



MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD
Jewel of the Rideau

**Corporation of the
Village of Merrickville-Wolford**

**Multi – Year Accessibility Plan
2022-2025**

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request by contacting the
Municipal Office

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Introduction

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides a guideline on how the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is committed to accessibility. The Municipality is consistently striving towards ensuring that the requirements and principles are met as outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR).

The Village of Merrickville-Wolford is a vibrant, growing community that has much to offer its residents and visitors. This Accessibility Plan is being implemented to demonstrate leadership and commitment to removing barriers for accessibility purposes throughout the community, whether that be at physical locations throughout the Village, or with any available documents as found on the Village website. The Municipality is committed to working towards creating a barrier-free, accessible environment for all who call Merrickville-Wolford home, or for those who choose to come experience all this community has to offer. The following plan provides guidelines on how this commitment will be placed into action.

Statement of Commitment

The Village of Merrickville-Wolford is committed to meeting the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The Village strives to provide services and facilities that are accessible, and to continuously improve access to facilities and services for people with disabilities.

The Village is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This Accessibility Plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. This plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

Contact Information

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Please contact the above staff members to request an alternative format of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that better meets your needs.

Definition of Persons with Disabilities

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines persons with disabilities in the following manner, which is the same definition used in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

A “disability” means:

- 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 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”).

Under the AODA, a barrier is defined as “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability”. Barriers limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, or the attitudes of others towards them (AODA, 2019).

The goal of this multi-year plan, and the accessibility legislation provided below, is to prevent these barriers and continuously work towards removing them so that people with disabilities can have the opportunity for full participation.

Accessibility Legislation

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (AODA). The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, and buildings. The overall goal is to make Ontario accessible by no

later than January 1, 2025. The standards set out in the AODA are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that people living with disabilities are able to have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The AODA can be found at: <https://www.aoda.ca/the-act/>

The Human Rights Code

The Human Rights Code was enacted in 1962, and it prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area. It is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, harassment and reprisal with respect to employment, trade, self-governing profession, services, goods, contracts, and facilities.

The Code works together with the AODA to ensure equality and accessibility. The Municipality has a legal duty to accommodate any person with a disability regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer, resident, or visitor.

The Human Rights Code can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)

The Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (IASR) establishes the accessibility standards for each of the following areas:

- Information and communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of public spaces
- Customer service

The standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities (AODA, 2019). The Village of Merrickville-Wolford is required to comply with the IASR, as it is a municipality with at least one employee and provides goods, services, and facilities to the public (AODA, 2019). These standards will be addressed within this plan.

The IASR can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191>

Accessibility Standards & Village of Merrickville-Wolford Achievements

The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The following categories will outline initiatives and achievements that the Village of Merrickville-Wolford have successfully implemented to ensure accessibility.

Customer Service Standard

- Accessible Customer Service Training delivered to members of staff
- Approved Complaint Policy (2016) that allows for a process to encourage feedback and ensure complaints are handled appropriately and in a timely manner to resolve concerns, including accessibility

Information and Communication Standard

- Improvements to website accessibility

Employment Standard

- Documentation of individual accommodation plans
- Implementation of policies and procedures for accommodation of employees
- Staff training on accessibility when onboarding

Transportation Standard

- Continued maintenance and improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure they remain accessible
- Accessibility requirements are implemented when rehabilitating infrastructure or adding new infrastructure
- The Village of Merrickville-Wolford does not have a public transportation system due to our small size

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- Implementation of a new entrance deck at the landfill, with a wheelchair ramp being added to it shortly
- Two (2) accessible washrooms are located within the Municipality
- Continuous maintenance of the Municipal Office to ensure safety and accessibility standards are met, including wheelchair lift and ramp at front entrance
- Wheelchair lift at the Public Library for access to the second floor of the building
- Automatic door openers installed at the Municipal Office entrances

Village of Merrickville-Wolford Priority Setting: 2022-2025

The following priorities have been set by the Municipality to focus on and improve accessibility within the Village over the next three (3) years. These will continuously be monitored, reviewed, and updated to remain compliant with accessibility standards.

- Website accessibility improvements: improvements to the processes that produce fully accessibility-compliant content including Council agendas and minutes that are posted on the Village website. Work towards a Village website that meets the requirements under the AODA and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA
- Review and proposal of adding an accessible door to the municipal rink building
- Continue ongoing accessibility training for staff and employees
- Consistent review and updating of policies to ensure accessible service