all residents and visitors with disabilities are treated with respect, dignity, inclusion, and independence at all our facilities and municipal programs.
- Emergency plans, procedures and public safety information are provided in an accessible format upon request.
- The Township recognizes the unique benefits and needs of persons with disabilities requiring service animals. As such, all Township properties, facilities, and services allows access to service animals.
- Increased recruitment of diversity with Human Resources practices.

Information and Communications Standard Successes

- Township staff have been trained for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Township staff have committed to the best of their ability to ensure website accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Employment Standards Successes

- The Township of Fauquier-Strickland has made employment more accessible through recruitment, employees returning to work, employee accommodations, communication support, performance management and career development.

Design of Public Spaces Standard Successes

- The Chief Building Official ensures compliance with the design of Public Spaces Standard as well as all accessibility requirements in the Building Code Act, 1992.
- Successful renovation of the Community Centre and Municipal Library complete with fully accessible exterior doors, washroom doors and exterior ramp. Design and relocation of the Public Library in the Main Hall of the Community Centre allows and provides for sufficient space for wheelchair access between shelving.
- Successful purchase and installation of a new children's playground structure complete with wood fiber blanket to allow access to persons with disabilities.
- Successful new construction of the medical centre and municipal offices which complies and responds to all accessibility requirements.



LOOKING FORWARD

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to continue identifying, removing and preventing barriers to ensure that everyone can continue to have access to accessible facilities and continue to participate to accessible services and programs.

By doing so, the Township is providing persons with disabilities, the ability to maintain their dignity and live more independently in a community that supports and encourages them.

General Requirement Goals

- Monitor and update accessibility policies, as required or necessary.
- Monitor and update multi-year accessibility plan, as required or necessary.
- Incorporate accessible design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.
- Ensure timely filing of accessibility compliance reports every two years.

Customer Service Standards Goals

- Regularly review policies, procedures and practices to ensure accessibility.
- Increase self-serve options, including more options for residents to perform tasks independently through the use of online fillable forms.
- Continue to ensure that community groups offering programs are offered in community spaces that are fully accessible to enable all individuals who wish to participate.

Information and Communications Goals

- The Township of Fauquier-Strickland will continue its efforts and seek funding to completely revamp its website and ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Standards.
- Create a statement to be added to the Township website to inform the public that documents are available in an accessible format upon request.
- Creation and addition of online fillable templates for forms and permits.



- Staff training on creating accessible documents.
- Ensure that all documents posted on website are in accessible formats.

Employment Standards Goals

- Township staff will continue to regularly review its employment policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the support they need.
- Address ergonomics issues in the workplace.

Transportation Standard Goals

- The Township will continue its efforts for on-demand accessible transportation services in the community and the potential partnerships required to provide the service.

Design of Public Spaces Goals

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to removing barriers and to ensuring that all municipal buildings are accessible.

- Continue to enhance the accessibility of new and existing playgrounds.
- Ensure adequate accessible parking spaces are available and align with the Township's zoning by-law.
- Work towards bringing the municipal public works garage in compliance with AODA standards.
- Look into the addition of digital display boards at the community centre.

CONCLUSION

The 2023-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides a path to a barrier-free community by reducing and eliminating barriers making the Township of Fauquier-Strickland a municipality where persons of all abilities can actively participate and have a sense of belonging.

Council, employees, and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the Township's behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the Township's goods, services, programs and facilities. Ensuring an accessible community is a team effort.



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN FEEDBACK

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to providing accessible customer service to all its citizens. We welcome your feedback regarding the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Assistance may be provided in an alternate format or necessary communications support.

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