



TOWNSHIP OF WELLESLEY

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2009-2010

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2009-2010 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WELLESLEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared to meet the obligations of Provincial accessibility legislation. It is the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan of the Township of Wellesley. Throughout the document, it will be referred to as the “Wellesley Plan”.

INTRODUCTION

The Wellesley Plan describes accessibility initiatives that were undertaken in 2009 and initiatives that are proposed for 2010. The goal of the Wellesley Plan is to identify by-laws, policies, practices and services that were or will be reviewed for compliance with Provincial legislation.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 32

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act is commonly known as the “ODA”. This Act was passed into law by the Ontario Legislature on December 4, 2001. The goal of the Act is “to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province”. The ODA applies to all municipalities, hospitals, district school boards, colleges, universities, public transportation organizations, the Ontario Government, ministries and agencies.

The ODA requires municipalities to prepare annual accessibility plans and to get advice from an accessibility advisory committee on the contents of the plan. The ODA will eventually be repealed when all accessibility standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act are in place.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is known as the “AODA”. It received Royal Assent in the Ontario Legislature in June 2005. The AODA focuses on improving accessibility in areas such as buildings and spaces, employment, customer service, communications and transportation in the private, government and broader public sector.

The goal of the AODA is:

- To achieve an accessible Ontario on or before January 1, 2025;
- To establish and implement mandatory and enforceable accessibility standards to be achieved within five years or less; and
- To maintain municipal accessibility advisory committees.

BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WELLESLEY

The Township of Wellesley consists of rural areas plus a variety of small settlement areas including Wellesley, St. Clements, Heidelberg, Bamberg, Linwood, Hawkesville, Crosshill, Wallenstein, Dorking, Kingwood and Paradise Lake. The municipal offices are located in Crosshill. The population of the Township of Wellesley is approximately 10,500. The Council of the Township of Wellesley is governed by a Mayor and 4 Ward Councillors.

JOINT EFFORT WITH OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

Since 2003, the Township of Wellesley has prepared a joint accessibility plan with the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, and the Townships of North Dumfries and Woolwich. Starting with the 2009-2010 Plan, the Township of Wellesley will prepare independent accessibility plans but will continue to work co-operatively on accessibility initiatives with the other municipalities. This will provide more flexibility in the timing of the development of the Wellesley Plan and its review by GRAAC.

GRAND RIVER ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GRAAC)

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) is an advisory committee serving the Councils of the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Woolwich and Wellesley. Staff representatives of each municipality participate in a joint recruitment process annually to fill GRAAC vacancies and each Council passes a resolution to appoint new members. GRAAC is made up of between 12 and 15 volunteers and advises the councils on accessibility issues including their annual accessibility plans.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WELLESLEY PLAN

Legislation requires that accessibility plans be made available to the public. The 2009 - 2010 Accessibility Plan will be made available on the Township's website at www.township.wellesley.on.ca. It will also will be provided to anyone upon request, and copies will be set out at the Administration Office reception desk.

STAFF CONTACTS

The following Township of Wellesley staff members co-ordinate and oversee the Township's accessibility efforts and may be contacted for additional information relating to the Wellesley Plan, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and accessibility in general.

Accessibility Co-ordinator:

Rik Louwagie,

Chief Building Official

(519) 699-4611

rlouwagie@township.wellesley.on.ca

REPORT ON 2009 ACTIVITIES

The Township of Wellesley municipal office underwent construction in 2008. The 2008 Report and 2009 list of goals frequently refer to the reconstruction of the office.

1. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

ASL: American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters have been resourced and available upon request.

Alternate Formats: Alternate Format Policy Schedule "A" attached.

TTY: The TTY has been installed in the municipal office in 2009.

2. TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Website Accessibility:

1. The Township's website address is www.township.wellesley.on.ca. Council and Clerk's staff is responsible for developing and overseeing the maintenance of the website.
2. The accessibility page of the Township of Wellesley website to be expanded to include font enhancements.

3. POLICY/PRACTICE BARRIERS

1. Accessibility Audit was conducted on all Township of Wellesley facilities.
2. The Township of Wellesley Recreation Department applied for and received a RinC Grant. Automatic doors will be installed in both the St. Clements and Wellesley Community Centres.

4. ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

1. New accessibility policies, procedures and practices have been developed.
2. Every person who deals with members of the public has received or will receive accessibility training. This includes every employee, volunteer or other agent (ie. contractors). Accessibility Booklets and Third Party Brochures have been distributed to assist front line employees.
3. Development of accessibility feedback opportunities and reporting mechanisms.

5. PHYSICAL/ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS

INITIATIVES COMPLETED IN 2009

1. Township Council Chambers' porch and front door have been replaced.
2. Township Administration Office has been reconstructed and is fully accessible.
3. Sidewalks installed in Wellesley Settlement Area (Henry St; Queen's Bush Road)
4. Bridge replacement at Wellesley Pond (Wellesley Settlement Area) making the island accessible.
5. Installed sidewalks in Hawkesville Settlement Area.
6. Preliminary designs are prepared for an addition to the St. Clements Fire Station.

INITIATIVES PLANNED FOR 2010

1. Continuous compliance with the requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) including the following initiatives:
 - a) Monitoring four other AODA standards currently in development: Transportation; Information and Communication; Built Form; and Employment.
2. St. Clements and Wellesley Community Centres to have upgrades to the kitchens, washrooms and bar areas making these areas accessible.
3. Sidewalk and paved boulevard on Maple Leaf St. in the Wellesley Settlement Area.
4. St. Clements Fire Station addition and accessible upgrades to washrooms.
5. Upgrade Council Chambers washrooms.

SCHEDULE "A"

ALTERNATE FORMATS POLICY

The Township of Wellesley will respond to requests for documents in alternate format or plain text on a case-by-case basis.

The Township of Wellesley Council and Clerk's Department will manage and guide all requests for documents in plain language or other format.

The fee to obtain a document in plain language or alternate format shall be the same as the fee the resident would pay for the unaltered document.

The Township will produce information in plain language upon request from a person who has a disability or low literacy level.

All requests for information in alternate formats or plain text received by the Township shall be treated in a confidential manner.