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February 11, 2020



Corporation of the Town of Renfrew

2020-2024 Multi-Year  
Accessibility Plan

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## **Background**

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People with Disabilities make up a significant part of our community. It has been projected that by 2036 twenty percent of all Canadians will have some form of disability. In response to these statistics, in 2005 the Government of Ontario created the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) with the goal of making Ontario accessible for all people with disabilities.

To achieve this goal, the AODA was implemented, and includes requirements that all organizations must meet, with deadlines specific to an organization's type and size. The AODA is made up of five standards, including:

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard

Deadlines for compliance began as of January 1, 2010 and are the law.

## **Town of Renfrew Commitment to Accessibility**

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The Town of Renfrew is committed to eliminating barriers (where possible) and improving accessibility, for persons with disabilities, in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. The Town recognizes the diverse needs of our residents and customers and will continue to make every effort to provide the same access and rights to municipal services as all other members of our community, for those persons with disabilities. For this reason, the Town is committed to modifying service delivery, programming, and other workplace processes, policies, and procedures to ensure equal access for all of our residents and customers.

To demonstrate recognition of the Town's commitment, Renfrew Town Council approved the incorporation of accessibility measures into the Community Improvement Plan in December of 2015. The accessibility improvement grant is intended to promote improvements to properties, including access ramps, entryway widening, as well as leveling or repairs to pathways and stairs. It is intended that any improvements approved under this grant program will exceed the applicable requirements of the Ontario Building Code. The grant will contribute to the accessibility and walkability of the Town. Accessibility features such as installation of automatic doors, installation of wheelchair access ramps, widening of public entrance ways, and leveling or repairs to pathways/accesses and stairs are features encouraged to improve accessibility in the Town of Renfrew. The Community Improvement Plan, Facade & Accessibility Grants were designed to encourage Commercial and Mixed-Use properties in the defined area of the CIP to improve upon their facade and accessibility with a grant up to \$3500 or 50% of the cost (lesser of the two). In addition to this commitment, Renfrew Town Council approved \$25,000 each year be set aside for these commitments in order to enhance and improve upon accessibility for our residents and visitors.

The Town of Renfrew also demonstrated its commitment to accessibility through the reconstruction of the Downtown core. In December 2017, the public had its first glimpse of the project which included the elimination of many full or partial steps to provide flush entrances at businesses, existing paving stones to be removed and replaced with poured

concrete panels for a more level surface as well as ensuring twizzles were installed for the safe transition from sidewalk to street, and the installation of more benches throughout the Downtown. Additionally, crossovers and crosswalks feature curb bumpouts and pedestrian activated flashing signals to improve visibility for the pedestrians and reduce crossing lengths. In November 2018, Renfrew's new Downtown was re-opened for business and was hailed an accessibility footprint for all Downtown Reconstructions, by neighbouring municipalities and the County of Renfrew's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

As well, in July 2018, new outdoor accessible washrooms opened at the Ma-te-Way Activity Park adjacent to the Splash Pad and Natural Park that opened in June 2019, which are both accessible. Renfrew Town Council is also considering an addition to the Ma-te-Way Activity Centre, replacing the current Recreation Centre to ensure that all of its programs and services are accessible to all.

In 2018, the Finance Department added E-Commerce, which allows ratepayers to receive and pay their Water/Wastewater and Property Taxes online. This improves upon accessibility for those who use devices to read their bills received and they can use their own accessibility devices to pay.

The Town ensures that accessibility is part of all of its festivals and events, acquiring accessible washroom facilities at events and ensuring pathways are clear of barriers.

The Renfrew Public Library rearranged the entire main level to improve accessibility to collections. The children's library was renovated with lower shelving and a more open floor plan. The washroom on the lower level was also renovated so the library now has two accessible washrooms.

The Library also does outreach programs to the Seniors' Homes and personal residences for those who cannot physically get to the library. Accessible collections include audio, large print, and access to the CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access) collections. The library also has an accessible internet station. RPL continues to explore ways to make our facility and collections accessible to all.

Along with other training, staff received mental health first aid training and other training on dealing individuals with mental health issues so that everyone has equitable access to the library space and services.

## **Summary of the Town of Renfrew's progress in Accessibility**

### **Accessible Customer Service Regulation (ACSR)**

The Town of Renfrew is compliant with all of the Accessible Customer Service Regulation:

#### **1. Accessible Customer Service Policy**

The Town developed and follows an Accessible Customer Service Policy.

#### **2. Service Animals and Support Persons**

The Town permits service animals and support persons to accompany persons with disabilities.

#### **3. Temporary Disruptions**

The Town continues to provide the public with notice of planned service disruptions at Town facilities and Town services. These notices are posted on the Town of Renfrew's Website and social media channels if required.

#### **4. Training**

The Town continues to provide training to new hires, volunteers, and all other necessary personnel, as per the regulations.

#### **5. Feedback Process**

The Town has implemented a feedback process and continues to provide feedback on issues regarding accessibility. The feedback form can be found on the Town of Renfrew's Website. Individuals are also able to contact the Town of Renfrew with any feedback through the website. If individuals are not able to utilize online services, the Town of Renfrew also receives and responds to feedback by phone, in person, and by regular mail.

#### **6. Documents**

The Town provides requested documents in accessible formats, upon request. There is no charge for providing a document in an accessible format.

### **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) & Information and Communication Standards**

The Town of Renfrew is compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:

#### **1. Policy Development**

The Town has developed and implemented an Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy through its 2014 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

#### **2. Multi-Year Accessibility Plans & Annual Status Report**

The Town has developed a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and has now refreshed this plan after six years. The Plan will be made available on the website. Staff will continue to provide annual status reports, and put forward a new five-year plan in 2025, the year that Ontario has stated it will be fully accessible.

#### **3. Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities**

The Town has amended the Policy on Procurement to include the required changes as per the regulations.

#### **4. Training**

Training has been provided to necessary staff, volunteers and other third parties of the Town of Renfrew. This training will continue to be provided to all new employees, volunteers and third parties.

#### **5. Self Service Kiosks**

This section does not apply to the Town of Renfrew at this time. Any future self-service kiosks will be accessible, if installed.

#### **6. Website**

The Town of Renfrew implemented a new website on January 1, 2017 which met the WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standards, and continues to update the website as required, ensuring that all staff who work on the website are cognizant of incorporating accessible features into all documents uploaded onto the website.

## **7. Accessible Formats & Communications Supports**

The Town of Renfrew will provide information upon request in an accessible format and at no additional cost.

## **8. Emergency Procedures, Plans, or Public Safety Information**

The Town's public emergency information can and will be provided in an accessible format upon request.

## **Employment Standards**

The Town of Renfrew is compliant with the Employment Standards Regulations, and continues to strive to remain an accessible employer.

### **1. Recruitment**

The Town of Renfrew has notified all necessary staff of the recruitment process, which will accommodate applicants with disabilities. All Job Postings indicate the following statement "The Town of Renfrew will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation for a known disability for an applicant or employee if requested."

### **2. Selection**

The Town of Renfrew is committed to maintaining an accessible selection process. Applicants selected to proceed to the interview phase in the selection process will be notified of the availability of accommodations upon request.

### **3. Notice to Successful Applicants**

The Town of Renfrew has amended the standard offer letter for successful applicants to include a statement outlining the Town's policies to accommodate employees with disabilities. The Town also incorporates this notification requirement into the verbal job offer. All necessary staff has been notified of this change .

### **4. Informing Employees of Supports**

The Town has enacted both a Return to Work Policy as well as an IASR Policy which outline the procedures to support and accommodate employees with disabilities. Staff has been notified of the policies and procedures that are in place to accommodate employees with disabilities.

### **5. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The Town of Renfrew is committed to providing employees with disabilities the necessary accessible formats or communication supports required to perform their job duties. Staff have been notified of the policies and procedures, including the IASR Policy and Accessible Customer Service Policy that are in place to support employees with disabilities and provide job-accommodation where required. In addition, staff employed in June 2014 were trained on the accessibility measures and accommodations offered to them, as well, all new staff hired are provided the training electronically and must sign off that they have read and understood the information.

## **6. Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Any employee who requires any emergency related assistance/ other accommodation will be provided this upon request. The Town ensures that all staff have completed a Workplace Emergency Response Information form, which is collected and reviewed by the Deputy Clerk. These forms are confidential and should an employee require any assistance during an emergency, the Clerk/ Deputy Clerk will ensure that the accommodations are discussed and permissions received from employee to contact the Renfrew Fire Department for assistance in providing the information, training or accommodations.

## **7. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Town of Renfrew is committed to documenting a process for developing individual accommodation plans, as well as providing these plans to employees as required. The Town has created a procedure to compliment the IASR Policy, which outlines the steps that need to be taken to create/document an individual accommodation plan and forms part of the .

## **8. Return to Work Process**

The Town of Renfrew is committed to ensuring a smooth return to work process for all employees and has created a procedure to compliment the IASR Policy, which outlines the written steps that need to be taken to support employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require accommodations to return to work.

## **9. Performance Management**

The Town's Management is aware of the need to consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities in the performance management process.

## **10. Career Development and Advancement**

The Town takes into consideration individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement.

## **11. Redeployment**

The Town will take into account the Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual Accommodation Plans when considering redeployment and on an annual basis the employee/manager will ensure that any changes to the individual accessibility needs as well as changes to the individual accommodation plans in order to assist in advancing within their position.

## **Transportation Standards**

The Town of Renfrew does not currently provide conventional transportation services (bus, taxi-cab services, etc.); however, the Town does support the Sunshine Coach through the Gas Tax Funding as well as supporting them with their new equipment purchases that offer more accessibility for their customers.

# **Design of Public Spaces Standards**

## **(Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)**

The Design of Public Spaces Standards addresses accessibility planning in a range of public spaces, including: trails/beach access routes; outdoor public eating areas; play spaces; accessible parking; exterior paths of travel including sidewalks; accessible pedestrian signals; service counters; fixed queuing lines; waiting areas and the emergency and preventative maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces. These standards only apply to new construction or the redevelopment of existing public spaces and buildings. The Town of Renfrew has implemented a Recreation Master Plan, as well as building/renovating existing parks to ensure they are accessible and working on the conceptual plan for a new Recreation Centre at the Ma-te-way Activity Centre which will provide accessible features for those who attend the programs and use the services provided.

### **1. Recreation Trails and Beach Access Routes**

The Town is committed to creating accessible trails and access routes, on any new construction and major changes to existing features, as per the regulation. The Town does not have any beach access at this time.

### **2. Outdoor Public Eating Areas**

The Town is committed to creating accessible public eating areas, whether they are new constructs or redevelopments of existing areas, as per the regulation. In addition, whenever there are outdoor events, accessible washrooms and picnic tables are provided.

### **3. Outdoor Play Spaces**

The Town is committed to creating accessible outdoor play spaces, whether they are new constructs or redevelopments of existing spaces. The Town installed parks in Horton Heights 2015 and Legion Park in 2017 which are both accessible. The natural Play Park at Ma-te-Way was also designed with accessibility in mind. Any newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces, will take into consideration Accessibility Design of Public Spaces Standards.

### **4. Exterior Paths of Travel**

The Town is committed to creating accessible exterior paths of travel that are new or redeveloped, as per the regulation. The Town demonstrated this in the Downtown Revitalization when it renovated the sidewalks, specifically improving the walkway up to the Cenotaph . In 2017-2018 the Town of Renfrew revitalized the Downtown, illustrating the Town's commitment to creating accessible exterior paths of travel. The Downtown Revitalization showcases the following accessible features:

- Accessible curb ramps and tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI) at all cross walks;
- Where possible, modification of the grade of the sidewalk to eliminate steps and provide accessible transition from sidewalk to storefronts:  
Accessible benches with appropriate clear floor space for mobility devices;



- New pedestrian signals in accordance with Section 80.28 of the AODA, which includes audible locator tones, as well as audible and vibro-tactile walk indicators;
- Universally accessible tree grates, with all seams and openings meeting criteria set out by AODA;
- All sidewalk cross-falls were kept to a maximum of 4% which is below to AODA's maximum allowable slope of 5%;
- All sidewalks were kept to a minimum of 1.5 meters wide and maintain this dimension as a clear path of travel;
- Installation of bump outs reduced the distance that pedestrians must cross for their required travel.

## **5. Parking**

The Town is committed to creating accessible parking lots that are new or redeveloped, as per the regulation.

## **6. Service Counters, Queuing Guides and Waiting Areas Accessible**

The Town is committed to creating accessible service counters, queuing guides, and waiting areas that are new or redeveloped. In 2014 the Town lowered the service counter on the main level of Town Hall to make it accessible. At the Recreation Centre, a table was placed on the main level to provide an accessible counter until the facility could be renovated. Unfortunately, the building is not an applicant for renovation but a new build and at that time the AODA legislation will be implemented.

## **7. Maintain the Accessible Parts of Public Spaces**

The Town is committed to maintaining all accessible features of our public spaces. Council, Committees and Staff are able to use the main floor boardroom should accessibility for meetings be required. Additionally, the Town works with its garbage and recycling contractors to ensure that paths of travel, specifically sidewalks are free of cans and boxes for safe and accessible paths of travel.

## **Purchasing and Tendering**

In 2019, the Town added accessibility to the Purchasing and Tendering Policy to meet the regulations: To promote, and incorporate, wherever possible, the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, (ODA), C-81 Accessible Canada Act, the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA), and specifically, Ontario Regulation 191-11 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, in procurement activities of the Town, and in cases where it is deemed not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria features in procurement activities, an explanation shall be provided upon request.

***The Town of Renfrew submitted the required AODA Compliance Report in December 2019, the Ontario Government noted that the Town of Renfrew's Compliance report indicates that our organization is in compliance with Ontario's accessibility laws.***

## **Future Goals**

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The following are other areas that the Town of Renfrew staff have identified as areas that require improvement to help further remove barriers for individuals with disabilities. Some of these barriers will be removed within the timeframe of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, while others have been identified and are outlined as goals to be completed in the future.

### **Clerk and Economic Development & Tourism:**

- Upgrading the Town's website to be more mobile and accessible.
- Participate in training to improve upon documents and social media posts to ensure accessibility.
- Improve upon signage through Way Finding signs to improve accessibility.
- Wifi throughout downtown core, this will enable those with accessibility issues to be able to use more websites that promote and encourage independence for those with disabilities.

### **Treasury:**

- Investigating more payment options on-line, not only to provide convenience but to ensure everyone has an opportunity to pay their bills, buy their garbage tags, pet tags and pay parking tickets even if they are unable to physically get into the office due to their accessibility needs.

### **Renfrew Fire Department Goals:**

- Review/ Update Emergency Evacuation Plan, to incorporate accessibility (as required).
- Continue to strive to ensure all public access events for the Fire Department (open houses, training demonstrations, breakfasts/lunches) conform to accessibility requirements.
- Ongoing efforts to ensure documents published to the Fire Department web pages, locally created and published from outside sources, are accessible compliant.
- Partake in offerings of educational opportunities on accessibility issues/ legislation.

### **Renfrew Public Library Goals:**

- The Renfrew Public Library is currently developing an Emergency and Safety manual which will include detailed evacuation plans for people with disabilities.
- Understanding that the library building continues to have accessibility issues when navigating between floors, RPL continues to seek out opportunities to improve upon the situation.
- To introduce services, programs and/or spaces for those with sensory and/or learning challenges.

## **Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department Goals:**

Staff have identified many accessibility issues with the current century year old Recreation Centre and are considering building of an expansion to the facility at Ma-te-Way. Some accessibility features being conceptualized in the expansion plan are:

- Zero Drop/Ice Surface flush with entrance.
- Accessible seating area in arena.
- Fitness Centre that is physically accessible with adaptable equipment.
- Additional elevator to meet current needs.

## **Development & Works Department Goals:**

- Ensure that that all doors leading to their department are accessible.
- Continue to work with businesses to ensure that they are aware of the CIP and the opportunity to make their business more accessible for their customers.
- Ensure that during construction projects accessibility remains a priority.

## **Conclusion**

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Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses, and community life. Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Creating communities where every person who lives or visits can participate fully, makes good sense for all of us.

The Town of Renfrew will continue its commitment to the removal of accessibility barriers and to the improvement of overall accessibility in the community. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be updated again in 2024, as per the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and to mark the year 2025 which Ontario has stated will be Accessible for all.

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## **Let Us Know What You Think**

Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments on the Town of Renfrew's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report, and any other accessibility related matter. To provide feedback, please visit the Town's [website](#) or contact:

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