



**Town of Hanover
ADM-003 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

2023-2025

This document has been prepared in compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

This publication is available on the Town of Hanover website at <http://hanover.ca/accessibility> and may be provided in alternative formats upon request.

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Intent

This 2023 to 2025 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that the Town of Hanover will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in accordance with the requirements communicated under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) (IASR).

Statement of Commitment

The Town of Hanover (The Town) is enriched with a population of varying talents, abilities, and experiences and values the contributions that all staff, residents and visitors make to enhance our community. The Town believes in equal opportunity and diversity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity in accessing programs and services. The Town aims to prevent barriers by designing inclusively and supporting positive approaches and attitudes toward accessibility.

As an organization, the Town respects and upholds the requirements set forth under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its associated Regulations, and strives to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

The Town will establish and maintain policies, practices, and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the built environment, and that support the four core principles as outlined in the AODA:

- **Dignity** - Service is provided in a way that allows persons with disabilities to maintain self respect and the respect of others.
- **Full Inclusion (Independence)** - All people are allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- **Integration** - Service is provided in a way that all persons with disabilities can benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable persons with disabilities to access those services.
- **Equal Opportunity** - Service is provided to persons with disabilities in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods and services equal to that given to others.

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Accessibility Plan

Part I - General Requirements

Establishment of Accessibility Policies

The Town has established accessibility policies and will continue to review and revise these according to regular review schedules, legislative changes and requirements. New and revised policies will be shared with and reviewed by staff, and will include confirmation that staff understand and agree to abide by the content of the policies as an added measure for accountability.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services, Facilities, or Self-service kiosks

The Town works to continually incorporate accessibility features, criteria, and designs as it relates to accessing goods, services, and facilities.

Recent initiatives that have provided increased accessibility include:

- Relocating the service counter at the Civic Centre in the main reception area closer to the lobby entrance. The counter includes standing and seated service areas that can accommodate the use of mobility aids.
- Two-way audio communication devices installed where glass barriers are present at service counters at the Civic Centre and P&H Centre.
- Developing and implementing a Municipal Election Accessibility Plan and executing it successfully in the 2022 election.
- Theatre renovation with new equipment capable of connecting to devices for hearing assistance, or ability for patrons to use Town-provided hearing assist devices during theatre performances.
- Addition of lighting to theatre seating areas and heated outdoor steps leading in to the theatre.
- Installation of an LED sign at the Civic Centre capable of displaying large text and images.
- Installation of auto flush and automatic faucets in Community Hall, Civic Centre and Hanover Medical Clinic washrooms.
- Accessible servery added in the Community Hall.
- Numerous technological and software updates across various departments.
- Addition of motion sensor doors added to the players corridor at the P&H Centre arena, Community Hall entrance, Civic Centre entrances, and Police Station.
- Installation of slip-free flooring in various areas of the Civic Centre and Hanover Medical Clinic.
- Installation of devices to automatically hold doors open in the case an emergency in the Civic Centre, Theatre and Community Hall.
- Installation of high-contrast, raised braille bathroom signage in the Community Hall.

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The Town also works consistently to provide recreational programming and cultural initiatives that serve a wide audience including people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. For example, aquatic staff develop and tailor specialized lesson plans for individuals with unique needs, have increased the frequency of adult and senior swims, and programming such as Chair Yoga has also been provided.

Training on the IASR and Human Rights Code

All Town of Hanover staff and volunteers are required to complete training in accordance with accessibility regulations. Training is available in both electronic and print form to support the diverse needs of staff and volunteers.

Human Resources is investigating and assessing training capabilities available within other modules of the current Human Resources and Payroll system. Investigation will continue through 2023 and beyond, as required. Consideration will be given to streamlining access to training programs, maintaining a central database where all training is tracked, and monitoring for any incomplete training that could result in non-compliance.

Further, various staff remain actively connected with a number of resources that occasionally provide additional training and development opportunities related to a wide variety of accessibility topics. These training opportunities are shared with staff whenever possible. In 2023 multiple Library staff participated in training related to accessible websites.

Part II – Information and Communication

Feedback Process

Mechanisms are in place and are publicly available to allow staff, patrons, and community members to provide feedback to the Town related to accessibility. All feedback received will be reviewed, considered, and shared with the applicable Town facilities throughout the duration of this plan.

Starting in 2022 new CityWide software began being implemented. This software provides an additional avenue for members of the public to provide feedback via a Customer Service Portal and allows improved oversight in case of trending issues. A specific category has been created for accessibility feedback within the system. CityWide also enhances documentation and accountability for the resolution of any concerns which may arise. Software implementation will continue over the next year and beyond, though ability to provide feedback is already in place.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The Town strives to provide efficient and effective service to customers through the provision of information in alternative formats, or through the use of communication supports.

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Throughout 2023 and beyond, the Town aims to develop and provide resources and policies to support staff in creating accessible documents, and understand how to effectively provide supports to persons with disabilities. The Town recognizes that this is an area which could require training for staff and incorporating certain accessibility features within standard Town print and electronic materials.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic new processes and technologies were adopted to administer public meetings both in-person and virtually via Zoom. The Town implemented policies providing for electronic participation by both staff and members of the public and aims to keep this process in place moving forward. A live, closed-captioned feed of public meetings can be attended directly within Zoom or through live stream on Facebook. A recording of the meeting is also made available on YouTube and Wightman TV to provide a much wider opportunity for participation and staying informed. Technology in Council Chambers includes multiple large television displays, a new audio system, and accessible desks with extended microphones that are compatible for use with assistive hearing devices.

Administration is in the process of implementing Escribe agenda management software which publishes information in both PDF and html accessible formats. This software also includes ability to stream meetings live with closed-captioning. This functionality will be considered as part of updates being made to the Town's website and related capabilities.

Building and Planning has adopted the use of Cloudpermit, a software program that allows online building permit applications, payment and correspondence. This has increased ability for the public to submit and work through the application process. The department is considering increasing Cloudpermit capabilities in the future to administer planning applications in the same way.

Emergency Procedures Plans, or Public Safety Information

Emergency plans are established for all Town facilities. Individual plans may be developed or incorporated within existing plans as required for the individual needs of staff with disabilities. Emergency procedures are shared and will be made available in alternative formats as required and upon request.

Emergency evacuations are practiced in the form of Fire Drills, often with various members of the public present within Town facilities. The Town will continue to monitor effectiveness of emergency evacuation plans throughout 2023 to 2025 and address any barriers as may become evident.

The Hanover Fire Department provides exemplary rescue efforts to all within their service area. Fire Department staff are thoroughly trained and make rescue of all persons a top priority in emergency situations. The Fire Department provides continuous education to the public to prevent and address fires and other emergency situations.

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Each year the Town's Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) ensures all members of the Emergency Control Group (ECG) participate in training and mock scenarios. Participation in these activities ensures the ECG is thinking about the best interests and needs of all community members, including those with disabilities, so the best response can be provided where a real emergency occurs.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

Improvements for ease of access and availability of information on the Town's website has been occurring since before 2023 and will continue to occur as required. Accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA requirements will be considered within updates to the current website and content as required and in accordance with implementation deadlines under the Standard.

The Town is looking into a new website platform that will be compliant with WCAG requirements. The request for proposal includes the provision that the website must be AODA compliant. Website upgrades aim to work with Escribe agenda management software to provide closed-captioned live feeds of public meetings.

Public Library

In accordance with the requirements of the AODA, and IASR, the Hanover Public Library will consider accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services or facilities for the Hanover Public Library, except where it is not practicable to do so.

The library will review and prioritize items on an ongoing basis, taking into consideration urgency of barriers, time constraints and available funds. In cases where it is determined that accessibility criteria and features are not practicable or available, the Hanover Public Library will provide an explanation upon request.

The Hanover Public Library recognizes the need for accessible formats and content within the library. The library maintains a supply of audio books, large print materials, low vocabulary adult interest books, Daisy audiobooks from the Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB) as well as a Daisy Reader available for borrowing. The library houses a few braille items, a magnifying reader, hand-held magnifiers, and a public computer with a large print, high-contrast keyboard and easily found accessibility functions. In addition to this, the library will provide accessible formats upon request, where reasonable.

Recently the Library acquired new accessible technology in the form of Daisy audiobook players that store multiple downloaded audiobooks from the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) collection. These devices are available by members of the public.

The Hanover Public Library plans to continue to supply accessible formats and content where available and will consider accessibility within library initiatives.

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Part III – Employment

Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection Processes

The Human Resources function within the Town's structure supports an inclusive environment and ensures the Town maintains its status as an inclusive employer that values diversity.

People with disabilities are encouraged to apply to positions which interest them, and are notified on each job posting that accommodations are available throughout the recruitment process. Applicants are asked to notify the Town when accommodations are required so appropriate and timely action may be taken in support of a successful recruitment experience.

Policies and related guidelines and forms have been developed to provide hiring managers or supervisors with the information and tools they require to ensure accessibility is considered throughout their hiring, assessing, and selecting process. These policies will continue to be maintained moving forward.

Informing Employees of Supports

The Town takes a proactive approach during the onboarding process to learn whether any new hire requires accommodations prior to the start of employment. The Town wishes to ensure that appropriate accommodations, where possible, are in place prior to a new employee beginning their role. Human Resources ensures that all employees are informed upon hire that policies are in place for the provision of supports and accommodations related to disability. This information is provided to hires through multiple avenues during hiring and onboarding to help ensure support is well-known.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Employees are welcome to request information pertaining to their work or that is generally available to staff in an accessible or alternative format.

The Town will make continuous efforts throughout the duration of this plan to consult with those who require supports and/or alternative formats to ensure they are provided with a reasonable format that is suitable for their needs.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

The health and safety of all employees is of the utmost importance to the Town. The Town recognizes that existing Emergency Response Plans may not be suitable for all persons; and where that situation arises, individual emergency plans will be developed and documented in consultation with the employee, supervisor, and Human Resources in accordance with HR-019 Individual Accommodation & Emergency Response Plans Policy and related protocols.

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Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

Where an employee identifies as having a disability, Human Resources will work with the employee and their supervisor to determine and implement appropriate and reasonable accommodations and supports in accordance with HR-019 Individual Accommodation & Emergency Response Plans Policy and related protocols. This process is based on a collaborative approach that ensures all parties are well informed of and agreeable to the plans set in place.

Return to Work Process

The Town is committed to supporting employees in their return to work through the provision of effective accommodations. The Town maintains HR-023 Return to Work Policy and related protocols. This Return to Work Policy and Individual Accommodation & Emergency Response Policy work in tandem to ensure a comprehensive and effectively supported return to work.

Performance Management and Career Development and Advancement

Performance reviews are conducted on a regular schedule, usually annually or after the completion of probationary periods. Individual Accommodations Plans will be considered as part of this review process to ensure appropriate supports are in place to foster the success of the employee in their role.

All Town employees are encouraged to set goals related to career development and advancement. Accessibility needs will be considered within annual performance reviews and development plans on an ongoing basis.

Part IV – Transportation

The Town does not presently provide Town-owned transportation services; however, the Town is still committed to accessibility of transportation services within the municipality and will:

- Consult with the AODA, the public, and persons with disabilities in development of accessible design criteria in the construction, renovation, or replacement of bus stops/shelters, including steps to meet the goal of accessible stops/shelters;
- Consult with persons with disabilities and the public to determine the proportion of accessible taxis required in the community, including steps to meet the need;
- Ensure taxicabs do not charge higher or additional fees to persons with disabilities;
- Ensure taxicabs do not charge a fee for storage of assistive devices; and
- Ensure taxicabs have appropriate information displayed on the rear bumper and available in an accessible format to passengers.
- Liaise with and support Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART), a local organization that provides accessible transportation to the region.

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Part IV.1 – Design of Public Spaces

Recreation Trails and Beach Access Routes

Where recreational trails owned and maintained by the Town are constructed or redeveloped, consultation will take place regarding the slope of the trail, need for and placement of ramps, rest areas or other amenities. Consultation will take place through discussions at public meetings held by the County of Grey Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (GCJAAC). Consideration will be given to all technical requirements as indicated within Regulation 80.9 under the IASR for town-owned recreation trails which are redeveloped or constructed.

At present Bridge One and Bridge Two along the Hanover Community Trails require replacement, which is set to occur in 2023. The GCJAAC will be consulted for input once more information is available. Bridge Three and Bridge Four are set to be upgraded in 2024.

Cedar East and Bren Lea Estates are both subdivisions under development in Hanover. Each of these subdivisions include trails which are currently owned by the developer. In the future these trails may become owned and maintained by the municipality. If and when that occurs, any constructions or redevelopments of these trail sections will be completed in accordance with the AODA.

The Town does not have beach access routes at this time.

Outdoor Public Eating Areas

Outdoor public eating areas which are constructed or redeveloped and are owned and maintained by the Town will comply with Regulations 80.16 and 80.17 under the IASR. A minimum of twenty percent (20%) of seating will be accessible to those using mobility aids by providing a firm, steady path of clearance leading to the seating and around the seating area. Any outdoor eating areas which are redeveloped or constructed during the term of this plan will be done so in accordance with IASR requirements.

Outdoor Play Spaces

The Town of Hanover owns and maintains a number of outdoor play spaces. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee (PRC Advisory Committee) started a review of various Town parks in 2019. That review continued into subsequent years and, after consultation with the public and the GCJAAC, updates were made to the Kinsmen Park and 4th Street Crescent Park, including the installation of additional accessible swings, accessible ground cover, and accessible play features.

While not specifically an outdoor play space, the Town consulted the GCJAAC regarding updates to the Heritage Square Amphitheatre and Stage. Upon receiving comment from the committee, Hanover Council amended the scope of the project to include adding an accessible ramp and

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railing to the amphitheater and stage. Construction began in 2022 and is nearing completion in 2023.

Plans are in motion to develop a splash pad in Hanover at a location that is yet to be determined. 2023 will be spent raising funds for the project with construction being considered towards 2024. Leadership will ensure that public consultation is completed and the GCJAAC is consulted as part of this project.

Should future plans be made to construct any other new play space or to redevelop an existing play space, public consultation will take place as well as review of plans by the GCJAAC. The Town will consider all feedback and incorporate accessibility features and elements within play spaces to support enjoyment of the space by persons of various abilities.

Exterior Paths of Travel and Parking

The Building and Public Works departments maintain up-to-date knowledge on requirements related to the design and construction or redevelopment of exterior paths of travel and parking spaces.

PW-004 Sidewalk Installation Policy was adopted in 2021 and specifically addresses accessibility requirements, including compliance with the AODA. Under this policy, a new sidewalk was installed on 11th Street between 15th Avenue and 17th Avenue in 2022. Plans for 2023 include extensions to areas of sidewalks on 11th Street, 14th Street and 24th Avenue. 2024 and 2025 include plans to further extend areas of the sidewalk on 24th Avenue and 7th Street.

All building and redevelopment projects to date and those which will occur in the future will maintain compliance with IASR regulations and other related legislation. Site plans for developments, including exterior paths of travel and parking areas, will be reviewed by the GCJAAC, where possible.

Service Counters and Waiting Areas

Patrons and members of the public visit Town facilities which make use of service counters and waiting areas.

Currently, there are no plans to install new service counters or waiting areas in existing municipal facilities. The service counter in the Civic Centre has been relocated closer to the lobby entrance and includes an area for service at standing height, and also at sitting height to accommodate those who require the use of mobility aids. Two-way communication devices have been installed at glass partitions at service counters at both the P&H Centre and Civic Centre, and additional lighting has been installed at the Civic Centre service counter for those who require it. Projects which arise throughout 2023, 2024 or 2025 will include consideration of IASR requirements.

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Maintenance

The Town employs a number of qualified individuals who are responsible for the preventative maintenance of buildings, features and infrastructure, including accessibility features. Maintenance plays a key role in ensuring that accessibility features are improved wherever possible throughout Town facilities and infrastructure. At present, a lighting retrofit is proposed for the P&H Centre in 2024, and keyless Civic Centre Office entry and automatic doors are being considered for Civic Centre washrooms, though a fully accessible washroom is readily available at present.

Where a disruption of service occurs that impacts accessibility, the Town will implement its Temporary Service Disruption protocol as included in ADM-001 Accessible Customer Service Policy. Information pertaining to service disruptions will be posted in visible locations within the physical facility experiencing the issue, where possible, as well as posted on the Town website and social media platforms on an ongoing and as-needed basis.

Projects

Building projects and developments will be completed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code, which includes accessibility provisions.

At this time there are no plans to extensively renovate public Town-owned buildings. However, smaller changes take place on an ongoing basis to increase the accessibility of Town facilities where possible. These changes include the installation of automatic doors, auto-flush toilets, touch-free automatic lighting, low-profile panic bars on doors, automatic taps, soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers.

Plans are in motion to build a new Fire Station starting in 2023 into 2024. Plans include the provision for accessibility within public areas of the facility, and the CGJAAC will be consulted accordingly as the project progresses. The project as a whole will provide improved operational efficiencies and possibilities that will better serve the community as a whole.

Part IV.2 – Customer Service

Establishment of Policies

The Town has created, implemented, and maintained policies regarding the provision of goods, services, and facilities to persons with disabilities in the form of ADM-001 Accessible Customer Service Policy and ADM-002 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy. ADM-001 Accessible Customer Service details the use of support persons and service animals, temporary service disruptions, training, feedback processes, and accessible formats.

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ADM-001 and ADM-002 aim to be reviewed and updated during the term of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Once updated these policies will be shared with and reviewed by all staff. This will support staff in understanding how they can support accessibility both internally and externally.

Additional Initiatives

The Town wishes to provide support to businesses within the community related to accessibility. The Town aims to provide supports to local businesses on an ongoing basis either through individual Town initiatives. Currently, Hanover's Community Improvement Program (CIP) provides incentives to promote development and revitalization projects, including assisting local businesses in making accessibility improvements.

The Town of Hanover also supports developers and business owners with considering accessibility in a more direct manner by bringing many different types of site plans to the GCJAAC for review and comment, even when they fall outside the mandated scope of public consultation under the AODA. The Town takes pride in liaising with the GCJAAC and providing their valuable feedback to developers in support of becoming a more accessible community overall.