



MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2022 - 2027

**FOR
THE TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH**



This document is available in an alternative format, upon request.
Please contact the Clerks Department at 519-468-2410

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor	Page 3
Message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee	Page 3
Introduction	Page 4
Legislation	Page 4
Barrier Identification	Page 5
Accessibility Advisory Committee	Page 5
Accessibility Partnerships	Page 5
Feedback & Contact Information	Page 6
Implementation Status	Page 7
Communication of Plan	Page 9
Conclusion	Page 9

Schedule A – Accessibility Advisory Committee Appointees 2018 – 2022 & Recognition of Past Committee Members
Schedule B – Goals for 2022 - 2027
Schedule C – Achievements to Date

Plan adopted by Council

Date:
Resolution #





THE TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022 - 2027

Message from the Mayor

This new Multi-year Accessibility Plan for 2022 – 2027 outlines goals to continue to remove and prevent accessibility barriers as well as incorporate accessibility into new projects.

Although it has been a challenging time since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the municipality has continued to work through identified goals. The pandemic also necessitated accessibility improvements with respect to: health and safety, signage, technology and meeting software for working remotely and Council meetings held via teleconference to enabled virtual attendance and participation.

We are looking forward to the construction of the new Southwest Park in the Village of Norwich. This park will incorporate a walking trail, play / fitness equipment, multi-use play courts and seating areas.

While the Township still has a lot of work to do to be a more inclusive, equitable and accessible municipality, we have accomplished many achievements to date and are committed to continuing this progress.

Sincerely
Mayor Jim Palmer

Message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) are committed to improving accessibility within the Township of Norwich for all residents and visitors. The AAC continue to work with Staff and Council to identify areas that need improvement to ensure safe and easy accessibility within the municipality.

We appreciate input from our community and encourage residents to share any suggestions or concerns they may have.



Introduction & Statement of Commitment

The Township of Norwich is located in the southeast corner of Oxford County in the heart of Southwestern Ontario. The population is approximately 11,151 (2021 Census Data). While being primarily agricultural lands, the Township has several villages and hamlets. These are as follows: Norwich, Otterville, Burgessville, Springford, Oxford Centre, Curries, Hawtrey, Holbrook, Eastwood, Milldale and Cornell.

The Township of Norwich is committed to promoting a barrier-free Township for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in Norwich. In order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities the Township of Norwich will:

1. Ensure practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration, inclusiveness and provide equal opportunity to all.
2. Will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to use of benefit from the services offered
3. Ensure persons with disabilities can obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services and facilities of the municipality.

This accessibility plan outlines the steps that will be taken to meet the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The contents of this multi-year accessibility plan were developed in consultation with the accessibility advisory committee, municipal employees and incorporate goals identified in the 20 year Capital forecast.

Legislation

In 2005 the Province of Ontario enacted The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities



Barrier Identification

Attitudinal barriers may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.

Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

Technological barriers occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Systemic barriers in policies, practices and procedures and result in people with disabilities being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.

Physical and architectural barriers in the environment and prevent access for people with disabilities.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Council approved Report C-A 2003-06 establishing an Accessibility Advisory Committee on February 11, 2003, and adopted the attached Terms of Reference. AAC meeting minutes are available through Council agendas. The Terms of Reference were amended by Resolution #14, November 11, 2008. The Committee's responsibilities range from providing a forum for persons with disabilities to raise issues and concerns, providing advice and guidance to Norwich Township Council on matters related to policies, practices and programs in the Township. A detailed Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Advisory Committee is available on the Township website.

Accessibility Partnerships

Oxford County is comprised of three city/towns and five rural townships. There are four Accessibility Advisory Committee's within Oxford County and each one reports to their respective Municipal Councils on a variety of accessibility matters.

During 2015 the Oxford County AAC started hosting semi-annual accessibility meetings which include representation from all AAC's and staff from all Oxford municipalities. These events have speakers, presentations and members discuss accomplishments and challenges. During COVID these joint meetings have been held virtually.

During 2017 representatives from Norwich Township worked with the Oxford County AAC and some Oxford County staff to identify accessible features within our Parks. The information, photos and video will be incorporated into a website to ensure the public is aware of what each play area has to offer.



Feedback & Contact Information

The Township of Norwich has made significant progress in adopting practices that ensure accessibility is at the forefront of planning development of practices. This is accomplished through improvements to by-laws, policies, work procedures, facilities, parks, services and programs.

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Township of Norwich Multi-year Accessibility Plan and any accessibility issues. There are a number of ways you can contact the municipality to express your accessibility related comments. A feedback form is also available on our website or by request.

Contact Information:

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285767 Airport Road
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karmstrong@norwich.ca



IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The Township of Norwich is committed to improving accessibility and promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities to fully participate in the community. The implementation plan contained herein attempts to balance the need of persons with disabilities against the need to balance available budget funds.

Strategies & Action Items	Proposed Implementation	Status
GENERAL		
Statement of organizational commitment	Statement to be included within plans	Compliant: Statements have been included within all Accessibility Plans
Establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan	To be reviewed by staff & AAC prior to presentation to Council	Compliant: approved by Council December 2013, new plan approved December 2016
Prepare annual status report on progress of Multi-year plan	Reports to be presented for Council approval annually	Compliant: status report presented to Council August 9, 2022
Incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring good, services or facilities	Include accessibility criteria when accessing purchases and incorporate into Procurement Policy	Compliant: Staff continuously considers accessibility during purchasing. On May 12, 2015 Council approved amending the Procurement Policy to include this requirement, making it policy not merely procedural.
File Accessibility Compliance Report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario	Reports due: December 31, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2025	Compliant



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION		
Feedback processes	Develop feedback form and supply in an alternate format if requested	Compliant
Provide information in an accessible format upon request, at no additional cost	Provide information in an accessible format upon request, at no additional cost	Compliant
Emergency procedures, plans and public safety information must be made available in an accessible format upon request	Ensure public safety information is available in an accessible format on the website and upon request	Compliant
Websites and content must conform to Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 at Level A	Oxford County IT department to create accessible platform for information	Compliant: New Norwich.ca is accessible (December 2013)
Websites and content must conform to WCAG 2.0 at Level AA	Oxford County IT department to create accessible platform for information	Currently working towards total website accessibility Continuing staff training & utilization of Software to test accessibility of documents
EMPLOYMENT STANDARD		
Provide accommodation in the recruitment and hiring process	Develop Accessible Employment Standards policy to outline practices	Compliant
Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with a disability	Develop Accessible Employment Standards policy to outline practices	Compliant
Provide accommodation plans and return to work processes for employees with disabilities	Develop Accessible Employment Standards policy to outline practices	Compliant



DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES		
Exterior paths of travel must meet accessible design requirements	Incorporate accessibility into all new construction and renovations	On-going
Accessible Parking Spaces	Incorporate IAS standard when constructing new or redeveloped parking areas	On-going
Accessible Service Counters	Incorporate into new Administration building construction	Compliant: Lowered counters are available at the NCC, Oxford Centre Hall and Administration Office
TRAINING		
Provide training on Customer Service, to all Council, employees, volunteers or others providing service on behalf of the municipality	Training booklet created and training module purchased	Compliant On-going
Provide training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards and Human Rights Code	On-going training of all new staff as they are hired	Compliant
Keep a record of training provided	Maintain a record	Compliant

COMMUNICATION OF PLAN

The Municipal Accessibility Plan will be available upon request at the Administration Building, on the Township website at www.norwich.ca or in an alternative format upon request.

CONCLUSION

The Township of Norwich is committed to continuously addressing current accessibility barriers that do not allow people with disabilities to fully participate in our communities. The Township of Norwich is also committed to developing innovative solutions to accessibility issues that enable the municipality and its partners to function effectively.



SCHEDULE A

Accessibility Advisory Committee 2018 - 2022

Mayor Larry Martin
Wendy Martin
Ray Sambrooks
Pauline Jackson

We would like to extend our appreciation to the individuals who previously served on the Accessibility Advisory Committee and have contributed to our progress to date.

Richard Picknell 2003 – 2013
Kelly Douma 2003 – 2004
Larry Gow 2003
Shannon Vanbesien 2003 – 2004
Gary Ykema 2003 – 2006
Brent Penny 2007 – 2010
Fred Christo 2008 – 2010
Janelle Gatti 2011 - 2013
Carolyn Richardson 2011 – 2014
Larry Martin 2011 – 2014
Councillor Lynne DePlancke 2010 – 2014
Roy King 2014 – 2018
Steve Esseltine 2014 – 2018
David Kerr - 2019

Accessibility Coordinator:
Kimberley Armstrong, Deputy Clerk
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SCHEDULE B

Future Accessibility Goals

(exact years determined by approved budget allocation)

- Requests for additional streetlights to be reviewed
- New Southwest Park in Norwich – accessible pathways around park perimeter and links to various amenities & accessible fitness/play structure
- Sidewalks – Jerdon Street, Norwich
- Sidewalk replacement on Main Street North in Burgessville
- Sidewalk replacement on Church Street in Burgessville
- Sidewalk replacement on Stover Street from Elgin Street to North Court (possibly to Brock Street, budget dependent)
- Otterville Picnic Shelter
- Springford Park paved pathways
- Burgessville Park – paved pathways
- Otterville Park - new play structure
- Otterville Park - walking/fitness trail
- Accessible picnic tables for various parks
- Ongoing training of new staff as soon as practical after start date
- Norwich Township to host Joint Oxford County AAC meeting in 2023
- Ongoing training of new Committee/Board members
- Implementation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training



SCHEDULE C

Achievements to Date

The Township of Norwich has been actively developing innovative approaches to addressing accessibility issues and is proud to report on the removal of current barriers and prevention of future barriers for people with disabilities and our maturing population.

The Township of Norwich is proud to report the following accomplishments:

2022

- Springford Picnic Shelter (including accessible picnic table(s))
- Springford Park Paved Pathways
- Centralized Public Works Shop – accessible ramped, push-button entrance, accessible washroom (existing)
- 4 accessible picnic tables purchased in total
- Review of plans for New Southwest Park in Norwich and start of groundworks
- Ongoing training to create accessible documents for the website
- Accessible 2022 Municipal Election
- Otterville Public Parking Lot – 1 accessible parking space
- Horse Hitching Posts installed on Front Street, Norwich and Stover Street Parking Lot

2021

- New online purchase of Dog Tags
- Ongoing training to create accessible documents for the website
- Sidewalk – Grove Street, Otterville
- Sidewalks – Stover Street Norwich, Norwich
- Groundwork started for Springford Pavillion project
- I-Cloud permitting implementation in the Building Department

Accessibility during COVID-19 Pandemic

- The Municipal Office remained open with limited capacity whenever possible during the Pandemic, following recommended health and safety measures.
- Information about safety measures and Township protocols was conveyed using high contrast, large font signage and posted on the municipal website.
- When working remotely, municipal staff were provided with the technology and meeting software to allow for safe meeting options. These programs provide accessibility features such as closed captioning, adjustable font size for chat and captions, keyboard maneuverability and screen reader support



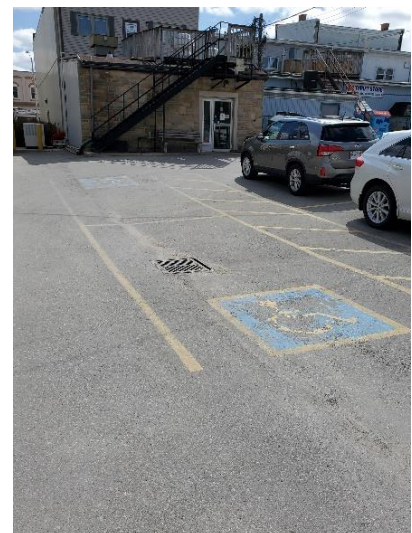
- Council meetings were held via teleconference which enabled anyone wishing to attend/participate a safe experience

2020

- Completion of Sidewalk Needs Study which will identify problem areas and provide a schedule for future maintenance and replacement.
- Completion of Provincial AODA Compliance Audit
- Installation of curb cuts at several intersections within the Village of Norwich. (Stover St. & South St., South Court St & Stover St., Brock St. & Carman St. and Stover St. & North St.)
- Reconstructed slope of sidewalk at laneway entrance between Shoppers Drug Mart and Circle K Convenience Store.

2019

- Downtown Norwich Parking Lot located behind Main Street businesses, was reconstructed and paved. Lot includes two accessible parking spaces located near the Village Walkway for easy access to downtown.
- Installation of curb cuts at numerous intersections within the Village of Norwich.
- Sidewalk replacement completed on sections of South Court Street East and Cook Street in the Village of Norwich.
- New Township of Norwich website created.



2018

- Downtown Norwich sidewalk along the south side of Main Street from Pitcher Street around the corner at Stover Street to Front Street. Sidewalk was rebuilt and wherever possible the sidewalk was sloped to the business entrance to allow for accessible entrance instead of a step. Tactile strips were installed at intersections.
- The 2018 Municipal Election included steps to ensure accessibility needs were met. Report CAO 2019-04, presented to Council on January 10, 2019 outlined considerations taken to enhance accessibility for the Election.
- Renovation of the Springford Hall included creation of a new accessible washroom and automated sliding entrance doors, as well as paved parking with accessible parking spaces and improved lighting.
- Installation of curb cuts at several locations on well-travelled sidewalks in the Village of Norwich were completed. Locations were identified during the October 2017 Sidewalk inspection.
- Parking lot at the Oxford Centre Hall was repaved.
- New Norwich Soccer Park was created with accessible walking paths constructed around all of the new fields.



2017

- Installation of paved pathways in Polden Park and Dillon Park in Norwich.
- Installation of new bleachers which include accessible seating areas and additional paved pathways in the Otterville Park.



- Norwich Community Centre - Installation of a new accessible water fountain
- Paxton Street in Otterville – new sidewalks and curb cuts installed
- North Street Parking Lot in Otterville – sidewalk installed from parking lot to Main Street
- Springford Hall - Tender accepted for installation of a new asphalt parking lot with accessible parking spaces as per building code and installation of cement sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts and improved lighting for enhanced accessibility.
- Council approved purchase of a sound system to enable those in attendance at Council meetings to hear presentations more easily.

2016

- New electronic eye control for accessible doors at Palmer Street entrance to the Norwich Community Centre
- Installation of 'Deaf Child' signs on Cornell Road
- Continued implementation and management of accessibility policies and training



- John Street, Norwich – construction includes curb cuts and sidewalk improvements



- Installation of new playground equipment at Dillon Park which incorporates accessible features and surface



2015

- Curries Park - paved walkway to pavilion and playground
- Municipal Administration Building – new construction which includes many accessible features and Council Chambers
- Oxford Centre Hall – new accessible sliding doors installed
- Sidewalk improvements including: curb cuts on Main Street and Pitcher Streets in Norwich and improved sidewalks from post office to park in Burgessville
- Norwich Community Centre – new accessible sliding doors installed
- Otterville Park – replaced existing damaged paths with wider asphalt pathways, installed a small splash pad and conversion of pea gravel surface under playground equipment to an accessible surface
- Amended Procurement Policy to include accessibility considerations

2014

- Curries Picnic Pavilion built, includes an accessible picnic table



- New curb cuts installed during construction on North Street and Albert Street in Norwich and on Dover Street in Otterville
- Execution of an accessible municipal election
- New Norwich.ca website that meets accessibility criteria
- Stairs installed at the Otterville pool for increased ease in entering the pool

2012 / 2013

- New playground equipment installed at Curries Park which includes some accessible features



- Pioneer Room renovation which includes: ramped and automated entrance, accessible washrooms and installation of friction resistant flooring at Pioneer Hall
- New automated sliding doors installed at the Nor-Del Arena
- Installation of accessible curb cuts at Pitcher and Tidey Streets
- A multi-year Accessibility Plan was approved by Council at their meeting on December 10, 2013
- Installed accessibility awareness signs on Pitcher and Palmer Streets in the Village of Norwich
- Employment Standards Policy and Information and Communication Policy adopted by Council at their meeting November 26, 2013 followed by training sessions

2011

- Accessible counters were installed at the Norwich Community Centre Kitchenette and the Oxford Centre Hall bar counter area.
- A new ramped entrance was installed at the Otterville Pool house
- New bleachers were installed in Springfield park with back rests and hand railings.



- An accessible picnic table was located at the Harold Bishop Park
- New playground equipment was installed at the Oxford Centre Park which included some accessible features.



2010

- Harold Bishop Park – installed a paved accessible pathway around the barrier free play structure, enhancing accessibility
- Norwich Arena – re-painted stair nosings for better visibility
- Harold Bishop Park – accessible picnic tables
- Barrier free Porta-Potties were used at several locations throughout the Township (ball diamonds and passive parks)

2009

- By-law 40-2009 was passed amending By-law 06-2005. Changes include a clause advising that all service animals must be registered within the township, but are exempt from paying license fees.

- A portion of the Norwich Community Centre Bar and the Arena Snack Bar counter tops have been lowered to enable greater accessibility for everyone.
- An accessible ramped viewing platform was constructed in the cold area of the Norwich Arena.



- Stair nosings at all facilities have been painted for better visibility.
- An Accessible Customer Service Policy was adopted by Council via resolution #37 passed October 13, 2009. This policy addresses all information as required under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)
- Training course materials and procedures have been developed for staff, council, volunteers and third parties providing services on the townships behalf. Training will be completed prior to December 23, 2009.

2008

- In January 2008, the Otterville Library moved to a new location, which included an accessible ramp, family washroom, better lighting and more space, which enables better mobility.
- The font in the bi-annual tax flyer has been changed to Arial and enlarged to enable easier reading.
- New playground equipment has been installed in the Springford Park, which includes an accessible surface and some accessible play features.
- The ramp to the accessible exterior washroom in Oxford Centre has been corrected to comply with Ontario Building Code Standards.
- The font size in the Community Resource & Leisure Guide has been increased to 12 for easier reading.
- On September 9, 2008, Report RPF 2008-43, Norwich Community Centre re: Auditorium Washroom Renovations Tender Results was approved by Council and the tender awarded. The washroom project at the Norwich Auditorium was completed in November 2008. The retrofit includes an accessible stall that is family oriented in both the men and women's washrooms. These enlarged stalls include toilet, sink, handrails, mirror, paper towel dispensers and baby change table.
- The Township of Norwich website has additional accessibility information available on it, as well as links to other informative sites.
- On February 29, 2008 the Deputy Clerk attended an AMCTO workshop regarding the new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, which must be complied with by January 1, 2010.
- The footbath at the Otterville Pool has been filled in to eliminate steps and provide a level surface when entering the pool area.
- Norwich Arena / Community Centre south parking lot has been re-lined to include six accessible parking spaces along the front of the building.



2007

- Report RPF-2007-23, Harold Bishop Park Playground Equipment re: Tender Results, was presented to Council at their meeting May 8, 2007. The evaluation of the Committee was based on play value, number of components, service and accessibility. The approval of the recommendation contained within this report represented the installation of the first accessible playground within the Township.



- Report RPF 2007-24, Medical Centre re: Parking Lot Lighting Tender Results was presented to Council at their meeting May 8, 2007. This ensures improved lighting at the Dr. Russell M. Hall Family Medical Centre for individuals who suffer from a visual impairment and/or night blindness.
- Report RPF 2007-44, Arena Door Hardware & Barrier Free Doors Tender Results, was presented to Council at their meeting August 14, 2007. The purpose of this project is to provide barrier free access to all entrances at the Norwich Arena and Community Centre.
- With recommendations from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, a comprehensive plan was developed to make the Oxford Centre Hall an accessible facility. The renovation included the installation of an additional accessible parking space, a ramped entrance, automated entrance doors, accessible interior and exterior washrooms.
- Approval was received for the new accessible playground at the Ducky Dennis Athletic Park in Burgessville. Installation commenced November 7, 2007.
- In March the Chief Building Official and the Deputy-Clerk attended the Oxford County Builders Forum session on CMHC's Flexhousing Barrier Free Design.5+

- In April the Director of Recreation, Parks and Facilities and the Deputy-Clerk attended an information session at KSL Design Inc. in Brantford regarding accessible playgrounds

2006

- The New Norwich Public Library was built to be completely accessible, according to the Facility Accessibility Design Standards adopted by the County of Oxford.
- Engineered drawings have been made of the proposed washroom upgrades and ramped entry to the Oxford Centre Hall. These drawings were forwarded to the Trillium Foundation with a grant request.
- Signage was placed in the Norwich Arena to mark the heated accessible viewing area.

2005

- Section A (5) of the 2004 MunAP (Municipal Accessibility Plan) addressed the fact that there was no official public input system to identify barriers and gaps in existing services / programs. There is now information posted on the website as well as the Municipal Office to address this issue.
- On July 12, 2005 the Township of Norwich Council passed By-law 53-2005, being a By-law to Regulate Handicap Parking within the Township of Norwich. Signs have been posted at the locations identified in Schedule A.
- Section H (1) of the 2004 MunAP, identifies many accessibility issues within municipally owned facilities. During the renovation of the Norwich Arena / Community Centre some of these issues were addressed:
 - Push button operator on main entrance doors to arena
 - Elevator to allow access to the second floor
 - Expanded washrooms in arena lobby to include a barrier-free toilet in the Men's and Women's washrooms
 - Installed barrier-free toilet in the Men's and Women's washroom in the Community Centre Lobby
 - New washrooms provided at the north end of the Community Hall are barrier-free accessible
- Prior to the renovation project some other items were addressed:
 - Stair nosings at the Norwich Arena were painted yellow for added visibility
 - Previous Handicapped parking locations were moved closer to the Arena and Auditorium entrances
 - Stair nosings and elevation changes were painted yellow for added visibility at the Otterville Pool – guard house and shower area



- The Otterville Hall Advisory Committee includes a member of our Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Section J (1) of the 2004 MunAP, identified a lack of information on accessibility within the community as a whole. Report RPF-2005-15, 2005 Summer Experience Program – Student to Conduct Cultural Research, went before Council on April 12, 2005. This position was responsible for conducting research into the arts, heritage and cultural sectors of the Township. While identifying the programs and services available, they were also assessed for accessibility.

2004

- Chief Building Official, Brian Reid attended an Accessibility Seminar while at the Ontario Building Officials Annual Meeting held in Etobicoke. He also returned with information for staff reference.
- The Norwich Arena Steering Committee included a member of our Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **Section J, Part 1 of the First Accessibility Plan relayed a lack of information on accessible restaurants and amenities in the community. In an effort to gather information the Accessibility Advisory Committee inserted a questionnaire into the Tax Bills mailed to Commercial properties in February. The intent of the Committee was to produce a pamphlet including this information, and also make it available on the website. Due to a very disappointing response (9/300) the project was not completed.

2003

- Treasury Report TR-2003-29 was presented to Council on Tuesday June 10, 2003, outlining the ten-year plus program to install new streetlights in the Township. (on-going improvements)
- Public Works Report PW-03-15 outlining the Level of Service Standards was presented to Council on June 10, 2003. This report outlines sidewalk snow clearing and repair standards, as well as response times for non-functioning streetlights.
- Recreation, Parks and Facilities Report RPF-2003-22 to develop a Norwich Arena / Community Centre Steering Committee includes a recommendation that a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be appointed to the Committee for accessibility input purposes.
- Improvements to the 2003 Voting Stations:
 - North Norwich Public School utilized a ramp for accessibility to the facilities.
 - Recreation, Parks and Facilities staff manufactured a portable ramp for access to the Oxford Centre Hall, this ramp can also be utilized for Public rentals.

