

2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Building An Inclusive Cambridge

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Our Commitment

The City of Cambridge is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities have equal opportunities to live, work, learn, play, visit, and invest in our city. We foster a caring, inclusive, and respectful community where City programs, services, and facilities are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, and aim to improve accessibility for both residents and employees.

Disability in Canada and Waterloo Region

- According to Statistics Canada's 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, **27% of Canadians aged 15 and older, nearly 9 million people**, reported having one or more disabilities that limit their daily activities.
- In Ontario, **28% of individuals aged 15 and over live with a disability**, a rate slightly higher than the national average.
- Based on 2022 data, **more than 87,000 people aged 15 and older with disabilities live in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge**. A more recent Statistics Canada estimate (March 2025) places this number between **100,150 and 161,250, with a new average of 128,000**. This reflects a significant increase from 2022, though the figure remains an estimate until the next Canadian Survey on Disability in 2027.

Accessibility Legislation in Ontario (AODA and its Regulations)

- ❑ In 2005, **Ontario introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, a law designed to make the province fully accessible by 2025 through enforceable accessibility standards.
- ❑ These standards set the rules organizations must follow to **identify, remove, and prevent barriers**, ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in daily life.
- ❑ These standards are set out in the **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)**. The IASR includes five standards and general requirements that guide the City's work in the following areas:
 - Customer Service
 - Information and Communication
 - Employment
 - Transportation
 - Design of Public Spaces

What is a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan?

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) is the City's five-year strategy for identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility. It ensures compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and promotes an inclusive environment for all.

Key Purposes of a MYAP

- Ensure compliance and champion accessibility inclusion through legislation and standards.
- Identify and prioritize actions to remove barriers and improve accessibility across City facilities, programs, and services.
- Engage the community to gather input and promote inclusive participation.
- Monitor progress and promote transparency through reporting and evaluation of accessibility improvements over time.

What We Did

- Benchmarked the MYAP against other municipalities to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Incorporated internal feedback from various departments, consulted the AAC, and engaged residents and stakeholders to ensure priorities were aligned.
- Conducted environmental scans of similar regions and municipalities to adopt best practices.

How We Got Here

2022

Initiated MYAP development; gathered internal input, leadership engagement; launched engagement on Engage Cambridge

2023

Filed Accessibility Compliance Report with Government of Ontario

2024

Drafted, reviewed, designed, and remediated the plan

2025

Presented draft to AAC; hosted additional online & in-person engagements; leadership final review; prepared 2024 & 2025 Annual Status reports; file Accessibility Compliance Report

2026-
2028

Prepare Annual status reports

Acknowledging the Timing of the MYAP

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is titled 2024–2028 and remains valid for this period.

Why the Delay?

- Work on the plan began in 2022
- Staff transitions impacted continuity
- COVID-19 had effects on engagement capacity
- Time was needed for meaningful consultation with community and stakeholders

Our Commitment

- Despite delays, accessibility remained a priority in our day-to-day work
- Additional time allowed us to create a plan that is thoughtful, inclusive, and responsive to community needs

We acknowledge the timing gap and are taking steps to ensure future plans are developed and endorsed on schedule.

What We Heard

Overall, residents expressed **appreciation** for City staff and volunteers who provide friendly service, as well as for the ongoing accessibility improvements across City facilities.

Key areas identified for action include:

- Accessible parking at City facilities.
- Improved snow and ice maintenance on sidewalks and pathways.
- Clear communication about available accessibility supports and processes.

A full review of the survey responses can be found [here](#), with a shorter summary [here](#).

What We Heard (cont'd)

There is a serious gap in inclusion summer camp spaces, as those spots fill in under 10 minutes annually.

I tried the website, and it is not straightforward. Registering and checking the account is difficult

Within buildings, add sensory spaces that are quiet and allow for a behavioural reset.

I need adult sized change tables, so I don't have to be changed in the grass.

stop piling the snow on handicap parking spaces

Ensure supported programs for those with disabilities of all ages! Our childcare needs do not stop at age 12. Families are burning out because programs are not available

When using the phone, I often have to educate people on how to communicate with a HOH person. I would like to see sensitivity and accommodation training for those interacting with the public.

Additional City-Wide Recommendations

- **Embed accessibility by default** in all City projects, events, and procurement processes.
- **Engage the community regularly** through consultations and focus groups to test and refine new accessibility initiatives.
- **Enhance event accessibility** by consistently offering ASL interpretation, captioning, and accessible seating.
- **Increase transparency and accountability** by developing a public accessibility dashboard to report on progress.

MYAP Status Reports (2024-2025)

- Under AODA, municipalities are required to prepare annual status reports that outline progress in implementing their Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP).
- The 2024- 2025 status report highlights the City's progress and ongoing commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive community for all residents and visitors across these standards, reflecting both City-wide initiatives and the valuable contributions of the Cambridge Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC).
- The City is committed to transparency and ongoing community collaboration, ensuring our efforts align with the priorities of our Strategic Plan.
- As a growing municipality, we will regularly review the MYAP to keep it relevant and focused on meaningful accessibility improvements and ensure our efforts lead to measurable outcomes.

Special Recognition

We extend our sincere appreciation to the following contributors for their vital role in shaping this Plan:

- City Staff
- Residents of Cambridge
- Cambridge Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Communications Team
- Kim Cusimano (Age-Friendly Coordinator)
- Councillor Sheri Roberts
- Councillor Corey Kimpson
- Councillor Helen Shwery
- Management and staff at Langs, YMCA and Cambridge Mall

Next Steps



Publish Plan and make available on City Website



Future Report to Council



Engagement and Education

Contact Information

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