



Township of Laird  
**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**  
**2023-2027**

Clerk Administrator: Jennifer Errington

Adopted by Council: Resolution #252-23, November 30, 2023



## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027

### Guiding Legislation

There are currently two active pieces of legislation in Ontario that specifically address accessibility: The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA)

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) ensured that public organizations incorporated accessibility planning into their operations and facilities and document same with annual accessibility plans.

In 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was enacted to serve as a framework for the establishment of accessibility standards in five areas:

1. Customer Service
2. Information and Communications
3. Employment
4. Transportation
5. Design of Public Space

Compliance with the AODA is required by both public and private sector organizations. The AODA is in place for the purpose of ensuring that people with disabilities are not discriminated against and included in all aspects of society.

### Statement of Commitment

***The Township of Laird*** is committed to treating all people with dignity, respect and in a way that maintains individual independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Township is committed to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.



## Regulatory Requirements and Proposed and Completed Actions

*The Township of Laird* continues to develop and implement accessibility initiatives under the ODA and meet compliance dates for accessibility requirements within the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA.

### 1. Customer Service

The Township is committed to ensuring that all staff and customers, whatever their ability, work in an accommodating environment and receive accessible goods and services in a timely manner.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Reviewing and updating policies regularly to ensure high-quality, accessible customer service
- Ingrain accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials
- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate

Our accomplishments:

- Continue to provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

### 2. Information and Communications

Information and communications are a large part of The Township of Laird's daily procedures. It is because of this that it is so important to ensure that information and communications are created in a way that considers accessibility.

The Township will follow best practices when developing, implementing, and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, print communications materials and face-to-face interactions.

The Township is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that emergency information, procedures, plans and public safety information that is available to the public is available in alternate formats, when requested.
- Developing guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for



common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

- Notifying the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication Supports.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level 2.0 AA Compliance
- Working towards ensuring web content published on the Township's website is in an accessible format whenever possible.

Our accomplishments:

- Continued accessible document training.
- Plain language guidelines and simple word phrases are circulated to staff following training.
- A form for receiving and responding to feedback regarding customer service or accessibility (IASR) is available on the Township's website and is available to people with disabilities in an accessible format or with the appropriate communication supports, on request (2023).

### 3. Employment

***The Township of Laird*** is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, The Township will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired:

- Reviewing on an ongoing basis, Human Resources policies, practices, and procedures to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities throughout the employment process, including recruitment, retention, career development and return-to-work.
- Notifying job applicants who have been invited to participate in the recruitment, assessment, or selection process that, where needed, accommodations for disabilities are available, on request, to support their participation in the process.
- Notifying successful applicants of the Township's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment.
- Informing new and existing employees of the Township's policies for supporting employees with disabilities, including providing employment-related accommodations for disabilities.
- Consulting with employees who have disabilities to provide them with the accessible formats and communication supports they require to do their jobs effectively and to be informed of information that is generally available to all employees in that workplace.
- Have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities.
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance management process (annual performance reviews).



- When providing career development and advancement opportunities the Township will take into account the accessibility needs of their employees who have disabilities.
- Redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when moving them to other positions so that employees can continue to have their accommodation needs met.

Our accomplishments:

- Have a process in place to create individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, upon request.
- The Township's job postings will now include the following statement regarding accommodations:  
"The Township of Laird is an equal opportunity employer that is dedicated to inclusive barrier-free recruitment and selection process. If contacted for an employment opportunity, please advise the Clerk Administrator if you require accommodation." (2023)

#### **4. Design of Public Spaces**

***The Township of Laird*** will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces (Ontario Regulation 191/11), as applicable, when building new or making major modifications to public spaces.

Public Spaces include:

- Recreational Trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor Public Eating Areas (rest stops, picnic areas);
- Outdoor Play Spaces; (playgrounds)
- Outdoor Paths of Travel; (sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals)
- Accessible Off Street Parking;
- Service-related elements (service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas)

##### **a) Recreational Trails**

This part applies to newly constructed and redeveloped recreational trails. The Township will consult with the public and persons with disabilities and members of the public before constructing any new recreational trails or redeveloping existing recreational trails, especially regarding the following features:



- Slope of the trail;
- Need for and location of ramps on the trail;
- Need for, location and design of rest areas, passing areas, viewing areas, amenities on the trail and any other pertinent features.

Where technical specifications are indicated in Ontario Regulation 191/11, The Township will make every effort to ensure compliance with the technical requirements set out in the Regulation, to the extent that it is practicable and does not contravene other legislation.

### **b) Outdoor Public Eating Areas**

This part applies to newly constructed and redeveloped outdoor public-use eating areas that the Township intends to maintain and includes tables that are found in public areas specifically intended for use by the public as a place to consume food.

The following locations have tables:

1. Centennial Park
2. Wharf
3. Laird Fairgrounds Gazebo

The Township will achieve this by:

Remaining proactive in prioritizing accessibility, ensuring that future projects and initiatives align with AODA guidelines and promote inclusivity for all community members.

### **c) Outdoor Play Spaces**

This part applies to newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces that The Township intends to maintain and includes play equipment or features where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Consulting on the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities with the public and persons with disabilities.
- Incorporating accessibility features into the design of outdoor play spaces.
- Ensuring that outdoor play spaces have a ground surface that is firm, stable and has impact attenuating properties for injury prevention and sufficient clearance to provide children with various disabilities the ability to move through, in and around the outdoor play space.



The Township currently has one location where there are outdoor play structures, the Centennial Park.

**d) Outdoor Paths of Travel**

This part applies to newly constructed and redeveloped exterior paths of travel that The Township intends to maintain and that are outdoor sidewalks or walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and are intended to serve a functional purpose and not to provide a recreational experience.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Adhering to certain technical requirements.
- Meeting certain requirements if the path of travel is equipped with a ramp.
- Meeting certain requirements if the stairs connect to exterior paths of travel.
- Meeting certain requirements where a curb ramp is provided on an exterior path of travel, the curb ramp must align with the direction of travel.
- Meeting certain requirements where a depressed curb is provided on an exterior path of travel.
- Consulting with the public, and persons with disabilities on the design and placement of rest areas along the exterior path of travel.

**e) Accessible Off-Street Parking**

Meeting certain requirements when constructing new or redeveloping off-street parking facilities, as stated in the Regulation, that The Township intends to maintain.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Regular Parking Spaces</b>	<b>Accessible Parking Spaces (included in the number of regular parking spaces)</b>
Township Office	3 for staff 1 Public	1
Laird Fairgrounds	100 plus	
Township Garage	No public access	0
Laird Hall	6	1
Bar River Hall	12	1



The Township will achieve this by:

- Providing two types of accessible parking spaces for the use of persons with disabilities. Wider spaces to accommodate mobility aids and standard width spaces to accommodate mobility assistive devices such as canes or crutches.
- Providing access aisles that can be shared by two accessible parking spaces.
- Providing a minimum number and type of accessible parking spaces.
- Ensuring that parking spaces for the use of persons with disabilities are distinctly indicated by erecting an accessible permit parking sign.

There are also exceptions to the requirements for accessible parking.

#### f) Accessible On-Street Parking

When constructing or redeveloping existing on-street parking spaces, the Township shall consult on the need, location, and design of accessible on-street parking spaces by consulting with the public and persons with disabilities.

Consulting topics could include:

- Expected accessibility benefits.
- Any relevant concerns.
- Local traffic patterns.

#### g) Service-Related Elements

**The Township of Laird** strives to provide welcoming environments for all members of the public to visit and/or conduct business with the Township. To ensure that all public spaces and service areas used by the public are accessible, the Township will ensure all new or redeveloped service counters, fixed queuing guides (where people line up for service) and waiting areas accommodate mobility aids. Where technical specifications are indicated in Ontario Regulation 191/11 the Township will make every effort to ensure compliance with the technical requirements set out in the Regulation.

### 5. Maintenance

As required under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, **The Township of Laird** has developed procedures for dealing with preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Shall apply best practices in the preventative maintenance of accessible elements with periodic checks such as:





- Annual inspections, or more frequently.
- After storms or events that might affect accessible elements.
- As part of any reports of vandalism or complaints.
- Shall apply best practices in the emergency maintenance of accessible elements with active response when notified.

## 6. Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

When disruptions occur that will impact the accessibility of goods, services or facilities provided by ***The Township of Laird***, notice will be given to the public indicating:

- a) Description of the service disruption.
- b) Reason for the disruption.
- c) Anticipated duration of the disruption.
- d) Alternate routes, facilities, or services, if any that are available.
- e) Contact information.

Notice will be given by posting the information at public entry points, key locations around the service disruption, posted on the Township's website or by such other method as is reasonable.

## 7. Progress to Date and Ongoing Initiatives

See Schedule "A" Progress to Date and Ongoing Initiatives.

## 8. Communication of the Accessibility Plan

The approved Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall be posted on The Township's website and be provided in an accessible format upon request.

## 9. Contact Information

**Township of Laird**  
3 Pumpkin Point Road West  
Echo Bay, ON, P0S 1C0  
**Telephone:** (705) 248-2395  
**Fax:** (705) 248-1138  
**E-mail:** [info@lairdtownship.ca](mailto:info@lairdtownship.ca)



## Schedule “A”

### Progress to date and Ongoing Initiatives

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Responsibility
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<p>Advise all staff of alternate formats for emergency planning available.</p> <p>Advise all customers of alternate formats available for emergency plans and general information.</p>	Clerk Administrator
	Review and update policies regularly to ensure high-quality, accessible customer service	Clerk Administrator
<b>TRAINING</b>	Provide training on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.	Clerk Administrator
<b>INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION</b>	Introduce staff to the use of plain language in their writing.	All Departments
<b>FEEDBACK</b>	<p>Ensure that receiving and responding to feedback is made available in an accessible format upon request or with appropriate communication supports.</p> <p>An updated feedback form was created in 2023 and posted on the website.</p>	All Departments



**Schedule "A" (continued)**

**Progress to date and Ongoing Initiatives**

<b>Accessibility Initiatives</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	Notify successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment.	Human Resources
<b>OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES</b>	Any new play space to be AODA compliant and provide inclusivity for people with disabilities. (ongoing)	Recreation