



Accessibility for Life

2022 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 2021, the city addressed several issues which had been identified in previous plans. These projects included: new pedestrian crosswalk on Elm Street between Bailey Avenue and Elmwood Avenue, new accessible playground equipment at Pinafore Park and Parish Park, addition of a fully accessible trail in Applewood Park and a residential link through Greenway Park, addition of grab bars in washrooms at Jaycees Pool and an increase in virtual programming at the St. Thomas Public Library to include those who are homebound.

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.

Joe Preston

Mayor

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

Again, the year has given us many challenges. We have new committee members with less meetings. Our Accessibility Forum at the Seniors' Center and the annual audits were cancelled.

Due to Covid 19, the committee held virtual meetings, while working diligently to advise the City on new and existing challenges that the citizens of St. Thomas may face in everyday living.

Our existing mandate is to advise the City of St. Thomas to become an inclusive and barrier free environment, so that all residents can fully participate in our community's programs and services. The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee is raising awareness and addressing changes so that our community and businesses are accessible to everyone.

Accessibility benefits all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Topping". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

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	8
Section 2: Legislative Requirements	8
2.1 2021 Accessibility Report	8
City Clerk	9
Environmental Services	9
Mayor’s Office	9
Parks Division, Parks, Recreation & PM Department	9
Planning and Building Services	10
Property Management Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	11
Recreation Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	11
St. Thomas Public Library	12
2.2 Accessibility Measures	12
2.3 2022 Strategic Actions	13
City Clerk	14
Environmental Services	14
Fire Department	15
Mayor’s Office	15
Parks Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	15
Planning and Building Services	16
Property Management Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	17
Recreation Division, Parks, Rec & PM Department	17
St. Thomas Public Library	17
Conclusion	18
Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms	19

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
- 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.

Effective January 1, 2021, all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (live captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

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 2021, a summary of barrier prevention measures the City currently has in place, and a description of strategic actions planned for 2022.

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 2022 Accessibility Plan involves the following:

- Information sharing with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, Province of Ontario, other Ontario municipalities and the general public;
- Representation of City Departments on the Accessibility Technical Committee;
- 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
- Environmental Services – Transportation Standard & the Road Infrastructure Portion of the Accessibility Amendments to the Building Code, Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Building Services– 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 2021;
- A summary of measures adopted to identify, remove and prevent barriers to access; and,
- A list of initiatives to be undertaken in 2022.

2.1 2021 Accessibility Report

Measures achieved under the 2021 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	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
2021 Accessibility Plan	2021 Plan produced in recommended font and available in accessible formats upon request	Completed

Environmental Services

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
2021 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 	Not funded in 2021
2021 Annual Road Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install new surface to improve road crossing for all modes of transportation 	Completed
2021 Construction Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - New pedestrian crosswalk to be installed on Elm Street between Bailey Avenue and Elmwood Avenue 	Completed
New Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure designs are in conformance with provincial AODA requirements 	Completed

Mayor's Office

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Website Accessibility	Ongoing monitoring and purchase of accessibility software for website compliance	Ongoing

Parks Division

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Pinafore Park Playground	Full replacement - additional accessible equipment added	Completed
Parish Park Playground	Full install of inclusive Playground	Completed

Orchard Park Playground	Full install of inclusive Playground	To be installed Summer 2022
Shaw Valley Park Playground	Full install of inclusive Playground	To be installed Summer 2022
Applewood Park Trail	Fully accessible 3m wide trail loop throughout park, paving residential links	Completed
Residential Link through Greenway Park	Fully accessible 3m wide trail connecting to existing trail at playground	Completed
Big O Swings at Optimist Park	Replacement	Completed

Parks Division - Emslie Field

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - Bleachers	No ramp to covered bleacher area	To be reviewed in 2022
Physical - Showers	Change room showers not accessible	Ongoing - Capital project consideration
Physical – Clubhouse; change room and concession	Accessibility upgrades	Ongoing - Capital project consideration
Physical – grade changes	Any trip hazards/grade changes to be marked with a contrast colour	To be reviewed in 2022

Planning and Building Services Department

Accessibility Issue	2021 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.	Not Completed
Policy Constrains/Land Use Regulations in the new Official Plan	This is part of an internal review and consolidation of the Official Plan.	Not Completed
Standards and definitions in the	Part of an internal review and consolidation of Zoning By-law 50-88.	Not Completed

Zoning By-law 50-88 supporting barrier-free access (i.e. ramps, parking, signage)	Barrier-free access provisions will be recommended for implementation at the time a report is presented to Council.	
---	---	--

Property Management - City Hall

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - Backstairs	2nd and 3rd floor back stairs strip carpet and tile and rubber nosing with yellow marking tape	Completed
Physical - Council Chambers	Plans have been updated - upgraded railing, safety glass, supports	Completed

Property Management - Horton Market

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Washrooms	Hot and Cold taps not marked, Signage needs to be larger	Completed

Property Management - Tourism Building

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical - Parking Lot	Lot is slated for redevelopment along with new Child Care facility.	Ongoing - to be completed by December 2022

Recreation Division

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Physical, JC Pool	Parking lot repaving and line painting	Parking lot is being reconstructed in late 2022. Lines will be painted at that time.
Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar across top of urinal bar	Completed
Physical, JC Pool	Grab bar outside washrooms (1M, 1F)	Completed
Physical, JC Pool	Braille signage for change room	Completed

Physical, JC Pool	Front stairway tread colour (top / bottom treads only)	Not Completed - anticipated completion May 2022
-------------------	--	---

St. Thomas Public Library

Accessibility Issue	2021 Action that Took Place	Status
Accessible Ramp entrance to be changed from Mondamin Street to main entrance of the library	Courtyard project is due to be completed this year.	Not Completed as Courtyard project was delayed
Webpage needs to have an accessibility audit	Changes needed to be reviewed.	Ongoing
Cognitive Care Kits for those with Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease	Kits to be put together and made available to borrow.	Completed and Ongoing
Doors with Key pads will be converted to key fobs	Conversion to take place this year.	Completed
Increase in virtual programming to include those who are homebound	Ongoing.	Ongoing

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	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>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> <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.</p>
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 2022 Strategic Actions

The following tables outline the City’s 2022 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	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Customer Service	2022 Plan produced in recommended font and available in accessible formats upon request.	2022	
2022 Municipal Election	Municipal Election Accessibility Plan produced in recommended font and available in accessible formats upon request. Measures will be designed to ensure 2022 Municipal Election process meets accessibility needs of voters and candidates.	2022	

Environmental Services

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
2022 Annual Road Rehabilitation	- Install new surface to improve road crossing for all modes of transportation	2022	
2022 Construction Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - New pedestrian crosswalks to be installed in various locations 	2022	
New Developments	- Ensure designs are in conformance with provincial AODA requirements	2022	

Fire Department

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Accessible Public Entrance into Vestibule and Office Area - 305 Wellington Street	Ramping of exterior door entry, door opening assistive devices, lowering of window at the dispatch office	2022	

Mayors Office

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Website Accessibility	Ongoing monitoring and purchase of accessibility software for website compliance	Ongoing	
Customer Service Software	Implementation of Citizen Request module to allow for better two-way communication	First Quarter 2022	

Parks Division

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Waterworks Park Trail system	Full rehabilitation of trails and replacement of pedestrian bridge	Summer 2022	
Shaw Valley Park Recreational Trail Phase 1	Fully accessible 3m wide trail connecting to existing trail at playground	Summer 2022	
Optimist Park Playground Upgrade	Partial replacement of playground equipment to bring up to current CSA standards, improve inclusivity	Summer 2022	
Addition of Section 'J' of Angus Mckenzie Trail	Fully accessible 3m wide trail connecting to existing trail at Sauv�e to link Hickory	Summer 2022	
Melrose to Southdale Recreational Trail	Fully accessible 3m wide trail connecting to existing trail at Melrose to Southdale	Summer 2022	

Repair of Recreational Trail in Pinafore Park	Fully accessible 3m trail in Pinafore from entrance to memory garden to be replaced	Summer 2022	
Solar Lighting Trial along L&PS Trail	450m lighting trial to be installed along busy recreational trail	Summer 2022	

Parks Division – Emslie Field

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Physical – bleachers	No ramp to covered bleacher area	To be reviewed in 2022	
Physical – showers	Change room showers not accessible	Ongoing – capital project consideration	
Physical – clubhouse; change room and concession	Accessibility upgrades	Ongoing – capital project consideration	
Physical – grade changes	Any trip hazards/grade changes to be marked with a contrast colour	To be reviewed in 2022	

Planning and Building Services Department

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	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	2022	
Policy Constraints/Land use Regulations in the new Official Plan	This is part of an internal review and consolidation of the Official Plan	2022	
Standards and definitions in the	- Part of an internal review and consolidation of Zoning By-law 50-88	2022	

Zoning By-law 50-88 supporting barrier-free access (i.e. ramps, parking, signage)	- Barrier-free access provisions will be recommended for implementation at the time a report is presented to Council		
---	--	--	--

Property Management - General

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
New build that will meet accessibility standards	Construction of new Childcare Centre	Completion in December 2022	

Recreation Division

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Physical, JC Pool	Parking lot repaving and line painting	Late 2022	
Physical, JTCC	Front stairway tread colour (top/bottom treads only)	May 2022	

St. Thomas Public Library

Accessibility Issue	2022 Action to be Taken	Timing	Status
Dyslexia Supports required	Dyslexia friendly materials to be purchased	2022-2023 and Ongoing	
	Cloud Library (e book and e audiobook provider) needs dyslexia friendly font	Completed	
Bookshelves on main level are too high for wheelchair access	Shelves to be cut down in order for them to be full accessible to those in wheelchairs	Completed	
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Audit is required	DEI Committee comprised of board and staff to be formed and audit to begin	Ongoing	

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