



Corporation of the Town of Huntsville
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2023-2027 Accessibility Plan

Updated:

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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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.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 2023-2027 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 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 its 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

Natalie Little, Committee Coordinator

- Telephone: (705) 789-1751 Ext. 2368
- Fax: (705) 789-6689
- E-mail address: natalie.little@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 Statement of Commitment

The Town of Huntsville is committed to promoting an inclusive community that is dedicated to pursuing healthy and balanced lifestyles for everyone. The Town of Huntsville is also committed to meeting the obligations outlined in the AODA and will work towards incorporating these requirements into the Town of Huntsville Accessibility Plan.

2.2 Evaluation and Reporting

The Town of Huntsville will continue to review and consult with staff, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, people with disabilities and any other individuals or groups who provide accessibility related feedback.

Additional evaluation and reporting include:

- Annual review of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan and progress report which is posted online and available in alternative formats.
- Compliance reports submitted to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, who regulates compliance for all Ontario Organizations.
- A report on the accessibility of a Municipal Election and voting measures is completed as required by the Municipal Elections Act, as amended from time to time.

2.3 Maintenance of Accessible Elements

Section 80.44 of the IASR states that in addition to the accessibility plan requirements set out in section 4, obligated organizations, other than small organizations, shall ensure that their multi-year accessibility plans include the following:

1. Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces as required under this Part.
2. Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this Part are not in working order. O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6.

In response, the Town of Huntsville provides preventative maintenance of accessible elements through routine maintenance and inspections. Inspections will focus on accessible elements covered by the Design of Public Spaces Standard and the Ontario Building Code. The Town of Huntsville also notifies members of the public of any temporary disruptions to accessible elements through the Town website, social media and the local newspaper if applicable. Temporary accommodation is provided where possible in the event of a temporary disruption, whether emergency or preventative, until the disruption has ended. Accommodation during a disruption will vary depending on the nature of the disruption.

2.4 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 Natalie Little, Committee Coordinator. 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 2023-2027

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 regard 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 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 behavior 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 2023-2027, 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:

- 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:

- 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.
- Ongoing review and maintenance of the tools and content are required to ensure the application is meeting guidelines, objectives, best practices, and legislated requirements.
- 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.

- An Accessibility Information and Communication policy will establish internal standards and is planned to be completed with the Communication Strategy.

6.2 Community Services Barriers

a) Access to MHP - Programs

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: To be determined based on method of programming.

Barrier Type: Communication, Information

Department: Muskoka Heritage Place

Method of Addressing:

- Staff will continue to work with individuals and groups to provide access to information on the site.
- 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.

a) Access to Heritage Buildings – Muskoka Heritage Place

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and inclusion in the 2024 budget.

Estimated Project costs: Estimated budget \$10,000 - \$15,000.

Barrier Type: Architectural, Physical

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. MHP Operations Group has discussed plans to build a ramp and platform to the back entrance of the Hares House.
- After consultation with the museum sector and in accordance with The Ontarians with Disability Act, we understand that removal of all physical barriers on the authentic site are subject to constraints of museum standards to maintain heritage integrity.

MHP continues to investigate ways to make the admissions office and the train station wheelchair accessible. Level Style door handles and Automatic (accessible) door openers (and the correspondingly appropriate signage) to be included in the facilities ongoing upgrades. b) Access to the Canada Summit Centre

i. Lever style door handles

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and to be included in 2024 and 2024 annual budgets.

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be completed within the approved budget (\$10,000 yearly for door repair and \$10,000 yearly for new additions)
- Ongoing operation costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Each year, facilities budget to replace existing door handles within the Canada Summit Centre. Staff will continue to include this each year as required.
- There are 300 doors in all municipal buildings to complete over the coming years.
- All door handles have also been placed on an annual staff inspection.

ii. Automatic (accessible) door opener

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and to be included in 2023 and 2024 annual budgets.

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be completed within the approved budget (same budget as noted in item b) i)
- Ongoing operation costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Currently staff have completed the minimum doors that require this system of door opener. The Town has 20 additional doors that should be replaced going forward.

- Cost per door is \$5000
- Community Services staff have completed the update and placement of signage to meet this request.
- Community Services staff have completed the update and placement of signage to meet this request.

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.

d) 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.)
- The Town Hall Working Group reviewed the area and provided recommendations within report WG-2022-1. No further direction or changes have been identified at this time.

e) Access to Town Hall (including staff areas)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- The Town Hall Working Group reviewed the area and provided recommendations within report WG-2022-1. No further direction or changes have been identified at this time.

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, as well as associated costs, and will replace the signage upon budget approval.
- Staff resources and budgeted funds are required to complete this task.

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:

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

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Marketing

Method of Addressing:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- An annual budget will be implemented to address changes which may arise during the lifespan of each website and would require a fix.
- 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.
- An Accessibility Information and Communication procedure 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:

- Ongoing accessibility maintenance costs for content: Staff time to maintain, \$2,945 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.
- On-going pdf remediation and training for staff required to ensure that new content is accessible at the start

Barrier Type: Technological

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

Method of Addressing:

- The Town conducts annual audits to address accessible web content. t and will endeavor to create accessible content that complies with (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.
- An Accessibility Information and Communication procedure will establish internal standards.

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:

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

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

Sidewalks accessed annually in accordance with the Minimum Maintenance Standards required by the Municipal Act. Assessment includes missing curb cuts, trip hazards, heaves, missing sidewalks and other obstructions.b) Access to Service (Transit) – Hours of Service (IASR – Transportation s.70)

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

Estimated:

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

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- This item is currently under Council and Committee review. Review includes both the Active Transportation and Public Transit Committee, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

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

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

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

Barrier Type: Physical, Communication

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- Consultation with the AAC will take place to identify which bus stops are to be renovated. The Town of Huntsville Transit System in its entirety, including equipment, routes and stops, is currently under Council review. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

d) Access to Town Dock at 20 Park Drive

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Currently under Council Review

Estimated:

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

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- Currently there is no direction to proceed on this file. Grades are very challenging and achieving a gentler grade would require extensive filling, grading and the installation of retaining structures.

e) Access to Lion's Lookout

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

Estimated:

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

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has passed a motion requesting accessible picnic tables and access to the legend map and view of the Town. This item will be considered by the Community Services Masterplan and Waterfront Strategy Committee.

6.6 Human Resources Barriers

a) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2023

Estimated:

- Project costs: For training – To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: unknown

Barrier Type: Attitudinal and Systemic

Department: HR

Method of Addressing:

- The current Human Resources Policies in place state the commitment to addressing diversity, equity and inclusivity more specifically the: Discrimination Policy, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Program and Workplace Violence and Abuse Policy and Program. The Town also complies to all provincial and federal legislation.
- We will continue to schedule corporate training, as deemed necessary, based on the policies, procedures and legislation with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion.

6.7 Huntsville Public Library Barriers

a) Signage Audit of the Huntsville Public Library

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated:

- Project costs: Unknown at this time

Barrier Type: Information, Communication

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

The Library's emergency exit signs have been updated to the standard. Completed in 2023 by Town Facilities Department.