

The Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 - 2024

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Introduction

The 2020-2024 Accessibility Plan outlines what steps the Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores (hereinafter referred to as the "Municipality") has and will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and when it intends to do so.

Alternative Formats

The plan and status reports are posted on our website and available in print format at the Municipal Office. They are available in alternative formats upon request.

About the Municipality of Huron Shores

The Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores was created on January 1, 1999, through an amalgamation of four incorporated 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 1,860 (as reported by Statistics Canada – 2021) and a massive influx of residents in the summer months. Land area is comprised of 451.87 square kilometres, 15 Provincially identified inland lakes and many river systems, including the Mississagi River, running through its interior.

Borders include: the Township of Plummer to the west; the Town of Blind River to the east; unincorporated townships with a few common boundary points with the Mississauga First Nation to the north; and falls into Lake Huron to the south. The Municipality surrounds the Town of Thessalon and Thessalon First Nation. Huron Shores is approximately 85 km from Sault Ste. Marie at its westerly boundary and approximately 170 km from Sudbury on its easterly boundary.

Municipally owned facilities include the Municipal Office/Public Works Garage, one satellite Public Works Garage, four Storage Garages, one Library, one seasonal Museum, four Recreation Centres, two Fire

Stations, three Gazebos, and 4 Landfill Shelters. There is one Social Housing Facility comprised of 10 Apartments, located in Iron Bridge.

The Municipality is comprised of a full-time permanent staff of 12, part-time permanent staff of 6, volunteer Fire Department and many committee volunteers.

Guiding Legislation

Regulated accessibility planning in Ontario began with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*. It ensured that public organizations incorporated accessibility planning into their operations and facilities and document same with annual accessibility plans.

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* was adopted. It advances the goals of the *ODA* and is more comprehensive and prescriptive. The goal of the *AODA* is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility to make Ontario fully accessible for all persons with disabilities by 2025. It includes general requirements and serves as a framework for the establishment of accessibility standards in five areas being: information & communications; employment; transportation; design of public spaces; and customer service.

On July 1, 2011, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) was enacted (O.Reg. 191/11). It contains general requirements and timelines for compliance in relation to an organization's classification.

According to the IASR classifications, the Municipality of Huron Shores is defined as a "**small designated public sector organization**", as it has "at least one but fewer than 50 employees", with the volunteer Fire Department excluded from the count (per consultation with Accessibility North).

Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of Huron Shores is committed to treating all people with dignity, respect, and in a way that maintains individual

independence. It believes in integration and equal opportunity and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Municipality of Huron Shores supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, in that it ensures compliance with the accessibility requirements in:

- Information and Communications;
- Employment;
- Transportation;
- The Design of Public Spaces; and
- Customer Service

The Municipality of Huron Shores understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

About the Plan

The initial Accessibility Plan was prepared and endorsed by Council in September 2003. The first 5-year Multi-Year Plan was adopted on March 26, 2014 (By-law #14-22). The 2020-2024 Multi-Year Plan was adopted on February 12, 2020 (By-law #19-63).

The plan is updated at least once every five years and a status report is completed on an annual basis. The annual status report tracks the progress of measures taken.

The Plan and Policies will be reviewed by a Working Group comprised of the Clerk/CAO, Deputy Clerk and Treasurer. The Working Group will seek input from the Community and Employees to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Municipality. Recommendations will be brought before Council and financing requirements will be addressed in the annual budget.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available at the Huron Shores Municipal Office and on the web site (huronshores.ca). All publicly available information will be made accessible, upon request.

Barrier Identification

The following methodology is used to identify barriers:

Methodology	Description	Status
Informal review by Working Group – comprised of Clerk/Administrator, Deputy Clerk and Treasurer	An informal review is conducted by the Working Group to identify all possible barriers.	The review is conducted on an annual basis. Council strives 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.

Generally, the physical retrofit order will be as follows:

1. All Main Entrance Retrofits – i.e. changing door knobs to lever handles; automatic door openers;
2. Reserved Parking signage and painting where possible;
3. Public Washroom Retrofits;
4. Municipal Office – front counter retrofit.

Buildings Barriers Identified

As a result of the Working Group review of the Municipally owned buildings, the following barriers have been identified:

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
Recreation Centre – Iron Bridge 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>Recreational Centre 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 - Sowerby Hall</p> <p>1 - no wheelchair access to kitchen entrance</p>	<p>Architectural</p>	<p>ramp at kitchen would allow for two wheelchair entrances.</p>

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
Community Centre - Thessalon Township 1 – no distinct access to new front entrance	Architectural/Physical	Investigate provision of better access to new front entrance ramp
Gazebo - Thessalon Township 1 - entrances	Architectural/Physical	floor surface to be brought to ground level
Gazebo - Museum 1 – lip onto cement floor	Physical	Grade ground to meet cement floor

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>

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention
Parking	Physical	Where parking lots are surface treated, designated parking could be established. Signage has been added at Iron Bridge Recreation Centre and Sowerby Hall. More signage could be installed at other locations
Emergency Exits	Architectural/Physical	Ensure thresholds to all emergency exists are conducive to wheelchair traffic

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The Municipality has improved accessibility or removed barriers as follows:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act:

- The first Accessibility Plan was prepared and endorsed by Council in September 2003. A Working Group was established, comprised of the Clerk/Administrator, Deputy Clerk and Treasurer. The Plan and feedback forms were made available for public viewing. Feedback forms and any comments/concerns 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.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR) Policy

- Integrated Accessibility Standard Train the Trainer with Accessibility Consultant;
- First Multi-Year Accessibility plan and policy adopted March 26, 2014;
- 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Policy adopted February 12, 2020.
- Policies developed respecting IASR standards.

Information and Communications Standard

- Municipal Website tested to ensure that it meets WCAG requirements.

Employment Standard

- Employee Safety During Emergencies: Letters to all staff advising that the IASR requires that the Municipality provide individualized written emergency response plans to all staff members with a disability whether permanent or temporary.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- 1999: front entrance renovated to allow for wheelchair access to both the Administration Office and Council Chamber.
- 1999: lift 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 (now known as Sowerby Hall) and the Thessalon Township Recreation and Community Centre, with the assistance of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines Small Communities Fund.

- 2003: application made 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 still presents concerns for wheelchair accessibility but has benefited those who were unable to negotiate the high step into the facility.
- 2008: 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.
- 2009: 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.
- 2011: installed automatic door openers at the Municipal Office.
- 2017: 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 completed in 2018.
- Reserved Parking signs were installed at the Iron Bridge Recreation Centre and Sowerby Hall.
- 2019: 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.

Customer Service Standard

- Accessible Customer Service Train the Trainer with Accessibility Consultant;
- Accessible Customer Service Policy created November 19, 2009 and made available at Municipal Office and on website;

- Relevant staff training in Accessible Customer Service began and is ongoing;
- For the Municipal Elections in 2006, several magnifying sheets were purchased and magnification tools were supplied to the front counter for customer convenience.

Strategies and Actions

General Requirements

Goal	Planned Measure	Timeframe
		2020 – 2024

Information and Communications Standard

Goal	Planned Measure	Timeframe
Alternative voting method for 2022 election	Tender and seek out alternative voting method and conduct community education	2022

Design of Public Spaces Standard

Goal	Planned Measure	Timeframe
Clearly marked accessible parking spaces	paint parking spaces at Municipal Office. This is the only location with paintable surface.	2024
Reconfigure reception area for accessible reception counter	Seek funding assistance	2020 - 2024

Customer Service Standard

Goal	Planned Measure	Timeframe
Create accessible reception counter	Seek funding assistance	2020 - 2024

Alternative voting method for 2022 election	Provide stations at Municipal Office for those requiring assistance to vote	2022
E-billing	Review and initiate new billing options	2020 – 2024
New municipal website	Tender and create new website better suited to navigation on different platforms	2022
Purchase eSCRIBE for Meetings of Council	Cloud based solution to provide Meeting minutes in HTML format	2021 - 2022
Promote Project Lifesaver Alert System	Promote Project Lifesaver availability on website	2020 - 2024

Contact Information

For more information on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Policies, or for a copy in an alternative format please contact:

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Category: General Requirements Legislative compliance	Deborah Tonelli Clerk/Administrator	By deadlines
<p>Review the "Advancing Accessibility in Ontario" framework launched in 2020 to update our current Accessibility documents with the cross-government framework and four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking down barriers in the built environment • Leading by example as a municipal government office, employer and service provider • Increasing participation in the economy for people with disabilities • Improving understanding and awareness about accessibility • Develop an Age-Friendly Municipality plan 	TBD	TBD