TOWN OF POINT LEAMINGTON
Accessibility Plan
2023-2026







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Welcome Message / Introduction

On Behalf of the Town of Point Leamington's Accessibility Advisory Committee, Council and town staff members, we invite you to read our first accessibility Plan

The Town of Point Leamington is committed to fostering a community where people of all abilities can participate in every aspect of public life. All members of our community have the right to access municipal services, supports, spaces and programs in ways that promote independence and dignity.

We firmly believe that a focus on accessibility will improve our services for everyone. Our goal is too continually improve and reflect on the work being done in the Town and encourage community members to give feedback to improve how we serve our community.

Wilf Mercer
Mayor

Advancements to Date

- During the 2023 accessibility plan period several aspects of the Town's commitment to accessibility underwent improvements to remove barriers, some of these include:
    - New Ramp to building, new doors, railings inside building, new wheelchair accessible washroom.

- Steps that the Town of Point Leamington have taken to remove barriers for people with disabilities.
    - Advertising of town events and notices are done via Facebook, Bulletin board as well as a telephone voice machine.
    - Formed a working advisory committee, consisting of staff, council as well as invited public.
    - Listened to the input of the advisory committee listing the barriers that people with disabilities have identified in accessing our programs, facilities, and services.
    - Wheel chair installed to access Municipal Building.
    - Secure railings inside building.
    - New wheelchair accessible doors, inside and out.
    - Upon request, large print notices and forms can be provided
    - Assisting the public when needed in filling out forms and applications as well as providing verbal information of written materials distributed to the public.

Accessibility Goals

WORK IN PROGRESS AND ONGOING

- Work has already begun to ensure easy access to all municipal buildings.
- We created a community garden and had planters made that are easy to access.

FUTURE GOALS

- We are planning upgrades in 2024 to our cenotaph for easy access by all to our memorial site.
- Upgrades to Otter Pond and Roswell's Hill.
- Upgrades to the walking trails at the river.
- Assessing playground to ensure equipment is accessible.

Glossary of Terms

- Accessibility Act
  The Provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Act defines the role and responsibilities of the Disability Policy Office and the Accessibility Standards Advisory board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement.

- Accessibility Plan
  A Plan developed to address the prevention, identification, and removal of barriers in the policies, programs, practices, and services of a public body.

- Accessibility Standards
  Accessibility standards establish clear, specific, and achievable goals to identify, prevent and remove barriers. Each standard will be introduced in stages with a timeframe for implementation. The standards and timelines would consider all sectors such as government, business, municipalities, and community organizations.

- Accommodation
  Any technical aid or device, personal support or disability-related support or other accommodation a person may require. This can include, but is not limited to: accessible meeting rooms; accessible formats such as Braille and plain

language; mobility supports to attend a meeting; and, sign language interpreters, captioning or ensuring space has sensory sensitive features.

- Barrier
  Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. The **Accessibility Act** defines a barrier as "anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, or a barrier established or perpetuated by an Act, regulations, a policy, or a practice.

- Disability
  As defined in the Accessibility act: "disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society".
- Equitable/equity
  A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

- Plain Language
  Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plan language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information. There are helpful resources available online, including the Plain Language Action and Information Network.

- Public body
  As defined in the **Accessibility Act**, public bodies include all provincial government, agencies, boards, commissions and committees, municipalities, public educational institutions and private educational institutions. Part I (o.) of the **Accessibility Act** includes the full list.

Statement of Commitment

- The Town of Point Leamington is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence
- We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and

by meeting our accessibility requirements under Newfoundland's accessibility laws.

Focus Areas

➢ Programs and Services

Our Commitment

- We will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to programs and services delivered by the Town

Where we are

- Handling meetings of council and committees.
- Overseeing communication to the public
- Providing customer service
- Maintaining streets and snow removal
- Maintaining parks, trails and open spaces
- Maintaining water and sewer services
- Ensuring accessibility in Recreation programs and services
- Providing emergency services, such as ambulance and fire.

Achievements

- The Town hall is wheelchair accessible; guard rails are in the hallway as well as a wheelchair accessible bathroom with hi rise toilet.

Barriers

- Staff are not trained in alternative communication methods

Priorities (2023-2026)

- Ensure parks and outdoor spaces can be enjoyed and utilized by people of all ages and abilities.
- The use of plain language in documents and advertisements for municipal programming.
- Training of staff.
- Ensuring that delivery of administrative and financial services can be barrier free.

➢ Information and communications

Our Commitment

- Information and communications delivered by the Town of Point Leamington will be clear and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. We will take steps so people understand accessibility and barriers to participation and will increase awareness about the accessibility rights of every community member.

Where we are

- The town of Point Leamington delivers information to the public in many ways; email, town website, Facebook, telephone messaging service, public bulletin boards and meetings of Council which are open to the public.

  Meetings are held at the town hall which is easily accessed by the front entrance and door which are all wheelchair accessible.

Barriers

- Most people do not realize that others face barriers to accessibility.
- We have no process in place for hearing impaired individuals to attend or participate in council meetings
- Video and related "new" technologies do not always work as intended

Priorities (2023-2026)

- To ensure our website meets the latest web content accessibility guidelines
- Upon request, provide information in an accessible format.
- Train staff in plain language and inclusive communications
- Provide modified copies of municipal resources, such as large print on request, examples would be our policy plans, bylaws, newsletters.

➢ Built Environment

Our Commitment

- Our public buildings and spaces will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities. We will also encourage community volunteers, citizens and local businesses to make public and private spaces available.

Where we are

- This lists some of the services that we offer to the public
  - Emergency Services.

- Water and Sewer.
- Waste collection.
- Snow removal and maintenance of municipal parking lots and roadways.
- Sidewalks.
- The use of public infrastructure, such as recreation center, heritage center, firehall, Marina, and RV Park.
- Recreational programming.

Barriers

- Some sidewalks are not walkable after heavy rainfall.
- It can be very expensive to update all town owned buildings to make them. more accessible and this competes with other budget demands.

Priorities (2023-2026)

- Ensure sidewalks are always maintained
- Provide accessible parking in all town owned properties
- Provide access for people of all ages and abilities to town buildings, washrooms, public parks and spaces.
- Ensure all public service desks are of an accessible height.

➢ Employment

Our Commitment

- We will remove barriers to employment for people of all ages and abilities who seek a career with the Town of Point Leamington. We will make our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees of all ages and abilities.

Where we are

- The Town employs 3 permanent employees and 2 part time employees. Our arms of council employ 3 to 6 students yearly. We have 7 elected officials on council.

  Members of council receive iPads for reading agendas, minute meeting information and municipal documents. This makes reading more accessible because users can zoom in on text and change the font size. The Municipal chambers is wheelchair accessible.

Barriers

- We are not trained to recognize barriers and this may limit job opportunities.

Priorities (2023-2026)

- Offer accommodation to employees and officials of all ages and abilities. This includes providing assistive devises so that employees can succeed at their jobs.
- Work with staff and officials in understanding the value of accessibility and inclusion.
- Acquire data on ages and abilities of employees and officials.

Actions / Outcomes

- Responsibilities
  - The Municipal Accessibility committee, along with staff and council are responsible for adopting and overseeing the Point Leamington Accessibility Plan.

- Timeline
  - This plan will be finalized by December 31, 2023 and will be worked on yearly during our policy planning.

- Monitoring and evaluating
  - The working advisory committee will prepare an annual report for council and submit yearly by December 31. Recommendations will be made at this time for any improvements and changes. This will be a public document.
  - Monitoring and evaluating

- Responding to questions and complaints
  - Complaints, questions or concerns can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator (Town Manager).
  - The Accessibility coordinator will respond within a reasonable time and will consult with the staff person responsible for the area of inquiry. The coordinators response will contain the reasons for the decision.
  - Anyone can approach council if they are not satisfied with the response from the accessibility coordinator, council may in turn refer this to the advisory committee for additional review and recommendations before issuing a final response to the complainant.

- The Accessibility Coordinator will record all complaints, concerns and questions submitted to them and provide summary update to the advisory committee. These updates will form part of the committee's annual review.

Conclusion

In line with the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan, Council and staff together with the Accessibility Advisory committee make the following commitment;

- Reporting to council on an annual basis on the progress of the plan, as well as updating the Plan as necessary
- Checking compliance when standards become regulations that require the public body to follow, and update its plan.
- Review of all and any unresolved issues carried through from previous years.

This plan is intended as a working document. Comments and recommendations will be noted throughout the year and will be reflected in annual updates to the plan. Additional evaluation and reporting efforts include:

- Annual review and preparation of a progress report;
- Annual progress report prepared for Council to identify progress of the Plan's implementation, accomplishments and achievements; posted online and available in alternative formats upon request;
- Compliance reports submitted annually to the province of Newfoundland.

Appendices

Committee Members

Wanda Ryan, Accessibility Coordinator (Town Manager)
Rodney Decker, Councilor
Denny Andrews Deputy Mayor
Kim Alcock, Recreation Chair
Justin Saunders Fire Dept. Chief
Kirk Woodworth, Maintenance Supervisor