

**Parks of the
St. Lawrence**



**Les Parcs du
Saint-Laurent**

SLPC MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2017 to 2020



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***Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.**

Last update October 2018

Our Organization's Accessibility Commitment

As an Agency of the Government of Ontario, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) is a revenue-generating tourism business offering customer-focused entertaining and educational experiences that maximize its natural, leisure and heritage assets.

SLPC is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

SLPC believes in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities while delivering exceptional customer service to our visitors and supporting all of our employees in realizing their full potential.

SLPC will strive at all times to ensure our policies, procedures and practices are consistent with our accessibility goals and the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

SLPC is pleased to share with you SLPC's Multi-year Accessibility Plan, which sets out the accessibility accomplishments to date as well as the results they intend to achieve moving forward.

Achievements to Date

Compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation

Since implementation of this standard in 2010, SLPC continues to meet its obligation under the AODA Customer Service Standard employing either face-to-face training to all staff at our annual orientation or through e-learning courses. SLPC's pledge to provide customer service in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities is posted on the external website and includes information on providing goods and services; use of service animals and support persons; notice of temporary disruption; staff training and customer feedback processes.

2018 Accessible Tourism Award

As winner of the 2018 Accessible Tourism Award, SLPC has been recognized for its efforts in accessible tourism at the 2018 Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Summit. The award acknowledges an organization that operates an outstanding hospitality and tourism business that complies with Ontario Accessibility standards and is recognized by employees and customers as a leader in providing an inclusive experience for all visitors.

Compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

The IASR establishes accessibility standards and requirements for Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation as well as General requirements. The following outlines how SLPC has met its obligations to date on the regulations that apply to the organization:

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan/Policies, Practices and Procedures

SLPC has built their plan following the Ontario Public Service Multi-Year Accessibility Plan; the established SLPC Customer Service Policy Statement; new and refreshed OPS corporate directives and policies that reinforce and embed accessibility criteria into business practices, and the OPS Statement of Commitment.

The OPS Statement of Commitment to Accessibility:

"The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities"

As a designated public sector organization, SLPC is required to meet a number of deadlines in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The Multi-year Accessibility Plan has

been created as a living document to create a road map for SLPC to meet Ontario's accessibility laws and remove accessibility barriers.

Training

All new staff are trained on Accessible Customer Service as part of the on-boarding and training program, including Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Learning can be achieved through both formal or informal methods, informal may include the use of email communications, staff meetings or lunch and learns. SLPC considers and implements tailored training specific to the duties of our employees and volunteers where applicable and as described below.

Specialized training has occurred for staff at Upper Canada Village to support Accessible History programming and ASD Sensory Friendly Sunday's. Autism Ontario and Dementia Friendly Communities conducted training to educate staff on Autism Spectrum and Dementia. Staff have also participated in training with the Canadian Hearing Society and CNIB. Fort Henry staff have participated in specialized training in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of KFL&A as part of the Blue Umbrella Program.

Employment

Following the OPS mandate, SLPC is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices. The organization has taken the following steps to ensure they accomplish their goal:

- Job ads are in plain language; offered in alternative formats upon request and include information for applicants on how to request accommodation or assistance.
- Applicants invited to participate in an assessment process (such as an interview or testing) and who require accommodation, are directed to discuss their needs with the Human Resources department.
- Successful candidates will be made aware of our policy for accommodation in their offer letter.
- SLPC follows OPS policies and best practices related to employment accommodation. There are robust processes in place for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work strategies for employees that have been absent due to a disability or require an employment accommodation to continue meaningful employment.
- SLPC takes the following steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account during the performance management process, career development and job changes:
 - Alternate formats such as large print or verbal reviews can be provided during the performance management process
 - Accommodation needs will be considered when career development , job reassignment and succession planning opportunities are available

Managers and supervisors have been trained in the OPS Policy on Preventing Barriers in Employment, Employment Accommodation and the New OPS Employment Policy, all of which incorporates the goals of AODA.

Workplace information accessible in alternate formats, upon request, for employees with disabilities. This will be completed in consultation with the individual making the request to ensure the most appropriate form of support or format can be supplied.

Information on the organization's policies on supporting employees with disabilities is shared with staff and new hires.

Procurement

SLPC follows the OPS Procurement Policies and Procedures. Procurement directives, tools and guidelines have been updated to meet new accessibility standards, accessibility considerations are now part of the procurement process, which SLPC follows.

Where applicable, SLPC will specify accessibility criteria to be met and provide guidelines for the evaluation of proposals in respect to those criteria.

Kiosks

The Discovery Centres (Upper Canada Village and Fort Henry National Historic Site) designed to educate our visitors on the Canadian history that each attraction has to offer, utilizes interactive kiosks which have been built and designed to meet the requirements of people with disabilities. Features include touch screens, voice activated equipment and structural accessibility features to allow for wheelchair access and clear access paths from one kiosk to another.

Web Content

SLPC has achieved compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), Level A prior to January 1, 2014. We are currently investigating the steps we must take to conform to with (WCAG 2.0) Level AA.

Emergency and Public Safety Information

SLPC is committed to providing our customers with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. SLPC will work with visitors on a case by case basis to determine how they can meet their needs in a timely manner; this information is posted on our external website.

Workplace Emergency Information

SLPC has communicated with all staff to offer accommodation for any requirements they may have in a workplace emergency. Human Resources will assist managers and employees in creating a plan to ensure that an employee with an identified disability stays safe in an emergency by ensuring they have an individualized emergency response plan outlining the type of assistance they may require in such a situation. This messaging is communicated on an annual basis to ensure all employees are aware of this assistance.

Accessible Feedback

SLPC is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. They will undertake the following actions and measures to ensure we are compliant with this standard;

- Reviewing feedback mechanisms to ensure they are able to receive and respond to feedback, in multiple ways from customers, employees and members of the public who have a disability; this includes the use of email, comment cards and on-line surveys, which will be provided in alternate formats if requested.
- Ensure SLPC has the ability to produce accessible information to the public upon request, meeting their needs as soon as possible.

Accessible Meetings

When hosting events SLPC ensures the physical access to our meeting space is accessible to people with disabilities and that the content and proceedings of the meeting are available in accessible formats upon request; recognizing that people with disabilities have different needs, they will ensure meeting invitations and registration forms ask participants to identify any accessibility supports they require.

Design of Public Spaces

All public sector organizations are required to make new or redeveloped public outdoor spaces more accessible. The goal is to ensure that customers, staff and visitors are able to move freely, unrestricted by barriers in both the interior and exterior of our facilities. SLPC will ensure that they comply with the standards under Design for Public Spaces when building new or making major changes to existing areas.

SLPC has both preventative and emergency maintenance procedures in place for accessible sections of public spaces.

Many of SLPC's Special Events take place outdoors, they take a proactive approach to accessibility with these events by including accessibility considerations with follow up actions when they conduct safety and accessibility tours prior to and during events. Accessibility improvements also form part of capital asset assessments conducted across SLPC; they will take the necessary steps to address any issues that have been identified through this process.

Meeting Accessibility Commitments Going Forward

Accessible Programming

True to SLPC's commitment to continuously be a better organization, focused on customers and providing recreational, tourism, cultural and educational opportunities to people of all abilities, SLPC continues to grow our accessible programming each year as outlined below.

- The first floor of all buildings are equipped with accessible ramps at Upper Canada Village and iPads to provide guests with a visual tour complemented by dialogue with

a costumed interpreter of the upstairs area in historic buildings with second floors that are not accessible.

- Upper Canada Village offers horse drawn carry-all and miniature train rides that are wheelchair accessible.
- Site maps at Upper Canada Village with detailed building descriptions in several languages including Braille.
- Specialized tours at Upper Canada Village, such as a tactile tour for those with site loss, have been designed and can be adapted to accommodate a variety of needs.
- Accessible patio area at Battery Bistro and venue rental spaces at Fort Henry National Historic Site.
- Wheelchairs designed for outdoor terrain are available for loan at all historic sites.
- Upper Canada Village offers Accessibility nights during fall event Pumpkinferno and winter event Alight at Night on designated evenings so that individuals who cannot walk the site can participate in a driving tour.
- Kingston Penitentiary conducts tours for people with vision loss, hearing loss and for those with mobility issues and Upper Canada Village has similar offerings as requested.
- ASD Sensory Friendly Sunday Mornings, Upper Canada Village - Visitors on the autism spectrum or with sensory processing difficulties will have a fun, enjoyable learning experience in a comfortable and accepting environment. The sensory accommodations will include schedule and itinerary suggestions, quiet spaces, hands-on opportunities and gentle social interactions with Village staff.
- Sensory Sunday's, Fort Henry National Historic Site – Quiet rooms are available in both the Advanced Battery and Lower Fort for those visitors that require a quiet, enclosed space, including a camping tent, wool blankets, and a barracks box containing various Fort Henry items. Garrison Gauntlet is presented to allow children and parents to participate in a series of stations designed for interactive, sensory learning.



Accessible Zip Lining - Skywood Eco Adventure Park

- The Discovery Zip Line is an accessible zip line that is ten feet above the ground with specialized safety equipment that is compatible with adaptive and assistive technologies. A unique independent experience that is suitable for persons with reduced mobility or requiring mobility aids.

Upper Canada Village and Fort Henry National Historic Site are recognized as Dementia Friendly Communities by the Alzheimer's Society of Ontario.

Ongoing Training

On an annual basis, various sites across the SLPC engage in training provided by organizations such as CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society, Alzheimer's Society of Ontario and Autism Ontario. This training reinforces knowledge for many employees, while providing the tools for enhances skills for new employees.

Web Content Requirements

All public websites and all web content on those sites published after January 1, 2021, must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than providing captions on live videos or audio descriptions for pre-recorded videos.

Measuring Results

Accessibility Reporting

Accessibility Compliance Reports are submitted as required, to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, which regulates compliance for all organizations in Ontario. These reports will assess our progress against the accessibility requirements. To date, SLPC has had successful compliance reviews.

Review of Feedback

Feedback obtained from visitors and staff will be used to evaluate progress and integrate this information, where feasible, into ongoing accessibility planning. Primary sources of feedback are through comment cards, various Customer Service Unit channels and informal surveys performed by a variety of SLPC staff.

Feedback is also regularly solicited by engaging specific organizations such as CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society, Alzheimer's Society of Ontario, Autism Ontario, and various local long term care organizations. These organizations are invited to SLPC attractions to evaluate the level of accessibility offered and improvement suggestions are implemented. This activity is particularly valuable because it ensures that SLPC is fully aware of weaknesses in the actualization of the accessibility plan, giving an opportunity to take action to improve.

Review of our Multi-year Plan

Revisions and adjustments will be made to this plan as required when we have changes or accomplishments to highlight. This plan has been updated to include achievements and key objectives to October 2018.

Conclusion

Accessibility involves everyone and it takes a commitment from employees at all levels to accomplish. SLPC is committed to ensuring that customers with disabilities receive accessible goods, services and facilities with the same quality and timeliness as others. As an employer, SLPC is committed to ensuring we provide equal access to employment opportunities, accessible, safe workplaces and that we meet the accommodation needs of employees who require it.

Feedback

SLPC welcomes feedback and input to ensure they continue to reduce or eliminate barriers. Feedback on how well those expectations are being met can be given through the following avenues:

By e-mail: getaway@parks.on.ca

In Writing: St. Lawrence Parks Commission
13740 County Rd 2 Morrisburg Ontario K0C 1X0
Attention: Human Resources Department

By Phone: Susan LeClair, Manager, Customer Service and Corporate
Communications (613) 543-3704 extension 2496

Comment cards: Comment cards are available at all of our attraction locations

Alternate formats are available upon request.

St. Lawrence Parks Commission wins Accessible Tourism Award

NEWS

Morrisburg, Ontario – The St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) has been recognized for its efforts in accessible tourism at the 2018 Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Summit in Windsor.

The award acknowledges an organization that operates an outstanding accessible hospitality and tourism business that complies with Ontario Accessibility standards and is recognized by employees and customers as a leader in providing an inclusive experience for all visitors. Areas of consideration include the provision of accessible service, employment, built environment and accessible information and communications.

“This award means so much to our team. It recognizes SLPC’s ongoing commitment to be a better organization, focused on all of our customer’s needs in providing recreational, tourism, cultural and educational opportunities for people of all abilities. From ensuring we have all-terrain wheelchairs to loan to navigate our outdoor terrain, to programming which caters to those on the autism spectrum, to working with organizations like the CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society and the Alzheimer’s Society of Ontario to educate our employees and create specialized tours, this was a team effort by people who care.” – Geoff Waycik, Director, Historic Sites

The Ontario Tourism Summit is an event where the tourism industry gathers to network, gain new insights, explore trending topics and celebrate excellence.

BACKGROUND:

- The SLPC offers tours featuring multi-sensory tours and American Sign Language tours during select special events at Upper Canada Village
- Upper Canada Village offers iPads to provide guests with a visual tour complemented by dialogue with a costumed interpreter of the upstairs area in historic buildings with second floors that are not accessible as well as offers horse drawn carry-all rides that are wheelchair accessible.
- The Village also offers site maps with detailed building descriptions in several languages including Braille.
- Upper Canada Village is recognized as a Dementia Friendly Community by the Alzheimer’s Society of Ontario.
- Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village offer ASD Sensory Sunday mornings throughout July and August for individuals on the Autism Spectrum.
- Wheelchairs designed for outdoor terrain are available for loan at all historic sites.
- Upper Canada Village offers Accessibility nights during fall event Pumpkinferno and winter event ALight at Night on designated evenings so that individuals who cannot walk the site can participate in a driving tour.
- Kingston Penitentiary conducts tours for people with vision loss, hearing loss and for those with mobility issues and Upper Canada Village has similar offerings as requested.
- The SLPC has invested and continues to invest in specific accessibility improvement initiatives.

QUICK FACTS

The St. Lawrence Parks Commission, an agency of the Government of Ontario, operates facilities in 16 municipalities stretching from Kingston to the Quebec border, including Upper Canada Village, Fort Henry National Historic Site of Canada (and a UNESCO World Heritage Site); Kingston Penitentiary Tours, Skywood Eco Adventure, Chrysler Park Marina, Upper Canada Golf Course, Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary and 13 campgrounds and beach day-use picnic areas including the Long Sault and 1000 Islands Parkway.

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