



## TOWN OF LASALLE



### 2009—2010 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

---

#### **1.0 ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT REQUIREMENTS (ODA)**

All municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish accessibility advisory committees (a majority of which must be persons with disabilities) and prepare an annual accessibility plan which is available to the public.

On October 14, 2003 Council adopted its first Accessibility Plan 2003. The plan has been updated in subsequent years to reflect accomplishments and identify ongoing activities.

The LaSalle Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) meets at Town Hall once per month, excluding July, August and December. Meeting dates and times are published on Town Council Agendas. All Committee meetings are open to the public.

Membership on the LAAC is:

- in accordance with the ODA;
- by Council appointment;
- includes representatives of the LaSalle community and one Municipal Councillor appointed as Committee Chairperson.
- representative of 50% persons with disabilities.

The members responsible for the development of the 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan are:

Members:

Sue Desjarlais (Chair, Councillor)

Rob Lauzon (Vice Chair)

Danielle Gignac

Jim Chappus

Jeffrey Kapasi

Administration:

Brenda Andreatta (Director of Council Services/Clerk)

The ODA requires that municipal accessibility plans address barriers in the following manner:

1. Report on the measures that the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
  2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for bylaws, policies, programs, practices, and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities.
  3. List the bylaws, policies, programs, practices, and services that the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to persons with disabilities.
  4. Describe the measures that the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
  5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.
- The ODA also imposes other obligations on municipalities either directly or through amendments to other statutes such as:

- access must be considered when buying goods and services, and in planning of subdivision approval ;
- business licenses ;
- parking penalties;
- improved access for municipal elections;

## **2.0 DISABILITIES AND BARRIERS**

The ODA has adopted a broad definition for disability that is set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. “Disability” is:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, weakness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheel chair or other remedial appliance or device;
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involving in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

4. a mental disorder; or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1977.

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, in a policy or a practice.

The Ministry has provided a sample of these types of barriers which include

<b>BARRIER</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper body mobility and strength
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with low vision
Communicational	A person who talks loudly when addressing a deaf person. A professor who is talking to a student who is deaf
Attitudinal	A receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair
Technological	A paper tray or a laser printer that requires two strong hands to open
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that persons with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly

The Human Rights Commission has indicated that discrimination against persons with disabilities is the largest category of complaints received by its office. One of the goals of the accessibility plan is to educate people that persons with disabilities face unnecessary barriers in almost all aspects of their life. These types of barriers prevent people from shopping, leisure, school or attending the work place.

### **3.0 BARRIER IDENTIFICATION and REMOVAL OF BARRIERS – COMPLETED WORK AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2009-2010**

To identify the barriers located within the municipal sector of the Town of LaSalle, the Accessibility Committee conducted a tour of a number of municipal facilities to identify the types of barriers which currently exist. These barriers and suggested strategies to eliminate the barriers are outlined below.

### 3.1 Municipal Building, 5950 Malden Road

BARRIER	TYPE OF BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIER	STATUS
Signage at Main Entrance	Communication	Enhance the signage for visually impaired.	Completed ✓
Access to Council level in Council Chambers	Architectural	Provide portable removable ramp to where Council sits.	Pending.
Opening to Administration offices	Architectural	Remove portion of counter to allow wider access.	Completed ✓
Internal Doors	Architectural	Open during day and/or provide automatic openers	Door stop installed. Completed. ✓
Water Fountain Too High	Physical	Lower the fountain on the wall.	Interim remedy – install disposable cup dispenser Completed. ✓

### 3.2 Parking Lot—Municipal Complex

BARRIER	TYPE OF BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIER	STATUS
Disabled Parking Spaces Not Wide Enough	Policy / Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repaint lines in parking lot to provide wider spaces;</li> </ul>	Completed. ✓

### 3.3 Gil Maure Park

BARRIER	TYPE OF BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIER	STATUS
Picnic Table Not Accessible	Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install concrete pad of paving stones</li> <li>Remove wood frame</li> </ul>	Completed ✓

Access to Picnic Shelter in Park	Physical	To install a sidewalk or trail from parking area to main picnic shelter	Completed. ✓
Access through Pool Building to Swimming Area	Architectural/Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access provided through existing side gate</li> <li>• Install more signage for both physical and visually impaired</li> </ul>	Completed. ✓

### 3.4 Library

BARRIER	TYPE OF BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIER	STATUS
Refuse containers	Physical	Provide flush mount containers.	Consult with Library staff and ask Library staff to complete an Accessibility List.
No handle on door to toilet	Physical	Install appropriate handles.	
Two book racks extend too close to end wall	Architectural	Reduce length of rack.	
Oversized books protruding into aisle	Physical	Store books differently.	
No wheelchair access to tables	Physical	Provide at least one table to accommodate wheel chairs.	

### 3.5 Vollmer Culture & Recreation Centre

BARRIER	TYPE OF BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIER	STATUS
Interior doors not accessible	Physical	Install push bars	Completed ✓

## **4.0 ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2008—2009**

### **4.1 Accessible Customer Service Training**

Citizen Advocacy, a non-profit agency with a mandate to advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities, was retained to conduct accessible customer service training as required by Ontario Regulation 429/07. At the time of writing this report, over 95% of full time and part-time staff received either 3 hours or 1 ½ hours of disability awareness and accessible customer service training. While the Town could have chosen to offer only accessible customer service training it was recognized that staff would be better equipped to provide accessible customer service if they have an awareness and understanding of persons with disabilities in the first instance.

### **4.2 Accessibility Information Kits for Local Businesses**

While the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) does not require private businesses to be compliant with the AODA regulations until a future date, the LAAC through the leadership of Rob Lauzon, Vice Chair, decided to be proactive and disseminate information to local businesses on why accessibility makes sense for businesses. Materials were ordered from provincial ministries and organizations and assembled by staff in the Clerk's Department and distributed to local businesses. Promotional efforts in this regard will continue to be explored.

### **4.3 Accessibility Information Kits at 2009 Accessibility Workshop**

The same information kits as referred to in 4.1 were offered at an information booth at the annual accessibility workshop sponsored by the County of Essex.

### **4.4 Recognition of Accessible Businesses**

The Liquor Control Board of Ontario retail store on Front Road was recognized for its commitment to make accessibility improvements while renovating. The store manager proactively sought the assistance of a committee member to visit the store while under renovation to provide input on accommodation for persons who use wheelchairs. A plaque recognizing the store for its efforts was presented at the grand opening. In addition, the Sunset Ice Cream Parlour on Front Road and Seasons Bistro were recognized for their commitment to accessibility. The Committee believes that recognition of local establishments will go a long way to promote accessibility. Where barriers are identified, the Committee communicates with the business to suggest improvements to remove the barrier.

#### 4.5 Browsealoud

A Text help System Limited product called Browsealoud was recently installed on the Town's website. Browsealoud is a service that makes the website easy to read and understand and is designed to increase website accessibility and digital inclusion. The technology installed for a nominal fee by the Town, is available free to the end user. The product assists individuals with dyslexia, literacy difficulties and visual impairments to access the website.

Dual colour highlighting aids comprehension as the words are read and highlighted simultaneously. Text is magnified as each word is spoken and a talking dictionary increases vocabulary and promotes comprehension for those with literacy difficulties and English as a second language. Text on PDF can be converted to an MP3.

#### 4.6 Web Page

With the assistance of administration, a web page has been created as part of the Town of LaSalle's website. This is an ongoing process to provide up-to-date information to residents, homeowners, business owners, and visitors that would both heighten their awareness of accessibility issues and provide useful tips and resources. The Committee continues to approve topics and templates for the website.

#### 4.7 Silhouette Newspaper

The Town provides information via the Community Page. The LAAC is also a regular participant providing useful information pertaining to relevant areas of accessibility awareness education.

#### 4.8 Recreation

Vollmer Complex—Accessible fitness equipment in the Fitness Area of the Complex ensures that wheelchair users and persons with other mobility limiting disabilities can participate. In addition, the pool is equipped with a ramp and lift and has a zero grade entry point. A section of the large arena has a designated accessible viewing area of the rink. Group programs for persons with disabilities are encouraged at the Complex.

#### 4.9 Infrastructure Review

The Committee received a presentation from Derek Weckers and Nicole Caza of Dillon Consulting on development plans for the Vollmer Culture & Recreation Complex. A question and answer period ensued and the Committee provided suggestions for accessible features.

#### 4.10 Accessible Customer Service Policy

Town Council adopted an Accessible Customer Service Policy (copy attached), which had been endorsed and recommended by the Committee. The Director of Council Services/Clerk is responsible for the policy and will ensure the Province 's reporting requirements are met.

#### 4.11 Call Service 211

On November 22, 2007 a 211 service was launched for residents of Windsor & Essex County. 211 is an information and referral service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with multi-lingual and TTY capability. Calls are answered by specialists in the field of Information & Referral relating to human services, regardless of whether or not the services are delivered by government or non-government service providers. Persons with disabilities benefit from this accessible service with information and referrals to a wide variety of agencies such as: Accessible Employment Resource Centre, Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Family Support Group, Canadian Mental Health Association, Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for the Disabled, etc.

### **5.0 MATTERS TO BE REVIEWED**

The Committee continues to identify barriers throughout the municipality and develop strategies as to how these barriers can be reduced and/or eliminated and develop ways to ensure that no new barriers will be created.

The Town will continue to review a number of the Town's bylaws and policies throughout 2010, including:

- a review of the parking regulations as contained in the Town's zoning bylaw.

The Committee will continue to provide input into site plans being brought forward for development within the Town.

### **6.0 ONGOING WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

In addition to the requirements of the legislation, the Committee will also be developing a number of resources in order to enhance both the removal of barriers and education to the community at large. These initiatives will include:

1. Continue to foster partnerships for community involvement.
2. Continue to network with other advisory committees and provide input into the quarterly Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committees.
3. Investigate the availability of workshops offered throughout the province.
4. Continue to encourage municipal departments to consider accessibility when developing annual budgets with a view to increasing accessibility and removing barriers.
5. Ongoing accessible customer service training and incorporation into employee orientation.
6. Review upcoming additional accessibility regulations.

## **7.0 MAKING THE PLAN AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC**

It is important that the public become aware of and have access to the Municipal Accessibility Plan. Copies of this plan will be made available at the municipal office, on the municipal website, and at the community library. Further, upon request at the Clerk's office, a copy of the Plan may be available in alternate formats. All members of the public are encouraged to review the plan and submit comments to the Advisory Committee. Comments can be submitted through the Clerk's Office located at 5950 Malden Road, LaSalle, Ontario, N9H 1S4.