

Draft 2023-2027

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Statement of Organizational Commitment to Accessibility

The Town of Halton Hills is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents by creating an accessible community that is equitable and inclusive and values the contributions of people with disabilities. The Town of Halton Hills will continue to:

- Ensure its policies, practices, and procedures provide for dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities in accessing and using Town of Halton Hills goods, services, programs, and facilities.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure that they can obtain, use, or benefit from Town of Halton Hills goods, services, programs, and facilities and that they can do so in a timely manner, at a cost no greater than that for people without disabilities.
- Develop and train Town of Halton Hills employees on providing accessible goods, services, programs, and facilities.

2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR) to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) requires that municipalities with 50 or more employees create a written Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and update it at least once every five years. The purpose of the multi-year plan is to outline the steps a municipality will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The Town of Halton Hill's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2023-2027 will be implemented within the provisions of the AODA and the IASR.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and annual status reports on the progress of measures taken to implement the plan will be posted on the Town of Halton Hills website [Accessibility Page](#) .

Legislation

Accessibility For Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the AODA to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards. These standards work to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, service, facilities, accommodations, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

The IASR was enacted in July 2011 and establishes accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service. The requirements apply to the public, private and not for profit sectors and have compliance dates ranging from 2011 to 2021. According to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, in Ontario, approximately 2.6 million people have a disability. This means roughly one in four Ontarians live with a disability and face various types of accessibility challenges in their everyday life. With the ageing population this number is expected to grow in the next 25 years. This is why it is more important now than ever to remove all barriers that impede accessibility for all. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on the future prosperity in Ontario.

Legislative Review of the Accessibility Standards

Each standard in the IASR is required to be reviewed five years after it becomes law to determine whether it works as intended or requires amendments. The province is currently reviewing the customer service standards and the employment standards. If there are changes made to these standards, Town staff will align policies, procedures, documents, and training materials as required.

Town of Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee (HHAAC)

The AODA requires that municipalities with a population of over 10,000 people must establish an accessibility advisory committee to advise Town Council on the preparation of accessibility plans and the achievement of actions within the plan.

The Town of Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee (HHAAC) was established in 2002, as a volunteer citizen advisory committee composed of a maximum of twelve (12) members, with up to ten (10) citizen members and two (2) members of Town Council. Members are appointed by Council concurrent with the term of Council for their knowledge, experience, and dedication to eliminating barriers and promoting universal accessibility.

The Town of Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee (HHAAC) is a key resource and contributor to accessibility planning issues in all departments of the Town. The HHAAC is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free environment for all persons, regardless of needs, to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of community life. It is a legislated committee of active community volunteers who represent or provide a general knowledge of a wide range of disabilities including physical, visual, hearing impairment, intellectual, mental health, seniors' issues, and communication. The HHAAC has access to resources to consider all disabilities when making recommendations.

The HHAAC also assists with the development of protocols related to AODA on various topics including site plan applications, construction of new Town facilities, renovations to Town owned facilities and AODA related corporate purchases. HHAAC is committed to working with staff and the community to develop standards that meet legislative requirements as well as reflect the community's needs. Halton Hills Town Council seeks input from the Committee in establishing criteria for current and new policies and practices. Most importantly, the HHAAC generates ideas for the development and implementation of Municipal Accessibility Plans which benefit persons with disabilities throughout the Town of Halton Hills.

Accessibility Accomplishments

- Retro-fitting physical barriers, such as automatic sliding doors in many Town facilities;
- Push button openers for public washrooms within Town Hall and entrance to Council Chambers and Esquensing Room (2019);
- New accessible signage for Town Hall;
- Complete enhanced technology upgrades within Council Chambers, infrared assistive listening devices' installation, and large screen presentations for better viewing of presentations at Committee and Council meetings;
- As part of the Customer Service Strategy, provide a fully accessible customer service counter which provides a welcoming and accessible experience for customers at Town Hall;
- Implemented Voiceprint – a service which allows those with visual impairments to know what is happening in our community through audible readings of local newspaper articles broadcast through YourTV;
- Halton Hills Public Library – Cognitive Care Kits for people with dementia, including educational programs for caregivers (2020);
- Halton Hills Public Library expanded the collection of accessible audiobooks provided by the Centre for Equitable Library Access to the Acton Branch (2021);
- Halton Hills Public Library launched the Sensory Collection that provides neurodiverse library patrons with tools to provide comfort and reduce anxiety during library visits (2022);
- Halton Hills Public Library started lending decodable books that are helpful for children with dyslexia (2021);
- Funded the Halton Hills Public Library - Acton Branch – reading deck accessible features (push button door and accessible tables) (2019)
- Funded retrofitted sliding doors for the MoldMasters Sportsplex (multiple locations) (2019);
- Funded two UbiDuo2 face to face communication devices for Service Halton Hills and the Gellert Community Centre (2019);
- Funded new sliding doors at Town Hall (2017-2018);
- Committee provided input on the Specialized Transit Plan (2021-2022);
- Committee provided input on the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2021-2022);
- Funded implementation of MagnusCards (2020);
- Installation of speakers with hearing assistive device capabilities at the Service Halton Hills Counter and at the Gellert Community Centre(2020)
- Funded 2 year subscription to Site Improve – a digital website accessibility checker (2022);
- Funded updated hearing assistive listening system for the John Elliott Theater (2022);

- Funded an accessible curb at the Acton Arena (2022);
- Reviewed site plan applications for development applications since 2013;
- Recreation and Parks provides specialized programs designed for persons with disabilities;
- Recreation and Parks hires professional instructors and inclusion facilitators to increase the number of participants with disabilities that can now participate due to inclusion support;
- Funded a change table at Hillsview Active Living Centre - Georgetown

Objectives of the 2023-2027 Multi Year Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan describes the measures that the Town of Halton Hills will take in the next five years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities, who utilize the facilities and services of the Town of Halton Hills. While the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires that a multi-year plan be developed to outline how the Town will remove and prevent barriers within the areas of employment, information and communication, and transportation, the Town's 2023-2027 Multi-Year Plan goes farther in outlining action items to reduce and prevent barriers within all five standards:

- customer service
- employment
- information and communications
- transportation
- built environment (buildings and outdoor spaces).

Annually, a status report will be completed to outline the progress of measures taken to implement the plan. Additionally, an annual review of the plan will be conducted with updates as required to include newly identified priority action items and/or new legislation. The accessibility plan is in keeping with the objective of incorporating sustainability into the Town's operation. Implementation of the actions outlined in the plan provides greater opportunity to sustain community livability for residents of all abilities. We welcome customer feedback on the Town's Accessibility Plan. Together we can continue to make the Town of Halton Hills one of the leaders in accessibility.

General Accessibility

The Town of Halton Hills will continue to lead by example, striving not only to meet but exceed minimum compliance under the AODA and IASR. The Town will continue to look at implementing policies and procedures that will remove and prevent barriers for residents, staff, and visitors to our community. The Town will ensure that accessibility, equity, and diversity guide its' actions, decision-making and service approaches in the delivery of municipal goods, services, and facilities. The Town will:

- Foster a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion within the Town as an organization and throughout the community by ensuring that the delivery of goods and services and the facilities we operate are planned and delivered to reduce as many barriers as possible.
- Identify and address discriminatory systems, processes and behaviours.
- Establish an internal staff working group to review and ensure that accessibility goals are achieved.

- Continuing to ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities.
- Continue to work with vendors and community partners to meet or exceed accessibility requirements.

Information And Communication

The Town of Halton Hills is investigating new approaches and technology that will increase the Town's ability to provide information and communications in formats that will improve accessibility and provide employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities increased ability to participate.

The Town of Halton Hills strives to ensure that the Town's website and other digital formats are as accessible as possible, recognizing resource limitations and providing the public the ability to engage with the Town. The Let's Talk Halton Hills platform is an important tool that the Town uses to provide information about various projects and initiatives and a means of acquiring the public's input through general comments and surveys. The Town will:

- Continue to engage with stakeholders including employees, residents and visitors with disabilities and the Town of Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee when designing and implementing Town of Halton Hills goods, services, and facilities.
- Consult with the Town of Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee on decisions related to accessibility planning, as outlined in the AODA.
- Ensure that employee and public engagement activities are accessible.
- Ensure that Town departments work together to advance accessibility priorities.
- Provide accessible formats and communication supports as best as possible.

Communications staff are in a state of continuous improvement and recognize that there are opportunities to enhance our website to ensure WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliancy online along with internal efforts regarding document production.

Customer Service

The Town of Halton Hills is committed to providing goods and services and facilities to people of all abilities in a manner that respects the inherent dignity, diversity, and abilities of all individuals. The provision of these goods, services and facilities will be provided to people of all abilities in a similar way, unless an alternative measure is necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are able to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services, or facilities. The Town will:

- Provide services in a caring, compassionate, non-judgmental manner, free from discrimination and harassment.
- Respect the independence of employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities by enabling their access to Town goods, services, and facilities.
- Ensure that people with disabilities can access and benefit from the same goods, services, and facilities in an equitable way.
- Pursue permanent accessibility solutions for employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities to access and benefit from Town goods, services, and facilities.
- Consider individual needs and proactively provide accessible formats, communication support or other accommodations to ensure equitable outcomes.
- Take a holistic approach that recognizes that accessibility solutions may need to address multiple barriers and that a single solution might not meet the accessibility needs of everyone.
- Continue to increase on-line services for better accessibility.

Some important initiatives that the Town of Halton Hills will be working on for 2023-2027 are the Community Improvement Plan – Grant for Accessibility, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

The Community Improvement - Grant for Accessibility promotes accessibility in the community by providing grants to local businesses that are making improvements to their business that promote accessibility.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy will help the Town to prioritize and implement initiatives to improve equity, diversity and inclusion which is the basis of accessibility.

The Halton Hills Public Library has been working in 2023 with the Alzheimer's Association of Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, Hamilton, and Halton to offer programming for people with dementia and their caregivers including a Dementia Friendly Collection and Alzheimer's Society Social Café.

Employment

The Town of Halton Hills supports the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The Town of Halton Hills is committed to advancing accessibility, diversity, and inclusion of employees with disabilities.

- Continue to review all recruitment processes to remove unintended accessibility barriers.
- Review policies and procedures to identify, prevent and remove barriers to employment and development opportunities. This review will also serve to ensure ongoing compliance with relevant legislation.

- Provide individualized accommodations and emergency plans for Town employees who have disclosed a disability (upon request).
- Provide equitable, clear, and consistent employment and accommodation policies and procedures that seek to remove systemic barriers and ensure people with disabilities can participate fully as job applicants and employees of the Town.

The Town of Halton Hills is continuing with hybrid work arrangements. These arrangements allow staff to create working environments in their homes and at the office to meet their accessibility needs.

Transportation

The transportation standard under the IASR outlines requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation which are applicable to specialized and conventional transit, licensing of vehicles-for-hire, and includes taxicabs and private transportation companies. In addition to the AODA requirements, the Town of Halton Hills is committed to removing transportation barriers within the Town and working toward providing transit services that are available for everyone, while increasing accessibility and usability of all municipal sidewalks, and roadways. The Town will:

- Ensure purchases of public transit vehicles meets or exceed all provincial and federal legislated requirements for accessibility.
- Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs and monitor the demand of specialized transit services required in Halton Hills
- Ensure barrier-free pedestrian connections and bus stops, ensuring all conventional bus stops and specialized transit cross-boundary connection locations are fully accessible.
- Continue to implement recommendations made within the Town's 2019-2031 Transit Service Strategy, toward a fully accessible conventional transit service.
- Continue to implement recommendations made in the Town's 2021-2031 Specialized Transit Plan.
- Review snow clearing policies, practices and procedures using accessibility and equity analysis and develop a strategy to reduce barriers that significantly limit the mobility of people with disabilities.
- Continue to research and incorporate methods to improve accessibility on Town's streets and sidewalks.
- Continue to install accessible pedestrian signals when replacing existing traffic crossing signals and for all new traffic signal installations.
- Install tactile walking surface indicators when undertaking road rehabilitation projects.

Timeline for Specialized and Conventional Transit Projects

- 2023 - Expand specialized transit service for cross-boundary travel to Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital from the current arrival/departure times of Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to the newly adjusted/expanded times Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. (implemented Q2 2023)
- 2024 – Extend ActiVan service hours to 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Q1 2024)
- 2024 – Staff to engage with RideWell On-demand Transit Services for a cross-boundary travel within Wellington County
- 2023-2028 – Expand fleet to meet service demands for specialized transit from current fleet of 9 vehicles to 13 vehicles by 2031
- 2025 – Expand ActiVan accessible bus service hours to Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- 2026 – Implement on-demand microtransit service
- 2026– Expand ActiVan accessible bus service hours to Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 8:00 a.m. -6:00 p.m.
- 2026 – Update to the Town’s (2019-2031) Transit Service Strategy based on current ridership demand
- 2027 – Implement automated fare payment system for conventional and specialized transit services
- 2027 - Extend ActiVan service hours to 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
- 2028 – Implement conventional transit route(s) throughout the Town to replace on-demand microtransit service in areas with increased transit demand
- 2028 – Update the eligibility policy for specialized and conventional transit services

Traffic Signals

As part of their annual program, Transportation staff schedule upgrading two to three intersections.

The 2023 traffic signals to be upgraded are located at:

- Mountainview Road and Delrex Boulevard
- Mountainview Road and Armstrong Avenue

The program will continue through 2024 -2028 all new traffic signal installations, including pedestrian crossovers will be built to comply with AODA specifications.

Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces

The Town of Halton Hills is committed to increasing the accessibility of public spaces. The design of public spaces standard under the IASR requires that newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces are accessible. The Town of Halton Hills follows the barrier-free design requirements of both the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and strives to achieve a high level of accessibility in public spaces as well as all municipal workplaces. The Town will:

- Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management.
- Continue to implement accessibility improvements.
- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventive maintenance of accessible elements.
- Continue to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation. (Appendix A – Procedure for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces)

Timeline for Built Environment Projects

- 2023-2025 Install an accessible pool staircase in the Acton indoor pool. Cost estimate is between \$10,000 - \$12,000. (Not in the budget – being funded by the Accessibility Fund)
- 2024 Prospect Park boat ramp revitalization

Projects not in the current capital plan but have been identified by the Recreation and Parks team as areas that need to be addressed for accessibility;

- Cultural Centre – accessible entrance replacement
- Mold Masters Sportsplex - accessible door additions (4)

The Following are projects of re-habilitation and renovation that will require addressing for accessibility components 2024-2027.

- Mold Masters Sportsplex parking lot resurfacing
- Town Hall Parking Lot replacement
- Acton Arena and Community Centre concession refurbishment
- Mold Masters Sportsplex concession refurbishment
- Georgetown Youth Centre renovations
- Georgetown indoor pool renovations
- Acton indoor pool renovations
- Acton Arena and Community Centre interior door to Hillsvie Active Living Centre – add push button
- Hillsvie Active living Centre - Georgetown - Welcome Desk renovation

Next Steps

Town staff will continue to meet the requirements of the IASR and undertake other activities aimed at eliminating barriers. This will include the following: prepare an annual update on the multi-year accessibility plan, as required by the IASR, submitting compliance reports to the province for 2023, 2025 and 2027 demonstrating compliance with components of the IASR, reviewing all existing accessibility procedures and updating them as required, continuing to provide training to new staff on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code, continuing to consult and seek input from the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee on physical improvements and other Town initiatives.

Conclusion

The Town of Halton Hills continues to work toward creating a universally accessible community through the removal of barriers to persons with disabilities. The Town will continue to remove and prevent barriers related to architecture, information, technology, and attitude to make the Town of Halton Hills accessible for all. Not only is the municipality obligated to continue its pursuit in the prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities – it is simply the right thing to do.

The Town of Halton Hills has been proactive, and, with the assistance and guidance of the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee, we have accomplished much to ensure accessibility is integrated within by-laws, facilities, policies, programs, services, and our customer service practices. We strive to continue our mandate of treating people with disabilities with respect, to ensure they maintain their dignity and independence, and to make reasonable efforts to provide equal opportunities for our services for all.

APPENDIX A

Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

The Town of Halton Hills reviews, maintains, and inspects accessible items as required, including monthly as required for the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) or Fire regulations (i.e., elevators or emergency lighting) or either weekly, monthly or some other timeline as industry standard suggests or deems appropriate (i.e., sliding doors).

In the case of emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces the Town of Halton Hills undertakes the following steps:

1. Service requests are received and assigned to staff on duty. As per service standards for emergency repairs, accessible items will be reviewed immediately.
2. Action on accessible items will be immediate and include either a repair by staff if possible or work order/schedule of a repair by an appropriate skilled professional.
3. If item is out of service or unusable, signage is attached indicating recommended alternate options.
4. Communications Staff are advised when an accessible element is out of service and an appropriate public advisory is issued on the Town's website and/or through social media detailing the disrupted/not working accessible element that and an estimate of time before the element will be fixed and operational again.
5. Once an accessible element is repaired and available to the public again Communication staff will be advised so that the website and social media can be updated to reflect this change in status.