

2019-2023

# Access Blandford-Blenheim

## MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

TOWNSHIP OF BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

# Table of Contents

- Township of Blandford-Blenheim’s Commitment to Accessibility ..... 2
- Accessible Format..... 2
- About the Township of Blandford-Blenheim’s Accessibility Plan ..... 3
- Consultation ..... 3
- Implementation Strategy ..... 3
- Structure and Governance ..... 4
- Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council..... 4
- Funding for Accessibility..... 4
- Legislative Background ..... 5
  - Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) ..... 5
  - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) ..... 5
  - Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) [IASR]..... 5
  - Canadians with Disabilities Act ..... 5
  - Ontario Building Code..... 5
  - Ontario Human Rights Code..... 5
- Progress on AODA/IASR to Date ..... 6
- Goals for Compliance with AODA/IASR for 2019-2022..... 8
- Review and Monitoring..... 10
- Feedback ..... 10
- Availability of the Plan ..... 10
- Contact Information ..... 10

## Township of Blandford-Blenheim's Commitment to Accessibility

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to promoting a barrier-free Township for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim. In this plan, the Township of Blandford-Blenheim is proud to present its findings and report on the development of innovative strategies to remove and prevent future barriers for people with disabilities and our maturing population.

In keeping with this vision, the Township of Blandford-Blenheim understands that people with disabilities:

- Represent a growing and diverse community that is dramatically increasing due to the demographic trends of a maturing population.
- Form part of the work force, and include our families, our friends, our customers and the members of the community at large.
- Purchase products and services and make important financial decisions on where they do business, enjoy recreation or choose to live.
- Understand that accessible features can be of benefit to others, such as automatic doors that assist parents with children in strollers.
- Are aware that their full participation in Canadian society has been long awaited and anxiously anticipated.
- Understand that inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities requires well-considered commitment from all levels of government.

**The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy the same opportunities as all others who live, work, visit and invest in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim.**

## Accessible Format

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the administration office at [generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca](mailto:generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca) or 519-463-5347 or toll-free at 1-800-410-6882.

## About the Township of Blandford-Blenheim's Accessibility Plan

This is the Township of Blandford-Blenheim's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan outlines our strategy to prevent and remove all types of barriers as well as meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11).

### Consultation

The consultation process involved Township staff, particularly the senior leadership.

Municipalities with a population greater than 10,000 are required to establish accessibility advisory committees. In addition, the legislation stipulates that the majority of committee members must self-identify as a person with a disability.

With an approximate population of 7,399 (based on the 2016 Statistics Canada Census) the Township of Blandford-Blenheim is exempt from having an accessibility advisory committee.

### Implementation Strategy

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to the intention of the AODA to make the Province of Ontario accessible by 2025. The Township is determined to ensure that accessibility is a priority in all of our municipal facilities and operations.

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim recognizes that:

- Long-term planning is imperative to meet the challenges and opportunities of the significantly maturing population as well as people with disabilities.
- The Township must continue, as an employer, to provide equal employment opportunities that encourage the full participation of people with disabilities.
- Well-planned buildings use universal design concepts that provide access for all including families with children, injured or ill people and the elderly as well as persons who rely on a wheelchair or other mobility devices and persons who have a visual, hearing, mental or developmental impairment.
- Education is the cornerstone to effective change, good management, and integrated services. The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to educating its staff and the community on accessibility issues and opportunities.
- A commitment to research and development of products, services and educational material is necessary.
- Visitor and tourism operators also depend upon accessible municipal services and facilities. The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to encourage accessible visitor and tourism facilities.

- Preventing the introduction of new barriers by ensuring heightened awareness of accessibility considerations in the Township planning and inspection processes is continuously necessary.
- Existing facilities will take time and resources to make accessible. As updates are considered and scheduled, accessibility will always be a priority.
- The process of municipal government has to be barrier-free and the Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to making public meetings and materials accessible and available to all.

## **Structure and Governance**

The responsibility for the implementation of the AODA falls within the Clerks Department.

Accountability for the various clauses within the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation is a shared responsibility between municipal departments. The Clerks Department is responsible for ensuring compliance at the corporate level and is responsible for legislative analysis and subject matter expertise. Each Township Department is accountable for ensuring that their respective responsibilities are executed according to legislative requirements pertaining to the service delivery.

## **Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council**

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council is committed to continuously eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Township Council allocates funds each year through the Community Grants Program where inclusivity and accessibility are significant considerations in deciding the allocation of funds.

## **Funding for Accessibility**

The Township has successfully applied for and received grants in the past in order to assist in meeting and exceeding accessibility requirements. The Township has successfully received grants through the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for:

- Richwood Community Hall Ramp & Washrooms
- Drumbo Park Splash Pad

The Township is committed to seeking additional funding opportunities to aid in the removal of barriers and improving accessibility within its municipal borders.

## Legislative Background

### Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), was enacted in 2001. The Act requires municipalities to develop an annual accessibility plan aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005. The purpose of the Act is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities in relation to products, services, facilities, accommodations, employment, structures and premises.

### Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) [IASR]

The IASR establishes accessibility standards and introduces requirements for:

- Accessible Customer Service Standard
- Information and Communications Standard
- Employment Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard

### Canadians with Disabilities Act

The Government of Canada is planning new legislation known as the Canadians with Disabilities Act. Employment and Social Development Canada consulted with Canadians on planned accessibility legislation from July 2016 to February 2017.

### Ontario Building Code

The Ontario Building Code outlines accessibility / barrier-free design requirements in newly constructed buildings and existing buildings that are to be extensively renovated.

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs outlines a New Edition of the Building Code proposed in-effect date of January 2019 with proposals to include accessibility updates.

### Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code is an individual, complaints-based legislation that addresses discrimination. The Ontario Human Rights Code requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship.

## **Progress on AODA/IASR to Date**

### **Bright Fire Hall**

The sidewalks leading into the Fire Hall in Bright were reconstructed and, as such, designed to be barrier-free and meet or exceed AODA/IASR Standards.

### **Corporate Website**

In 2016 the Township of Blandford-Blenheim corporate website was redesigned to update the functioning as well as content of the site to provide a better user experience. In collaboration with the upper tier, Oxford County Information Services Team, content was reorganized to allow visitors to more easily find what they are looking for. The search function was updated to return relevant results. Content was reorganized to be less crowded and more simply organized. Content employs all required accessible features such as captioning and optical character recognition to ensure that user tools to make information accessible are compatible, such as screen readers. All web content meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A.

### **Corporate Licensing**

The Township requires all dogs in Blandford-Blenheim to be registered and licensed with the municipality for a fee. Service dogs must be registered, however, there is no fee for the license.

### **Customer Service**

The Township follows our Corporate Guidelines for Delivering Accessible Customer Service in daily operations.

All staff and Council have completed the required training (through the use of a self-study package) in order to successfully assist individuals with disabilities. Accessible Customer Service Standards are also built into the Township's procurement policies and procedures.

Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to making emergency procedures, plans or public safety information available to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports.

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim provides and will continue to provide workplace emergency response information for municipal employees with disabilities.

### **Drop-in Centre**

Through the Township Community Services Department, children aged 4 to 13 are invited to attend the Drop-In Centre for fun activities weekly at the Blenheim and Plattsville Public School gymnasiums. Each location also has a homework club in a separate room to allow students a place to work on their homework or get help with it.

Each the Blenheim and District Public School and the Plattsville and District Public School are fully accessible.

### **Drumbo Public Parking Lot**

The existing gravel parking area was officially designated for public use and paved to meet AODA/IASR Standards. Two parking spots have been clearly marked as wider spaces for people who use mobility aids. The sidewalk leading into the parking lot was reconstructed as barrier-free and meeting or exceeding AODA/IASR Standards.

### **Municipal Elections, 2014 and 2018**

Several measures were taken by municipal staff to ensure increased accessibility during the 2014 and 2018 municipal elections. These included accessibility audits of all polling locations, and training staff to assist persons with disabilities who required assistance filling out forms, filling out a ballot, or accessing voting locations. In the 2018 municipal election, a voting location was changed in Plattsville from a community church to the municipal arena to remove certain barriers and improve accessibility of that poll.

### **Princeton Park Expansion**

Paved accessible walkways were implemented in the Princeton Park reconstruction project, which assist wheelchairs and other mobility aid devices in gaining access to the baseball facilities, covered pad, walking trail, and exercise equipment. The walking trail and exercise equipment are accessible, the trail being hard-packed stone dust and the equipment having several features designed for inclusivity and accessibility. Furthermore, access to benches throughout the Park Expansion area meet or exceed AODA/IASR Standards.

### **Reporting**

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim files annual accessibility compliance reports, as required.

### **Subdivision Creation and Expansion in Township Villages**

New development and expansion to current development areas, as part of Subdivisions Agreements must comply with AODA/IASR Standards. Curb lowering and textile plates on sidewalks at intersections or crossing areas have been implemented in development areas of Plattsville and Drumbo Villages.

### **Township Villages**

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim Public Works Department removes snow and applies salt to melt ice on all the sidewalks in the villages of Bright, Drumbo, Plattsville and Princeton.



## **Richwood Community Hall**

The historic building was updated to include an access ramp and improve the existing washrooms to create AODA/IASR-compliant facilities.

## **Goals for Compliance with AODA/IASR for 2019-2022**

### **Corporate Website**

The Township shall continue to ensure that all features and additions to the corporate website or any Township-owned website meet or exceed AODA/IASR Standards. In collaboration with the Oxford County Information Services Team, routine website redesigns will meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA (other than criteria 1.2.4 and 1.2.5).

### **Corporate Licensing**

The Township is committed to continuing the licensing of service dogs, ensuring they are registered with the municipality free of charge.

### **Customer Service**

The Township's Accessible Customer Service Policy Manual will continue to be complied with, and reviewed by staff to ensure the Township is providing an adequate level of Accessible Customer Service to the public. Township staff will continue to be made aware of the Township's Accessibility Plan and Township's Accessibility Policies. New employees will be notified and trained on existing policies for accommodating persons with disabilities. Accessible formats for policies and procedures will continue to be made available.

### **Golden Age Active Place / Seniors Centre**

The Township is working with community groups and residents to offer a space for older adults, similar to the Drop-in Centre provided for youths. The Golden Age Active Place is committed to all programming being hosted in accessible locations and making inclusivity a priority.

### **Plattsville Park**

The pavilion in Plattsville Park is to have accessible access through providing ramped access into the covered area.

### **Public Spaces**

The Township is committed to ensuring that any new or redeveloped public spaces meet the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Part 4.1). Consultation for Outdoor Play Spaces, On-Street Parking, and Recreational Trails are ongoing.

### **Princeton Fire Hall**

The construction of a barrier-free fire hall in Princeton to be completed, as was completed with the Plattsville and Drumbo Fire Halls in previous years.

### **Princeton Park**

Accessible pathway to be constructed in the Princeton Park leading to the multi-purpose pad. This will assist wheelchairs and other mobility aid devices in gaining access to a hard-surface recreation pad with the opportunity to play multiple sports.

### **Princeton Village**

New sidewalks shall be designed to be barrier free and meet or exceed the necessary AODA/IASR Standards when installed in Princeton as part of the water and sewer and storm drainage project.

### **Reporting**

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is committed to continue filing annual accessibility compliance reports, as required.

### **Township Villages**

The Township is committed to continue removing snow and applying salt to melt ice on all the sidewalks in the villages of Bright, Drumbo, Plattsville and Princeton.

## Review and Monitoring

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Township of Blandford-Blenheim's strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

## Feedback

The Township of Blandford-Blenheim welcomes public input as feedback helps to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve facilities, products and services. Should a member of the public wish to provide feedback, comments or suggestion please contact the Clerks Department in the Administration Office at [generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca](mailto:generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca) or 519-463-5347 or toll-free at 1-800-410-6882.

## Availability of the Plan

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be made available through:

Website:

This Plan can be accessed through the Township of Blandford-Blenheim's website. <http://www.blandfordblenheim.ca/Accessibility>

Hard Copy:

The Plan may be accessed at Township of Blandford-Blenheim Administration Office:  
47 Wilmot Street South, Drumbo, ON, N0J 1G0

## Contact Information

For more information, contact the Township of Blandford-Blenheim Clerks Department:

519-463-5347 | 1-800-410-6882 | [generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca](mailto:generalmail@blandfordblenheim.ca)

Township of Blandford-Blenheim Clerks Department  
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