

# **2010 Annual Accessibility Plan**

**A Joint Accessibility Plan for the City  
of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo**



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## **City of Kitchener and City of Waterloo** **2010 Joint Accessibility Plan**

### **Executive Summary**

This report was prepared as required in order to meet the obligations of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Plan describes the actions each of the participating municipalities took in 2009 and the areas to be reviewed, including measures and actions, in 2010. The Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are proud to present the Joint Plan and to report on the steps that are being taken to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in our communities.

### **BACKGROUND**

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

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law “to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their full involvement in the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province”. The ODA applies to all municipalities, hospitals, district school boards, colleges, universities, public transportation organizations, the Ontario Government, ministries and agencies.

The ODA requires municipalities to prepare annual accessibility plans and to get advice from an accessibility advisory committee on the contents of the Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in each municipality’s by-laws, policies, practices and services. The accessibility plan must be made available to the public.

At present, the Ministry has retained the services of Charles Beer to conduct an independent and arms length audit of the ODA and the impact on the current regulations on the ability to improve accessibility for persons with a disability. We anticipate the results of his review in February 2010.

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

The AODA focuses on improving accessibility in areas such as buildings and spaces, employment, customer service, information and communications and transportation in the private, government and broader public sector. The AODA intends to achieve an accessible Ontario on or before January 1, 2025. To do so, mandatory and enforceable standards will be implemented. These Standards include:

##### *Customer Service Standard*

- Established as regulation 429-07 on January 1, 2008
- Municipalities required to comply by January 1, 2010

##### *Transportation Standard*

- Currently with the Minister. Awaiting the decision to accept, accept with changes or reject.

##### *Information and Communication Standard*

- Currently with the Minister. Awaiting the decision to accept, accept with changes or reject.

##### *Employment Standard*

- Currently with the Minister. Awaiting the decision to accept, accept with changes or reject.

##### *Built Environment Standard*

- Public review of document made available with responses due Fall 2009.

More information on the Standards can be found at [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca)

## **Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)**

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee was established to advise the participating Councils on the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the Joint Plan. The participating municipalities include the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, the Region of Waterloo and the Townships of Woolwich, Wellesley and North Dumfries. The Councils also seek advice from GRAAC on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises that the municipalities purchase, build, renovate or leases as municipal capital facilities. GRAAC also reviews site plans and drawings for new municipal buildings or developments (as per Section 41 of the Planning Act) that the Committee selects.

In 2009, GRAAC had the Built Environment Sub-Committee – to review and comment on site plans and the Transportation Sub-Committee – to examine transportation issues within the scope of municipal responsibility. These issues may include: travel by pedestrians, transit (conventional or specialized transit), taxi or use of a personal vehicle.

### **GRAAC members for 2009:**

Taposhi Batabyal ( Co-Chair)	Sharon Ward Zeller (Co-Chair)
Amy Ross	Brad Ullner
Gail Brunsdon	Anthony Cashin
Sharon Giles	James Hunsberger
Myron Steinman	Kurt Schneider
Gordon Cummer	Ken Parker

### *Built Environment Sub-Committee members for 2009:*

Sharon Ward-Zeller	Amy Ross
Brad Ullner	Kurt Schneider
Saul Herzog	Gordon Cummer
Paula Saunders	

### *Transportation Sub-Committee members for 2009:*

Amy Ross	Sharon Giles
Sharon Ward-Zeller	Mike Begin
Ken Parker	Taposhi Batabyal
Anthony Cashin (since April 2009)	

## **Staff Contacts**

GRAAC operates with the support of staff representatives from each of the participating municipalities. The following staff may be contacted for additional information related to the Joint Plan, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee or the municipalities involved in this Plan:

City of Kitchener – Kelly Steiss, Inclusion Coordinator  
200 King Street West, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7  
519-741-2226 or [kelly.steiss@kitchener.ca](mailto:kelly.steiss@kitchener.ca)

City of Waterloo – Kelly Steiss, Inclusion Coordinator  
100 Regina Street South, Waterloo, ON N2J 4A8  
519-747-8651 or [ksteiss@city.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:ksteiss@city.waterloo.on.ca)

## **SECTION 1**

**Note:** For the purposes of this report, 'Joint' refers to both the city of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo

**2009 Status Updates**

**Information/Communication Barriers**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Provide signage for the public at the Clerk's desk that assistive listening devices (phonic ears and FM systems) are available for use at Council and Standing Committee meetings.	Complete	Information signage also available in Council Chambers and as a standard item on notices for public meetings	Clerks and Corporate Services
Develop a policy for providing American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters at Council and Standing Committee meetings	Carry forward	Because of the limited resources with respect to ASL, staff are investigating alternate solutions	Clerks and Corporate Services
Implementation of TextNet	Complete	TextNet was launched June 1, 2009	Information Technology Corporate Services
Policy for all staff to place the TextNet number on all external communications	Complete	It was determined that the development of a practice as oppose to a policy would be a better approach. Practices have been established for the inclusion of this number on all external communications	All
Develop communications strategy for staff and public on process for requesting materials in alternate formats.	Carry forward	This to be further developed in compliance with the Information and Communication Standard.	All

**Technological Barriers**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Plans for website overhaul that will make the use of HTML code that is more reader friendly	Carry forward	Overhaul of websites still in process.	City of Kitchener - Information Technology Corporate Services City of Waterloo – Information Systems
Work towards compliance with W3C standards	Carry forward	Both the City of Kitchener and City of Waterloo are working towards an overhaul of their websites. Need to ensure that this requirement complies with the Standard.	City of Kitchener - Information Technology Corporate Services City of Waterloo – Information Systems

### Policy/Practice Barriers

Action	Status	Details	Department Responsible
Continue to incorporate the consideration of accessibility into the Community Investment Strategy	Complete	Grant applications now involve a process for the consideration of accessibility.	City of Kitchener - Community Services City of Waterloo – Recreation and Leisure Services
Coordinate initiatives from the checklist in the Special Events manuals (phase 1)	Complete	Staff are using the checklist in their planning.	City of Kitchener – Community Services City of Waterloo – Special Events
Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) to review the special events checklist and provide comment/feedback (phase 2)	Carry forward	GRAAC to review the checklist in 2010	Special Events
Review policies and practices with respect to recruitment and interviewing	Carry forward	Waterloo is currently reviewing the recruitment policy The Employment Standard will have more direction	City of Kitchener – Human Resources City of Waterloo – Human Resources
GRAAC to review the emergency template document to ensure that it addresses needs for individuals with various disabilities	Carry forward	Awaiting direction from the Information and Communication Standard. In the meantime staff have created a template that addresses the needs for individuals with various disabilities and that it is consistent across facilities.	City of Kitchener City of Waterloo
To review the policy with respect to availability of specialty golf carts at Golf North	Complete	Golf North has established a Player Accessibility Plan	Recreation and Leisure Services

### Physical/Architectural Barriers

Action	Status	Details	Department Responsible
Implementation of the results of the Accessibility Audit	Ongoing	Upgrades and improvements made to a number of areas. Full details are contained in the section: Notable Successes (on page 6 of this report). Anticipating further direction from the Accessible Built Environment Standard.	City of Kitchener – Facilities Management, Corporate Accessibility Steering Group City of Waterloo – Asset Management, Facilities Services

## **2009 Notable Successes**

### **Joint Initiatives**

#### Accessibility Legislation – Standards review

- Both City of Kitchener and City of Waterloo provided comment to the Standards Development Committees with respect to the Information and Communication Standard, the Employment Standard and the Built Environment Standard.

#### Customer Service Legislation

- The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy was adopted in both the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo.
- Accessibility Standards trainer was hired to develop and deliver the training required under the Customer Service regulation
- Staff and volunteers in both the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo received training.
- Statement is included on all bid opportunities of the responsibility of those vendors delivering service on behalf of the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo to ensure that the staff they employ to perform these tasks are trained in Accessible Customer Service.

#### Employment

- Staff are involved in the Steering Group and in Focus Group interviews with the Making Cents of Abilities project. This is a Trillium funded project with the aim to improve employment opportunities for individuals with a disability in the Waterloo Wellington region.

### **City of Kitchener**

#### Customer Service Regulation

- A number of programs across the City provided additional individual support to facilitate the participation of some individuals in the programs.
- Received feedback from participants involved in the special needs golf lessons that the positive staff attitude and approach was exemplary and contributed to their enjoyment in this program.
- Individual accommodations and support were provided to an individual to facilitate their involvement and attendance at a Rangers game. Provided phones with adjustable volume, made an exception to the registration policy for a person who could not wait in line to register, adapted the Tai Chi program by providing an opportunity to participate using a chair.
- Provided a number of sessions to staff on mental health awareness training.
- Included a statement on the Neighbourhood Association registration forms that accommodations are available, upon request.
- Ads in the Neighbourhood Association newsletters with information on the PAL Card.
- Planning for the delivery of individual accommodations and support for attendance at the Olympic Torch relay.

#### Information and Communication

- In some programs, where there is an identified need, additional mailings are sent to participants to remind them of the program in which they registered.

#### Employment Standard

- Staff have organized a Committee of staff from the CNIB, the CHS and KW Habilitation to act as advisors on the anticipated requirements under the Employment Standard and as a resource to the City of Kitchener recruiting team.

(City of Kitchener continued)

#### **Built Environment**

- Improved access to facilities by painting yellow strips on stairs at the Downtown Community Centre
- At the Mill-Courtland Community Centre, new flooring was installed with a high color contrast at the border.
- Fire Safety House, a training trailer for use in elementary schools was equipped with strobe lights and ramps for wheelchair access.
- Improved lighting in the Conestoga Room.

#### **Other**

- Provided accommodations to volunteer positions to support the participation of a couple of individuals in volunteer opportunities

### **City of Waterloo**

#### **Customer Service Regulation**

- Provided accommodation to volunteer positions to enable participation in volunteer opportunities offered at the City of Waterloo.
- Provided accommodations to enable participation in a program by providing a 3-D map of a building and developed strategies to plan for participation
- Marketing/Special Events – held pre-event meetings and post-event review with event organizers on the needs and/or changes required to make an event/site accessible

#### **Built Environment**

- Inclusive and accessible design of the Public Square
- Soap dispensers at all facilities re-located as per the accessibility audit
- Installed new wheel chair accessible door with push button operators to track at Rec. Complex
- Installed glass sliding doors to library at Albert McCormick
- Installed glass sliding doors at Erbsville Centre
- Washroom renovation at main library
- Renovated main entrance at Service Centre to make it barrier free, including customer service counter
- Designed new Finance counter to be accessible
- Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex purchase portable signs to enhance the number of accessible spaces available during large events.
- RIM – installation of shower bars in the Fitness Centre men’s changeroom; provided for the better location of benches along the upper hallways; installation of new picnic tables
- Development Approvals Division – new urban design policies and guidelines that emphasize barrier free access for new site development; barrier free reviewed at site plan and building permit stage
- Guidelines developed for the inclusion of the TTY number on all materials
- Installed larger fonts on arterial road signs for better visibility

#### **Employment**

- In Community, Culture & Recreation Services, now includes as part of the job functions, a requirement to adhere to compliance with the accessibility legislation and provides for measurements to demonstrate compliance.

**SECTION 2**

### 2010 Plan of Activities

#### **Customer Service Regulation**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Develop a plan to meet the ongoing training requirements for the Customer Service regulation	February 19, 2010	Human Resources Inclusion Services
GRAAC to review the special events checklist and provide comment/feedback	December 31, 2010	Special Events

#### **Information/Communication Standard**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Develop a resource list of alternate/acceptable formats when ASL Interpreters are not available	December 31, 2011	Inclusion Services
Develop a resource list with respect to alternate formats	March 1, 2010	Inclusion Services
Work towards compliance with respect to the accessibility of web communications (i.e. compliance with W3C standards, HTML code that is reader friendly)	December 31, 2010	Information Technology
Develop communications strategy for staff and public on process for requesting materials in alternate formats.	December 31, 2011	Clerks, Communications and Corporate Services
Investigate the possibility of providing a visual closed captioning box providing ASL during televised Council meetings	December 31, 2010	Clerks

#### **Transportation Standard**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
When the regulation is released, review for compliance requirements	December 31, 2010	Community Services

#### **Employment Standard**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Review policies and practices with respect to recruitment, hiring and interviewing as per the requirements under the Employment Standard	December 31, 2010	Human Resources

**Built Environment Standard**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Department Responsible</b>
Create an implementation plan for compliance with the Built Environment Standard	December 31, 2010	City of Kitchener –Facilities Management City of Waterloo – Asset Management
Review of the status of the Accessibility audit completed by the Herrington Group	December 31, 2010	City of Kitchener –Facilities Management City of Waterloo – Asset Management

**City of Waterloo Technical Resource Group  
For The Joint Accessibility Plan**

<b>Core Business</b>	<b>CMT Rep</b>	<b>Staff Team Rep</b>	<b>ODA Responsibilities</b>
Corporate Services	David Calder	Susan Greatrix Jim Barry	Clerks, bylaw, Mayor's office, legal services
Corporate Communications		Janice Works	Communications plan, publishing access plan, alternate formats, etc Promotion of accessible community info
Purchasing		John Miller	Regard to accessible goods and services
Human Resources		Alison Meunier	Employee accommodations, policies, recruitment
Information Systems		Teresa Soulliere Garry Bezruki	Accessible web site TEXTNET/assistive technology
Asset Management		Kevin Lobsinger	Access upgrades to municipal facilities, project administration
Development Services	Cam Rapp	Ralph Kaminski	Inspection & building code issues
		Bebe Khan	Site plans, standards and policy development, building code issues
Public Works Services	Tim Anderson	Phil Hewitson	Engineering – infrastructure, design of sidewalks, curb cuts, traffic – parking, roads
		Mark Dykstra	Parks, snow removal, playgrounds
Community, Culture & Recreation Services	David Smith	Steve Heldman	Access to facilities and services, cemeteries
		Leta Bulgin	Facility scheduling, program registration processes
		David Smith	Grey Silo Golf Course
		tbd	Programs and Inclusion, aquatics
		Colleen Dostle	Special Event Planning (outdoor)
		Chris Cressman	Emergency Planning – facility services/community evacuation centres
		Cassandra Pacey Lori Ludwig	Capital/operational budget development related to Access plan
Library	Cathy Matyas	Lynda Gale	Access to building, programs, services & accommodations

**Appendix**  
**Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
**Accomplishments**

- Co-Chairs presented and advised Council in both the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo on the importance and value of the inclusion of sidewalks in a neighbourhood.

**Built Environment Sub-Committee**  
**Summary of Buildings and Plans Reviewed in 2009**

**City of Kitchener**

- Kingsdale Community Center
- Consolidated Maintenance Facility
- Kitchener Market Marketplace
- King Street walkabout to identify accessibility concerns during construction
- Williamsburg Community Centre

**City of Waterloo**

- West Side Library/Y
- Deer Run playground
- Drinking fountains for City facilities

In addition, GRAAC members have provided comment as requested under the public review for the Accessible Built Environment Standard.