

The background of the entire page is a dark, textured surface, possibly wood, covered with various colorful wooden cutouts. These cutouts include stylized human figures in different colors (orange, green, blue, red) and wheelchair symbols in red, green, and blue. The icons are scattered across the page, with some overlapping the text boxes.

Municipality of Mississippi Mills

MULTI-YEAR
ACCESSIBILITY
PLAN

2026 - 2030

Executive Summary

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026-2030 outlines the initiatives the Municipality has taken and plans to take to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. The Plan also identifies steps taken to address the growing needs of our community.

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities share the same rights, freedoms and obligations, so that they may live as independently as possible and participate in all that the Municipality of Mississippi Mills has to offer. The annual accessibility plan represents and plays an essential role in recognizing the needs of persons with disabilities who reside in Mississippi Mills.

The multi-year plan outlines strategies to identify and remove accessibility barriers. It also positions the Municipality as a leader in accessibility matters in the community.

About Mississippi Mills

On January 1, 1998, the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills was created by an amalgamation of the former Town of Almonte, the Township of Ramsay and the Township of Pakenham. The Municipality is a diverse community of urban and rural areas, with a population of 14,740, covering over 500 square kilometres in Lanark County, just west of the City of Ottawa.

In 2022, new findings from Statistics Canada found that 27% of Canadians aged over 15 years have one or more disabilities, which is up 5% from the last report. Based on Mississippi Mills' population and Canada's average number of individuals with an identified disability, there would be just under 3,980 residents living with a disability, which has increased by almost 1000 since the last update.

Legislation

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the AODA to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. The AODA sets out the road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas:



CUSTOMER
SERVICE



INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORTATION



PUBLIC SPACES

The AODA also requires municipalities to prepare annual status reports on the progress of measures to implement their accessibility plans. In addition, municipalities must file an online report every two years that identifies how they are complying with AODA standards.

Ontario Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

The ODA was established to improve the opportunities for people with disabilities. Certain sections of the ODA, which applied to municipalities, were rescinded in 2015. This was done to streamline accessibility requirements across different accessibility laws and remove duplicate requirements.

Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

The IASR was enacted in July 2011 and establishes accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service. The requirements apply to the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and have compliance dates ranging from 2011 to 2021.

Mississippi Mills Accessibility Advisory Committee

Building a Community for Everyone

The Mississippi Mills Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) works with Council and municipal staff to make our community more inclusive and accessible for everyone. The committee provides advice and support to help identify, remove and prevent barriers that people with disabilities may face when accessing municipal services, programs and facilities.

Roles

- Review municipal policies, programs, and services for accessibility
- Recommend improvements to public spaces and services
- Promote an inclusive community where everyone can participate fully

Committee Makeup

The AAC is made up of between 5 and 7 members of the public, 1 to 2 members of Council, and the Mayor is an ex-officio member.



Mississippi Mills' Plan

1. Customer Service

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills developed an Accessible Customer Service Policy in January 2010. Accessible customer service means giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access the municipality's goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other people.

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills continues to:

- Provide accessible training to staff (training completion certificates are saved with the employee's personnel file)
- Ensure that anyone who provides service on behalf of the municipality has been trained on providing accessible customer service

2026-2030 Customer Service Goals

- Explore the opportunity to utilize technologies to support accessible customer service, such as acquiring a tablet to facilitate communication for deaf, deafened, and hard-of-hearing visitors, as well as non-English-speaking visitors. The tablet may also magnify information for people with low vision and can access an on-demand sign language interpreter.
- Review the Accessible Customer Service Policy and Procedure and identify opportunities to reinforce and promote requirements that enhance accessible customer service.
- Continue to incorporate changes to the municipal website using existing tools, ensuring information is presented in plain language to serve diverse audiences.
- Continue to identify and address potential barriers in public spaces, including in-class, events, and e-learning on IARS requirements.
- Accessible 2026 Election
 - Evaluate all voting locations and methods to ensure that locations are fully accessible and provide barrier-free access to voters, candidates and employees.
 - Ensure that all election materials are made available in a number of accessible formats.

2. Information and Communication

The Information and Communications Standard under IASR requires the Municipality to communicate and provide information in ways accessible to people with disabilities.

The municipality continues to:

- Maintain an accessible website and web content where possible
- Encourage Municipal staff to communicate in accessible formats
- Incorporate plain language into municipal communications

2026-2030 Information and Communication Goals

- Review and update standards and guides for municipal employees for accessible digital, marketing and media content.
- Review and update municipal website to meet or exceed WCAG 2.1 Level AA.
- Explore the use of accessibility tools to test the municipality's website for accessibility standards and plain language.
- Ensure that all print documents are accessible.

3. Employment

The employment standard under the IASR sets out accessibility requirements that the municipality must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

The municipality continues to:

- Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
- Advise successful candidates about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities

2026-2030 Employment Goals

Continue to review human resource policies to prevent or remove barriers, ensure they are compliant with legislation and reflect best practices.

4. Transportation

Most of the requirements of the Transportation Standard relate to the operation of public transportation systems. The Municipality of Mississippi Mills does licence taxis within the municipality but does not own or operate any transportation system.

2026-2030 Transportation Goals

- Develop, share and promote information about accessible transportation options available within the municipality, i.e Lanark Transportation.

5. Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the IASR requires that the Municipality ensure that newly constructed or significantly renovated public spaces are accessible.

The municipality also complies with the Ontario Building Code's accessibility requirements for the built environment.

The municipality continues to:

- Identify barriers at all municipally owned facilities
- Consult with the AAC on all new designs for public spaces

5.1 Maintenance of Accessible Elements

The Municipality will maintain the following procedures for preventive and emergency Maintenance of the accessible elements in its public spaces.

- Staff will continue to monitor and check accessible elements of corporate public spaces regularly.
- If an issue is identified, staff will report it to the Director of Public Works, Facilities Manager, and/or the Recreation Manager as soon as reasonably possible for timely remediation and/or emergency maintenance, where necessary.
- In addition, in the event of any temporary disruptions affecting the accessible elements in the Municipality's public space, due to maintenance or otherwise, the Municipality will notify the public through the following procedure:
 - Planned service disruptions to facilities and services that are relied upon by persons with disabilities accessing Municipal goods, services, or that are not in working order.
 - No notice of the disruption shall be provided in advance
 - Unexpected disruptions
 - Notice will be provided as soon as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- Notice Provisions
 - Notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration (if known), and, if applicable, a description of alternative facilities and services that may be available.
 - Notice may be given by posting the information in a common place on premises owned or operated by the Municipality, and/or posted on the website or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

2026-2030 Public Space Goals

- Continue to prioritize accessibility in newly designed and significantly renovated public spaces
- Explore community engagement opportunities during the project design phase
- Continue to review and provide feedback on the current municipal master plans as they progress
- Enhance pedestrian safety



Accessibility Moving Forward

The Municipality must comply with the statutory requirements identified in the AODA; however, the Municipality is committed to identifying and implementing barrier-reducing initiatives to improve accessibility.

Barrier-reducing initiatives endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee include:

- Conducting an accessibility survey to garner feedback from the community to identify barrier-reducing opportunities
- Working with community partners in the community and county to promote accessibility opportunities
- Creating an annual accessibility fund that would identify barrier-reducing improvements to municipal assets such as buildings, recreation facilities or outdoor spaces
- Providing educational and promotional campaigns highlighting accessibility throughout the municipality

