Corporation of the Town of Huntsville
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2018-2022 Accessibility Plan

Updated: September 29, 2020

Contents

1.0 Introduction

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001 was passed by the Provincial Government in December of 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005 was passed in June of 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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.

Under the AODA, the Province has developed regulations to ensure that standards are developed to address accessibility within the areas of customer service, transportation, employment and Information & Communication. Requirements within these regulations and methods of addressing these requirements have been identified within the Town of Huntsville's 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan.

On January 1, 2013, the Government of Ontario achieved another milestone in implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) was amended to include accessibility requirements for the Design of Public Spaces (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment). Beginning in 2015, public and private sector organizations will have to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas for public use
- Outdoor play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on and off street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

The Town of Huntsville is committed to meet the obligations outlined in the amended regulation and will work towards incorporating these requirements into the Town of Huntsville Accessibility Plan.

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.

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.

The purpose of preparing an Accessibility Plan is to highlight the measures the Town will take during the coming year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. The measures that the Town has taken to reduce these barriers to date can be found in the "Accessibility Accomplishments to date" document.

The content of an accessibility plan must include these five requirements:

1. Report on the measures the organization has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.(Found in the "Accessibility Accomplishments to date document")
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the organization assesses it acts/by-laws, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the policies, programs, practices and services that the organization will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the organization intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

Further to these requirements under ODA, AODA stipulates that the Accessibility Plan must be:

- A multi-year document

- Posted on the Town's website

- Provided in an accessible format upon request

- Reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The Town of Huntsville has committed to a five year plan that is reviewed annually as recommended by the AAC.

1.1. Barrier Recommendations

This Accessibility Plan includes the recommendations proposed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) as well as any legislative requirements. Each item identified within the plan is subject to budget approval.

1.2 Key Contact

Crystal Best-Sararas, Deputy Clerk

- Telephone: (705) 789-1751 Ext. 2258

- Fax: (705) 789-6689

- E-mail address: crystal.paroschy@huntsville.ca or accessibility@huntsville.ca

2.0 Organization

The Town of Huntsville 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.

To view the organizational structure or for further departmental information, please visit the Town of Huntsville website at 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, but are not limited to:

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

As required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 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 provide people with disabilities the support needed to acquire and retain employment.

3.0   Plan Consultation

The Accessibility Plan has been developed and updated by Town Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Plan is reviewed annually in conjunction with the Budget process to ensure adequate funding is available for mandatory projects. The Staff member who can be contacted regarding any questions on this plan is Crystal Best-Sararas, Deputy Clerk. Please refer back to 1.1 Key Contact for further contact information.

4.0   Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Along with the legislative obligation, 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.

4.1   AAC Vision for 2018-2022

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:

1. Promote and educate the business community on the current five standards and the upcoming new standards that will be developed in the next five years under AODA, by:
   - Remaining current with respect to any changes or revisions to the standards as mandated by the AODA;
   - Liaising with the Business Improvement Area, the King William Group and the Chamber of Commerce;
   - Remaining current with all funding initiatives such as the Federal "Enabling Fund" offered to municipalities and to the private sector;
   - Making use of the media;
   - Offering to speak to clubs, staff and volunteers;
   - Assisting in workshops for small business, if requested.
2. Promote accessible housing and accessibility for business construction by:
   - Reviewing and making recommendations based upon Universal Design for all municipal Site Plan Applications for multiple residential, institutional, industrial and commercial development;

- Remaining current with respect to accessible affordable housing initiatives (e.g. the Affordable Housing Plan in Huntsville, etc.);

- Providing input on the Town's Site Plan Guidelines and accompanying accessibility checklist to be used by the Town of Huntsville; and

- Educating local builders, architects, planners and designers on the concept of Visitability, Flex Housing and Universal Design.

3. Promote accessible transportation throughout the Municipality by:

- Working with the provider and Town Staff to assess transit service to ensure that all potential riders have access;

- Working with Town Staff to implement the recommendations and/or pilot projects, in relation to accessibility, resulting from a public transit review;

- Working with the local taxi companies and Town Staff to work on a plan to provide accessible taxi's; and

- Working with Town Staff on the completion of sidewalk repairs as identified by the Accessibility Advisory Committee in the Town's Sidewalks Needs Assessment Study, and updating the Sidewalk Study as required;

- Working with Staff to assess all bus stops for accessibility and establish guidelines for design and practices for year round maintenance as mandated by AODA.

4. Promote accessible recreation by:

- Supporting the concept of playability for accessible play spaces;

- Researching the possibility of alternative funding for the necessary accessibility improvements to accommodate regarding sledge hockey improvements at the Don Lough Arena;

- Providing input, in regards to accessibility, on the Municipality's Leisure Guides and provide information on the transit system, the audible lights, and accessible features of all municipal buildings;

- Working with Town Staff to assess whether there is a need to provide alternative recreation programming for people with a disability;

- Working with Town Staff to ensure that all existing and any new programs are assessed for inclusiveness; and

5. Support the initiative for subsidized recreational programs being considered by all Muskoka municipalities, and to ensure the all programs take into account the needs of

persons with disabilities and those living in poverty.Promote inclusion by educating to help change attitudes, values and behaviour towards accessibility and disabilities by way of:

- The media such as radio interviews, written newspaper articles, etc.; and
- Presentations to groups

6. Promote the removal of all barriers by:

- Participating in the preparation of the Town's Accessibility Plan 2018-2022, and monitoring the completion of projects as specified in the plan;
- Participating in the preparation or review of other Accessibility Plans such as the District of Muskoka's Accessibility Plan;
- Monitoring the completion of various Ontario Municipalities Accessibility Design Guidelines in anticipation of adopting them for Huntsville. The Committee shall promote the adoption to municipalities within the District of Muskoka.

5.0   Identifying Barriers

This section of the Plan is dedicated to the identification of Barriers within municipal facilities and access to all municipal goods and services.

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:

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

5.3   Types of Barriers

AODA defines a barrier as: "a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people apart. For people with disabilities, barriers can take many forms including attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation".

Some barriers and an example illustrating that barrier follow: (Prepared by Jennifer Miller for AMCTO, 2007)

Architectural Barriers:

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

Attitudinal Barriers:

- 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 & 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 Across all Departments

6.1 Corporate Barriers

a) **Access to Information & Service - Accessible Online Applications (Design, Development and Content) (IASR – Part II - Information and Communications s.14)**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimate for all Town of Huntsville online applications:

- o Ongoing accessibility auditing and maintenance costs: unknown, cost is per application, and is dependent on individual vendor

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Each department in ownership of; or that has signed a contractual agreement for an online application.

Method of Addressing:

- o The Town of Huntsville shall make their online applications, as well as the content within, conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA.
- o Ongoing review and maintenance of the tools and content are required to ensure the application is meeting guidelines, objectives, best practices and legislated requirements.
- o The Town will make every effort to work with contractors/owners of sites and applications, as well as their site development team(s) to ensure ongoing maintenance and compliance at (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.
- o An Accessibility Information and Communication policy will establish internal standards.

6.2 Community Services Barriers

a) Access to MHP - Programs

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Information

Department: Muskoka Heritage Place

Method of Addressing:

- o Staff will continue to work with individuals and groups to provide access to information on the site.
- o Continue to research alternative methods of programming such as Multi-Sensory Tours as mentioned by John Rae, First Vice President, of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, in the Ontario Historical Society Bulletin.

b) Access to the Canada Summit Centre

i. Lever style door handles (4 per year)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and to be included in 2021 budget

Estimated:

- o Project costs: To be completed within the approved budget
- o Ongoing operation costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- o Each year, facilities budget to replace existing door handles within the Canada Summit Centre. Staff will continue to include this each year as required.

ii. Signage at all designated accessible viewing areas (7)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- o With the finalization of the Corporate Signage Policy, staff are determining what signage needs to be changed and/or added and will replace the signage upon budget approval.

iii. Signage for automatic door access to the top level of the Jack Bionda Arena

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- With the finalization of the Corporate Signage Policy, staff are determining what signage needs to be changed and/or added and will replace the signage upon budget approval. There is currently temporary signage in place.

c) **Access to the Ice at the Don Lough Arena**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Upon funding for total project

Estimated:

- Project costs: $86,000.00 (2010 estimate)
- Ongoing operation costs: Unknown

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has identified this as a long term vision. Staff will watch for alternative funding for the necessary accessibility requirements (boards, sliders, concrete work, and flooring) to accommodate sledge hockey.

e) **Access to Council Chambers Elevator**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Alternative solutions are being researched, such as the possibility of removing the elevator and installing a lift or a ramp. (Building Department looking to see if this could be done - possibly need professional advice i.e. Architect Engineer.)
- This matter is under review by the Town Hall Working Group

f) Access to Services – Directional Signage

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing as signs are repaired, replaced or purchased new

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing: With the finalization of the Corporate Signage Policy, staff are determining what signage needs to be changed and/or added and will replace the signage upon budget approval.

6.3 Corporate Services Barriers

There are no Corporate Services barriers identified at this time.

6.4 Development Services Barriers

a) Access to Websites (Design and Development) (IASR – Part II - Information and Communications s.14)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing Annual

Estimated for Town website, Algonquin Theatre website, Muskoka Heritage Place website:

- o Ongoing accessibility auditing and maintenance costs: $5,000-$8,000

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Marketing

Method of Addressing:

- o The Town of Huntsville websites have been upgraded to meet the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA standards, as of the launch date (go-live) of each website.
- o WCAG 2.0 is composed of requirements and best practices (guidelines for achieving objectives) to meet the WCAG standards. Best practices are regularly amended as new ones are identified and developed.

- o Auditing and scanning technologies also continue to improve and can more easily identify issues now, than when the websites launched. This results in ongoing maintenance needs for accessibility.
- o Amongst changes to best practices, objectives and requirements, the website technology that is already developed and in place, must continue to be maintained at a Level AA standard.
- o An annual budget will be implemented to address changes which may arise during the lifespan of each website, and would require a fix.
- o The Town will make every effort to work with site development team(s) to ensure ongoing maintenance and compliance at WCAG 2.0 level AA.
- o An Accessibility Information and Communication policy will establish internal standards.

b) Access to Websites (Content) (IASR – Part II - Information and Communications s.14)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimate for Town website, Algonquin Theatre website and Muskoka Heritage Place website:

- o Ongoing accessibility maintenance costs for content: Staff time to maintain, $2,860 annual Siteimprove subscription (Huntsville Public Library is included in this cost) which covers automatic auditing and suggestive content fixes for maintaining Level AA accessibility compliance

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Marketing and other departments that have editing access to content on a website

Method of Addressing:

- o The Town will make every effort to create accessible content that complies with (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.
- o An Accessibility Information and Communication policy will establish internal standards.

c) Site Plan Guidelines

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2021

Estimated:

- o Project costs: None
- o Ongoing operation costs: None

Barrier Type: Architectural and Physical

Department: Building/Planning

Method of Addressing:

- o When updating the comprehensive zoning by-law, site plan as a separate application will no longer be required. The Community Planning Permit system will incorporate the site plan process. Staff will consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to insure Accessibility considerations and compliance with the current Ontario Building Code, the Design of Public Spaces - AODA and the Town's Official Plan.
- o An accessibility checklist will be developed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to assist staff in their review of all site plans.

6.5   Operations and Protective Services Barriers

a) Access to Sidewalks and Intersections in the Urban Area

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

- o Project costs: Per the approved transportation infrastructure budget
- o Ongoing operation costs: Per the approved transportation infrastructure budget

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- o The Sidewalk Needs Assessment, 2019 as amended, reviewed accessible barriers such as missing curb cuts, trip hazards, heaves, missing sidewalks and other obstructions. These hazards will be addressed by the Roads staff on an ongoing basis.

b) Access to Service (Transit) – Transit Study

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Currently under Council Review and pending budget approval

Estimated Project costs: Varied depending on direction provided

Barrier Type: Physical/ Information & Communication

Department: Public Works

Method of Addressing:

- o On October 26, 2017 the Accessibility Advisory Committee supported staff's recommendation to hire a consultant to complete a Transit Review Study.

c) Access to Service (Transit) – Hours of Service (IASR – Transportation s.70)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Under review and pending budget approval

Estimated:

- o Project costs: Varied depending on direction provided
- o Ongoing operation costs: Varied

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- o This item is currently under Council review. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

d) Access to Service (Transit) – Duties of Municipalities (bus stops/shelters) (IASR s. 78)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

- o Project costs: Per the approved budget
- o Ongoing operation costs: Per the approved budget

Barrier Type: Physical, Communication

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- o Consultation with the AAC will take place to identify which bus stops are to be renovated. This item is currently under Council review. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

e) Access to Town Dock at 20 Park Drive

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Currently under Council Review

Estimated:
- o Project costs: None at this time
- o Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:
- o The AAC has made a motion to Council to direct staff to design and construct safe and accessible pedestrian access.
- o Council is reviewing the 2011 Memorial park Master plan to address immediate and long term items.

f) Access to Port Sydney Beach – Mobi Mat

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: When funding becomes available
Estimated:
- o Project costs: None at this time
- o Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:
- o The AAC has requested staff purchase and maintain a Mobi Mat for Port Sydney beach when funding becomes available

g) Access to Trails – Hunter's Bay Trail

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: When funding becomes available (to apply under the Trans Canada Trails mandate to improve the accessibility of the Trail across Canada)
Estimated:
- o Project costs: None at this time
- o Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- o The AAC has passed a motion requesting staff repair the current section at the entrance of Lakeshore Blvd of the Hunter's Bay trail

h) Access to Lion's Lookout

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and pending suggestions from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Estimated:

- o Project costs: None at this time
- o Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- o The AAC has passed a motion requesting accessible picnic tables and access to the legend map and view of the Town. Staff will work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to address the barriers.

6.6   Human Resources Barriers

There are no Human Resources Barriers identified at this time.

6.7   Huntsville Public Library Barriers

a) Signage Audit of the Huntsville Public Library

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated:

- o Project costs: Unknown at this time

Barrier Type: Information, Communication

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- o Staff is currently working on a Corporate Signage Policy based on CNIB guidelines, the CSA standards and best practices of other municipalities in Ontario.
- o Library Staff will be auditing all Library facilities and signage will be upgraded as required.

- Library Facility Audit will wait until 2021 as state of the future of the building is unknown as well as the space staff will be working in the near future.

b) Collection Development Plan

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2021

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: to be determined.

Barrier Type: Information

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- The Library will be creating a new collection development plan that will include goals for accessible materials. Automatic release plans with materials vendors will be revised to include any amendments to existing plans.
- Library does have large print material, audio books, Daisy Readers for loan and items with closed captions. As stated above we will work with vendors to see what a Auto release plan would look like in regards to cost an augmenting the plan.

c) Programming Policy & Plan

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2021

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: to be determined

Barrier Type: Information, Systematic

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- The Library will be revising the Programming Policy and Programming Plan to include accessibility options for participants of all ages. We will also include a review of marketing plans.
- We will work with and seek advice from the Town's programming department to ensure we are in line with recommendations they are moving forward with.

d) Sign Language

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2021

Estimated:

- o Project costs: To be determined
- o Ongoing operation costs: to be determined

Barrier Type: Communication

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- o The Library will investigate training opportunities for Library staff to enable them to communicate with users at the central service desk and at programs.
- o We will reach out to other libraries for examples of how they are working with those who have communication barriers.