

2021
The Corporation of the City of Kitchener
Status Update on the Accessibility Plan

The City of Kitchener Accessibility Plan for 2018-2022 describes how the Corporation will continue to prevent and remove accessibility barriers. The Status update provides the progress on the implementation of the plan.

Highlighted below are the 2021 Status updates.

General Requirements Commitments:

Accessibility Policy

- The City of Kitchener Accessibility Policy was, updated in May 2017 and continues to be reviewed and updated as required.
- The Accessibility Policy is available to the public on the city website.

Accessibility Plan

- In 2018, Council approved The City of Kitchener Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2018-2022. The Accessibility Plan is available to the public on the city website.
- The annual status update is presented to the City of Kitchener's Accessibility Advisory Committee at the end of each year.
- The annual status update is available to the public on the city website.

Procurement

- Staff at the City of Kitchener are provided with the Guide to Accessibility Requirements and the Guide for Purchasing Goods, Services for the City of Kitchener available to them on the staff intranet.
- Staff can contact procurement with questions or request 1-1 training. Procurement 101 training through a module offered on the staff intranet, is planned to return after the pandemic.
- All applicable purchasing documents include an AODA clause.
- Project Managers incorporate accessibility design criteria and features in project specifications, where applicable.

Training

- Mandatory eLearning accessibility training is provided to all new staff.
- The corporate training brochures for staff and volunteers, updated in October 2017.
- Continue to update and provide new resources for staff on the intranet.
- Provide the training brochures to staff leads to distribute to city affiliates and volunteers.

Standards Commitments:

Information and Communications Standards

- The City of Kitchener launched a transformed website and brand-new customer service portal on March 1, 2021.
- All decisions around this new online experience were made using customer data, feedback, and consultation.
- Citizen committees were consulted, including the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Mayors Advisory Committee for Kitchener Seniors.
- The team has focused on making the documents on the website accessible and have also moved many forms online that were previously in printed or PDF format to online content.
- Majority of the content on the website is written to a grade 7 level.
- The content has been structured into a more easy-to-read and search format with popular action items positioned near the top of the page.
- Training sessions are available to staff on creating accessible documents.
- Training resources for accessible document creation added on the staff intranet.

Employment Standards

- City of Kitchener job postings notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
- Inform all current and new employees through the IASR training brochure and through the mandatory accessibility eLearning module of procedures used to support employees with disabilities.
- Accessible formats and communication supports are available for all employees, upon request. Information is available for staff under Learning & Development intranet page.
- Continue to provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability. Implemented prior to 2013, posted on the staff intranet and part of AODA training.
- Continue to have in place a written process, for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities through the Corporate Workplace Accommodation Program.
- Continue to have in place a return-to-work process and plan for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability through the Corporate Workplace Accommodation Program.
- Management staff are trained and updated on policies and practices with respect to recruitment, hiring and interviewing. This was paused due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the ongoing pandemic response and recovery activities. Planned to resume in 2022.

Design of Public Spaces Standards

- City of Kitchener staff consult with GRAAC, before constructing new or redeveloping existing municipal recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, and exterior paths of travel, rest areas and on-street parking spaces. GRAAC has developed an accessibility comments sheet for each of these areas to help staff with accessibility considerations.
- City of Kitchener public consultations are open to all members of the public.

- The City of Kitchener’s ‘Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment’ document, approved by council in May 2017 was prepared to assist in implementing the Design of Public Spaces Standards, and is used under the City of Kitchener’s Site Plan Approval process.
- Annually review and update the City of Kitchener procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

Customer Service Standards

- The customer service standards are included in the Accessibility Policy.
- The corporate training brochures for staff and volunteers include the customer service standards.
- The mandatory accessibility training for staff includes the customer service standards.
- Staff resources related to customer service standards are available on the staff intranet.

The Province of Ontario reviews all standards, which may require updates to existing policies, training, manuals, bylaws etc. Because of the reviews, revisions to current standards or new standards may be introduced by the Province of Ontario, which will include new requirements and compliance deadlines. Those revisions and any actions related to them will be captured in the City of Kitchener annual status update. No revisions to the current standards were introduced in 2021.

Consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC):

As municipal projects arise, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee review site plans and provide suggestions on how to best improve and achieve accessibility.

In 2021, GRAAC advised on:

- Schlegel Park
- National AccessAbility Week, suggested speakers for week-long event
- Bavarian Eatery Stands for Special Events
- Compass Kitchener Citizen Dashboard
- Pop up patios
- Kiwanis Park temporary accessible parking for 2021 summer season
- City of Kitchener, Vision Zero
- City of Kitchener New Website
- City of Kitchener, Iron Horse Trail crossings
- Jack Couch Park
- Centre in the Square washroom renovations
- Survivor Garden Sculpture, Victoria Park
- Williamsburg community boards
- Downtown Kitchener Market Walkabout
- New Southwest Community Library
- On site consultation with CNIB at Schlegel Park regarding wayfinding for persons with low vision
- Wallenberg Park
- Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts
- GRAAC position paper on In-Boulevard Shared Use Facilities
- GRAAC position paper on Signage

The impact of COVID-19 on GRAAC

The Government of Ontario declared its first provincial emergency in response to COVID-19 on March 17, 2020. To comply with the Region of Waterloo Public Health regulations and to keep members and staff safe during the pandemic, in person meetings were cancelled as of March 2020. GRAAC committee meetings resumed virtually in September 2020. The pandemic has provided opportunities for GRAAC to complete their work in different ways. The shift to virtual meetings has resulted in an increase in GRAAC committee member attendance as it has removed some barriers as it relates to transportation, childcare etc. The year 2022 will continue with virtual meetings until it is safe to return to in person.

Update on the Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Space Standard (DOPS) addresses accessibility in public access spaces. Items addressed include recreational trails, outdoor public use eating spaces, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel (e.g., sidewalks), on and off-street parking, service counters and fixed queuing guides. The DOPS includes technical specifications, public consultation, and maintenance requirements.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard, section 80.44, maintenance of accessible elements states that multi-year accessibility plans shall include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions. The chart below addresses all sections within the DOPS.

City of Kitchener
Design of Public Spaces Standard
80.44 - Maintenance of accessible elements

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
80.8, 80.9, 80.11, 80.12, 80.13, 80.14, 80.15	Recreational trails (Means public pedestrian trails that are intended for recreational and leisure purposes)	Procedure for preventative maintenance of recreational trails involves the following general activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routine scheduled maintenance activities carried out, as required. - Specific maintenance work associated with inspection findings. - Planned capital upgrades carried out. - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints. - Annual inspection program for recreational trails. 	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of recreational trails involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trail section and limit of work zone cordoned off to secure construction area. - Signs posted indicating closure of trail if closure is more than one (1) day. - Temporary closures, more than one (1) day, communicated via City of Kitchener website and social media. - Repair work carried out to appropriate standards. - Trail reinstated following completion of work.
80.21, 80.22, 80.23, 80.24, 80.25, 80.26,	Exterior paths of travel (Are outdoor sidewalks or walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and are	Procedure for preventative maintenance of exterior paths of travel of sidewalks or walkways involve the following general activities:	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of exterior paths of travel of sidewalks or walkways involve:

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
80.27, 80.29, 80.30, 80.31	intended to serve a functional purpose and not to provide a recreational experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual inspection of sidewalks to meet the MMS (minimum maintenance standard). - Annual inspection of sidewalk or walkways leading to the entrance of city facilities. - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints. - In accordance with the City of Kitchener Snow Removal By-law, the City will clear sidewalks in front of City owned properties as well as rear lot properties. - Sidewalks in the downtown area maintained by the City and funded through special by-law taxation to downtown properties. - Winter maintenance of sidewalks adjacent to private properties is the responsibility of the property-owner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas closed off and or identified until work is complete. - Signs posted indicating closure of sidewalk or walkway. - Repair work carried out to appropriate standards. - Sidewalk or walkway reinstated following completion of emergency work.
80.18, 80.19, 80.20	Outdoor play spaces (Consists of an area that includes play equipment, where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers)	Procedure for preventative maintenance of outdoor play spaces involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playground inspections as per CSA Standards. - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints. 	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of outdoor play spaces involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow the CSA Standards for removal of damaged equipment and signage guidelines (i.e., unsafe equipment removed, new piece of equipment installed, and sign posted if the park closed). - Temporary closures, more than one (1) day communicated via City of Kitchener website and social media channels.
80.16, 80.17,	Outdoor public use eating area (Consists of tables that are found in public areas, and are specifically intended for use by the public as a place to consume food)	Procedure for preventative maintenance of outdoor public use eating areas involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual inspection of tables at municipal outdoor public use eating areas. - Routine scheduled maintenance activities carried out, as required. - Specific maintenance work associated with inspection findings. - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints. 	Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of outdoor public use eating areas involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsafe tables removed and repaired/replaced.

Section(s) #	Maintenance of accessible elements	Procedures for preventative maintenance	Procedures for emergency maintenance and Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions
80.32, 80.33, 80.34, 80.35, 80.36, 80.37, 80.38, 80.39	Accessible parking – off-street parking facilities, accessible parking spaces, access aisles, signage, on-street	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of accessible off-street and on-street parking involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routine maintenance activities carried out, as required for off-street municipal parking lots (i.e., repainting lines). - Planned capital upgrades carried out. - When severe snowfall is expected, a public notification is issued regarding a parking ban to clear the roads and no on-street parking is permitted so the roads can be cleared. - On-street parking is inspected through Operations Roads & Traffic’s Road patrol program and maintained in accordance with the Municipal Act’s Minimum Maintenance Standards. 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of accessible off-street and on-street parking involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For (paid) municipal off-street parking lots when work is going to be done. Permit holders are notified. - For (no charge) municipal off-street parking lots when work is going to be done signage would be posted. - For on-street parking during emergency maintenance work, the parking spot would not be available for use and signage would be posted.
80.40, 80.41, 80.42, 80.43	Obtaining Services (Requirements for obtaining services in respect of service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas apply whether the services are obtained in buildings or out-of-doors)	<p>Procedure for preventative maintenance of municipal facility service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work repairs generated through customer and staff reported complaints. - Planned capital upgrades carried out. 	<p>Procedure for emergency maintenance/temporary disruptions of municipal facility service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas closed off and or identified until work is complete. - Alternate service areas identified. - Repair work carried out to appropriate standards. - Area reinstated following completion of work.