



## **The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle**

**To:** Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Prepared by:** Linda Jean, Deputy Clerk

**Department:** Council Services

**Date of Report:** February 2, 2025

**Report Number:** CS-2025-001

**Subject:** 2024 Year-End Accessibility Status Report

### **Recommendation**

That the report of the Deputy Clerk dated February 2, 2025 (CS-2025-001) regarding the 2024 Year End Accessibility Status Report be received.

### **Report**

The Town of LaSalle remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive and accessible community for all residents, visitors, and employees. In accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11, section 4, each designated public sector organization is required to develop, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan. This plan serves as a strategic framework for identifying, addressing, and eliminating barriers while ensuring compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Additionally, the regulation mandates the preparation of an annual status report to highlight the progress made in advancing accessibility initiatives.

LaSalle's 2023–2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan ("Accessibility Plan"), adopted by the Accessibility Advisory Committee on June 29, 2022, outlines the Town's approach to identifying and removing barriers. It reflects both the achievements made and the initiatives planned for the coming years.

Accessibility is an ongoing priority, and LaSalle continues to demonstrate leadership in reducing and preventing barriers. This report provides an overview of the progress made throughout 2023 and reaffirms the Town's commitment to enhancing accessibility standards, promoting inclusivity, and striving for continuous improvement.

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

### **Accessible Playground Design**

Henderson Play Equipment conducted a detailed presentation on the construction of inclusive playground equipment, ensuring that future recreational spaces meet accessibility standards and foster engagement for individuals of all abilities.

### **Accessibility-Focused Design Review for LaSalle Fire Hall 2**

J.P. Thomson Architects conducted a presentation on the accessibility design considerations for LaSalle Fire Hall 2. This review emphasized the integration of inclusive design elements to create a barrier-free facility that accommodates both staff and visitors with diverse needs.

### **Educational Session of Inclusive Spaces**

Julie Sawchuck, an expert in accessibility advocacy, delivered an insightful presentation titled *"Making Spaces Accessible for Everyone."* This session provided valuable guidance on best practices for designing public and private spaces that prioritize accessibility and usability for individuals of all abilities.

### **Accessibility Advisory Consultation**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee was invited to provide input on the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. While no formal responses were received, the Town remains committed to prioritizing accessibility in the planning and enhancement of recreational spaces, programs, and services.

## **Information and Communication**

### **Formation of an Accessibility Working Group**

To further advance accessibility initiatives, a dedicated working group was established. The intent of this working group is to identify barriers, propose solutions, and collaborate on strategies to enhance accessibility across municipal projects and services.

### **Participation in the Outdoor Accessibility Fest-for-All**

Two Town of LaSalle employees participated in the "Outdoor Accessibility Fest-for-All" on September 13th at Colchester Park in the Town of Essex. The event focused on raising awareness of opportunities that promote inclusion in activities, services, and spaces for individuals with varying levels of ability. As part of the event, the Town set up a booth to provide information on local accessibility initiatives, including accessible trails, building design, etc. This engagement served to highlight the Town's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive community.

### **Continued Efforts to Improve Website Accessibility and Documents**

The Town of LaSalle remains committed to enhancing the accessibility of its website to ensure all users, regardless of ability, can access and navigate information with ease.

Ongoing initiatives include document remediation and the integration of accessible application forms. In addition, efforts are being made to optimize site navigation for

users with disabilities, ensuring full compliance with accessibility regulations. These improvements highlight the Town's dedication to fostering an inclusive online environment that effectively serves residents, visitors, and employees alike.

## **Employment**

### **Recruitment**

In 2024, the Town of LaSalle approved a new Accessibility Clerk position, with recruitment scheduled for 2025. This role will focus on advancing the Town's commitment to accessibility by overseeing document remediation, enhancing website accessibility, and coordinating comprehensive training initiatives.

### **Accommodation**

The Town of LaSalle consistently ensures that notices of accommodation are provided during the advertising of employment opportunities. Furthermore, the Town accommodates applicants by offering virtual interview options and informs successful candidates of current accommodation policies during the employment offer and orientation processes. Additionally, the Town continues to provide necessary accommodations to employees as needed.

## **Public Spaces**

### **Events**

During events, specialized cable covers have been implemented to enhance both safety and accessibility. These covers are strategically placed to secure and conceal cables, thereby reducing trip hazards and ensuring a risk-free event space. In addition to meeting safety requirements, the use of these cable covers align with the Town's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. This initiative not only safeguards participants but also supports a seamless and enjoyable experience for all attendees.

### **New Build**

The Town of LaSalle has implemented accessibility measures in new Town-owned developments, ensuring that every building complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards. By integrating universal design principles into our construction practices, we have created environments that are both functional and welcoming, promoting equal opportunity and integration for residents.

## **Expanding Accessibility in Programming and Design**

### **Programming**

The Town of LaSalle is actively working on inclusivity of its recreational programs by implementing specialized adaptations for participants with unique needs. For example, a participant with visual impairments registered for a swimming program. In collaboration with the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind), staff were provided with tailored adaptations and strategies to create a more accessible experience for the participant.

**Design**

Creating sensory-friendly spaces to reduce overstimulation and provide a comfortable environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities. For example, the Strawberry Festival and Holiday Lights offer designated sensory-friendly times with limited noise, a specialized swim time has been introduced for individuals and families seeking a more inclusive recreational experience, eliminating music, waves, and spray features to enhance comfort and chair fitness classes for seniors with mobility needs.

In conclusion, the Town of LaSalle remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive community through its accessibility initiatives. These ongoing projects, along with the establishment of key positions and the adoption of safe practices during public events, highlight the Town's commitment to both immediate improvements and long-term planning.

**Consultations**

Each department was contacted to submit information on their accessibility initiatives and progress made in 2024.

**Financial Implications**

None.

**Prepared By:**

Linda Jean, Deputy Clerk

**Link to Strategic Goals**

1. Enhancing organizational excellence - Yes
2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - Not Applicable
3. Grow and diversify the local economy - Not Applicable
4. Build on our high-quality of life - Not Applicable
5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Not Applicable

**Communications**

None.

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	2024 Annual Year-End Accessibility Status Report.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Feb 3, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Director, Council Services/Clerk

Jennifer Astrologo