



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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.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

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2.0 Organization

The Town of Huntsville's organizational structure is similar to those adopted by most municipalities throughout Ontario and enables the Town to 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 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 includes:

- 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 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (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 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.

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.

3.1 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 Downtown Huntsville BIA and the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, and other community partners
 - Remaining current with all funding initiatives such as the Federal “Enabling Accessibility Fund” and the Ontario “Inclusive Community Grants Program” offered to municipalities and other organizations
 - Making use of the media
 - Offering to speak to clubs, staff, and volunteers to provide education and awareness.
2. Promote accessible housing and accessibility for business construction by:
 - Reviewing and making recommendations based upon Universal Design for all municipal Community Planning Permit Applications for multiple residential, institutional, industrial and commercial development
 - Remaining current with respect to accessible affordable housing initiatives
 - Providing input on the Town's Site Plan Guidelines and accompanying accessibility checklist being used by the Town of Huntsville, and
 - Educating local builders, architects, planners, and designers on the concept of Visitability, Flex Housing and Universal Design
 - Inclusion of Visitability as part of the requirement for Affordable Housing rebates as per the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

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 vehicles for hire companies and Town staff to ensure the compliance with by-law 2025-17 – Vehicles for Hire. This bylaw outlines the parameters for providing accessible services. 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 potential accessibility improvements at the Don Lough Arena to accommodate sledge hockey.
 - Providing input, in regard to accessibility, on the Municipality's Digital Recreation Guides, and provide information on the transit system, the audible lights, and accessible features of all municipal buildings
 - Working with Town staff to suggest alternative recreation programming for people with disabilities
 - Providing input to Town staff to ensure that programs are assessed for inclusiveness.
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 articles, social media posts and other forms of marketing materials etc.
 - Presentations to groups
 - Support of the Affordable Recreation Policy
6. Promote the removal of 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

4.0 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.

4.1 Barrier Identification Process

Barrier identification is used to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Barriers are identified through various processes, including, but not limited to: review of documents and publications, conducting public meetings, surveys and/or audits, and the use of customer feedback forms.

4.2 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
- Developmental
- Mental Health
- Learning
- Other – resulting from accidents, illnesses, and diseases.

4.3 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,
Example: inaccessible washrooms/pool changerooms.

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, 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 visual, 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 which is 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 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.

5.0 Town Accessibility/Diversity Barriers to be Addressed Across All Departments

5.1 Corporate Barriers

a) Access to Information & Services - Accessible Online Software 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 software applications:

- Ongoing accessibility auditing and maintenance costs: 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 software 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.

The Communication Strategy was approved in 2023 and is being continuously implemented along with the inclusion of an Accessibility Information and Communication Procedure. b). Access to Websites (Design, Development and Content) (IASR – Part II - Information and Communications s.14)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing Annual

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Marketing and Communications, other departments that have editing access to website content

Method of Addressing:

- The Town of Huntsville websites (Huntsville.ca; Algonquintheatre.ca; Muskokaheritageplace.ca; Huntsvillelibrary.ca; MyHuntsville.ca; hlobfire.ca – as of Fall 2025) meet the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA standards.
- 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.
- The Town currently subscribes to ongoing annual accessibility maintenance which covers automatic auditing and suggestive content fixes for maintaining Level AA accessibility compliance.
- Ongoing PDF remediation and training for staff is required to ensure that new content is accessible at the start.
- The Town conducts annual audits to address accessible web content and will endeavor to create accessible content that complies with (WCAG) 2.0 level AA.
- An annual budget will be implemented to address changes which may arise during the lifespan of each website and would require a fix.

c)

b) Sound/Media Availability in Partner's Hall

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2025

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Information Technology

Method of Addressing:

- Investigation into various types of audio-visual equipment has been completed. Inclusion in the 2025 budget for Council has been approved.
- The aim is to create a comprehensive, mobile media system which addresses auditory concerns and well as providing opportunities for livestreaming of AAC meetings. The potential for remote participation is also being considered.

5.2 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, Technology

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.

Partner with local organizations to provide audio-visual equipment such as pocket talkers to address auditory concerns during oral presentations at the Pioneer Village b) Access to Heritage Buildings – Muskoka Heritage Place including village

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: Estimated budget to be determined. .

Barrier Type: Architectural, Physical

Department: Muskoka Heritage Place

Method of Addressing:

- After consultation with the museum sector and in accordance with The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, we understand that removal of all physical barriers on the authentic site are subject to constraints of museum standards to maintain heritage integrity.
- As an alternative, MHP is looking at technology to make buildings and second storeys accessible. Funding is being sought through grants

- Accessible seating throughout the site to be considered in the 2027 budget process.

c) Access to Facilities

i. Lever style door handles

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing and included in 2025 and 2026 annual Operational 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. Staff will continue to include this each year as required.
- There are approx. 300 doors in all municipal buildings to maintain & replace over the coming years.
- All door handles have also been placed on an annual staff inspection.

ii. Muskoka Heritage Place and Centennial Pool - Automatic (accessible) door units and openers

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Included in 2025 annual capital budgets.

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be completed within 2025 capital Budget (approved, grant and external funding sources)
- Ongoing operation costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facilities and MHP

Method of Addressing:

- Community Services staff have completed the update and placement of signage to meet this request.

- Pool Change Room renovation project will add 2 accessible doors to the accessible changeroom (grant funding or reserves).
- MHP accessible door project will add 5 accessible doors throughout the site, subject to external funding (subject to grant or external funding).

c) Access to the Ice at the Don Lough Arena for Sledge Hockey

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2027.

Council directed staff to include Sledge Hockey to the 2027 draft capital budget for consideration, and that it be fully funded from grant support.

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing: The AAC has identified this as a long-term vision.

- Research has been put on hold for 2025 and 2026.
- This potential capital project was included in the 2025 draft capital budget for Council's consideration as per Motion AAC 12-23. This item was not approved by Council to move forward for 2025 or 2026.
- Project costs: To be determined prior to the 2027 budget process.
- Staff accommodate all requests for sledge hockey, by providing alternative arrangements.

d) Access to Centennial Pool (Completed in full)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2024 Completed

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:

- Recommendation GC54-24, was denied and then ratified on May 27, 2024, resulting in staff direction to not proceed with the Town Hall Renovation Project. No further direction or changes have been identified at this time.

f) 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

Method of Addressing:

- Recommendation GC54-24, was denied and then ratified on May 27, 2024, resulting in staff direction to not proceed with the Town Hall Renovation Project. No further direction or changes have been identified at this time.

5.4 Operations 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 staff review and potential Transit Plan options will be brought forward for Council and Committee review. 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 AAC member has been completed, and a final bus shelter design has been selected. Bus Shelter placements will be confirmed as part of the overall scope of the forthcoming Transit Plan. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

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. Staff have assessed the topography of Lion's Lookout and have determined that both access to the historic plaque and the accessible picnic table does not allow for completion of this request. Staff would recommend signage installed at the base of Lion's Lookout indicating challenging terrain. In consultation with a member of AAC, a parking location will

be determined for accessible vehicles in order to allow persons with disabilities to enjoy the view from their vehicle.

5.5 Human Resources Barriers

a) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

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

Barrier Type: Attitudinal and Systemic

Department: HR

Method of Addressing:

- o 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.
- o Town staff will continue to schedule corporate training on a regular basis, based on the policies, procedures and legislation with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion.

5.6 Huntsville Public Library Barriers

No barriers currently identified.