

**The Corporation of the Township of Laurentian Valley**

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2029**

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# Introduction

The Township of Laurentian Valley is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people with Disabilities. Our mission is to strive to deliver to our residents an elevated quality of life and high sense of community while ensuring businesses have an opportunity to grow with us. The Township recognizes the diverse needs of our residents and customers and will strive to eliminate where possible and prevent barriers to accessibility in efforts to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires that Municipalities prepare and maintain multi-year plans to remove accessibility barriers in our municipality. The accessibility plan addresses the identification, prevention and removal of accessibility barriers. This is to be accomplished through the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services of the Municipality.

The 2025-2029 Mutli-Year Accessibility Policy and Plan outlines the policies and actions that the Township of Laurentian Valley has taken in the past, what barriers were removed and it identifies what measures need to be addressed in the future to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. This five-year plan builds on the accomplishments of the 2019-2024 plan. The 2025-2029 plan acts as our accessibility road map, outlining key actions to meet the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. It helps us relay our commitment to accessibility and an inclusive community.

# Laurentian Valley Township Demographics

Laurentian Valley Township was formed by the amalgamation of the former Townships of Stafford-Pembroke and Alice & Fraser on January 1, 2000. 2021 Census Statistics indicate the Municipality has a population of 9,450 residents, with 3877 households. The Township of Laurentian Valley surrounds the City of Pembroke and is south of the Town of Petawawa.

Land uses range from rural residential and farming properties on private water and on-site sewage disposal systems to suburban and residential and highway commercial on municipal water and sewer. There are several blocks of industrial properties in the municipality and regionally significant mineral aggregate resources. The Township has approximately 20 kilometres of Ottawa River frontage.

The Municipality has eight significant properties with structures; the Municipal Office and Public Works Complex, Highway 41 Multi-Use Building, Laurentian Valley Fire Hall, and five Recreational buildings. The Township technically owns the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre Property, however the OVWRC has their own board which manages their site-specific accessibility plan. The recreation facilities are managed by volunteer committees.

# Legislation

The law requires that barriers are identified and removed, in order to provide customer service that is more accessible to people who have disabilities. The Province of Ontario recognized that accessibility is a shared responsibility and passed the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) on December 14, 2001 to require Provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations to review their policies, programs and services.

In June 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) setting the goal of a fully Accessible Ontario by 2025. The purpose of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is to set standards in five areas of customer service, employment, information and communications, public transportation and public spaces. Each of the five standards help organizations to identify and remove barriers to improve accessibility.

The Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act both deal with accessibility but are two different pieces of legislation. The Ontario Human Rights Code is an individual complaints-based legislation that addresses discrimination. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation created under the AODA applies to all organizations in Ontario. Under the Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to equal treatment without discrimination. The Ontario Human Rights Code requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation does not replace or affect the legal rights or obligations that arise under the Human Rights Code and other laws relating to the accommodation of people with disabilities. The IASR applies to all public, private, and not-for-profit organizations with at least one employee and the goal of the AODA and the standards enacted is to make Ontario Accessible by 2025.

The 5 mandatory standards of the AODA are Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces. They mandate how organizations must remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The AODA standards govern how organizations can offer services that meet the needs of all Ontarians, including citizens with disabilities. There are five mandatory standards of AODA that all organizations in Ontario must comply with. The traditional definition of a barrier used in the context of accessibility has been expanded to include obstacles beyond physical boundaries. There are several other categories of barriers to consider, such as:

* Physical Barriers: Features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate entry by persons in a motorized scooter.
* Communication Barriers: Obstacles with processing, transmitting or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read or documents not available in alternate formats.
* Attitudinal Barriers: Prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that a person who has a speech impairment can’t understand you.
* Technological Barriers: Occurs when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.
* Systemic Barriers: Barriers within an organization’s policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, listing a driver’s license as an employment qualification for an office position may prohibit persons with visual impairments from applying.

## Mandatory Standards of AODA - Customer Service Standard

The customer service standard under the AODA outlines requirements for service providers to make their goods, services, and facilities accessible for customers or patrons with disabilities. The Customer Service Standard mandates that service providers must find ways to break down barriers that prevent customers with disabilities from accessing the services they need.

## Mandatory Standards of AODA - Information and communications

The Information and Communications Standard requires organizations to make their information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. This includes accessible formats for print and electronic materials, website accessibility, and accessible communication supports.

## Mandatory Standards of AODA -Employment

The Employment Standard requires that employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities. This includes accessibility in job recruitment, employee training, and accommodation for employees with disabilities.

## Mandatory Standards of AODA -Transportation

The Transportation Standard of the AODA requires transportation service providers to make the features and equipment on routes and vehicles accessible to passengers with disabilities. The Township does not currently provide conventional transportation services (bus, taxi-cab services, etc); however, the Township does support through Gas Tax Funding, the Pembroke-Laurentian Valley Handi-Bus which provides fully accessible door to door transit service for persons with disabilities in the City of Pembroke and the Township of Laurentian Valley.

## Mandatory Standards of AODA - Design of Public Spaces

The standards outline the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for people with disabilities. The IASR design of public spaces standard outlines requirements such as accessibility planning in a range of public spaces, including: trails/beach access routes; outdoor public eating areas; play spaces; accessible parking; exterior paths of travel including sidewalks; accessible pedestrian signals; service counters; fixed queuing lines; waiting areas and the emergency and preventative maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces. These standards only apply to new construction or the redevelopment of existing public spaces and buildings; new constructed municipal outdoor play spaces; and planning and design of recreational trail surfaces.

# Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Corporation of the Township of Laurentian Valley is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people with disabilities. We are dedicated to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and Ontario’s accessibility laws.

The Township of Laurentian Valley understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Laurentian Valley is dedicated to the continuous improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities.

# Accessibility achievements

The Township of Laurentian Valley is working to achieve an accessible and barrier-free community by 2025. The township is committed to assessing its policies, programs, practices, services and facilities to identify, remove or prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

The Council of the Township of Laurentian Valley approved by Resolution No. RM-01-013 on January 19, 2010, the Township’s Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures. Subsequently, Council approved by Resolution No. RM21-01-012 on January 19, 2021 Policy GEN-01 Accessibility Standard Policy.

As required under the Act, the Township ensures that the following persons received training about the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities:

* Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
* Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The Township is implementing the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan which will provide accessible features for those who attend the programs and use the services provided. By-law 2022-08-038 adopted the Township of Laurentian Valley’s first Parks and Recreation Master Plan prepared by Sierra Planning and Management, which will be used to guide the communities’ direction in planning and decision making for parks and trails, recreation and cultural facilities and services, and programming and events to 2032.

The Township has completed the process for the Township of Laurentian Valley Active Transportation Plan prepared by Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited whereby a key principle of the plan is to provide solutions to remove physical and non-physical barriers to participation in active transportation, including design concepts. The vision of the plan is to provide safe mobility choices for all residents and visitors regardless of age or ability through connected network of trails, on-road routes and sidewalks that are shared by users.

The Township provided tabulators for use in the past two elections and provided alternative formats of casting ballots in past two elections.

The Township has recently updated their website and the website is WCAG 2.0 compliant. The Township has passed a disabled parking By-law No. 03-03-167 in March 2003. Short form wording has been approved by the Crown. The set fine is $300.00 as required by the province. Disabled parking and access are considered when planning new developments with minimum requirements related to size and number included in the Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

The Building Department has enforced Section 3.8 since its introduction into the Ontario Building Code.

There are references to accessibility in the Official Plan and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

The municipality owns several buildings and audits were completed in 2004, 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2019, whereby several barriers were identified and remedial work was completed. Several barriers that were removed are contained within this report and a list of other barriers removed can be found in the 2014-2018 multi-year accessibility plan. The Municipality has advised the recreation committees that manage the recreation facilities of their obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the deficiencies found during the completed inspections.

There are a couple of areas in the Municipality that are signed to caution traffic for local disabled persons. This signage has been done on a request basis in the past.

The Municipality provides grants to the Friends of the Disabled towards the expenses for operating the Pembroke Handi-bus service.

The Township have formed accessibility partnerships. Staff are members of the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (O.N.A.P.), a group of public sector accessibility professionals working collectively to remove barriers through the sharing of information and experiences. Township staff also work in partnership with the County of Renfrew and other local municipalities to identify and eliminate barriers to accessibility.

# Barriers Identified

The following chart gives a list of deficiencies that were previously identified in the 2019 to 2024 plan; the strategy for their removal; and the status of completion for each of the municipally owned buildings:

# Laurentian Valley Municipal Office

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| None identified |  |  | n/a |

## Public Works Complex

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| None identified |  |  | n/a |

## Highway 41 Complex

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Parking spaces are not painted and signed | Architectural | Paint lines for parking and install signs | Complete |
| There is a 1” bump at door threshold | Architectural |  | Complete-New door installed to remove bump |
| There is no barrier free accessible washroom in this building | Architectural | If and when this building is renovated it will have to be redesigned to accommodate an accessible washroom | Outstanding |
| Lunchroom, shop area not accessible | Architectural | Redesign layout to provide a route to the lunchroom and shop area. | Outstanding |

## Stafford Recreation Centre

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Paved parking lot, not marked spaces | Architectural | Mark a couple of spaces | Complete |
| The washrooms are not signed as being accessible | Architectural | Municipal Staff to locate a supplier and obtain proper signs for all the Municipal buildings | Complete |
| Door knobs are round twist type | Architectural | When replacing door hardware, lever type hardware is to be specified | Outstanding |
| Faucet handles are round type | Architectural | When replacing faucets, lever type hardware is to be specified | Outstanding |

## Splash Pad

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Parking, same concerns as Stafford Recreation | Architectural | Mark a couple of spaces | Complete |

## Shady Nook Recreation Centre

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Door opening device has round knobs | Architectural | Change door knobs to lever type | Front Complete – Rear to be complete |
| Hall phone height is too high | Architectural | Lower phone so that it is accessible (not a public phone) | Complete |

## Laurentian Valley Fire Hall

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Parking spaces are not painted and signed | Architectural | Paint lines for parking and install signs | Complete |
| There is a 2” bump at door threshold | Architectural | Repair concrete walkway at door | Complete |
| Waste receptacle blocks access to water closet in the women’s washroom | Physical | Relocate the waste bin | Complete |
| Hand dryers are too high in both washrooms | Physical | Relocate dryers lower | Complete |
| Mirrors are too high | Physical | Lower the mirrors | Outstanding |

## Alice & Fraser Recreation Centre

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Gravel parking lot, no signed spaces | Architectural | Order and sign some parking spaces.  Install a paved parking area. | Outstanding |
| Entrance is not a level area at the door | Physical | Design and install a sidewalk with level entry at main door | Complete (could be build up more but not requirement) |
| Some doors have round knobs | Architectural | Replaced round knobs with lever | Outstanding |
| Men’s washroom does not have a spring or gravity door closer or a pull door, soap dispensers are too high | Physical | Install a spring or gravity door closer, door pull and lower soap dispensers | Some items Outstanding and indicated on 2025-2029 plan |

# New Recreational Facilities

## Outdoor Skating Trail

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier | Type | Strategy for Removal | Status |
| Gravel parking lot, no signed spaces | Architectural | Order and sign some parking spaces.  Install a paved parking area. | Signs installed |
| Signage Requirements | Architectural | Signs required indicating length, maximum grades, noting rest areas. | Complete |

In addition to the list of deficiencies noted above, strategies were identified in the 2019-2024 plan and continue to be strategies or new strategies in the new plan related to municipal buildings, and will be considered during the design and rehabilitation of major projects, such as heating, electrical, plumbing and renovations of existing kitchens, bathrooms, meeting rooms etc. Additionally, the Stafford Works Garage/Highway 41 Complex is currently leased to two entities, enquiries should be made establish their legislated requirements. Estimates could be sought to design and renovate to accommodate the disabled, for council’s and the tenants’ decision to proceed.

# Barriers to be addressed in 2025 - 2029

The following chart provides a list of barriers that have been identified and the strategy to eliminate the barrier:

## Laurentian Valley Municipal Office

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Ladies Washroom needs accessible sign with braille | Order and install updated accessible sign |
| Emergency Door needs ramp | Install a ramp at door |
| Thermostat too high | Consider lowering thermostat when replacing furnace or install bluetooth/wifi thermostat |
| Threshold in/out of vault needs ramp | Install a ramp at door |
| Clearance inside the vault not adequate | Move safe and/or adjust counter cabinet to allow for adequate clearance |

## Public Works Complex

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| None identified | n/a |

## Highway 41 Complex

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy Removal |
| There is no barrier free accessible washroom in this building | If and when this building is renovated it will have to be redesigned to  accommodate an accessible washroom including taps, mirror, door handles, soap and paper towel dispensers; and install proper signage |
| Lunchroom, shop area not accessible | Re-design layout to provide a route to the lunchroom and shop area |
| Thermostat too high | Lower thermostat |
| Doors - some have round knobs | Replace round knobs with lever style |

## Alice & Fraser Recreation Centre

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Public phone too high | Lower telephone |
| Door openers failed | Repair door openers to be functioning properly |
| Gravel parking lot | Install a paved parking area. |
| Doors - some have round knobs | Replace round knobs with lever style |
| Thermostat too high | Lower thermostat |
| Garage door handle not accessible | Replace round knobs with lever style |
| Men's washroom toilet too close to wall | Replace toilet proper distance from wall |
| accessible washrooms soap and towel dispensers are too high | Lower soap dispensers and towel dispenser |
| Taps and faucets not accessible in bar, kitchen, canteen, washrooms | Replace style of taps |
| Garage thermostat too high | Lower thermostat |
| Playground surface | Update for accessibility and safety (engineered wood fiber ground for playground) |

## Laurentian Valley Fire Hall

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Ramp to sidewalk not level at door | Ramp to sidewalk needs lip at door leveled |
| Thermostat too high | Lower thermostat |
| Washroom signs too high and not standard | Install standard accessible signs (with braille) at accessible height |
| Doors - some have round knobs | Replace round knobs with lever style |
| Washroom mirrors too high | Angle mirrors to be more accessible |

## Shady Nook Recreation Centre

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Doors - some have round knobs | Replace round knobs with lever style |
| Exterior Doorway threshold not ramped | Install ramp |
| Taps in zamboni and janitors closet not accessible | Replace style of taps |
| Emergency exit not accessible (too high) | Install ramp out at emergency exit door at front of building |
| washroom signs not accessible | Install proper accessible sign |
| Thermostat too high | Consider lowering thermostat when replacing furnace or install bluetooth/wifi thermostat |
| Playground surface | Update for accessibility and safety (engineered wood fiber ground for playground) |

## Stafford Recreation Centre

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Hatch marks to mark access for accessible parking space | Will paint hatch marks with parking lot is repainted |
| Washroom mirrors too high | Angle mirrors or lower mirrors |
| Washrooms are not signed as being accessible | Municipal staff to locate a supplier and obtain proper signs for all the Municipal buildings |
| Door knobs are round twist type | When replacing door hardware, lever type hardware is to be specified |
| Faucet handles are round type | When replacing faucets, lever type  hardware is to be specified |

## Splash Pad at Stafford Park

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| None identified | n/a |

## Pleasant View Park

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Playground surface | Update for accessibility and safety (engineered wood fiber ground for playground) |

## Forest Lea Park

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Playground surface | Update for accessibility and safety (engineered wood fiber ground for playground) |

## Elgin Street Park

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| None identified | n/a |

## LV Lodge

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Entrance too narrow and not level or ramped | Install a ramp or redesign entrance with accessible width and ramp |
| Thresholds not level to rooms within the building | Reconstruct flooring |
| Entrance has round door handles | Replace round knobs with lever style |
| Thermostat too high | Lower thermostat |
| Washrooms not accessible, location not accessible, washroom doors, stalls, taps, mirrors, grab bars, faucets, soap dispenser, etc. | Rehabilitation required |

## LV Outdoor Skating Trail

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barrier | Strategy for Removal |
| Gravel parking lot | Install a paved parking area |

## Communicating the plan

This multi-year accessibility plan will be made available on the Municipal website. Copies of the Plan will also be available at the Township Office. The Township of Laurentian Valley will make every attempt to make this plan available to those with disabilities for their perusal, review and input. This document can be made available in alternative accessible formats and with communication support as soon as practicable and upon request.

The Township welcomes feedback on accessibility including accessing facilities, programs, services and information. Please contact the township should you need assistance to provide feedback. We welcome the opportunity to learn and improve through the experiences of others within our community.

## Review and monitoring the plan

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Council is committed to following through with this plan. This plan will be reviewed semi-annually to allow Council, staff and the public to monitor the progress the Municipality is making to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

## Publication and Availability

The Township always encourages feedback from the public on accessibility, including suggestions about new initiatives and how we can better provide our services. This is everyone’s community and there’s value in our experiences and how it provides different perspectives.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2029) will be available on the municipal website. Paper copies of the plan are available at the Township Office. This document is available in alternative accessible formats and with communication supports as soon as practicable and upon request.

**Contact / Inquiries**

All inquiries with respect to this plan can be directed to:

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