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Corporation of the Town of Huntsville

2009 Annual Accessibility Plan



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Organization.....	4
2.1	Services Provided by Other Levels of Government.....	5
3.0	Plan Consultation.....	5
4.0	Accessibility Advisory Committee.....	5
4.1	AAC Mandate.....	6
4.2	AAC Plans for 2009/2010.....	7
4.3	AAC Activities – 2008/2009.....	8
5.0	Identifying Barriers.....	11
5.1	Barrier Identification Process.....	11
5.2	Types of Disabilities.....	11
5.3	Types of Barriers.....	12
6.0	Town Accessibility/Diversity Barriers to Be Addressed.....	13
6.1	All Departments.....	13
6.2	Community Services Division.....	13
6.3	Corporate Services Division.....	15
6.4	Development Services Division.....	17
6.5	Protective Services.....	17
6.6	Public Works Division.....	18
6.7	Economic Development Department.....	18
6.8	Human Resources.....	19
7.0	Town Accessibility/Diversity Achievements to Date	19
	2009 (page 19)	
	2008 (page 20)	
	2007 (page 22)	
	2006 (page 23)	
	2005 (page 24)	
	2004 (page 26)	
	2003 (page 27)	
	Pre-2003 (page 29)	



1.0 Introduction

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) 2001 was passed by the Provincial Government in December of 2001. In June of 2005, this Act was repealed with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) 2005. The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.

The purpose of these acts is to improve the opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their participation in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province.

Under the ODA, municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish accessibility advisory committees and a majority of their members must be people with disabilities.

The purpose of preparing an Accessibility Plan is:

- to report on the measures that have been taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities;
- to describe the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for bylaws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities;
- to list the bylaws, policies, programs, practices and services that the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities;
- to describe the measures that the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

This Accessibility Plan includes the recommendations proposed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

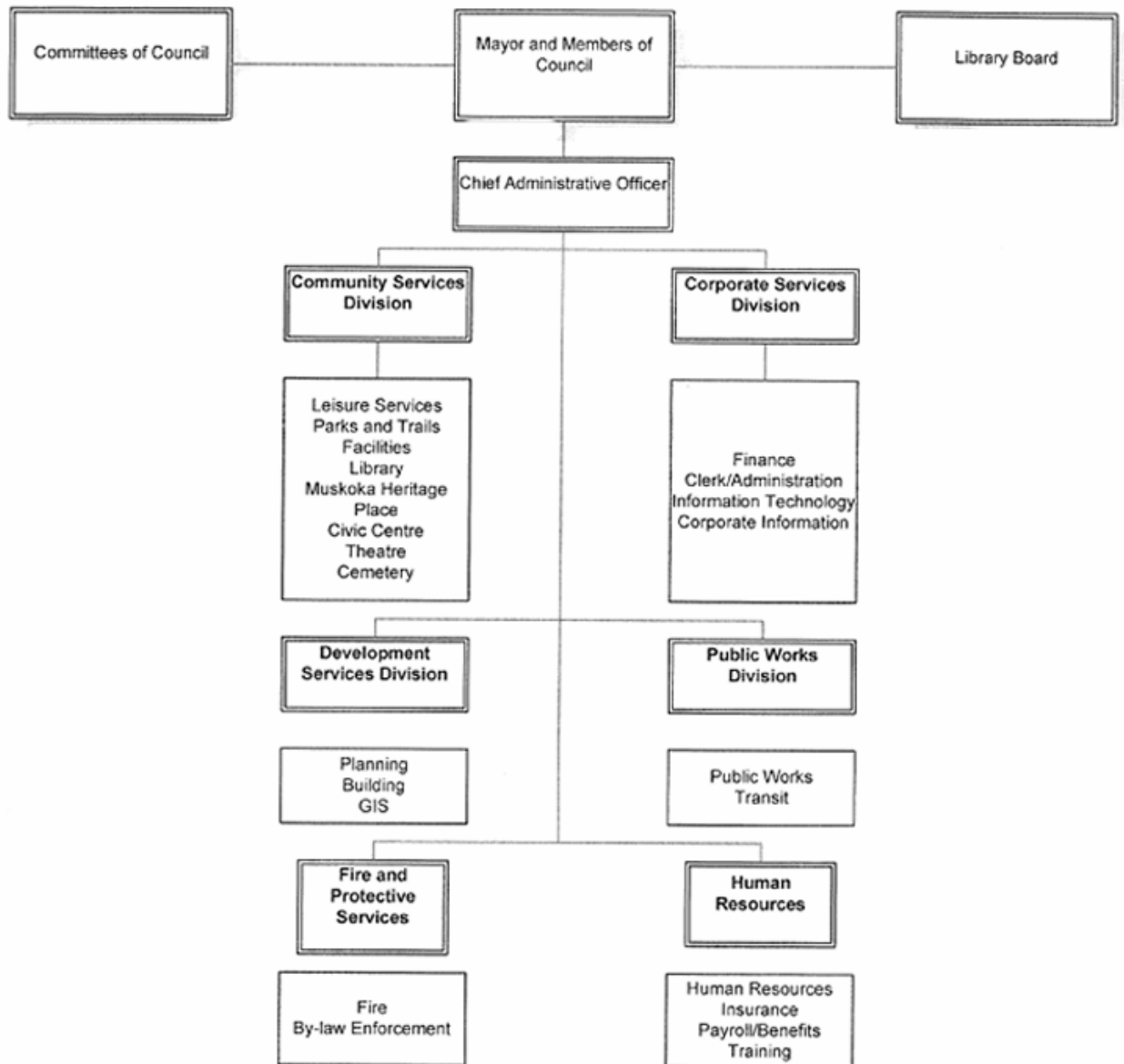
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2.0 Organization

There are four Divisions and four Departments that report directly to the Town's CAO. This new organizational structure is similar to those adopted by most municipalities throughout Ontario and allows the Town to ensure that the Corporation can meet the needs and expectations of the community. Figure 1 below provides an overview of this organizational structure as of 2008.



For further departmental information, please refer to the Town of Huntsville website ~ www.huntsville.ca



2.1 Services Provided by Other Levels of Government

The Town of Huntsville is a lower tier municipality within the District Municipality of Muskoka. As a result, the District Municipality of Muskoka delivers certain services on behalf of the taxpayers of Huntsville which include:

- Ontario Works
- Social Housing
- Children's Services
- Land Ambulance and Emergency Planning
- Homes for the Aged
- Health Unit Matters
- Water and Sewer Services
- Waste and Recycling Services

As required under the ODA, the District Municipality of Muskoka will prepare its own Accessibility Plan covering those services delivered by the District.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Community and Social Services is responsible for the delivery of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The ODSP is intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities and to help them become more independent. The ODSP has two parts:

- 1) **Income Supports** provides financial assistance to eligible people with disabilities.
- 2) **Employment Supports** provides people with disabilities the support needed to acquire and retain jobs.

3.0 Plan Consultation

The Accessibility Plan Working Group has prepared this year's Plan. Town staff from Human Resources, Corporate Services, Community Services, and the Building Department, as well as a member of Council and the Accessibility Advisory Committee Chairperson have all contributed to the development and update of the Plan. Representatives of these individuals have also provided input from the community in the delivery of the Town's respective programs and services. The staff member who can be contacted regarding any questions on this plan is Denise Corry, Director of Corporate Services. Please refer back to section 1.0 for further contact information.

4.0 Accessibility Advisory Committee

The municipal obligations under the ODA include the following:

- All municipalities are required to prepare an updated Accessibility Plan on an annual basis. It is a public document and is used to consult with persons with disabilities.
- Municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish accessibility advisory committees, and a majority of their members must be people with disabilities.



In response to these obligations, Huntsville formed its AAC in the spring of 2001. This committee has been assigned the task of advising Council on all matters pertaining to persons with disabilities. Relevant committee terms of reference follow.

4.1 AAC Mandate

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Huntsville has established an Accessibility Advisory Committee whose purpose is to advise Council in the promotion of equal opportunity for all persons, regardless of needs as well as to enable all persons to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of community life.

SCOPE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will conduct research and prepare reports and recommendations for Council's review on various matters respecting the issues of persons with disabilities.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall consist of up to (12) twelve members: one being appointed from Council by the Mayor and the remaining members shall be appointed by Council on the recommendation of the Mayor from interested residents of the Municipality as per the criteria specified by the Ontario Disabilities Act, 2001. The Chair will be selected by a majority vote of the Committee from among their Members and the Chair will serve for the term of Council. Members of the Committee shall be appointed for the term of Council. Eligibility requirements for members of the Committee are: an elector in the Town of Huntsville, a Canadian Citizen and 18 years of age or older.

RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP

The members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be permanent or seasonal residents of the Municipality representing the widest cross-section of the community and shall include, but not be limited to, persons with disabilities as well as parents of children with disabilities, representation from service providers and the professional community.



4.2 AAC Plans for 2009/2010

To advise the Town of Huntsville in its quest to become a place to visit, work and live that is accessible to all by continuing to:

- Promote accessibility to the municipality's retail stores, motels/hotels and restaurants;
- Liaise with the Business Improvement Area, the King William Group and the Chamber of Commerce;
- Assist the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce to identify accessible hotels/motels, restaurants, etc to be included in their Directory. Our long term goal is to provide information to the Access Canada Guide, based on the information provided in this directory;
- Review and make recommendations based upon Universal Design on all site plan applications;
- Remain current with respect to affordable housing initiatives (e.g. the Affordable Housing Plan in Huntsville, etc.);
- Educate to help change attitudes, values and behaviour towards accessibility and disabilities;
- Support an accessible transit service, and improve transportation for those with disabilities;
- Support the concept of playability for accessible play spaces;
- Remain current with respect to employment initiatives for people with disabilities;
- Remain current with respect to the new standards mandated by the AODA;
- Remain current with all funding initiatives such as the "Enabling Fund" offered to municipalities and to the private sector; and
- Educate local builders, architects, planners and designers on the concept of visitability, flex housing and universal design.

Review and provide input into:

- Any future revisions to the Town's Site Plan Guidelines;
- Any future revisions to the Official Plan 2006;
- Any future revisions to the Zoning Bylaws 2008;
- The Town's Accessibility Plan 2009, and to monitor the completion of projects as specified in the plan; and



- The Town's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy; including Best Practices and Procedures Forms/Pamphlet, as required by the Accessible Customer Service Standard under AODA, 2005.

2009 Initiatives

- To follow up on and provide input on the renovations to the community halls scheduled for completion by 2010;
- To provide input on the accessibility of the Town's website during its review;
- To follow up on the purchase of the recommended accessible equipment at the community pool;
- To follow up on the installation of a new hand rail on the side wall;
- To work with the BIA, King William Group and the Chamber of Commerce to provide an information night regarding the Customer Service Standards to all businesses; and
- To work with the Chamber Of Commerce on determining the frequency of the presentation of the Accessibility Award.
- To provide input on the Town's Transit Study planned for July 2010.
- To participate on a subcommittee of the Parks & Recreation committee to develop a policy that will identify the process to follow when rebuilding an existing playground or creating a new playground.
- To design an "Accessible Huntsville" page (full or half) to be included in the 2010 Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide.

4.3 AAC Activities – 2008/2009

Some of the highlights of the year include:

- Two members of the AAC attended the second Muskoka Wide Accessibility Conference held in Gravenhurst, April 2009, promoting commonality throughout the District on addressing accessibility issues.
- A report was presented to Council in April 2009, recommending the need for five new accessible equipment items for the pool and that the Paralympic Legacy be used to offset costs.
- Three members of the AAC attended the Accessibility Advisory Committees Regional Forum in North Bay held in May 2009.
- Our Chair at the request of the Ontario Government, made a presentation on accessibility in Huntsville at the Accessibility Advisory Committees Regional Forums in Toronto and Ottawa held in the spring of 2009.



2009 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

- Our Chair at the request of the Town's Chief Building Inspector, made a presentation on the new proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard at the OBOA Conference held at Deerhurst in October 2009.
- One member of the AAC attended the Simcoe County Accessibility for People with Disabilities Conference in Orillia, September 2009.
- Providing information material on accessibility in Huntsville during a Community Living evening at the High School for students entering the working world.
- Discussing customer service training with Muskoka Tourism.
- As an ongoing self education practice, a representative from the Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka Bracebridge office was invited to speak at our meeting April 2009.
- Reviewed the building drawings for the new "Summit Centre" and submitted recommendations to the Parks & Recreation Committee. We followed up with a second review of the drawings with the Town's Chief Building Inspector.
- Reviewed the preliminary building drawings for the new University of Waterloo Campus and submitted recommendations directly to the Architect.

As a result of the ongoing support, advocacy and input of the AAC:

- The River Mill Playground now includes a "Sway Fun" donated by the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Rotary Club. This equipment allows for all children regardless of ability and age to play together.
- The Huntsville Bowling Alley installed a new handrail to their entrance.
- Moose Delaney's installed new ramped access to their entrance.
- Arowhon Pines Resort has renovated a cabin for wheelchair access.
- The Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services has filmed a short video on accessibility improvements made in Huntsville. This video will be available for viewing on their website.
- A new accessible parking spot was created on the Main Street.
- A new handrail was installed at the steps in front of Town Hall.
- A store owner has presented plans to District and the Town to renovate the entrance for wheelchair access.
- At the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, the inaugural "Accessibility Award" was presented.



2009 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

- An application to the Federal Enabling Fund Program has been made by the Town to finance the installation of two automatic doors in the Town Hall and the renovations for a new accessible washroom at the Utterson Community Hall.
- Accessible parking at the hospital and the professional building was increased in number and the design was improved.
- New wheelchair-accessible picnic tables were installed at Rivermill Park.
- A new interlocking brick pathway was created to provide access from the Main Street sidewalk to the Town Dock.
- An accessible boat docking space has been marked with a yellow painted wheelchair symbol at the Town dock.
- Five new yellow ramps have been installed at local downtown businesses.
- The Town's Spring/Summer Leisure Guide 2009 included a full page titled "Accessibility within the Corporation of the Town of Huntsville". It provides information on the transit system, the TTY system, the audible lights, and accessible features on municipal buildings.

The AAC has reviewed and provided comments/recommendations on the following:

- Town of Huntsville's 2008 Accessibility Plan;
- All site plan applications in the Town of Huntsville; and
- Town Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy; including Best Practices and Procedures Forms/Pamphlet, as required by the Accessible Customer Service Standard under AODA, 2005.



5.0 Identifying Barriers

5.1 Barrier Identification Process

Barrier identification is through any process of methodology used to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Examples of a barrier identification process include review of documents and publications, conducting public meetings, surveys and/or audits, the use of customer feedback forms and other mechanisms.

5.2 Types of Disabilities

Barriers exist as a result of various forms of disability. In developing this Plan, the Town has considered the functional limitations associated with several different kinds of disability and the effects of these limitations on an individual's ability to perform everyday tasks.¹

- Physical Impairment
- Hearing Loss
- Speech Loss
- Vision Loss
- Deaf-blind
- Smell
- Taste Limitation
- Touch
- Intellectual
- Mental Health
- Learning
- Other – resulting from accidents², illnesses, and diseases.

¹ Canadian Standards Association. Customer Service Standard for People with Disabilities, B480-02. Canadian Standards Association, Rexdale, ON, 2002.

² Receiving WSIB (formerly known as WCB) is to be considered a disability.



5.3 Types of Barriers

The Town of Huntsville recognizes that a number of different barriers can exist. A "barrier" is anything that stops a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Some barriers and an example illustrating that barrier follow:

Architectural Barriers

- Includes building design, shape and dimensions of rooms, width of doorways, stairways, inaccessible bathrooms

Attitudinal

- Inaccurate beliefs or perceptions about a person's ability
- Someone who is abrupt, insensitive, impatient and uncomfortable with people slowed by a physical, language or developmental disability
- Receiving WSIB (formerly known as WCB) is to be considered a disability.

Communication Barriers

- The process of providing or sending, or receiving information such as difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone
- Someone who speaks too quickly or unclearly
- Use of language that is not understandable such as the use of complex words or jargon

Information Barriers

- Information is not available in an accessible format – large print, audio video, plain language, Braille, closed captioned video or computer diskette
- Inadequate or incomprehensible signage – font, size, colour, location, or faded

Physical Barriers

- Additions to an interior or exterior environment such as doors, windows, furniture, planters, hardware, recreational or playground equipment, lighting, signage, use of colour, materials, etc.

Systemic Barriers (Policies, procedures and practices)

- Occur when practices or policies restrict participation. Often done unintentionally
- Needing to fill out a (complex) form to get a service and not being able to because of a disability

Technological Barriers

- When a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices
- Lack of visual alarms
- Lack of TTY machines
- Website is not accessible – no colour contrast or large print options, screen reader, cluttered appearance, difficult to navigate





6.0 Town Accessibility/Diversity Barriers to Be Addressed

6.1 All Departments

All departments shall comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* Customer Service Standards by 2010. The training component should include all Council members.

6.2 Community Services Division

- **Access to Services – Braille Signage**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Information
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2009/2010
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** The men's bathroom on the first floor of the Civic Centre has a Braille sign that is spelled incorrectly. Community Services will be updating the sign to have the correct spelling. All existing Braille signage in the municipal buildings are under review.

- **Access to Council Chambers & Public Washrooms**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** The Council Chambers are not easily accessible with two heavy doors to open. Installation of an automatic door at the entrance would allow a person with a disability independent access. Grant application is in process for Council Chambers doors and public washrooms - still awaiting funding approval for this process.

- **Access to Council Chambers Elevator**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** The old elevator door in the Council Chambers does not have lever handles on the outside of the door. Installation of these would allow easier access to the elevator. Alternative solutions are also being researched, such as the possibility of removing the elevator and installing a lift or a ramp.

- **Access to All Community Halls**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** An accessibility audit has been completed and funding will be applied for to make the necessary upgrades. A grant application for the Utterson Community Hall is in process. The Aspden Community Hall plans for 2010 are ready.



- **Access to Pool**

- **Barrier Type:** Systemic
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Leisure Services
- **Method of Addressing:** Practice already exists to allow guide dogs to accompany individuals in the pool area, however it is necessary to create a policy which reflects existing practices and have it clearly posted for all to see. This policy must be created by 2010 as it falls under the Customer Service Standards, AODA.

- **Access to 9 Heritage Buildings – MHP**

- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
- **Year To Be Addressed:** Ongoing as funding allows.
- **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
- **Method of Addressing:** MHP has re-thought the decision to ramp the Maw House due to inaccessibility through the door. Current proximity to building by wheelchair or scooter allows for interior view.

MHP continues to research ways to make portions of the General Store and the Darling House accessible.

As a result of the construction slated in our proximity it was decided by the members of the MHP Operations Group last spring that we would not perform any construction to the village site in 2009.

MHP Operations Group have discussed plans to build a ramp and platform to the back entrance of the Hares House.

- **Access to Information – MHP**

- **Barrier Type:** Information
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2009
- **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
- **Method of Addressing:** MHP is looking forward to the release of our large print photographic booklet in time for our May 22nd opening in 2010. Our hope is that this will assist our visitors with disabilities in gaining the most complete experience and enjoyment of our site.

- **Inaccessible Heritage Buildings – MHP**

- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical, Visual
- **Year To Be Addressed:** Spring 2010
- **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
- **Method of Addressing:** Create dwelling-specific manuals with photos and descriptions of areas unable to be made accessible – second floor as well as narrow entrances.

- **Access to Muskoka Heritage Place**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
- **Method of Addressing:** MHP is looking at designating accessible parking spaces.



- **Access to Information – Library Website**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Technological
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Upgrade the library webpage to correct poor colour contrast and improve accessibility features. The Information Technology Department is working to introduce a template-style for the Library website to improve readability for person's with visual disabilities. The Town of Huntsville is proposing new web designs for all Town related websites (Town of Huntsville, Library, Muskoka Heritage Place, Algonquin Theatre).

- **Access to Library Entrance**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** Unknown – Pending Funding
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** the tread and run of the stairs at the entrance of the Library are too steep and have an unsafe high-rise. Pillar at the top of the stairs as well is difficult to walk around. Changing the main entrance to reflect these barriers would make it more safe and accessible.

- **Access to Huntsville Train Station**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Communication
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** The entrance does not allow for level access, door handles are not accessible and the telephone needs to be lowered.

- **Access to Public Playgrounds**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Parks & Recreation
 - **Method of Addressing:** A subcommittee will be set up to determine the procedure to ensure that all new playgrounds and all existing playgrounds under revision will include access for all.

6.3 Corporate Services Division

- **Access to Information – Alternate Format**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Finance
 - **Method of Addressing:** The tax department is looking into the options of providing alternate format tax bills (ex: large print).

- **Access to Service – Payments**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information, Technological, Communication
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010/2011



- **Department:** Finance
- **Method of Addressing:** Inquiries have been made regarding an accessible interact machine (also known as a “Point of Sale Machine”). The bank is currently looking into pricing and availability of this machine.
- **Access to Service - Methods of Voting**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information, Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Clerks
 - **Method of Addressing:** A Voting Machine will be rented that will assist voters with a visual impairment. Closer to 2010 the Clerks department will meet with a variety of companies that provide the optional voting methods and depending on cost efficiency, it is possible that it may only be rented for one day. Discussions between the Clerks Department and the Accessibility Advisory Committee will take place closer to 2010 as well.
- **Access to Information – Alternate Format Documents**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Clerks
 - **Method of Addressing:** Alternate formats of municipal documents will be provided upon request. Where possible, documents will be available in PDF and Microsoft Word formats. Huntsville Public Library will be able to convert a word document into Braille.
- **Access to Information – Council Chambers**
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Clerks
 - **Method of Addressing:** Pending approval, the purchase of two listening assists will be available for patrons using a hearing aid or who are hard of hearing. This is currently offered in the Algonquin Theatre and is needed for meetings in the Council Chambers.
- **Access to Service – Cheques and Forms**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Systemic
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010, Ongoing
 - **Department:** Finance
 - **Method of Addressing:** As many individuals need assistance when writing cheques or filling out forms, staff training shall include techniques on how to offer assistance.
- **Access to Information – Town Website**
 - **Barrier Type:** Communication, Information
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010, Ongoing
 - **Department:** Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** The Town website will regularly be assessed for accessibility as new innovations become available. The ability to enlarge font sizes



and colour contrast will be considered.

- **Access to Information – Maps**

- **Barrier Type:** Information
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Corporate Information
- **Method of Addressing:** A new Accessibility Map of the Town of Huntsville will be created which will include highlights of accessible parking, buildings, local businesses and resorts, new accessible boat parking space, curb stops and sidewalk routes and accessible park and beach areas. The Town of Huntsville will work alongside the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Downtown Huntsville BIA to gather any missing information and to distribute the map onto the associated websites.

6.4 Development Services Division

- **Access to New and Renovated Buildings**

- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
- **Year to be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Building
- **Method of Addressing:** Pending Ministry revision of the program, the Building Department will provide training for Building Officials and Builders to improve awareness of the Ontario Building Code requirements for universal design in new buildings.

- **Access to Information and Service – 2nd Floor Counter**

- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Communication
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Building/Planning
- **Method of Addressing:** The open concept counter is very distracting and could be difficult when accommodating individuals with various disabilities. A quiet area (such as the meeting room if not booked) shall be designated for use allowing for more privacy.

- **Access to Service – Form Assistance**

- **Barrier Type:** Systemic
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
- **Department:** Building/Planning
- **Method of Addressing:** Application forms cannot be completed by staff who are charged with the responsibility of enforcement and issuing permits. A policy will be set to allow a non-department staff person to assist with completing an application for a person requiring assistance.

6.5 Protective Services Division

- **Access to Private Parking Lots**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical



- **Year To Be Addressed:** Ongoing
- **Department:** By-Law Enforcement
- **Method of Addressing:** Private parking lots have been added to the list of full-enforcement areas by the by-law department. Every once in awhile, new private lots are added.

6.6 Public Works Division

- **Access to Sidewalks and Intersections in Downtown**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Visual
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Painted curbs to improve visibility for those with visual impairments are being examined. The old curb cuts/ramps should be reviewed to determine if upgrades are necessary.

- **Access to Public Transit**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2010
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** A study on extending the hours for the specialized bus will begin in July.

- **Access to Audible Pedestrian**
 - **Barrier Type:** Visual
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** 2009/2010
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Public Works Department for the District of Muskoka will be requested to install proper instructional signage on how to use the signals. The District has been asked to make sure that all guidelines have been followed to ensure the push button system is safe to use (i.e. signage, correct location of the buttons & locator sound clearing audible). Two new signals have been proposed at two additional locations.

6.7 Economic Development

- **Access to Grants/Funding**
 - **Barrier Type:** Systemic
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** Ongoing
 - **Department:** Economic Development
 - **Method of Addressing:** Economic Development will work cooperatively with all Town departments to overcome barriers related to accessibility. Funding will be researched and reviewed as the need arises.



6.8 Human Resources

- **Understanding the Needs of People with Disabilities**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal
 - **Year To Be Addressed:** Ongoing
 - **Department:** Human Resources
 - **Method of Addressing:** An in house advanced training program will be provided for all staff and council members.

7.0 Town Accessibility/Diversity Achievements 2001 to Date

The Town has implemented a number of initiatives since the publication of the 2003 Accessibility Plan to eliminate barriers and to make the municipality more accessible. Barriers identified and addressed with further details of these initiatives can be found below.

The Town was the recipient of the “Ontario Mainstreet Accessibility Award 2006” for outstanding achievement in and promotion of universal access and diversity by successfully hosting the Provincial Winter Paralympic Championships. The awards program was developed through partnership through the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) and the Ontario Business Improvement Areas Association (OBIAA) and the Ontario Government. The awards were created to recognize the efforts of small businesses and communities in Ontario that have significantly improved accessibility and reduced barriers for people with disabilities.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2009

- **Access to Information – Agendas and Minutes**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information
 - **Department:** Clerks, Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** Council and Committee Agendas and Minutes are now being posted on the Town of Huntsville website in a Microsoft Word format so that the document can be translated for any persons with screen reading software.

- **Access to Information – Report Format**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational
 - **Department:** Clerks
 - **Method of Addressing:** Report format has been amended to include a specific section which relates to Accessibility implications.

- **Access to Information - Maps**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational
 - **Department:** Corporate Information
 - **Method of Addressing:** Large-print urban area roads and important landmark maps were updated, printed and are located at the 2nd floor counter. 6 large font maps are readily available for the public and can be re-printed as necessary.



- **Access to Information – Web Map Services**

- **Barrier Type:** Informational
- **Department:** Corporate Information
- **Method of Addressing:** New GIS software gives the ability to publish map services on the internet using WMS (web map services) compatible with the Open Geospatial Consortium, Inc (OGC) which is an international industry consortium of 383 companies, government agencies and universities participating in a consensus process to develop publicly available interface standards. This new GIS software also allows the Town of Huntsville to consume or view other available WMS map services within our own application interface (eg. Bird Studies Canada, Canadian Mineral Deposits, etc). We can now view this available data without actually storing the data here on our physical server machines. This capability expands our data sharing and data use abilities.

- **Access to the River Mill Playground**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2009
- **Department:** Parks and Trails
- **Method of Addressing:** Improved access to the playground that was constructed in 2008. Reviewed the accessibility of the surface (Fibar) and additional accessible equipment (a Sway Fun and ramp extension) were installed.

- **Access to Information – Leisure Guide**

- **Barrier Type:** Communication
- **Year To Be Addressed:** Spring and Summer 2009
- **Department:** Leisure Services
- **Method of Addressing:** The Leisure Guide will be reviewed to include information on the AAC as well as the availability of accessibility programs and access to community centres.

- **Access to the Northland Passenger Train**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Year To Be Addressed:** 2008
- **Department:** Facilities
- **Method of Addressing:** A new lift device has been ordered by Northland for the Huntsville Train Station and is expected to arrive late 2008 to ensure wheelchair access onto the train. The Town will support this project by building the shed to house the lift.

- **Access to Accessible Parking**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Year Addressed:** 2009
- **Department:** By-Law Enforcement
- **Method of Addressing:** An additional accessible parking spot was added to main street in front of The Nutty Chocolatier.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2008

- **Access to 9 Heritage Buildings – MHP**



- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
- **Department:** MHP
- **Method of Addressing:** The ramp to the Spence Inn was completed in 2008.

- ***Access to Information – Audio/Video Collections***
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Continue to offer collections & services for persons with disabilities:
 - Books on tape & books on CD.
 - Described movies (in video & audiocassette formats).
 - Adult Learners' (literacy) collection.
 - Large print collection.
 - Adaptive technology (e.g., magnifier, reading machine, etc.).
 - Computer training sessions (with volunteer computer tutors and seasonal grants).
 - Home delivery of library materials.

- ***Access to Information – Council Chambers Sound System***
 - **Barrier Type:** Communication
 - **Department:** Clerks
 - **Method of Addressing:** The microphones used for staff and councillors were adjusted to improve the sound for people in the gallery. As well, a hand-held microphone was purchased for those wishing to speak from the gallery (it is especially beneficial for those in wheelchairs or with mobility limitations.)

- ***Access to Employment - Discrimination***
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal
 - **Department:** Human Resources
 - **Method of Addressing:** Review of Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual to include legislative changes as they occur.

- ***Access to Employment - Discrimination***
 - **Barrier Type:** Systemic
 - **Department:** Human Resources
 - **Method of Addressing:** Educate Human Resource personnel on:
 - The effective hiring practices to include more persons with disabilities in the work place
 - On the credits available to employers who hire persons with disabilities
 - Ongoing through courses and seminars. Liaise with Local organizations (Community Living, Health Unit, etc).

- ***Access to Muskoka Heritage Place Washrooms***
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** Door knobs which were difficult to turn by hand have been replaced with two hall-style (non-locking) door knobs in Steam Museum at 24 Park



Drive; Non-key knobs installed in Main Admissions/Muskoka Museum at 88 Brunel Road.

- **Access to Service – Snow Removal for Accessible Parking Spaces**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Due to snow build up in designated accessible parking spaces, snow removal and snow storage removal practices were reviewed. The Public Works Department deals with snow removal in these spaces the same way as all others, by clearing the snow for all locations as soon as possible.

- **Ensuring Accessibility-Supportive Review of Commercial/Industrial/Multi-Family Developments**
 - **Barrier Type:** All
 - **Department:** Planning
 - **Method of Addressing:** The new Comprehensive Zoning By-law has been revised in 2008 to provide more specific requirements for developments. Also site plan enforcement and accessibility parking enforcement is being employed to ensure greater compliance.

- **Access to the Civic Centre**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Civic Centre/Theatre
 - **Method of Addressing:** Automatic door openers were installed on 2nd floor.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2007

- **Understanding the Needs of People with Disabilities**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal
 - **Department:** All Departments/Divisions
 - **Method of Addressing:** Awareness training provided by Simcoe County Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities completed Fall 2007. There will be a further in-house training advanced program in the Fall/Winter of 2008.

- **Access to Service – Assistive Hearing Devices at the Theatre**
 - **Barrier Type:** Information, Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Civic Centre/Theatre
 - **Method of Addressing:** Literature contains hearing assist information for the hearing impaired.

- **Access to Information – Software Training**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Staff and volunteer training for persons with learning disabilities on the Trillium Workstation, June 2007.

- **Access to Information – Library Software**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services



- **Method of Addressing:** Additional software for the Trillium Workstation: Boardmaker, Co-writer, Write “Out Loud”, Writing with Symbols.
- **Access to Workstation at Library**
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Application to Trillium Foundation for an accessible workstation at the library was successful. Added 100+ new books on tape and books on CD to the collection, an automatic door opener for the inside door and software for persons with learning disabilities (Trillium workstation).
- **Access to Service – Outreach Initiatives**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Miscellaneous outreach initiatives to special needs groups:
 - Home deliveries by volunteers to homebound patrons.
 - Partnership with and regular reporting to Visually Impaired Peer Support Group (host monthly meetings at the Library).
 - Board outreach initiative to identify special needs user groups and raise the awareness of what is available at the library for them, May-August 2007.
 - Consultation with Town Accessibility Advisory Committee.
 - Online subscription databases and electronic books.
- **Access to Information – Storm Events**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Technological
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Made snow/tree removal information available in as many formats as possible. Storm event information has (and will continue to be) conveyed by all media outlets wherever possible.
- **Access to Service – Designated Accessible Parking in Private Parking Area**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Informational, Policy
 - **Department:** By-law/Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Assist with negotiations with private business owners to increase fines to \$300 for those parking illegally in designated accessible parking spaces. The Town of Huntsville is enforcing fines at various locations. Although the Public Works department cannot force the owners of private parking areas to create additional spots, issues as such should and can be identified during planning stages.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2006

- **Access to Information – Town Hall**
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Department:** Corporate Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** A TTY system was purchased.
- **Access to Huntsville Public Transit**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Physical, Policy/Practice
 - **Department:** Transit/Public Works



- **Method of Addressing:** Huntsville has had one wheelchair lift-equipped community bus since 1991 that runs on a fixed route from 8:00am – 5:30pm from Monday to Friday excluding statutory holidays. As of this year, Huntsville has added a second wheelchair lift equipped bus that runs a door-to-door service 5 days a week from 9:00am – 3:00pm.

The bus schedule has been made available in large print. It is also available on the Town's website.

It is the only municipal bus service in the District of Muskoka at this time.

- **Land Use & Development**

- **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
- **Department:** Planning
- **Method of Addressing:** AAC provided extensive comments on the Official Plan and all were incorporated.

The Town's new Official Plan commits to the development of policies and zoning requirements that address the needs of persons with disabilities within a land use planning context.

Under its objectives, Section 2.4.10, titled "Universally Accessible Environment" the Plan states that "The provision of cultural, recreational and educational facilities is encouraged to ensure accessibility by all. The development of an environment that facilitates universal access for all persons is encouraged".

- **In-Law Accommodation, Inspection, Permit and Plan Examination Practices**

- **Barrier Type:** Systemic
- **Department:** Planning
- **Method of Addressing:** The new Official Plan 2006 addresses the issue and Zoning By-laws currently under review will also address it.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2005

- **Access to the Old Town Hall Council Chambers**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Department:** Town Administration/Clerks
- **Method of Addressing:** Both Gallery and Council Floor are accessible. Significantly improved sound and video services.

- **Access to Customer Service Counters**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Department:** Administration/Clerks
- **Method of Addressing:** Counters were lowered and redesigned to make it easier for people with a physical disability to conduct required business.

- **Access to a Change Room in the Centennial Centre**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical



- **Department:** Leisure Services
- **Method of Addressing:** Accessible Change Room at the Pool was constructed. Input on layout and functionality from the AAC.

- **Access to a Heated Viewing Area in the Centennial Centre**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Department:** Leisure Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** The arena lobby has a raised heated viewing area. It was identified that there was no heated viewing for persons in a wheelchair. A permanent ramp has been constructed and some of the permanent bench seating removed in order to correct this situation. Hand rails were installed to assist people with mobility or sight issues in stepping up or down from the raised viewing area at locations other than the ramp location.

- **Access to Parks and Trails**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Parks & Trails
 - **Method of Addressing:** AAC provided a review of Parks Master Plan. All committee comments were integrated into the Final Plan.

- **Access to Centennial Centre**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** Additional Automatic Door Openers installed inside the Centennial Centre to allow access into the Pool and Arena.

- **Access to Town-Owned Facilities**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Department:** Facilities
 - **Method of Addressing:** All Town facilities including some year-round community halls are wheelchair accessible through the use of ramps. Most washrooms have been renovated to provide accessibility according to the Ontario Building Code.

- **Access to Parking at Library**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Parking reconfigured at front of Library to create “Kiss and Drop”, additional designated accessible parking and effective access to curb cuts.

- **Access to Fairy Lake Station**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** New decking and ramp were installed.

- **Access to Train Station and Train**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place



- **Method of Addressing:** A wooden ramp was built to access the platform and portable metal ramps were purchased to access the train.
- **Access to Information – Human Resource Policies**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Informational, Systemic
 - **Department:** Human Resources
 - **Method of Addressing:** Human Resource Policy and Procedures Manual (incorporating AAC comments) now compliant and approved by Council December 2006.
- **Ensuring Accessibility-Supportive Review of Commercial/Industrial/ Multi-Family Developments**
 - **Barrier Type:** All
 - **Department:** Planning
 - **Method of Addressing:** New Site Plan Guidelines has a revised barrier-free accessibility section developed by the AAC.
- **Trip Hazards Outside Downtown Core**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Comprehensive review completed of all sidewalks outside of Downtown Core, all identified trip hazards removed using sidewalk saw contractor. In excess of 500 trip hazards removed in 2005.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2004

- **Access to Information – Library Website**
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Summer students redesign of HPL webpage to promote accessibility. Incorporating the standards from BOBBY have been implemented in 2004 and will continue to be an on-going process.
- **Access to Daniel Bray House & Trappers Cabin**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** Ramp was manufactured for both locations.
- **Access to First Nations Encampment**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** Area leveled and landscaped.
- **Access to Information – Huntsville Website**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Technological
 - **Department:** Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** The Town has identified the deficiencies for accessibility in its current published website. To understand the requirements for the development of



updated web site, the Town has:

Done extensive research into the best practices assumed by some of the largest corporations (Microsoft) for accessibility.

Developed accessibility standards for the development of the website. These standards not only guide the development of the NEW website when launched but will ensure that future changes and modifications retain the integrity and quality.

Purchased assistive software (JAWS) so that the Town could educate themselves and test the development of the NEW website against end-user software.

Purchased a software license for BOBBY so that the Town can complete an exhaustive accessibility test before the NEW website is published in the public domain.

Launched new website in the 2nd quarter of 2004 that improved navigation and accessibility. New reports downloaded from website are available in HTML format. Departments are increasing the availability of documents on the website to communicate to persons with disabilities easily and effectively. During the launch we identified to Council, Staff and the public at a Committee of the Whole meeting the accessibility features available on Town's website.

- ***Ensuring Accessibility-Supportive and Transit-Supportive Review of Commercial/Industrial/Multi-Family/Institutional Developments***
 - **Barrier Type:** All
 - **Department:** Planning
 - **Method of Addressing:** New developments are reviewed by the AAC for appropriate accessibility features as part of the Site Plan Review.

- ***Access to Washroom at the Town of Huntsville Train Station***
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Barrier-Free Washroom constructed with funding from Huntsville Train Station Society and Lions Club.

- ***Access to Washroom at 215 Main Street West***
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Economic Development
 - **Method of Addressing:** Women's washroom made accessible during tenant construction improvements.

YEAR ADDRESSED - 2003

- ***Access to Parking in Designated Spaces Downtown***
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** By-law/Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** A comprehensive review of Downtown Parking completed



by AAC, Staff and BIA. By-laws were passed by District/Town to designate revised locations.

- **Disability Awareness and Discrimination Employment Practices**

- **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Physical, Technological
- **Department:** All Departments/Divisions
- **Method of Addressing:** Town of Huntsville Disability Awareness Training Seminar, April 2003.

- **Disability Awareness and Other Training**

- **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Physical, Technological
- **Department:** Library Services
- **Method of Addressing:** Staff Training.

Town of Huntsville Disability Awareness Training Seminar (all library staff), April 2003.

Services for people who are hearing impaired – CLA/ALA Conference, June 2003.

Webcast – Accessible Libraries, June 2003.

- **Access to Information and Services**

- **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal
- **Department:** Library Services
- **Method of Addressing:** In partnership with Friends of the Library and the Muskoka Literacy Council, the library initiated a new collection of library materials for Adult Learners (specifically, those with low literacy skills).

Needs Assessment In-House Survey, distributed for 3 weeks in August and 3 weeks in September of 2003, contained a detailed question regarding difficulties or barriers encountered in using the library and offers several opportunities for suggestions to remove barriers, improve service, add services, etc.

HPL Strategic Agenda 2005-2009 identified the following goal (with special regard to addressing special needs):

HPL will provide cost-effective, convenient access to accurate, in-depth information and library materials as well as to local and global communications networks. The library will pursue strategies in the following areas:

- Improve and expand collections to support library roles.
- Sustain and expand learning outreach programs and partnerships.
- Promote electronic literacy.
- Promote the ability of patrons to access services independently.

- **Access to Pool at the Centennial Centre**

- **Barrier Type:** Physical
- **Department:** Leisure Services
- **Method of Addressing:** An additional in-water wheelchair has recently been donated to the Town by the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs. It has allowed the



accommodation of a greater number of aquatics program users who require this equipment. There is ramp access into both large and small pools.

- **Access to Information – Computer Monitors**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Technological
 - **Department:** Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** Larger computer monitors have been provided to staff who work intensively with documents, maps, drawing etc. to reduce eye strain.

- **Access to Information – Computer Keyboards**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** Ergonomic keyboards have been provided to staff who work at computer workstations as requested. The keyboards allow staff to place their hands, wrists and forearms in a natural position for greater comfort and less strain while keyboarding.

- **Trip Hazards in Downtown**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical
 - **Department:** Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Downtown reviewed and sidewalk trip hazards removed. This will continue to be done annually.

YEAR ADDRESSED – PRE 2003

- **Access to Information – Employment Opportunity**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Communicational, Informational
 - **Department:** Corporate Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Positions advertised for the Town include a statement that we are an “Equal Opportunity” employer. The Human Resources Department complies with the Human Rights Act and Employment Equity Act.

- **Access to Equipment**
 - **Barrier Type:** Physical, Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** In-house equipment for Special Needs:
 - Reading machine (CCT print magnifier)
 - Magnifier
 - Walkalator (basket on wheels to support user and carry library materials around the library)

- **Access to Information and Service – Computer Training**
 - **Barrier Type:** Technological
 - **Department:** Library Services
 - **Method of Addressing:** Through Community Access Program Youth Worker grants, the library has offered computer training for seniors.



- **Compliance with the ODA**
 - **Barrier Type:** Attitudinal, Informational, Policy
 - **Department:** By-law/Public Works
 - **Method of Addressing:** Passing by Town Council of By-law that reflects new fines of \$300 for those parking illegally in designated accessible parking locations in the Downtown.

- **Access to Facility**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** The museum and washrooms are barrier-free and accessible.

- **Access for Visually Impaired**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Physical
 - **Department:** Muskoka Heritage Place
 - **Method of Addressing:** Offer guided tours for the visually impaired and supply dwelling descriptions upon request, in various formats and languages.

- **Access to Information and Service – Town Staff Email**
 - **Barrier Type:** Informational, Technological
 - **Department:** Information Technology
 - **Method of Addressing:** Contact information for e-mail address provides access to Town staff to respond to enquiries from individuals who cannot readily physically access the Town Hall.

- **Access to Doorways, Washrooms and Corridors**
 - **Barrier Type:** Architectural, Physical
 - **Department:** Fire Department
 - **Method of Addressing:** Doorways and Corridors were widened to accept wheelchairs. Washrooms were made accessible for wheelchairs and attendants.