



Region of Waterloo
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

**Airport
Accessibility Plan
2024-2027**

Region of Waterloo International Airport
1-4881 Fountain Street North
Breslau, Ontario
N0B 1M0

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Commitment

The Region Waterloo International Airport (YKF) is committed to improving accessibility in our programs and services and understanding and meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

YKF will meet the needs of people with disabilities in a way that:

- Is free from discrimination.
- Uses reasonable efforts to ensure that there are equal opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Region of Waterloo International Airport goods, services, programs, and facilities.
- Protects the dignity and independence of all people; and,
- Strives to provide responsive and integrated services.

YKF is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable airport experience for all.

Website: Information on Accessibility at the Region of Waterloo International Airport can be viewed on our website at [Airport Accessibility](#).

General

As part of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Region of Waterloo), YKF is already subject to the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA)*. This put the airport in a good place to meet the requirements of the newer Federal *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*, *Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations (ATPRR)* and the *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR)*.

This plan sets out a roadmap for YKF to follow over a three-year period.

Contact

The Manager, Regulatory Affairs and Administration oversees accessibility-related passenger requests and issues at the airport, and coordinates internally to ensure those requests are addressed. Feedback can be provided as identified below.

Feedback Process

The Region of Waterloo International Airport invites feedback on the plan, or feedback on any barriers encountered during your journey.

If you have any feedback associated with accessibility, please contact us directly as outlined below:

Email: regulatoryaffairs@regionofwaterloo.ca

Website: [Submit a Customer Feedback](#)

Phone: 519-575-4781 or Toll free 1-866-648-2256.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TTY): 519-575-4608.

If you would prefer to contact us in writing, please write to:

Region of Waterloo International Airport
1-4881 Fountain Street North
Breslau, Ontario, Canada
NOB 1M0

If you are at the Airport, you can visit us at our information desk located near the check-in area inside the main terminal building.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

YKF uses digital tools and technology to help provide a barrier-free experience. Accessible ICT is detailed below:

The Region of Waterloo in general, and the airport’s website in particular, are WCAG 2.2 compliant, providing everyone with barrier-free access to important information about the airport. YKF responds via email, or if preferred, via phone, to enquiries and requests submitted through a web submission form on the airport’s website.

The Region of Waterloo has developed social media best practice guidelines based on the most current requirements, for all communications staff. The Region also continues to audit communication distribution channels (e.g. Canva, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook) and documents for accessibility and plain language.

YKF has installed accessible “common-use” kiosks in the terminal building for departing passengers. These kiosks feature the following features: navigation keypads with tactilely discernible keys; a headphone jack with volume control for audible instructions; and accessible height. Assistance for all self-service kiosks is available upon request.

Information and Communication Technologies Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Ensure that social media and the airport website continue to be updated with accessibility in mind, to ensure that we meaningfully engage with members of the community with a barrier-free approach.	December 2024
Partner with airlines to ensure adequate visual messaging is provided on video screens.	July 2025
Investigate higher quality accessible parking payment options.	November 2025
Investigate the deployment of hearing loops.	January 2025
Public announcements can be provided audibly, and the televisions screens/Flight Information Display System (FIDS) can provide a scrolling text banner to provide visual messages.	September 2024

Communication, Other Than ICT

In addition to the technologies and digital means identified above, YKF has other strategies to ensure respectful, accessible communications with persons with disabilities.

Accessible verbal communication with travellers considers:

- Nature of the person’s disability;
- The use of assistive devices; and,
- The preferred form of physical assistance.

Employees receive training based on their role and responsibilities, which includes guidance on interacting respectfully with persons with disabilities. More specifically, all YKF staff have received Canadian Airports Council (CAC) Accessibility Training.

We use internationally recognized symbols or a combination of raised symbols, text and braille on signage, identifying facilities from close or far. Examples include washrooms and pet relief areas. Washrooms are accessible and are identified with the International Symbol of Access.

Communication, Other Than ICT Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Investigate deploying pre-recorded messaging in the terminal building.	July 2025
Work with airlines to ensure proper voice communication techniques over public announcement systems.	October 2024

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

When procuring goods and implementing new services or opening new facilities, YKF ensures that the process remains respectful of and accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Region of Waterloo has an Accessible Procurement Guide, which is used by the procurement team. The guide was originally written to comply with the Provincial *AODA*, but the principles of the guide remain valid for procurement with respect to accessibility under the Federal *ACA* and *ATPDR*.

The guide specifies that whenever possible, Regional staff will consider accessibility when procuring or acquiring goods, services, and facilities. When not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, staff shall provide, upon request an explanation.

- The following criteria are considered for procurement:
- Accessible: Can a person with a disability use the good, service, or facility at all?
- Equitable: Can someone with a disability use the facility as quickly and easily as a person without a disability?
- Adaptable: Can a user configure the item to meet their specific needs and preferences and will it work with common assistive technologies.

The Accessible Procurement Guide specifies five steps to guide the process of accessible procurement. The steps identified below, are explain in more detail in the Region’s Accessible Procurement Guide:

1. Assess the barriers.
2. Include accessibility in your business case.
3. Develop documents.
4. Compare bids and document your compliance.
5. Ensure accessibility criteria are met.

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Monitor projects to ensure that the Region’s accessible procurement guidelines are followed.	May 2027
Provide CAC Accessibility training to all personnel contracted by YKF (Security, custodial, vendors)	October 2024

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

When designing and delivering new programs and services, YKF ensures that the process remains respectful and accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility training has been provided to all YKF staff. The training that all YKF staff receive includes barrier identification and strategies to overcome barriers for people with disabilities.

The Region of Waterloo has an Accessibility Committee that addresses Regional programs and initiatives from an AODA compliance perspective. YKF has established an Airport Accessibility Committee with its own Terms of Reference, which focus on *ACA*, *ATPPR* and *ATPDR* compliance.

YKF was a participant in the CAC Accessibility Training Program, implemented to deliver consistent, compliant training to all participating airports in Canada. In Spring 2024, all YKF staff completed the CAC's Canadian Airports Accessibility Training. The training is designed to meet the requirements of the [CTA Personnel Training for Assistance of Travelers with Disabilities: A Guide](#).

For any new YKF employee, initial training is conducted within 60 days of the start date. All YKF staff complete the initial training and then complete re-occurring training every 3 years.

YKF accommodates requests for airport familiarization tours for people with invisible disabilities, and for training of service animals, providing an opportunity to become comfortable with the airport experience in advance.

Curbside assistance is available at YKF by calling Terminal Operations at 519-575-4781 upon arrival. YKF staff will provide a seamless curb to counter service. The airport website encourages travelers to contact the airport 48 hours in advance when requesting curbside assistance, when able.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Investigate incorporating therapy dog service.	December 2024
Investigate implementing the Sunflower lanyard program.	December 2024

Transportation

YKF is committed to ensuring that transportation is accessible. This is accomplished in the following ways:

All local taxi companies that service the airport offer accessible options and are located in the immediate vicinity of the terminal building.

Ride share services, like Uber, have accessible options, and are summoned directly by the traveller.

Public transportation provided by Grand River Transit’s on-demand shuttle service is accessible.

A free shuttle bus service is provided both ways between the terminal building and the Value Parking Lot. The shuttle service is accessible, and the shuttle waiting facility is supported by an accessible ramp and seating.

Each parking lot has designated accessible parking, clearly identified by the international symbol for accessibility. Each parking lot adjacent to the terminal building has a defined cross hatched path from the lot to the terminal building. In the Value Lot, accessible parking is immediately adjacent to the waiting facility.

Transportation Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Investigate identifying the curbside edges of terminal exterior sidewalks with yellow paint to improve visibility of transit areas and the leading edge of pedestrian paths along vehicular routes;	July 2024
Designating pedestrian pathways between accessible parking stalls and lobby entrances using cross-hatching and colour contrasting for increased safety and easier wayfinding.	December 2024
Explore the use of stop signs, paint markings, speed bumps and lighting to more clearly define passenger pathways and crossings from parking lots to the terminal.	December 2024

Built Environment

The YKF Air Terminal Building was built to municipal, provincial, and national building code standards. Particular to accessibility, the terminal was designed to be compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* legislation, which was a precursor to the Federal legislation that is applicable to Transportation Service Providers (terminal building).

All new Region of Waterloo projects are built to these standards, which meet universal design requirements. Further, and airport facilities will take into account the legislative requirements of the *ACA* and *ATPDR*. The following elements in the terminal meet accessibility requirements:

- Signage in and around the terminal: signage within reach contains braille and embossed text.
- Washrooms: Universal washrooms are provided in various locations around the terminal building. Features include accessible toilets, grab bars, accessible clear turning spaces, transfer spaces on one or both sides for right- and left-hand transfer options, knee clearance below the sink, accessible height baby change tables, good lighting, accessible accessories, biohazard bins, limited mobility stalls, emergency call systems, electronic adjustable height adult change tables.
- Pet relief area: There are two pet relief areas at YKF. One located outside the terminal building near Domestic Arrivals and one in the secure area, just after pre-board screening.
- Parking lots: Reserved parking spaces for persons with disabilities are available in all YKF parking lots and there are walkways to easily reach them.

Built Environment Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Incorporate accessibility practices and principles into the optimization and redesign of any YKF buildings	December 2026
Continue auditing YKF facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with highest occupancy and public visitors.	Annually
Investigate the construction or provision of sensory areas or quiet spaces.	June 2025

Provisions of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

The following regulations made by the CTA, apply to YKF:

[*Accessible Canada Act \(ACA\)*](#), Part 4, Accessibility Plans – Regulations Under the Canada Transportation Act, and Regulations under the ACA;

[*Accessible Canada Regulations \(ACR\)*](#) – Accessibility Plans;

[*Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations \(ATPRR\)*](#) – Accessibility Plans;

[*Canada Transportation Act \(CTA\)*](#) PART V Transportation of Persons with Disabilities;

[*Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations \(ATPDR\)*](#) Part 1 and Part 4 Divisions 1 and 2.

Consultations

The Region of Waterloo has had a program in place for compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* for over a decade. This is a valuable resource for YKF in the implementation of the *Airport Accessibility Plan*, needed for compliance with the ACA and ATPPR regulations. Internal consultation with the Region of Waterloo Program Manager, Client Experience occurred as part of the development of this plan. This consultation allowed YKF to incorporate policies and lessons learned from the greater [Region of Waterloo Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(MYAP\)](#).

Further consultation occurred with Region of Waterloo Facilities Management representation to evaluate whether the AODA requirements mirrored the ACA and ATPDR requirements, as they pertain to the terminal buildings.

In development of the *Airport Accessibility Plan*, members of the YKF Management Team conducted site visits to other airports in Southern Ontario to observe established facilities and compare them to YKF's, with respect to pet relief areas, signage and accessible seating.

The [Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee \(GRAAC\)](#) works with local municipalities to create barrier-free communities and services. GRAAC is a cross-disability municipal advisory committee whose members advise the municipal Councils of the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, the Region of Waterloo and the Townships of Woolwich, Wellesley, Wilmot and North Dumfries. The Region of Waterloo has engaged with and participates as a member of the GRAAC. While the GRAAC exists to fulfill requirements of AODA legislation, it is available via Region of Waterloo representatives to YKF.

Autism Ontario was consulted for a review of the Airport website, communications and draft *Airport Accessibility Plan*. This consultation informed development of the plan and some of the goals that have been incorporated into it.

YKF continues to engage with organizations from the community and throughout Canada that support those with disabilities, to better inform our day-to-day ability to meet the needs of travellers, and also to help set realistic and meaningful goals.

Feedback from travellers was used to validate the measures already taken by YKF and to inform future goals.

CAC Accessibility Training received by all YKF staff incorporated consultation with people with lived experience, as well as instruction from those with lived experience, to ensure that the training was properly informed.

Consultation Goals

Goal	Target Completion
Pursue Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification	December 2025
Invite GRAAC to complete a peer review of Airport facilities	December 2024
Conduct an accessibility engagement survey on EngageWR	November 2024
Investigate opportunities to partner with accessibility focussed organizations	March 2025
Investigate implementing a Ready, Set, Fly program for passengers with physical and invisible disabilities	June 2026