



Town of LaSalle

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2023 to 2027

The approved Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Town's website and provided in alternate formats upon request.

Amended September, 2023

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Introduction

What is an Accessible Town of LaSalle?

The Town of LaSalle is a designated public sector organization subject to the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA)*. Under the AODA, all Ontario municipalities are required to develop a multi-year accessibility plan that is to be reviewed every 5 years.

The Town of LaSalle's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan details progress made and provides an overview of future initiatives. The Multi-Year Plan reaffirms the Town's commitment to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

In order to create a Municipality that is accessible and barrier-free, the core principles of accessibility legislation; dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity, are incorporated into policies, procedures, training, and best practices. Using these principles, The Town of LaSalle commits to engaging people with disabilities and their support networks to draw upon invaluable experiences and knowledge to help create a barrier-free community.

An accessible Town of LaSalle means:

- residents and customers with disabilities receive quality goods and services in a timely manner and in a way that preserves their independence and integrity,
- people with disabilities can participate in the Town's programs and events,
- greater accessibility in our facilities and public spaces,
- information and communication supports are available in accessible formats to residents and staff, and
- ensuring accessible employment practices during the recruitment process and for current employees



Legislation

Ontario currently has two pieces of legislation with respect to Accessibility, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities in Ontario and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation.

The AODA was created to complement the ODA and addresses discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario. The purpose of this legislation is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), (Ontario Regulation 191/11), was created as part of the AODA. The IASR establishes standards for customer service provision, employment accommodations, the relay of information and communication, public transportation, and the design of public spaces. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.



LaSalle Accessibility Advisory Committee

The LaSalle Accessibility Advisory Committee, established in 2003, is a Committee mandated by legislation. The Committee advises Council on the preparation and implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, and promoting and facilitating a barrier-free town for citizens of all abilities, including persons with disabilities.

The Committee's role in helping foster a community approach to accessibility and inclusion involves the review of municipal policies, programs, and services and the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee includes reviewing and advising Council on the following areas:

- Site plans of new and existing municipal buildings where approval is required by the Town of LaSalle
- Significant renovations to municipal facilities ▪ Leased facilities or any other facility used as a municipal building
- Goods and services provided by the Town of LaSalle or agents providing services under contract with the Corporation as defined under the new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA)
- Rules and Regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2001 (AODA)



Accessibility and the Town of LaSalle's 30 Year Strategic Plan

In January 2020, Council approved the Town of LaSalle's Strategic Plan which will guide the Town over the next 30 years into 2050. The Strategic Plan is an important and influential document as it establishes a long-term vision that is inclusive and accessible. The Town's five strategic goals will guide the Town's decisions and will move the Town toward achieving its vision.

The strategic goals as outlined in the plan are:

- enhancing organizational excellence
- sustaining strong public services and infrastructure
- strengthening the community's engagement with the Town
- growing LaSalle's economic advantage
- building on our high quality of life

One of the five goals in the Strategic Plan is to strengthen the community's engagement with the Town. An outcome that is outlined under this strategic goal is to strengthen communication and grow engagement with the community through tailored methods both digitally and traditionally and grow partnerships with stakeholders.

Another of the five goals is to build on our high quality of life. Outcomes that are outlined under this strategic goal are to ensure focus is placed on maintaining and delivering high-quality public service and to develop strategies and action plans to make all LaSalle neighbourhoods and districts walkable, interconnected, and inviting for persons of all ages and abilities to pursue healthy and active lifestyles.

These outcomes are designed to develop a shared understanding of issues, opportunities, and barriers facing people who live and work here, engaging with residents to discuss the issues and respond by adapting programs and services resulting in a barrier-free accessible community.

The Strategic Plan represents the Town's commitment to creating an accessible, barrier-free, inclusive, and welcoming community for residents, businesses, and visitors.



Progress So Far

Customer Service

- Accessible customer service training is provided for all employees
- Alternate formats and communication supports are offered upon request
- Notice of service disruptions is provided
- Accessibility considerations have been incorporated into procurement.

Employment

- Inclusive and barrier-free recruitment processes have been established including holding interviews using video conferencing technology
- Job postings encourage candidates to advise if they require accommodation during the recruitment process
- Successful applicants are advised of policies regarding accommodation during the offer of employment and orientation
- Employee support and accommodation plans are provided as required for both new and current employees
- Return to work processes are developed to ensure proper integration

Information and Communication

- The redesign of the website provides users with improved navigation and search tools, quick link access to the customer service portal, responsive design for compatibility with all screen sizes and mobile devices, and the ability to subscribe to any page allowing users to receive notification of updates
- Site Improve software is used to identify broken links and spelling errors on our website and to identify accessibility errors
- Abledocs software system was purchased in 2021 including licenses for employees and training to provide employees with the tools needed to create and remediate documents
- PlaceSpeak is an online engagement software application purchased in 2021, allowing us to share information regarding Town of LaSalle projects, and providing the ability for the user to offer feedback at their convenience
- ReachDeck (formerly BrowseAloud) is an accessibility tool that helps people who need online reading support by reading website content out loud and highlighting each word as it is spoken



- Interactive accessible maps are located on our website providing park and trail location
- Council and Committee meetings are conducted over an electronic video conferencing platform.
- Two Communication Boards were developed and installed at the Vollmer Recreation Complex.
- An event map identifying accessible features located at the Holiday Lights Heritage Nights

Transportation and Design of Public Spaces

- Accessible sidewalks and crosswalks installed at the Vollmer complex, including the addition of new sidewalks, accessible curb cuts, and crosswalks have been installed
- The stairs to the pool slide located at the Vollmer Complex have been painted in two-tone stripes for increased visibility
- A new crosswalk has been installed at Malden and Reaume for increased visibility
- Upgrades have been made to Heritage Park including accessible Playground equipment, a rubber play surface, paved pathways, and new courts
- Improvements have been made to St. Clair Park including a new play structure with an engineered wood fiber base, a new 3m wide asphalt pathway, and a newly paved basketball court
- The stairs in Rink A of the Vollmer Complex have been coated with a slip resistant material to prevent a slip and fall
- A public motorized lift was installed on the second level bathroom in LaSalle Town Hall, another in the family change room in the pool area of the Vollmer Complex, and another in the food court area of the Vollmer Complex
- All municipal buildings were outfitted with wave-activated touchless door operating buttons
- A bench was installed in the accessible seating area in Hockey Rink B of the Vollmer Complex to provide added seating for caregivers
- Upgrades to various parks in the Town including the addition of an accessible base on the playground surface and an upgrade to the playground equipment by adding transfer stations
- A new dog park constructed in 2022 includes an accessible walkway and benches for support workers
- New tennis courts which include an accessible walkway and seating



Preventative and Emergency Maintenance

- Continued monitoring and scheduled preventative maintenance have been established
- Necessary repairs are completed as soon as reasonably possible
- In the event of a temporary disruption, the public is notified through the Town of LaSalle social media channels or by placing signage on or near the affected disruption
- For planned service disruptions, notification will be provided in advance, communicating the reason and approximate duration of the disruption.



Going Beyond AODA

The Town strives to provide the highest accessibility standards in its recreational programming, swimming opportunities, and fitness programs for people of all abilities by incorporating accessible best practices in those offerings.

Some of the accessible programs and services are among best practices and pursue the highest standards in accessibility offering recreational programming, swimming opportunities, and fitness programs for people of all abilities. Adapted and integrated programs will continue to be available to participants of all abilities and are developed specifically for participants with disabilities including seniors, children, and youth.

Organizations that advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities are consulted regarding programs and services and provide partnerships with the Town of LaSalle.

Programs we currently offer

- Fantastic Friday program, (a recreation program offered in partnership with Family Respite Services)
- Free summer swim program, offered in partnership with Family Respite Services
- Virtual and telephone fitness programming available to seniors focusing on specific activities for mobility (e.g., chair fitness)
- Free use of the indoor walking track available to the community and accessible for those with mobility challenges

What else can we do?

- Special hours at the Vollmer Culture and Recreation Complex's indoor pool for those with accessibility needs
- Collaboration and engagement between Community partners and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss current and future initiatives
- Review the composition of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to include members that are industry professionals in disability or support services, special education, or are part of the support network of a person with disabilities
- Engage the community, members of the public and other stakeholders to provide feedback and ideas on current and future accessibility initiatives in the Town



2023 to 2027 Continued Initiatives

Customer Service

- Continue to ensure feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Continue to train and educate employees about the AODA and the importance of identifying, preventing, and removing barriers and challenges for people with disabilities

Employment

- Continue to provide any requested assistive technology/equipment as part of the hiring process, in consultation with the candidate
- Continue the review of employment policies to prevent or remove systemic employment barriers
- Continue to provide notice of accommodation when advertising for employment opportunities
- Continue to provide virtual interviews to accommodate applicants during the hiring process
- Continue to educate all successful applicants on current policies regarding accommodations during the offer of employment and orientation
- Continue to provide training on the duty to accommodate employment for managers and supervisors
- Continue to provide accessible formats and communications upon request
- Continue to provide individual emergency response information to employees with a disability when made aware of the need for accommodation

Information and Communication

- Continue to receive and respond to employee and customer feedback in a manner that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs
- Continue to provide communication support for public meetings, programs, and events upon request
- Continued diligence in ensuring the Town's website and contents conform to AODA standards
- Continue to provide training to employees on creating accessible documents and forms



- Continue to provide resources that support virtual and in-person public consultation and engagement activities
- Continue to use LaSalle Alerts to communicate emergencies and service interruptions to registered residents by text, email, and electronic voice messaging
- Continue to provide education to the community through the Town's social media platforms and website on the correct way to use crosswalks, with information for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians
- Continue to develop and create an accessible website
- Continue to ensure notice is posted as soon as possible, through various channels and in an accessible way during a service disruption

Transportation and Design of Public Spaces

- Continue to meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces as applicable when building new or making major modifications to public spaces
- Continue to prioritize accessibility regarding infrastructure projects at Town-owned facilities and properties including traffic lights, sidewalks, tactile warning plates, parks, etc.
- Continue to incorporate accessibility best practices into the public consultation process for all future newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects
- Continue to promote the LaSalle Transit service as a safe and reliable mode of transportation within the Town, with connections to the Transit Windsor service
- Continue to offer a Transit Affordable Pass Program for low income families with the support of Pathway to Potential funding

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance

- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance
- In the event of a temporary disruption, continue to correct any accessible elements not in working order as soon as reasonably possible and notify the public of the reason and duration
- Continue to repair any disruptions as soon as reasonably possible
- Continue to provide notification in advance for all planned disruptions communicating the reason and approximate duration



Looking Forward

Three Fire Station Model Project

By 2026 a second fire station will be constructed as part of the Three Fire Station Operating Model with the third substation constructed by 2031.

Over the next two years, the focus will be on the design and construction of the first substation and securing the land for the second substation.

The Small Coast Waterfront Project

The goal of LaSalle Small Coast Waterfront is to provide a year-round destination that is rich in history, walkable, and centered around a waterfront.

It will provide a variety of uses such as an event center, parkland, skate trail, water feature, museum, and carriage house with accessible parking, trails, and bridges.

Individual components will offer a mix of uses for both indoor and outdoor programming. The parkland will be a walkable, active, and passive recreational environment that links the buildings with the landscape. It will also be a sustainable and technology-infused environment welcoming users of all ages and abilities.

The multi-purpose event center will be able to hold events such as farmers' markets and craft fairs and will be a space where social, recreational, and commercial events can be hosted. Meandering paths and walkways will be developed including a riverwalk, numerous bridges, and a promenade that will be interconnected with the buildings and facilities across the site. A historic zone will be introduced focusing on heritage and cultural aspects through the restoration of a 1920s-built home. Interactive kiosks, location information, learning markers, component-specific information, real-time environmental markers, and more will be provided throughout the site.

It is intended that the site will be designed in such a manner as to accommodate and adapt to both current and future forms of accessibility and mobility needs.

Construction of the project will be completed in various phases expanding over the next two decades.



Conclusion

The Town of LaSalle is committed to being accountable and transparent to its residents and will monitor and report on progress and results while working towards achieving goals as outlined in this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Status reports will be provided annually and shared with members of Council, residents, and employees.

As the Town of LaSalle continues to grow and change, the Multi-Year plan will assist in guiding the Town towards becoming an inclusive and barrier-free community in accordance with Provincial Legislation.

We would be pleased to hear from you. If you have any questions, comments or feedback regarding Accessibility in the Town of LaSalle, please contact us at 519-969-7770.

