

The Corporation of the
Municipality of Huron Shores

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers, thus enabling more full participation in their life in the Province. To this end, the ODA mandates that each municipality prepare an annual Accessibility Plan.

The initial plan was prepared and endorsed by Council in September 2003. It is reviewed by the working group and updated by the Clerk/Administrator on a yearly basis. The report describes the measures the Municipality has taken in the past and the measures it will take during the current and future years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff and members of the community at large.

The working group is comprised of the Clerk/Administrator, Deputy Clerk and Treasurer of the Municipality of Huron Shores. As well, the Plan is available for public viewing and any comments are taken into consideration on an ongoing basis. The mandate of the working group is to identify barriers within the Municipality of Huron Shores to people with disabilities.

Since the implementation of the ODA, the Province has created the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. As required, the Municipality will be implementing an Accessible Customer Service Policy by January 1, 2010. A Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Policies 2014 – 2019 was developed and adopted by Council on March 26, 2014 (By-law #14-22).

Aim

This report identifies measures to be taken to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff.

Objectives

This report:

1. describes the process by which the Municipality of Huron Shores will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. will review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the Municipality will review in subsequent years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.

4. describes the measures the Municipality will take in the coming year(s) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. describes how the Municipality will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

Description of the Municipality of Huron Shores

The Municipality of Huron Shores was born on January 1, 1999, through an amalgamation of four municipalities (the Township of Thessalon, Townships of Day and Bright Additional, Village of Iron Bridge and Township of Thompson) and the remainder of two unincorporated geographic townships (Township of Bright and Township of Gladstone)

The Municipality is largely rural in nature with a permanent population of 1,664 (as reported by Statistics Canada – 2016) and a massive influx of residents in the summer months. Land area is comprised of 455 square kilometres, 15 Provincially identified inland lakes and many river systems, including the Mississagi River, running through its interior.

The Township of Plummer Additional to the west and the Town of Blind River to the east border the Municipality. Its northern boundary abuts unincorporated townships with a few common boundary points with the Mississauga First Nation. The southern boundary falls into Lake Huron. The Municipality surrounds the Town of Thessalon and Thessalon First Nation. Huron Shores is approximately 85 km from Sault Ste. Marie on the west and approximately 170 km from Sudbury on the east.

Municipally owned facilities include the Municipal Office/Public Works Garage, one satellite Public Works Garage, four Storage Garages, one Library, one seasonal Museum, one Arena, three Recreation Centres, two Fire Stations, and two Gazebos. There is one Social Housing Facility of 10 Apartments located in Iron Bridge.

Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores is committed to: the continual improvement of access to all municipally-owned facilities, premises and services for those persons with disabilities; and the provision of quality service to all members of the community with disabilities.

The legislation requires that each municipality prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable Council to meet these commitments.

Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

In 1999, the former Village of Iron Bridge Municipal Office became the Municipal Office for the new Municipality of Huron Shores. The front entrance was renovated to allow for wheelchair access to both the Administration Office and Council Chamber.

In 1999 a lift was installed at the Day and Bright Recreation and Community Centre to allow for wheelchair access to the second floor. Also, Wheelchair accessible washrooms were constructed at Day and Bright Recreation and Community Centre and the Thessalon Township Recreation and Community Centre, with the assistance of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines Small Communities Fund.

In 2003, the Municipality made application to the Trillium Foundation to construct ramps at the Arena to allow for easier access to the facility and main floor surface. Unfortunately, the request was denied. The Municipality proceeded to correct the elevation problem at the exterior entrances with the application of gravel. It may still present concerns for wheel chair accessibility but has benefited those who were unable to negotiate the high step into the facility.

For the Municipal Elections in 2006, several magnifying sheets were purchased and magnification tools were supplied to the front counter for customer convenience.

In 2008, a new ramp was installed at the front entrance to the Thessalon Township Recreation and Community Centre and a cement floor was poured at the Iron Bridge Museum Gazebo. Students commenced painting of the ramp at the Early Learning Centre (now the Library) and it was finished in 2009.

In 2009, the Municipality made application to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for: (1) automatic door openers and lowered reception counter at the Municipal Office and; (2) new entrance, wider door and automatic door opener at the Huron Shores Library. The applications were not approved. In 2011, the Municipality budgeted and in December of that year installed automatic door openers at the Municipal Office. We will continue to seek funding in order to permanently lower the reception counters.

In 2017, the Municipality was successful in receiving Enabling Accessibility funding for a new ramp at 10 Main Street, now housing the Library. As part of that renovation, new automatic door openers were installed. It was also successful in receiving Canada 150 funding for a renovation to the Ward 4 Recreation Centre. This funding has allowed for a new accessible entrance to the main floor of the facility, including the installation of an automatic door opener. The renovations were nearing completion at the end of 2017.

Reserved Parking signs were installed at the Arena but, work is yet to be done at other locations.

In early 2018, the Ward 4 Recreation Centre renovation was completed.

In August 2019, staff rearranged the existing front desk furniture to allow for a customer to be seated while being served. It is not a permanent solution but, will serve the purpose until funding can be obtained to purchase new furniture.

Informal Audit of the Municipally-Owned Buildings

An informal audit took place at which time the working group assessed all municipally-owned buildings for existing barriers. Solutions were identified to remove such barriers to comply with the current legislation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The barriers have been included in this report, along with the solution being identified.

Barrier Identification Methodology

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology has been used:

Methodology	Description	Status
Informal review by Working Group	An informal review was conducted by the Working Group to identify any barriers at the various Municipally owned buildings	The review has been completed and Council will strive to address these barriers as budget monies permit in future years, on the basis of priority.
Review by Working Group of any Feedback Forms	Feedback is welcomed and will be acknowledged and reviewed at time of receipt	To-date, the Municipality has received no feedback forms.

Barriers Identified

As a result of the Working Group review of the municipally-owned buildings, the following barriers, listed below, have been identified.

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
Arena: 1 - new ramps are required at main arena surface for summer activities.	Architectural	an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation was denied. New ramps were fabricated - improvement to previous ramps.
2 – washrooms	Architectural	washrooms require retrofit
3 – graveled ramping was installed at main entrance and zamboni entrance, however, still may be an issue for wheel chair access.	Physical	Should surface treat as monies become available. Not priority at this time.

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
<p>Community Centre - Thompson Township</p> <p>1 - upper level accessible via exterior ramp only. There is no interior wheelchair access to upper floor level.</p> <p>2 - washroom</p> <p>3 - old ramp</p>	<p>Architectural</p> <p>Architectural</p> <p>Architectural</p>	<p>Canada 150 funding (in 2017) allowed for a renovation to the main floor of the Ward 4 Rec. Centre. With the renovation a new accessible front door was installed with automatic door opener, allowing access to the main floor.</p> <p>Grab bars were added with Canada 150 funding</p> <p>upgrade</p>
<p>Community Centre - Day&Bright Additional</p> <p>1 - no wheelchair access to kitchen entrance</p>	<p>Architectural</p>	<p>ramp at kitchen would allow for two wheelchair entrances.</p>
<p>Community Centre - Thessalon Township</p> <p>1 – no distinct access to new front entrance</p>	<p>Architectural/Physical</p>	<p>Investigate provision of better access to new front entrance ramp</p>
<p>Gazebo - Thessalon Township</p> <p>1 - entrances</p>	<p>Architectural/Physical</p>	<p>floor surface to be brought to ground level</p>
<p>Gazebo - Museum</p> <p>1 – lip onto cement floor</p>	<p>Physical</p>	<p>Grade ground to meet cement floor</p>
<p>Early Learning Centre</p> <p>1 – ramp (no longer in operation)</p>	<p>Physical</p>	<p>Enabling Accessibility funding for new ramp in 2017</p>

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
<p>Municipal Office:</p> <p>1 - although doors were designed by architect, they are very heavy.</p> <p>2 - counter is designed for clients to stand at.</p> <p>3 - Five staff positions are on second floor</p>	<p>Architectural/Physical</p> <p>Physical</p> <p>Architectural/Physical</p>	<p>automatic door entry system installed</p> <p>low counter for clients requiring seating or in wheelchair. HRSDC application submitted. With no funding received, on August 28/19 staff rearranged the existing furniture to allow for a customer to be seated when being served. It is not ideal but, better than no provision.</p> <p>Install chair lift, if needed</p>
<p>Museum:</p> <p>1 - Washrooms</p>	<p>Physical</p>	<p>to be reassessed</p>
<p>Lack of handicap signage</p>	<p>Communications</p>	<p>install Accessibility signs where necessary</p>
<p>Parking</p>	<p>Physical</p>	<p>Where parking lots are surface treated, designated parking could be established and signage could be installed at other locations</p>
<p>Emergency Exits</p>	<p>Architectural/Physical</p>	<p>Ensure thresholds to all emergency exits are conducive to wheelchair traffic</p>

Barriers to be Addressed in the Future

The first barriers to be addressed will be access to buildings. Other issues will be addressed as funding sources become available or budgeting allows for construction works.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

Council is committed to addressing and removing the barriers identified, but funding to complete some of the projects may postpone desired completion dates. This plan will be created and updated annually to allow Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Municipality is moving to remove all barriers under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available at the Huron Shores Municipal Office, Library, as well as on the web site and Council will ensure that all publicly available information is made accessible, upon request.

SUGGESTED ORDER FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIERS

- 1) All Main Entrance Retrofits - including changing door knobs to lever handles.
- 2) Signage. Some Reserved Parking signs have been installed. This project is to be finalized in 2020.
- 3) Parking. Will be reviewed while locating ideal locations for Reserved Parking signage.
- 4) All Public Washroom Retrofits
- 5) Lower counter at Municipal Office. Temporary solution was completed in 2019 by rearranging the existing furniture.