



Accessibility for Life

2020 Accessibility Plan

City of St. Thomas

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

t. (519) 631.1680 x4131

f. (519) 631.9970

545 Talbot St., P.O. Box 520, City Hall
St. Thomas, Ontario, N5P 3V7

In the City of St. Thomas we strive to make our City the best it can be.

St. Thomas is committed to providing an accessible community for people with disabilities and the maturing population.

In 2019, the city addressed several issues which had been identified in previous plans. These projects included: New sidewalks, ensuring new development designs are AODO compliant, installation of accessible Porto Johns at Pinafore Park year-round, Horton Farmers' Market parking lot, and a new fully accessible pavilion at Valleyview Home.

As we move forward the City will remain committed to removing barriers and improving accessibility for those who live, work, play and visit the City of St. Thomas.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Preston".

Joe Preston

Mayor

Once again, it has been very rewarding year for the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC). Over the course of 2019, we worked diligently to suggest changes to new and existing built environments, thus taking a role in achieving the City's compliance with the Accessible Ontario Disabilities Act (AODA). The AODA's goal is to create an accessible Ontario by 2025 and I know I speak on behalf of the committee when I say that we are committed to the success of this at home. We will strive even harder this year to bring awareness to all areas of limitations and the challenges that the citizens of St. Thomas may face on a day-to-day basis.

MAAC held another successful Open House in September in an effort to engage and educate local residents on a variety of accessibility matters. In 2020, we hope to attract even more visitors and vendors at our Accessibility Open House being held on Thursday September 24th from 1-3pm at the St. Thomas Senior Centre. You won't want to miss it!

Our mandate is to see the City of St. Thomas become inclusive and barrier-free so that every resident can fully participate in our community's programs and services, without limitations. As such, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory committee is helping to make changes and raise awareness that when communities and businesses are accessible for everyone, it benefits us all.

Sincerely,



Cathy Topping
Chair – MAAC Committee

Table of Contents	Page
Section 1: Municipal Overview	5
1.1 Municipality	5
1.2 Executive Summary	5
1.3 Accessibility Objectives	6
1.4 Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee	7
1.5 Accessibility Technical Committee	7
Section 2: Legislative Requirements	8
2.1 2019 Accessibility Report	8
City Clerk	8
Environmental Services	9
Human Resources	9
Mayor’s Office	9
Parks Division, Parks, Recreation & PM Department	10
Planning and Building Services	10
Property Maintenance Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	10
Recreation Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	11
St. Thomas Public Library	11
Valleyview Home	11
2.2 Accessibility Measures	12
2.3 2020 Strategic Actions	13
City Clerk	13
Environmental Services	13
Mayor’s Office	14
Parks Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	14
Planning Department	15
Property Maintenance Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	15
Recreation Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	16
St. Thomas Public Library	17
Conclusion	17
Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms	18

Section 1: Municipal Overview

1.1 Municipality

The City of St. Thomas is located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, approximately halfway between Toronto and Detroit, and approximately 25 kilometers south of London and 13 kilometers north of the Lake Erie shoreline.

St. Thomas is a single tier municipality within Elgin County with a population of approximately 42,000. Surrounding St. Thomas are numerous picturesque towns, lakeside villages and historic hamlets, each with their own unique charm.

The Council of the City of St. Thomas is comprised of nine members – one Mayor and eight Councillors. Under the guidance and leadership of the Mayor and City Council, the City Manager and City Departments provide administrative and operational services considered essential for living.

1.2 Executive Summary

Statistics Canada reports that approximately 1.85 million Ontarians have disabilities – over 15% of the population including more than 40% of people over age 65.

Municipal governments play an important role in the planning and development of communities: in our streets, parks, libraries, social housing, programs, services, public buildings and elections. The Province of Ontario recognized that accessibility is a shared responsibility and passed the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) on December 14, 2001. In addition, municipalities with populations of 10,000 and over must have an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

In June 2005, the Province of Ontario furthered its commitment to accessibility by expanding previous legislation to include the private sector with the goal to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities by 2025. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities in five important areas of their lives within specified time limits:

- Customer Service (Reg. 429/07: must be compliant by Jan 1, 2010)
- Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Built Environment

On June 3, 2011, the Ontario government passed the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11. The regulation, which combines accessibility standards in three areas – Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation, came into force July 1, 2011.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11 was amended on December 12, 2012 to include the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

On December 27, 2013, Ontario Regulation 368/13 was filed to amend the new 2012 Building Code, Ontario Regulation 332/12, to include new accessibility amendments. The effective date of the amendment was January 1, 2015.

Amendments were also made to the Customer Service Standard effective July 1, 2016.

Council is committed to ensure that persons with disabilities share the same rights, freedoms and obligations so that they may live as independently as possible and are able to participate in all that the City of St. Thomas has to offer. The annual accessibility plan plays an important role in recognizing the needs of persons with disabilities that reside in St. Thomas.

This Accessibility Plan was prepared in consultation with the St. Thomas Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC), the City of St. Thomas Accessibility Technical Committee, City staff, the Province of Ontario and other municipalities.

This Plan contains a review of accessibility initiatives undertaken in 2019, a summary of barrier prevention measures the City currently has in place, and a description of strategic actions planned for 2020.

Information about accessibility is also available on the City of St. Thomas' website at www.stthomas.ca.

1.3 Accessibility Objectives

The objectives of the City of St. Thomas in regards to accessibility are:

- To promote public awareness and sensitivity to all persons with disabilities;
- To encourage co-operation between all service and interest groups;
- To identify and document relevant issues and concerns;
- To create a community that provides opportunities for barrier-free access to housing, transportation, education, recreation, health care and employment;
- To embrace the concept of universal design to include the needs of disabled citizens and an aging population;

- To ensure that policies and practices are maintained in relationship to the development and redevelopment of services and facilities that have regard to persons with disabilities and aging population statistics;
- To ensure that the City receives the maximum economic benefits from building an accessible City including an increased potential for tourism, retail business and accommodating conventions.

To achieve these objectives, the 2020 Accessibility Plan involves the following:

- Representation of City Departments on the Accessibility Technical Committee;
- Information sharing with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, Province of Ontario, other Ontario municipalities and the general public;
- Ongoing review of selected City of St. Thomas by-laws, policies, programs practices and services to determine their impact on accessibility;
- Monitoring the legislated AODA, 2005 Accessibility Standards, 2009 Customer Service Standard, 2011 Integrated Accessibility Standards, 2013 Design of Public Spaces Standard, 2015 Accessibility Amendments to Ontario's Building Code and 2016 Amendments to the Customer Service Standard; and
- Continued allocation of dedicated capital funds to remove barriers in municipal buildings.

1.4 Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

The mandate of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) is to advise and assist the City of St. Thomas, including the City's agencies, boards and commissions, in developing and facilitating a barrier-free St. Thomas. As required by the Act, a majority of the members of MAAC include persons with disabilities.

Duties of the Committee under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* Section 29(4) of the Committee shall,

- a) Advise Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice under subsection (5);
- b) Review Special Events applications to ensure that organizations adhere to accessibility requirements;
- c) Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act* that the Committee selects; and
- d) Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

1.5 Accessibility Technical Committee

The Accessibility Technical Committee consists of seven members from the following departments in the City with knowledge of the following standards:

- Human Resources – Employment Standard, Information and Communication Standard
- City Clerk’s – Customer Service Standard
- Roads and Transportation – Transportation Standard & the Road Infrastructure Portion of the Accessibility Amendments to the Building Code, Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Building – Accessibility Amendments to the Building Code, Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Parks, Recreation and Property Management – Accessibility Amendments to the Building Code, Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Library – Information and Communication Standard
- Valleyview – Accessibility Amendments to the Building Code, Information & Communication Standard, Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Committee works with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee toward the improvement of accessibility issues in the City and reports directly to the City Manager. Committee members meet to discuss issues, provide updated information on accessibility initiatives and suggestions to the City Manager. A representative attends MAAC meetings.

Section 2: Legislative Requirements (*Integrated Accessibility Standards, Regulation 191/11*)

This section of the Accessibility Plan captures the City’s commitment to accessibility and contains:

- A report on measures taken to remove barriers in 2019;
- A summary of measures adopted to identify, remove and prevent barriers to access; and,
- A list of initiatives to be undertaken in 2020.

2.1 2019 Accessibility Report

Measures achieved under the 2019 Accessibility Plan are highlighted in this section which is organized based on the City’s departmental structure. Suggestions from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee are also included in this portion.

City Clerk

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
2019 Accessibility Plan	2019 Plan produced in recommended font and available in accessible formats upon request	Completed

Environmental Services

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
2019 Annual Sidewalk Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install new sidewalks to fill in missing links in sidewalk network - replace narrow or poor condition sidewalks - install tactile warning plates at intersections 	ongoing
2019 Annual Road Rehabilitation	- install new surface to improve road crossing for all modes of transportation.	Complete
New Developments	- ensure designs are in conformance with City and Provincial AODA requirements	Ongoing
2019 Construction Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - installed new sidewalks to fill in missing links and replace narrow or poor condition sidewalks - installed tactile warning plates at intersections - installed new surface to improve road crossings for all modes of transportation - installed new pedestrian crossings in various locations around the City - installed new pedestrian crossovers at Elm Street and LNPS trail - installed new pedestrian crossover at Elm Street and Fifth Avenue - installed new traffic signal at Elm Street and Meehan 	Complete
Transportation – Accessible traffic signal (APS) installation	- Ontario Ministry of Transportation released policy regarding implementation of APS in accordance with AODA Ontario Regulation 413/12	Ongoing

Human Resources

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Communications and Employment	Updated employment policies to be current and in line with Integrated Standards.	Complete

Mayor's Office

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Website accessibility	Purchase of software for scanning website accessibility issues	Complete
Members of the public physically unable to attend Council meetings	Installation of equipment and software to video Council meetings	Complete

Parks Dept - Pinafore Park

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - railing on pavilion	Installed railings on south stairs of the Lakeside Pavilion	Completed
No accessible Porto Johns	Moved location of Porto Johns to an accessible area and provided year-round access to an accessible unit	Completed

Parks Dept - Waterworks Park

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - accessible washroom	Needs a ramp	Door threshold into accessible washroom under review in 2020
Physical - women's washroom	Door does not swing, no grab bar *please note exterior door does swing out, with handle to pull open from the outside*	To swing out under review in 2020, installation under review in 2020
Physical - family washroom sink pipe	Family washroom has exposed pipe, requires clearance for wheelchair/scooters/knees	Review in 2020
Physical - playground	Bit of a lip	Ongoing maintenance - safety surface topped up every three years. Last install in 2018. Surface inspected daily through summer

Planning and Building Services Department

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Policy Constraints/Land Use Regulations in the new Official Plan	Accessibility policies will be reviewed and recommendations will be made at the time a report is made to Council	Ongoing
Policy Constrains/Land Use Regulations in the new Official Plan	This is part of an internal review and consolidation of the Official Plan	Ongoing
Standards and definitions in the Zoning By-law 50-88 supporting barrier-free access (i.e. ramps, parking, signage)	- Part of an internal review and consolidation of Zoning By-law 50-88 - Barrier-free access provisions will be recommended for implementation at the time a report is presented to Council	Ongoing

Property Maintenance - City Hall

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - water fountain	Stem to be changed to a bottle filler	In progress
Physical - Washrooms	No grab bar for urinal - 2019 - reviewed application and unfortunately the urinal will not accommodate wheelchair access due to lack of space - no grab bar required for rising from seated position	Close

Property Maintenance - Horton Market

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - Parking Lot	Parking lot updated	Complete
Physical - Parking Spaces	No van parking spaces	Complete
Communication Sign	Exit sign not over actual west door exit	Complete
Physical - shelving	Shelving not secure yet to the wall	Complete
Approach - curb transition	S/E corner of curb redone	Complete

Recreation

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical, JC Pool	Parking lot repaving and line painting	Denied capital
Physical, JC Pool	Lit exit door sign	Not required
Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar across top of urinal	Reviewed
Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar outside washrooms (1M, 1F)	Reviewed
Physical, JC Pool	Coloured depth markers	Not required
Physical, JC Pool	Colour contrast on interior fencing	Not required

St. Thomas Public Library

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
Library catalogue was not AODA compliant	Overlay catalogue called Bibliocommons was purchased and it is AODA compliant	Complete
Main service desk does not have a proper accessible area in it	Purchased a new desk that will arrive in 2020	Incomplete

Valleyview Home

Accessibility Issue	2019 Action that Took Place	Status
	Noreen and Ralph Counsell Pavilion built - fully accessible	Complete

2.2 Accessibility Measures

The City of St. Thomas has conducted a comprehensive review of its many by-laws, practices, policies, procedures and services to ensure that consideration for accessibility takes place where appropriate. This section of the report contains a summary of measures and practices in place that ensure consideration for accessibility routinely takes place.

Accessibility Issue	General Municipal Practice/Procedure
Consideration for accessibility is an element of the corporate culture	<p>The Corporate Policy was approved by Council on November 12, 2013. This policy outlines the City's responsibilities related to the integrated accessibility standards under the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)</i>.</p> <p>Accessibility awareness information is delivered to staff throughout the Corporation.</p> <p>MAAC provides feedback on municipal capital projects, Special Events applications, site plan applications and Facility Audits.</p> <p>The Accessibility Technical Committee ensures interdepartmental cooperation for accessibility initiatives.</p> <p>The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is regularly monitored by MAAC, staff, the ATC, and Council.</p> <p>Documents are available in alternative formats upon request.</p>
Consideration for accessibility is built into municipal decision making processes	Staff respond to accessibility concerns in reports.
Accessibility is given consideration during the procurement process	<p>The following clause is included in bid documents for the City of St. Thomas: The Bidder shall ensure that all its employees and agents receive training regarding the goods and services contemplated herein to persons with disabilities in accordance with Section 6 of the Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Section 7 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as amended. The Bidder shall ensure that such training includes, without limitation, a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the regulation, as well as instruction regarding all matters set out in section 6 and section 7 of the applicable Regulation.</p>

	In addition, designated public sector organizations shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.
Municipal Policy and Planning	A member of the Accessibility Technical Committee attends the MAAC meetings to address accessibility policies and concerns.
Recreational Programs	Individuals with a disability may bring their own volunteer support to the recreation programs at no charge.

2.3 2020 Strategic Actions

The following tables outline the City’s 2020 accessibility initiatives based on the Department/Branch with the responsibility for “delivering the initiative”. Suggestions from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee are also included in this portion.

City Clerk

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Customer Service	Installation of computer monitor at front counter for additional visual media element for customers	2020	

Environmental Services

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Transit Strategic Plan	- Working with Stantec to complete strategic plan and report to Council	2020	Advisory
2020 Annual Sidewalk Program	- install new sidewalks to fill in missing links in sidewalk network - replace narrow or poor condition sidewalks - install tactile warning plates at intersections	2020	
2020 Annual Road Rehabilitation	- install new surface to improve road crossing for all modes of transportation	2020	
2020 Construction Projects	- install new sidewalks to fill in missing links and replace narrow or poor condition sidewalks - install tactile warning plates at intersections - install new surface to improve road crossings for all modes of transportation	2020	

	- new pedestrian crosswalk to be installed on Elm Street between Bailey Avenue and Elmwood Avenue		
New Developments	- ensure designs are in conformance with provincial AODA requirements	2020	

Mayors Office

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Website accessibility	Ongoing monitoring	ongoing	

Parks Department - Doug Tarry Complex

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical - grade changes	Grade changes are not marked with a contrast colour to distinguish changes	To be reviewed in 2020	
Communication signs	Lack of Large print, well lit, visible signage, exit signage under review	Bathroom signs installed in areas that are lit when the building lights are on – 2018 Will review exit signs – 2020	
Physical – Automatic Doors	Family washroom complete Entrance to Ron Baldwin room to be reviewed	2020	
Physical – One exit from entire complex	During play exit games are open between each diamond	Ongoing	

Parks Department – Emslie Field

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical – bleachers	No ramp to covered bleacher area	Under Review	

Physical – showers	Change room showers not accessible	Under Review	
Physical – clubhouse; change room and concession	Accessibility upgrades	Under Review	
Physical – grade changes	Any trip hazards/grade changes to be marked with a contrast colour	To be reviewed in 2020	

Planning and Building Services Department

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Policy Constraints/Land Use Regulations in the new Official Plan	Accessibility policies will be reviewed and recommendations will be made at the time a report is made to Council	2020	Consultation
Policy Constraints/Land use Regulations in the new Official Plan	This is part of an internal review and consolidation of the Official Plan	2020	Consultation
Standards and definitions in the Zoning By-law 50-88 supporting barrier-free access (i.e. ramps, parking, signage)	- part of an internal review and consolidation of Zoning By-law 50-88 - barrier-free access provisions will be recommended for implementation at the time a report is presented to Council	2020	Consultation

Property Maintenance - City Hall

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical - Backstairs	2nd and 3rd floor back stairs strip carpet and tile and rubber nosing with yellow marking tape	2020 if budget permits \$5-10k	
Physical - Council Chambers	Plans have been updated - upgraded railing, safety glass, supports	2020 if budget permits \$37k	

Property Maintenance - Horton Market

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Washrooms	Hot and Cold taps not marked, Signage needs to be larger	2020	

Property Maintenance - Tourism Building

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical - parking lot	Upper St. Catharine parking lot area needs repair	2020 - Redeveloping for Child Care facility	
Physical - Entrance door	Door not self opening, lip at door entrance needs to be modified	2021 - Requires budget funds	
Physical - doors	Requires ramp modifications	2021 - requires budget funds	

Property Maintenance - Wellington Block

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical - ramp	Ramp not marked or painted with contrast colour	N/A - City looking for leasehold/rent arrangement with new tenant	
Physical - 3 sets of stairs from entrance door do not have contrast colour	Yellow marking tape needs to be installed on the edge Suggest a railing for the centre of the north exit door stairs	N/A - City looking for leasehold/rent arrangement with new tenant	
Physical - Washrooms	Install grab bar for urinals Automatic door openers installed	N/A - City looking for leasehold/rent arrangement with new tenant	

Recreation Division

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
Physical, JC Pool	Parking lot repaving and line painting	2020 capital submission	Report

Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar across top of urinal bar	Not required, may do budget pending	Report
Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar outside washrooms (1M, 1F)	Not required, may do budget pending	Report
Physical, JC Pool	Braille signage for change room	Not required, may do budget pending	Report
Physical, JTCC	Front stairway tread colour (top/bottom treads only)	Pending budget	Report

St. Thomas Public Library

Accessibility Issue	2020 Action to be Taken	Timing	Role of MAAC
3 rd floor accessible washroom not available due to security issues	Working to move the non-fiction section upstairs and to have seating areas for customers; hope to staff the area when this happens to at least have the washroom open some of the time	October 2020	
Main service desk does not have a proper accessible area in it	New desk with accessible area has been ordered and is set to be delivered and assembled	March 2020	
Accessible Ramp entrance is at the corner of Mondamin Street and Curtis Street, a distance from the front of the building	Courtyard will be redesigned and a new ramp will be built that will be entered near the front of the building	Spring 2021	

Conclusion

The City of St. Thomas’ long term vision is to ensure that St. Thomas will be a caring and responsive community known for its accessibility. With the commitment of City Council, staff, the Accessibility Technical Committee, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee and community partners, barrier removal continues to be a priority in St. Thomas.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms

What is a disability?

“Disability” is:

- 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.

Barriers

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. An example of each of the different kinds of barriers is shown below:

Barrier type	Example
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body mobility and strength
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with low-vision
Communicational	A professor who talks loudly when addressing a deaf student
Attitudinal	A receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair
Technological	A paper tray on a laser printer that requires two strong hands to open