



Fort Erie Council Approves 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Addressing Barriers and Enhancing Inclusivity

December 17, 2024

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) mandates the creation, implementation, maintenance, and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan. This plan outlines an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers while meeting the legislation's requirements.

The Town of Fort Erie adopted its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) in 2013, followed by the second MYAP in 2019. The third MYAP was approved by Council at its meeting on December 16, 2024. Annual status reports are presented to Council to highlight the achievements of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) each year.

"As the Town has met all AODA compliance requirements, AAC members felt it was important to reach out to the community to determine priorities for the next five years. Our goal is to make Fort Erie even more accessible," stated AAC Chair Lori Brant. "We wanted our outreach to

reflect the concerns of those with lived experience and ensure the Plan addresses areas identified by the community.”

“The AAC takes great pride in its accomplishments and has great success working with businesses and organizations to improve access. This new plan will continue the awareness and education campaign that the Committee is known for – using a carrot, rather than a stick, we work on finding solutions that work”, stated Councillor Noyes, Council’s representative on the Committee.

Community Engagement and Audits

To gather input, the AAC conducted an extensive outreach program, which included:

- An initial presentation to Council.
- Public consultations at community events.
- A six-week online survey.

In addition, audits of Town facilities, parks, and playgrounds were conducted in June and July. Detailed reports from these audits were included in the Plan.

The Role of the AAC

The Accessibility Advisory Committee comprises nine public members, Councillor Noyes as the Council representative, and staff representatives from Community Service, Building and Facilities department. Committee members played a key role in public consultation, as well as audits and inspections of municipal assets.

Recommendations from the MYAP

Based on community feedback and audit results, the Plan includes the following summarized recommendations:

1. **Compliance:** The Town of Fort Erie will continue to meet its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
2. **Facility Improvements:** Long-term planning and budgeting will include accessibility upgrades in Town facilities, such as automatic doors and improved washrooms.
3. **Parks and Playgrounds:** Long-term planning and budgeting will include accessibility improvements in our community parks, including universal washrooms, benches, pathways, shaded areas, and rubberized surfaces.
4. **Water Access:** The Town will investigate options to improve accessibility to water-based activities.
5. **Sidewalk Maintenance:** Sidewalks and curb cuts will be proactively inspected, maintained, and cleared to ensure smooth travel for all residents.

6. **Parking and Bicycle Access:** A review of on-street parking and municipal parking lots will be conducted to create new accessible parking spaces closer to public buildings, and accessible bicycle paths will be considered.
7. **Barrier Prevention:** The AAC will be consulted on all Master Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, and major projects to ensure no new barriers are created.
8. **Business Collaboration:** The AAC will work with local businesses and organizations to enhance access and foster inclusivity.
9. **Awareness Campaign:** The AAC will lead a campaign to highlight the barriers created when sidewalks and accessible parking spaces are blocked.
10. **Acknowledgment:** Council will recognize efforts to create an inclusive community annually during National AccessAbility Week.

Continued Commitment

The AAC will continue to review community feedback and address concerns where possible. Council supports the AAC through annual funding for training, conferences, and interpretive services. Additionally, funding is provided through the Facility Budget to address identified barriers, with accessible features included in all new playground designs.

Reference: [By-law No. 131 -2024](#) and [MYAP 2024-2029](#)

Contact Us

Town of Fort Erie
1 Municipal Centre Drive,
Fort Erie, ON, L2A 2S6,
Phone: [905-871-1600](tel:905-871-1600)

24-hour Emergency Hotline: [905.871.1600](tel:905.871.1600)

[Send an Email](#)

Town Hall: 1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON L2A 2S6

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