

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2029



Introduction

The Municipality of West Grey is committed to providing equitable treatment to persons with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of Municipality's programs, services and facilities. The Municipality seeks to identify and remove barriers to accessibility and prevent the creation of new barriers. The Municipality is working to provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all West Grey citizens, its employees, and visitors. The Municipality of West Grey is equally dedicated to ensuring that all legislated obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005) and the Ontario Human Rights Code are met in a timely manner and that compliance is maintained.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the ongoing and future actions the Municipality of West Grey will undertake to enhance accessibility throughout our community. By establishing clear objectives and timelines, the plan serves as both a roadmap and a commitment to continuous improvement. It reflects the Municipality's dedication to fostering inclusion, supporting participation, and removing systemic barriers for people of all abilities.

Through collaboration, consultation, and engagement with community stakeholders and the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, West Grey will strive to create accessible environments that are welcoming and safe for everyone. This plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of individuals with disabilities and compliant with legislative requirements. Our goal is to offer leadership in accessibility, champion universal design, and nurture a culture where diversity and inclusion are celebrated as strengths of our municipality.



Background

Creating a barrier free community where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate is important for all people, businesses, and the community. In accordance with the AODA, West Grey developed this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to demonstrate how the Municipality is implementing the legislative requirements of the AODA and to manage compliance with emerging AODA regulations related to the Corporation. The Municipality recognizes that there is also a need for innovation outside of the legislation, and remains dedicated to ensuring that it meets, and when possible, exceeds, the compliance standards and legislated responsibilities to meet residents' accessibility needs. The Municipality also recognizes that achieving these objectives requires a corporate-wide approach to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for residents, employees, and visitors.

While the Municipality of West Grey is compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA, the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan focuses on maintaining and monitoring compliance, as well as promoting accessibility by design beyond legislative requirements. This plan covers the period from 2025 through 2029 and includes both new and continuing priorities that support the Municipality of West Grey in the ongoing identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers.

Identification of Barriers

Effective identification of barriers to accessibility is an important first step in their removal and is crucial to ensuring new barriers are not created along the way. When identifying barriers, assessments will involve evaluation of all possible forms, including:

Barrier Type	Description
Attitudinal	Behaviours, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against persons with disabilities.
Physical or Architectural	Occurs in the built environment and often prevents access for persons with disabilities.
Systematic	Organizational barriers, often policies or procedures, that unfairly discriminate and possibly prevent persons with disabilities from full participating.
Technological	Occur when technology or the way it can be used, does not consider the needs of persons with disabilities.
Communication	Arise when consideration is not given to how persons with disabilities receive or send information, or when persons with disabilities cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

The Plan

Accessibility Standards

The AODA sets out accessibility standards for private and public organizations to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. The following provides a brief description of each standard:

- **General Requirements:** Outlines actions to enhance accessibility across an organization, including the creation and maintenance of a Multi-Year Plan.
- **Customer Service Standard:** Outlines requirements for service providers to make their goods, services, and facilities accessible for customers or patrons with disabilities.
- **Information and Communications Standard:** Requires organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications in such a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Employment Standard:** Requires employers to make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.
- **Design of Public Spaces Standard:** Outlines the need for certain newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for persons with disabilities.
- **Transportation Standard:** Requires transportation service providers to make the features and equipment on routes and vehicles accessible to passengers with disabilities.

Municipalities are required to develop, implement, and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. This plan must outline the organization's strategy for identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility across its operations and services, in accordance with the standards set out by the AODA. The plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure continued progress, and it must be made publicly available to allow for transparency and community input.

Highlights of Achievements to Date

The following is a summary of the Municipality's achievements to date and reflect AODA required actions related to each standard that are already in place as a result of earlier efforts. The Municipality will continue to maintain compliance with the AODA standards and the requirements already in effect.

General Requirements

- Implemented and maintained a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that outlines long-term strategies to achieve AODA requirements, as well as accessibility initiatives above and beyond the AODA to improve accessibility within programs, services, and Municipal facilities.
- Established internal accessibility policies which govern how the Municipality achieves and maintains compliance with the requirements of the AODA, including Accessible Customer Service.
- Provided training to all employees, volunteers, and members of Council on the AODA Accessibility Standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training is provided to new people when they come on-board.

Customer Service

- Accommodate the use of assistive devices, support persons, and service animals.
- Receive and respond to feedback regarding the manner in which goods or services are provided to persons with disabilities.
- Provide notice of temporary service disruptions to programs, services, or facilities.
- Publish a Municipal Election Plan, outlining the measures implemented to ensure all voters and candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in the 2022 Municipal Election.

Highlights of Achievements to Date

Information and Communication

- Ensured West Grey website is WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliant.
- Included a notice on the West Grey website about the availability and provision of alternative formats being available upon request.
- Continuously train and ensure accessible documents are uploaded to the Municipality's website.

Employment

- As an equal opportunity employer, the Municipality provides notice of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.
- Ensure employees are aware, and informed of, available supports and accommodations. This would include consulting with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports where required and ensuring the needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement, and redeployment.
- Continuing to implement and document return-to-work processes and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities where required. Support employees who have been absent due to non-occupational or occupational illness/injury (Sick Leave, and WSIB Return to Work Procedure).
- Create accessible job postings and inform applicants that accommodation is available upon request during all recruitment stages.

Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

Continue to ensure new or redeveloped public spaces comply with AODA design requirements as it relates to:

- Trails
- Outdoor public eating areas
- Public play spaces and accessible parking
- Exterior paths of travel, including sidewalks and accessible pedestrian signals
- Service counters.

Accessibility Goals and Initiatives for 2025-2029

- Continuously improve, replace, and install tactile warning plates and sidewalks.
- Enhance the accessibility of new and redeveloped parks and playgrounds.

Transportation

The Municipality does not provide public transportation services; however, it has taken the following actions as it relates to accessible taxicab services that operate within the Municipality.

- Ensure owners and operators of taxicabs do not charge a higher fare for persons with disabilities, nor charge for storage of mobility aids or assistive devices.
- Ensure taxicabs display vehicle registration and identification on rear bumpers of taxicabs, and that this information is available in an accessible format to passengers with disabilities.

Accessibility Goals and Initiatives for 2025-2029

To ensure continued success in creating a fully accessible community for West Grey residents, employees, and visitors, the Municipality has developed a list of goals and initiatives. This list includes improvements to Municipal practices and procedures currently in place, as well as future initiatives that go above and beyond the requirements of the AODA.

General Requirements

- Review and update procurement process to include requirements for AODA compliant goods, services, facilities;
- Review and update the Municipality's accessibility policies;
- Formalize process for bringing items to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for review/input.

Customer Service

- Review and update the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service policies;
- Formalize and communicate the Municipality's process for responding to feedback;

Information and Communication

- Create a corporate procedure for the creation of accessible documents;
- Create a corporate procedure for accessible web content that will include the process involved to effectively audit and maintain Municipal webpages to ensure accessibility requirements are met;
- Enhance AODA training for website content managers and social media content creators;
- Perform regularly scheduled audits and maintenance of the westgrey.com website and its content to ensure continued compliance with the AODA and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG);
- Review and update the Municipality's process for responding to requests for alternative formats.

Accessibility Goals and Initiatives for 2025-2029

Employment

- Update and provide AODA related training to staff, members of Council, and volunteers, as required;
- Review and update accommodation and return-to-work policies and procedures to ensure they reflect legislation and best practices.

Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

- Continue to ensure new or redeveloped public spaces comply with AODA and accessible design standards;
- Provide Council with facility improvement plans as facilities under go renovations to make Municipal facilities meet or exceed current standards where feasible.
- Review the Municipality's event spaces and practices to identify areas of improvement related to accessibility and the removal of barriers for those in attendance;
- Integrate accessibility features into new parks and public spaces.

Transportation

- Communicate and promote regional partner accessible transit options available in West Grey.

Conclusion

The Municipality of West Grey is committed to meeting the initiatives of multi-year accessibility plans and will continue to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers. The Municipality will continue to monitor the progress and results of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan through status updates and compliance reports that are sent to the Province every two years. These reports will be available on the Municipality's website.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility and will be incorporated by design into the work of all Municipal Divisions. The Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will coordinate across all service areas to create a shift in the workplace culture with respect to attitudes about accessibility and disability. The Municipality of West Grey will demonstrate and maintain accessibility excellence as an inclusive employer, service provider and municipal government.

Feedback

The Municipality of West Grey encourages the public to submit feedback regarding this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan or any other accessibility matters in our community. Generating feedback is an important process that aids in identifying and removing barriers.

If you have any suggestions to help us identify and remove barriers or improve accessibility to our programs, services, and facilities, we'd like to hear from you.

To request a copy of this plan in an alternative format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

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