



**The Corporation of the City of
Niagara Falls**

**Multi Year
Accessibility Plan
2013 to 2017**

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SECTION 1: Municipal Information

Municipality: The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls

Contact Information:

The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls
4310 Queen Street
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6X5

Local Phone Number: 905-356-7521
Local Fax: 905-356-5110
Email: accessibility@niagarafalls.ca

Key Contacts:

Jason MacLean Human Resources Specialist City of Niagara Falls Human Resources Department 905-356-7521 ext 4294 jmac@niagarafalls.ca	Dean Iorfida Director of Clerks & Bylaw City of Niagara Falls Clerks Department 905-356-7521 ext 4271 diorfida@niagarafalls.ca
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Population

The population, according to the 2011 census, is 82,997

Municipal Highlights

The City of Niagara Falls provides a vast array of year-round activities for its local residents and visiting tourists. Beautifully-maintained biking and walking trails line the world-famous Niagara gorge while numerous golf courses, baseball diamonds, playing fields, swimming pools and rinks unite local citizens and contribute to a strong sense of community. Whether you currently reside in Niagara Falls or are planning to locate here, we invite you to explore and discover why Niagara Falls is a great place to call home.

Niagara Falls is the 2nd largest of 12 municipalities within the Region of Niagara. The remaining 11 municipalities include the following:

- FORT ERIE, Population 29,960
- GRIMSBY, Population 25,325
- LINCOLN, Population 22,487
- **NIAGARA FALLS, Population 82,997**
- NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Population 15,400
- PELHAM, Population 16,598
- PORT COLBORNE, Population 18,424
- ST. CATHARINES, Population 131,400
- THOROLD, Population 17,931
- WAINFLEET, Population 6,356
- WELLAND, Population 50,631
- WEST LINCOLN, Population 13,837

Source: Stats Canada 2011

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls is comprised of a Mayor and 8 City Councilors.

SECTION 2: Legislation and Interpretation

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) received Royal Assent and is now law. The purpose of the AODA 2005 is to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. Standards will be developed by the Government of Ontario in collaboration with persons with disabilities, representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy. Both the public and private sectors that provide goods and services to people in Ontario will have to meet certain accessibility standards in five (5) important areas which include the following:

- Accessible Customer Service (O.Reg. 429/07)
- Accessible Transportation (O. Reg. 191/11)
- Accessible Information & Communications (O. Reg. 191/11)
- Accessible Employment Standards (O. Reg. 191/11)
- Accessible Built Environment (O. Reg. 191/11)

Public sector organizations including government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, public transportation organizations, school boards, colleges and universities are required to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organizations strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under Ontario Regulation 191/11. The accessibility plan sets out the steps an organization will take to comply with Ontario's accessibility laws and prevent and remove accessibility barriers.

Communities are changing throughout the Province of Ontario as the population ages. Approximately one in seven people in Ontario have a disability. Over the next 20 years, that number will rise as the population ages. Creating a province where every person who lives or visits can participate fully makes good sense – for our people, our businesses, and our community. A mandate to remove barriers by 2025 will allow communities to fully accommodate an aging population, persons with disabilities; everyone.

Like other municipalities in Ontario, an Accessibility Plan is prepared to address any issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the life

of the community. Ultimately, the Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede residents and visitors from accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls. Accessibility planning will no longer be an afterthought but instead will become ingrained in the normal operating policies and procedures.

SECTION 3: Definitions

Definitions for “disability” and “barrier” as they appear in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA):

Disability -

- a) 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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”).

Barrier - 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, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”).

Common acronyms:

- AAC = Accessibility Advisory Committee
- FADS = Facility Accessibility Design Standards

- ODA = Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 – Bill 125
- AODA = Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 – Bill 118
- UD = Universal Design
- TTY = Teletypewriter (text communication phone)

Common barriers:

- Architectural = may result from the design of a building
- Attitudinal = refers to persons who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, or persons who display discriminatory behaviours
- Communicational = makes it difficult for people to receive or send information
- Policy / Practice = may result from an organization's policies, practices and protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities

SECTION 3: Departments & Agencies Participating in This Plan

3.1 Department & Agency

- Transportation Services Department
- Planning & Building Services Department
- Human Resources Department
- Clerks & Bylaw Department
- Recreation & Culture Department
- Municipal Works Department
- Information Systems Department
- Mayors Disability Advisory Committee

3.2 Description

Transportation Services Department

In 2008, the Niagara Transit Commission was amalgamated with the City of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls Transit has supplied public transportation for the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada since 1960. Presently, they supply the city with 10 bus routes that deliver passengers to various business areas and medical facilities around Niagara Falls. The City of Niagara Falls is partnering with Falls Management Company, the Niagara Parks Commission, the provincial and federal governments and other key stakeholders to help make the people mover project a reality.

Planning & Building Services Department

Planning and Development is responsible for land use management in the City of Niagara Falls. Growth is directed through a long range planning document called the Official Plan while development is regulated through zoning By-Laws.

Amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Laws are considered at the regularly scheduled City Council Meetings. Minor Variances or simple changes to the Zoning By-Laws are considered by the Committee of Adjustment. Various Mapping is maintained showing road layouts and development, as well as, land use opportunities and constraints.

Building Services Profile

- Permits and inspections of building activities on private property - City-owned properties (buildings)

- Processing, approval, inspection of building construction ensuring compliance with Ontario
- Building Code (which now incorporates Plumbing Code) and related By- Laws (e.g.: Sewer By-Law)
- Lot Grading Control Compliance
- Administration of Municipal Plumbing By-Law (i.e. Standards, Tests and Licensing of Master Plumbers)
- Property Standards

Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department provides a variety of services and management direction in support of City employees and management in general. The City currently employs approximately 520 persons, with a seasonal temporary work force that fluctuates depending upon requirements.

As well as taking care of all the hiring for the municipality our responsibilities include assistance to other departments in matters relating to recruitment, job postings, reorganization, accessibility, and all areas relating to personnel. This would include administration of employee benefits, contract negotiations, Corporate Policy development and management, pensions, Workers Compensation and Health and Safety issues.

Clerks & Bylaw Department

The Clerks & Bylaw Department is responsible for maintaining the official record of all Council meetings, the indexing and retention of all by-laws, agreements and contracts of the City. This department also issues business licenses as the local representative of the Provincial Registrar General which involves the registration of births and deaths and the issuance of marriage licenses. For the most part, the Clerks Department is the initial contact point for the public at City Hall.

Recreation & Culture Department

The Recreation & Culture Department is responsible for a variety of recreation, cultural and leisure opportunities, and is instrumental in organizing many sport tourism initiatives. These programs and services preserve and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

As a team, the staff works with different organizations to identify and fulfill the recreational, cultural and sports needs of the citizens of Niagara Falls.

The Recreation and Culture Department is responsible for the following facilities:

- Arenas (5 pads)
- Pools (5 outdoor pools)
- Community Centres (MacBain Community Centre & Coronation 50 Plus Recreation Centre)
- Niagara Falls History Museum

Mission Statement

A commitment to provide optimum leisure services delivery in the City of Niagara Falls which enhance the quality of life, health, and well-being of our people, our communities, our environment and our economy.

Municipal Works Department

The Municipal department is responsible for a multitude of public services in the City of Niagara Falls including the design, construction maintenance and rehabilitation of our local infrastructure. Additionally, the responsibility for reviewing, monitoring, assessing and analyzing the ongoing condition and operational capacity as well as inspecting activities also lies with Municipal Works.

Project Design, approvals as well as tendering of Capital projects (including new construction, ongoing repair/rehabilitation and replacement), on the various Municipal Infrastructure systems. Municipal Works keeps up to date inventory of all physical assets for the City-wide Municipal Infrastructure Systems.

Information Systems Department

The Information Systems department is responsible for supporting all divisions of the Corporation by evaluating, creating, purchasing, installing, processing, training, maintaining all computer related hardware and software, communications systems, office equipment (photocopiers, faxes), telecommunications systems, GIS and Internet services.

This responsibility extends to networking, operating systems, accessibility formatting, communications networks, phone systems, security systems, applications, programming, mapping, manuals, training, operations, security, policies, standards, procedures and the City web sites.

Mayors Disability Advisory Committee

The Mayor's Disability Advisory Committee was formed in 1997 to deal with accessibility issues in Niagara Falls for disabled persons. The Committee's goals are to educate the public, and increase barrier free accessibility in our community for both residents and visitors of Niagara Falls.

As a committee, they feel that an accessible community is a healthy community. Each year, the Committee recognizes businesses, organizations, service providers, community residents and public buildings who comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA), through presenting them with the Patrick Cummings Memorial Award.

SECTION 4: Outside Consultation Activities

4.1 Target Groups

The Mayors Disability Advisory Committee (or AAC), Sterling Frazer Consulting Services (Brian Kon), Niagara Specialized Transit (NST), the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment and the Regional Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee.

4.2 Consultation Activities

Agency	Mandatory/ Preferred	Status
Mayors Disability Advisory Committee	Mandatory	Ongoing
Sterling Frazer (Brian Kon)	Preferred	Ongoing
Niagara Specialized Transit	Preferred	Ongoing
Ministry of Economic, Trade & Employment	Mandatory	Ongoing
Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee	Preferred	Ongoing

Section 5: Departmental Accessibility Working Group Contacts

Working Group Member	Department / Affiliation	Contact Telephone (905)
Jason MacLean	Human Resources (Staff Liaison to MDAC)	356-7521 ext 4294
Dean Iorfida	Clerks & Bylaw (Staff Liaison to MDAC)	356-7521 ext 4271
Carey Campbell	Mayor's Office	356-7521 ext 4206
Carm Mignelli	Building & Maintenance Services	356-7521 ext 4701
Bob Bolibruck	Planning & Building Development	356-7521 ext 4298
Dave Stuart	Transportation Services	356-7521 ext 4510
Rob McDonald	Recreation Facilities	356-7521 ext 3340
Chris Anders	Municipal Works	356-7521 ext 6206
Shawn Oatley	Information Systems	356-7521 ext 4000
John Grubich	Parking & Traffic	356-7521 ext 5214

SECTION 6: Summary of Initiatives & Projects in 2012 / 2013

Initiative	Department	Barrier	Resources / Comments	Timeframe (Ongoing = initiated and continually addressed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessible Customer Service Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All New Staff Hired in 2012 - 2013 - Administered by HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudinal, communication, policy, practices, sensitivity etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training organized by HR staff, Accessibility Committee Member and incorporated into the Corporate Policy review for Accessible Customer Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing with all new staff. - Develop in-house Customer Service training tool & related policies in compliance with the AODA's mandate of Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy / Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Departments - Administered by HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff expertise - MDAC expertise on accessibility matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing - Incorporate outcomes from all AODA Standards as they become enforced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative format availability for information and technology materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudinal and Communicational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff expertise - MDAC consultation (ex. City materials available in alternative formats upon request) - website updates with accessible technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing - Incorporate requirements from the AODA's Information & Communication Standard

SECTION 6: Summary of Initiatives & Projects 2012 / 2013

Initiative	Department	Barrier	Resources / Comments	Timeframe (Ongoing = initiated and continually addressed)
- Accessibility Events	- MDAC	- Communicational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual BBQ a City Hall in recognition of National Accessibility Awareness Week. - Participation of MDAC members in the Breaking the Barriers Awards. - Annual award nomination of Patrick Cummings Accessibility Award. 	Ongoing
- Accessibility Legislation	- All Departments	- Communicational, Employment, Transportation, Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Liaisons to the MDAC: (City Clerk & HR Specialist) - ensures legislative compliance and implementation into practices - ensures review of draft AODA standards when issued <p>Annual Accessibility Plan for submission to AAC, City Council and Ministry.</p>	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy / Practice and Architectural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff expertise - MDAC expertise - Staff Liaisons to MDAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departmental Accessibility Consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal Works & Transportation Services on Millenium Manor Ramp/Access to Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Architectural & Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure ramp access is safe and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed in 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal Works on Curb Cuts on Queen Street (Near Taps Restaurant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure curb cuts were accessible at sidewalk access. Adoption of MDAC recommendation of new tool for saw cuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed in July 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MDAC on appropriate Curb Cuts at the Mount Carmel & Commisso's Plaza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure appropriate curb cuts were implemented at various sidewalk junctions to allow for accessible travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed in Oct 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair A Van Service (Transportation Services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobility, Customer Service, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure buses/ routes are accessible & hrs of service are same as conventional Transit, as per AODA legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing

SECTION 6: Summary of Initiatives & Projects 2012 / 2013

Initiative	Department	Barrier	Resources / Comments	Timeframe (Ongoing = initiated and continually addressed)
- Accessibility Consulting	- Parking & Traffic (Traffic Signal Lights, Wheelchair parking compliance etc)	- Mobility, Procedural, communicational, Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that private sector organizations are compliant with City bylaw (ie. Wheelchair parking) - Ensure that traffic signals for pedestrians are safe and accessible. - Completion of Audit of intersections with Audible Pedestrian Signals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing - Ongoing - February 2013
- Accessibility Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Departments - Mayors Disability Advisory Committee - Sterling Kon Fraser 	- Physical, Mobility, Architectural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal is to conduct Accessibility Audits on all city facilities. - Staff is preparing to coordinate a train the trainer session so that staff within various departments will be able to conduct internal audits and report to the Mayors Disability Advisory Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 Facilities to date have been completed (City Hall, MacBain Centre, Gale Centre, Scotia Convention Centre and New Museum) - Training was completed in 2011.

SECTION 7: Goals & Objectives for 2013 – 2017

Initiative	Department	Barrier	Resources / Comments	Timeframe (Ongoing = initiated and continually addressed)
- Sidewalk Repairs	- Municipal Works	- Physical/Mobility	- The MDAC will continue to work with the Municipal Works Department in identifying sidewalks throughout the City that need repairing.	- Ongoing
- Accessible Buses/Routes	- Niagara Falls Transit	- Mobility, communicational	- The MDAC will continue to work with Transit to ensure that all new buses are fully accessible and that the number of accessible bus routes increase.	- Ongoing with quarterly meetings with Transit Management staff
- Implementation of 2007 FADS Version	- City Council	- Physical, Visual, Communicational	- Continue with the implementation of the FADS document with all new facilities and or retrofits.	Ongoing
- Road Crossing Protection (audible signals)	- Parking & Traffic	- Architectural, Physical, Visual, Hearing	- The MDAC will continue working with Parking & Traffic to ensure safety and accessibility at traffic lights.	- Ongoing
- MDAC scheduled meetings	- All Departments	- All	- The MDAC will continue to work with staff on various initiatives/projects through its regular monthly meetings	- Ongoing

SECTION 7: Goals & Objectives for 2013 - 2017

Initiative	Department	Barrier	Resources / Comments	Timeframe (Ongoing = initiated and continually addressed)
- Accessibility Audits	- All Departments	- Architectural, Physical/Mobility	- The goal is to continue working toward completing accessibility audits on all City facilities.	- Ongoing - Goal to complete 1-2 audits per year.
- Annual Compliance Strategy with AODA Accessibility Standards	- All Departments - HR to develop Corporate Policies to ensure compliance	- All	- Continue to work and consult with various agencies on the implementation and compliance of AODA Accessibility Standards.	- Ongoing
- Inter-Municipal Specialized Transit	- Niagara Falls Transit - Mayors Disability Advisory Committee	- Transportation	- Staff expertise, MDAC consultation, community consultation - Expanded medical trip criteria now includes employment and education	- Ongoing - Incorporate outcomes expected in the near future from the AODA's Transportation Standard
- Awards / Presentations and Special Events	- MDAC	- Attitudinal, Physical, Policy/Procedural	- Continue to work with staff and the private sector on ensuring the City is accessible and safe. - Recognize local businesses and agencies for exceeding minimum standards in accessibility.	- Ongoing

SECTION 8: Province of Ontario, Legislation and Standards

PREAMBLE: With the implementation of the Province's AODA's standards into Regulation well underway, this Multi-year Accessibility Plan (Section 8) will incorporate regulatory standards into the accessibility planning format. This will allow for greater clarity and tracking capabilities as legislative obligations are introduced.

APPENDICES