

Municipality of Lakeshore
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2026 to 2031



TOGETHER WE ARE
Lakeshore

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Executive Summary

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11, established under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), requires designated public sector organizations, including municipalities, to develop a multi-year accessibility plan and review the plan at least once every five years. This plan outlines the Municipality of Lakeshore's strategy to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessibility while continuing to meet its obligations under provincial accessibility legislation.

The 2026 – 2031 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is the second plan prepared by the Municipality of Lakeshore, following the 2013 – 2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The 2026 – 2031 Plan builds on the foundation established by the previous plan, focused on meeting the accessibility standards created for designated public sector organizations. This updated plan reflects the Municipality's continued commitment to moving beyond compliance by strengthening internal knowledge, improving accessibility practices, and embedding accessibility considerations into municipal services, facilities, communications, employment practices, and public spaces.

The focus of this plan is continuous improvement. It recognizes that accessibility planning is an ongoing process which requires regular review, public feedback, staff training, and coordinated action across all departments. Through this plan, the Municipality of Lakeshore will continue to identify and remove barriers, support our staff with the tools and resources they need, and promote a corporate culture that values dignity, integration, and equal opportunity for all persons with disabilities.

Message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Lakeshore Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) is pleased to represent and support a diverse group of committed knowledgeable individuals who bring a broad range of expertise and advocacy from across the Municipality of Lakeshore. The LAAC is committed to improving accessibility by preventing, identifying, and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from equitable access to services and opportunities.

We are capably and enthusiastically supported in our role by staff in promoting public engagement helping to make the Municipality of Lakeshore not just compliant, but a leader in achieving the goals and objectives of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

We are very thankful to Council and staff for their strong support in being proactive in their approach, not only in the past but going forward with this next five-year plan.

Sincerely,

Thomas Jaeger

Chair of the Lakeshore Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

Introduction

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) received Royal Assent and became law in Ontario. The purpose of the AODA is to improve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities through the development, implementation, and enforcement of accessibility standards. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of AODA and to support the Municipality of Lakeshore in identifying, preventing, and removing barriers in municipal by-laws, policies, practices, services, and public spaces.

A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society. Barriers may be physical, informational, architectural, technological, or created through policies and practices.

The Municipality of Lakeshore is committed to promoting independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities. The Municipality's goal is to provide accessible and welcoming spaces, services, workplaces, and public spaces for employees, residents, and our visitors.

In addition to outlining planned accessibility initiatives, this plan seeks to recognize the accessibility achievements that have been already completed or are underway across Lakeshore. The plan is intended to support the Municipality's responsibilities under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, while also providing a practical roadmap for ongoing improvement.

Accessibly planning does not end once a plan has been prepared. Monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that we continue to meet our obligations. The Municipality will prepare annual updates on progress made towards implementation and will present those updates to Council. Further, a comprehensive review of this plan will be completed every five (5) years, unless significant changes require an earlier review or revision.

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario may periodically conduct file reviews to ensure compliance with AODA and its standards. For this reason, ongoing documentation, training, reporting, and follow-up remain important aspects of Lakeshore's accessibility planning process.

About the Municipality of Lakeshore

Lakeshore was established in 1999 through the amalgamation of the former Town of Belle River and the former Townships of Maidstone, Rochester, Tilbury North and Tilbury West.

Today, Lakeshore is proud to be “Community of Communities” that recognizes and embraces the distinct identities of the place’s our residents call home.

These communities include Belle River, Comber, Deerbrook, Emeryville, Lighthouse Cove, Puce, Ruscom, Maidstone, Staples, St. Joachim, Stoney Point/Pointe-aux-Roches, and Woodslee.

As a geographically diverse municipality with an attractive and unique mix of urban, rural, recreational, and waterfront spaces, Lakeshore’s accessibility planning must capture a wide range of municipal services and public environments, including municipal buildings, parks, trails, sidewalks, parking areas, recreations spaces, public information, customer service, employment practices, and community engagement.

Accessibility Progress

Lakeshore is committed to continuously improving accessibility in the areas outlined in the AODA, including Customer Service, Information, and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. While not every standard applies to our Municipality in the same way, Lakeshore continues to review municipal services, public spaces, facilities, and internal processes to ensure that accessibility is considered in both day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

The Lakeshore Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) continues to support the Municipality by identifying barriers and recommending improvements as issues are raised by residents, staff, and persons with disabilities. Some of the most significant accessibility challenges are connected to older municipal facilities and public spaces that were not originally designed to meet current expectations. As renovations, redeployments, and maintenance opportunities arise, the Municipality will continue to consider accessibility improvement and prioritize barrier removal where feasible.

The Municipality is in compliance with the Customer Service Accessibility Standard (effective on January 1, 2010) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (effective in 2013).

Through this plan, Lakeshore will continue to develop and implement strategies that remove and prevent perpetuating barriers for persons with disabilities and improve access to the broader community.

Accessibility Wins in Lakeshore

Lakeshore has made meaningful progress in meeting accessibility standards and implementing new accessibility initiatives across municipal spaces. These improvements demonstrate the Municipality's ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive community and provide a foundation for continued accessibility planning across the next five years.

In 2025, Lakeshore launched a refreshed municipal website designed to provide a more accessible, and fresh user-friendly experience. The updated website supports improved access to municipal information, online services, and public notices, while ongoing user feedback will continue to guide future website improvements.

A renovated Lakeshore Town Hall also re-opened to the public in late 2025, with improvements that included accessible washrooms and a designated accessible customer service space to support more inclusive frontline service delivery.

The Municipality has also advanced accessibility through parking, pathways, and public space improvements. Accessible parking ticketing has been updated to reflect fines for the misuse of accessible parking spaces, helping to protect spaces intended for persons who require them. Several parking spaces in Geralyn Tellier-Perdu Park have been upgraded to be fully compliant along with additional crosswalks have been installed throughout the Municipality to improve pedestrian access and safety.

Significant improvements have also been made in municipal parks and recreation spaces. River Ridge Park was completed in 2022 as a fully accessible park, providing an inclusive, recreational space for residents and visitors. In Lakeview Park, accessible pads have been installed beside accessible picnic tables in some picnic areas, and the accessible kayak launch continues to be an important regional feature that supports access to waterfront recreation. The kayak launch is a unique amenity in the region and attracts visitors from across Southern Ontario who travel specifically to use it.

Facility and washroom accessibility have also improved with the new, touch-free fixtures installed in municipal facilities, where feasible. Automatic door openers and upgraded "L" bars have been installed in washroom facilities to improve independent access and usability. In Comber, a ramp and new accessible pathways were installed at the medical centre's primary entrance, improving access to an important community service location.

The Municipality has continued to invest in accessible outdoor recreation. Upgrades at Stoney Point Park are currently underway and include a new pavilion, washrooms, toboggan hill, pickleball court, and accessible play areas. At Optimist Park, an upgraded two-metre-wide trail has been completed and meets AODA standards. Further, in 2025, a new accessible pathway was also installed at Optimist Park, and a second pathway was

installed to provide access from the east parking lot to Optimist Diamond #2. These pathway improvements support safer and more direct access to recreational amenities for users with mobility devices and families alike with varying needs.

The Municipality has also taken steps to improve playground accessibility. In 2024, playground surfaces were converted from pea stone to engineered wood fibre (EWF), which is an approved accessible surface that better supports movement through play areas. Surface conversion work has been completed at Lions Park and Ladouceur Park, improving mobility within those playground spaces. At Shanahan Park, upgrades to the pathway, bench seating, and playground were completed in 2025, including accessible pads to improve seating access and rest areas.

Other accessibility initiatives include public awareness campaigns through social media, accessibility festivals, the launch of a digital budget application, new procurement requirements for consultants, and ongoing staff training to meet customer service standards and support new hires. Investments in the Public Service Unit and Communications Coordinators also support more responsive service delivery, clearer communication, and better public access to municipal information.

The Five Standards of AODA

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) includes five main accessibility standards. These themes help guide accessibility compliance and long-term planning for municipalities and organizations throughout the Province of Ontario. The following section

Customer Service Standard

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into force on January 1, 2008. The standard applies to organizations in Ontario that provide goods and services to the public or to other organizations and have one or more employees.

Initiatives & Performance Measures

Lakeshore will continue to provide corporate-wide staff training to improve accessible customer service. Training will help staff understand how to respond appropriately to requests for accommodation, how to communicate respectfully with persons with disabilities, and how to recognize barriers that may affect access to municipal services. This training is especially important for frontline staff who interact directly with the public, but it also supports a broader corporate culture where accessibility is understood as a shared responsibility across departments.

The Municipality will continue to strengthen how accessibility concerns are received, tracked, and addressed upon internal and public service request processes. Doing so allows staff to better identify and address patterns, assign follow-up and implement the correct measures that ensure concerns raised by residents or employees are treated not as one-time issues without accountability. We believe this approach supports a more coordinated process for documenting barriers and responding to them in a timely manner.

Lakeshore will also continue to promote accessibility feedback tools in multiple formats, including print, digital, phone-based, and in-person interactions. By providing multiple ways to give feedback, we can hear directly from our residents who experience barriers and use that information to improve our services.

Information and Communications Standard

The Information and Communications Standard ensure that organizations create, provide, and receive information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes digital content, websites, printed materials, emergency information, public notices, forms, and documents. Accessible information should be provided in a timely manner and, where required, at no additional cost to the person making the request.

Initiatives & Performance Measures

Ongoing staff training on digital and document accessibility will remain a priority. This includes helping staff create documents, forms, reports, presentations, and web content that are easier to read and navigate with assistive technologies.

Training will also support staff in understanding why accessible formats matter, including the importance of heading, plain language, colour contrasts, alternative links for accessible PDFs, and HTML-based web content. The Municipality will launch an informative and communication accessibility portal on the municipal intranet for staff.

Annual staff surveys will be conducted to identify gaps in accessibility knowledge and training needs. Survey results will help the Municipality understand where staff may require additional support, whether certain departments need targeted training, and how accessibility resources can be improved.

The Municipality will also work towards a formal, accessible documentation audit process. This process will help identify municipal documents that may need to be updated, converted, or reformatted with accessible-friendly formats. For example, where appropriate, the Municipality may use HTML-based webpages instead of relying solely on PDF documents, as webpages are often easier to update and can be more accessible when properly designed.

Lakeshore will continue to use digital and phone-based surveys to receive feedback and follow-up on accessibility concerns. The Municipality will also review requests for alternative formatting to identify common issues and improve how information will be presented in the future.

Documents prepared by consultants for public distribution will be reviewed to ensure they meet AODA requirements before being shared with the public, and ensure that accessibility expectations are built into procurement, project management, and public communication processes.

Employment Standard

The Employment Standard requires employers to make workplaces accessible to potential and current employees with disabilities. It applies across the employment lifecycle, from recruitment to onboarding, accommodation, performance management, developments, return to work processes, and redeployment. For Lakeshore, accessible employment practices support an inclusive workplace and help ensure that employees and applicants have equitable opportunities to participate and achieve success.

Lakeshore is committed to ensuring that the process of finding, obtaining, and keeping employment with the Municipality is as inclusive and barrier-free as possible.

For the purposes of this plan, reasonable efforts by Lakeshore will be guided by the frequency and nature of accommodation requests, the availability of the requested support or service, and the relative cost compared to the overall budget, best practices used by similar sized municipalities, and applicable provincial regulations.

Initiatives & Performance Measures

Lakeshore has created a dedicated IT Help Desk email to address technology-related barriers that may affect an employee's ability to complete assigned tasks. This provides employees and supervisors with a clear point of contact when accessibility barriers arise through software, hardware, digital platforms, equipment, or workplace systems. Through this process, staff can report barriers such as difficulty accessing a program with assistive technologies. The IT department can then review the concern, troubleshoot the issue, coordinate with the appropriate department, and help identify practical solutions or alternate tools where possible.

The IT Help Desk email also supports accessibility by creating a more consistent way to document and respond to internal technology barriers. Rather than relying only on informal requests, the Municipality can track recurring issues, identify systems that may need improvement, and use that information to inform future training, procurement, and technology planning. This helps ensure that digital accessibility is treated as part of workplace accommodation and operational effectiveness.

The Municipality will continue revising individual work plans and developing guides, tools, and templates to remove barriers from the recruitment process. This includes reviewing job postings, interview processes, assessment methods, and onboarding materials to ensure that applicants and new employees can request accommodations and participate equitably. Accessible recruitment practices may include offering alternate formats, providing clear instructions, and allowing candidates to request accommodation during the process.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard mandates that public transportation providers in Ontario (including buses, subways, trains, and specialized services) make their services fully accessible to people with disabilities. The majority of the Transportation Standard does not apply to the Municipality of Lakeshore because the Municipality does not operate the same type of public transportation system as larger transit providers. However, the Municipality does have Taxicab By-Law 061-2020, and the applicable conditions in the Municipalities Policies and Procedures for Integrated Accessibility Standards are followed.

Lakeshore will continue to monitor the accessibility requirements that apply to its transportation-related responsibilities and will consider accessibility when reviewing relevant by-laws, public feedback and service-related concerns.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standard mandates that new, or redeveloped, public spaces must be accessible to people with disabilities. Its focus on outdoor area, such as trails, parks, and sidewalks, complements the accessibility requirements that are outlined in the Ontario Building Code, ensuring fair access to amenities for all residents.

The Municipality of Lakeshore commits to ensure that the design of Public Spaces meets accessibility requirements according to Regulation 413/12. The Municipality incorporates accessibility into Public Spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped. We will follow the most current requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standards for recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and service-related elements (counters, waiting areas, etc.).

Initiatives & Performance Measures

- Lakeshore staff will continue auditing parks, facilities, and trails to identify accessibility deficiencies and inform future budget and capital planning. This ensures accessibility needs are documented and prioritized within municipal planning. All trail, park, and public space projects will continue to follow applicable accessibility standards at all stages of planning, supported by regular and maintenance to keep features useable over time.
- Stoney Point Community Park is under construction and will include accessibility upgrades to its pavilion, washrooms, and toboggan hill, a pickleball court, and an accessible play area.
- In 2024, playground surfaces were converted from pea stone to engineered wood fiber (EWF) to improve mobility and accessibility across municipal playgrounds.
- Concrete pads will be installed beside picnic tables at select parks, including the Libro Centre and Maidstone Park to provide stable, accessible seating areas.
- At Optimist Park, accessible pathways have been installed as of 2025 to provide routes to continuous parking areas to recreational amenities.
- Accessible parking spaces planned for Lions Park are scheduled for completion in 2026-2027 and will improve access to park facilities.

For more information and to share your feedback

Lakeshore is committed to creating an accessible community by removing barriers and providing accommodations to people with disabilities. To help us accomplish that goal, we need your feedback!

We encourage residents, visitors, and stakeholders, to share their accessibility experience in Lakeshore by identifying barriers and potential solutions. We are committed to receiving feedback and providing updates and responses to everyone who contacts us. The feedback you provide may be shared with Lakeshore staff, Lakeshore's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and/or Council.

Feedback can be submitted through our online Accessibility Feedback Form, available at Lakeshore.ca/Accessibility.

If you prefer receiving responses through other methods, please contact Lakeshore's Public Service Unit at PublicService@Lakeshore.ca or by phone during regular business hours at 519-728-2700 ext. 0. The Public Service Unit is also available for in-person service during regular business at Lakeshore Town Hall and the Atlas Tube Recreation Centre.

To contact Lakeshore's Accessibility Advisory Committee directly, please email Accessibility@Lakeshore.ca.