A. Recommendations


AND THAT Council endorse the “Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019 – 2023” as presented.

B. Overview

The Town of The Blue Mountains is required to have a multi-year accessibility plan under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The Town’s first plan expired in January 2019. The new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019 - 2023 will guide the Town beyond compliance and ensure accessibility is an integral part of the Town’s programs and services. This plan outlines what progress has been achieved during the first five-year accessibility plan and outlines the steps the Town can take to maintain compliance, meet changing regulations, and improve accessibility of services.

C. Background

The Town’s first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2014 – 2019 helped identify and remove barriers in our services and comply with the incoming standards of the AODA. Specifically, it helped us implement the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation that came into effect from 2012-2016. The Town continues to be committed to providing programming and services that consider the diverse needs and abilities of the people we serve.

The AODA sets a roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. This is to be achieved through mandatory standards that the Town needs to meet, specifically:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
Transportation
Design of Public Spaces

In addition to the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, the Town must follow the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The OBC was recently updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces of building are accessible.

D. Analysis

The updated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan highlights our accomplishments to date against each standard and sets out goals for improving our practices and enhancing the accessibility of our services.

Some of the goals for 2019-2023 include:

- Provide mandatory accessible customer service workshops for staff, council, volunteers, committees and local board members.
- Arrange for plain language training for staff.
- Explore opportunities for diversity and inclusiveness training for staff.
- Accessibility considered through the Town’s Master Transportation Plan process.

These goals have been developed in consultation with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Town’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023 was supported by the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee at their June 7, 2019 meeting, as noted in the meeting minutes attached.

Ongoing review and feedback are important for this plan to be effective. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan should be considered a living document that is updated as required throughout the five-year plan period.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability
Objective #3 Promote a Diversified Economy

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners
Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #1 To Be an Employer of Choice
Objective #2 Improve Internal Communications Across our Organization
Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness
F. Environmental Impacts

Not applicable.

G. Financial Impact

The plan itself has no financial impacts. Implementation of the plan goals will have some financial impacts that will be determined annually with the setting of the budget.

H. In Consultation With

Jennifer Moreau, Director of Human Resources

Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Sarah Traynor, hr@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

1. Town of The Blue Mountains Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023
2. Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes- June 7, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Traynor
Health & Safety/HR Coordinator

For more information, please contact:

Sarah Traynor
hr@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 265
Accessibility

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2019-2023
Inclusive Programs, Services and Spaces for All
This plan was created by Town of The Blue Mountains staff in consultation with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Plan is available in alternate formats, such as print, electronic, plain text and verbal, upon request. Other formats may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, communication supports are also available upon request.

This multi-year plan is available online at www.thebluemountains.ca

For more information about the Town of The Blue Mountains’ Accessibility initiatives, please contact Human Resources at 519-599-3131 ext.265, accessibility@thebluemountains.ca or in person at:

Town of The Blue Mountains
32 Mill Street
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0
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Town of The Blue Mountains Commitment to Creating an Accessible Community

The Town of The Blue Mountains (the Town) is committed to building an inclusive society and providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to programs and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The Town supports the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and will establish policies, practices, and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces, and that is consistent with the core principles as outlined in the AODA:

- Dignity—Service is provided in a way that allows persons with disabilities to maintain self-respect and the respect of others
- Independence—all people can do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others
- Integration—Services are provided in a way that all persons with disabilities can benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable persons with disabilities to access goods or services
- Equal Opportunity—Service is provided to persons with disabilities in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods and services equal to that given to others.

The Town will continue to prevent barriers by designing inclusive spaces, and supporting positive approaches, that address attitudes which undervalue and restrict the potential of persons with disabilities.

In working toward its goals under this statement, the Town is committed to meeting the requirements of existing legislation and its own policies and goals related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities and becoming a barrier-free community.
A Background on Accessibility at the Town of The Blue Mountains

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The AODA sets a roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. This is to be achieved through mandatory standards that public, private and not-for-profit organizations need to meet. The Town needs to meet the deadlines and requirements of the large public sector organization description under the Act.

AODA Standards include:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

In addition to the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, the Town must follow the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The OBC was recently updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces of buildings are accessible.

Consultation

Under the AODA, the Town is sometimes required to consult with individuals, persons with disabilities and a municipal Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC). The Town is committed to working with these persons and its JAAC to ensure legislation is met.

Implementation

Accessibility is an important element of providing excellence in government service and aligns with the Town’s Strategic Plan. Providing accessible and inclusive programs and services is part of the Town’s culture for customer service. The Town supports the Province’s goals of making Ontario accessible by 2025 and will work within its means to meet all requirements of accessibility legislation and to eliminate barriers in its services and workplaces. These include barriers that are: physical, attitudinal, systemic, communication, and technological.

Structure

Accessibility Coordinator refers to the Town’s staff for accessibility. This position oversees compliance reporting as well as participates on the JAAC; however, all Town staff and departments have a role to play in the implementation of this plan and in ensuring the programs, services and materials the Town offers meet accessibility legislation.
The JAAC reports to Grey County’s Committee of the Whole. The JAAC provides an advisory role and final decisions, relating to the Town, are the responsibility of the Town’s Council.

**What is a disability?**

Under the AODA, a “disability” is defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder;
- or, an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*.

This broad definition includes disabilities of different sensitivity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities which may be temporary or have effects that come and go over time.

**Barriers**

This multi-year plan will help the Town strategize ways to identify, address and prevent barriers that limit persons with a disability from fully participating in its programs and services.

Barriers are obstacles that prevent someone with a disability from doing a day-to-day activity that many people take for granted. The traditional definition of a barrier has been expanded beyond physical obstructions. There are several other categories of barriers to consider. These include:

- **Physical Barrier**: Buildings, public spaces or features that restrict or impede physical access. Example: a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate a person in a motorized scooter.

- **Communication Barrier**: An obstacle that prevents the transfer, processing or interpreting of information. Example: a print brochure with text too small to read, or a document written in a way that is too complicated to understand.

- **Attitudinal Barrier**: Prejudgments and assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Example: assuming all visually impaired persons can read Braille or treating a support person as if they are your client.

- **Technological Barrier**: When technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. Example: a website that doesn’t provide for increased text sizes.

- **Systemic Barrier**: Policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. Example: requiring a valid driver’s licence for a position prevents a person with visual impairment from applying for the job.
Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC)

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Town of The Blue Mountains Council and staff members, on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in municipal services, programs and spaces. The Committee meets approximately four times per year plus additional meetings and consultation, as required.

The Town’s Progress on Complying with the AODA Regulations

The following pages outline the Town’s accomplishments and commitments over the next five years in meeting the Accessibility Standards in five key areas: Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.

There are also general requirements that apply across all the Accessibility Standards.

General Requirements

Accessibility Policies & Procedures: The Town has written policies and procedures in place regarding the standards set out by the AODA. The Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy was updated in 2016. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy was updated in 2017. They are posted on the Town’s website and are available in accessible formats upon request.

Procurement: The Town considers accessibility in all of its buying decisions and will ensure that accessibility is integrated into all municipal initiatives, business practices, boards, committees and departments. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services or facilities, an explanation will be provided, upon request.

Reporting: Reports will be shared with the Town’s Council on the progress and implementation of this multi-year accessibility plan and this information will be posted on www.thebluemountains.ca and will be available in alternate formats upon request. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will continue to be updated once every five years with additional updates made throughout the term, as required. Reports will be filed with the Accessibility Directorate as required.

Minutes of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will be provided to Council.

Training: All Town employees, council, committee members, local board members and volunteers receive mandatory accessibility training. Everyone will receive general training on accessibility which will include legislation, requirements (AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Human Rights Code) and customer service training. Staff will also receive necessary job-specific training to ensure their day-to-day work is accessible. Staff and department heads will have the responsibility of staying up to date with changes within their
designated fields (example: a web designer taking WCAG training). The Accessibility Coordinator is available to provide additional support as needed.

All new staff receive accessibility training during orientation. Staff have also received refresher accessibility training in 2019. Additional job-specific training is provided on a case-by-case basis as necessary. For example, all staff who will create documents for the Town will receive accessible document training in conjunction with training on the Town’s document management system.

2019-2023 Goals:

1. Improvements can be made to better identify which staff receive job-specific training and to identify more opportunities for staff development.
2. Incorporate accessibility considerations in other corporate and departmental training.
3. Enhancements will be made to the Town’s Intranet to provide additional accessibility resources for staff.

Feedback: The Town is always open to suggestions about ways to improve accessibility of its programs and services. The public is encouraged to share their comments by contacting the Town, in person, at the address below, by calling 519-599-3131 ext. 265, emailing accessibility@thebluemountains.ca or by mail to:

Town of The Blue Mountains
Human Resources
32 Mill Street
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

**Commitment:** Continue to provide staff with the training they need to provide high-quality accessible service to people of all abilities who access the Town’s programs and services. To design and provide programs and services that consider accessibility and respect the dignity and independence of the people served.

**Progress:** The Town trains all new employees on accessibility and the Accessible Customer Service Standard as part of mandatory orientation. All employees received refresher training on the Accessible Customer Service in 2019. Assistive listening devices have been implemented in Council Chambers and the webcasting of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are provided with closed caption. Public facilities are designed with accessibility in mind. The Town Hall building has several accessibility features including: automatic door openers, accessible washrooms, evac chair, and an audio and visual alarm system. The Town continues to listen to feedback to find ways to improve the accessibility of its programs and services.

**2019-2023 Goals**

1. Provide mandatory accessible customer service workshops for staff, council, volunteers, committees and local board members.
2. Review guidelines and processes for service disruptions, customer feedback and request for alternative formats.
3. Provide additional resources for staff on planning accessible meetings and events.

Information and Communications Standard

**Commitment:** The Town is committed to providing information and communications about its programs and services in an accessible manner to people of all abilities.

**Progress:** The Town follows accessible document design principles and ensures procured services and associated documents are accessible. The Town strives to ensure that all public documents posted to the website are made electronically accessible. Where necessary, documents in an alternate format can be made available upon request at no expense to the requestor. The Town’s website is designed to the WCAG 2.0 AA. The Town is committed to producing information in plain language.

**2019-2023 Goals:**

1. Schedule mandatory plain language training for staff.
2. All documents produced by the Town will be in an accessible format, to the best of its ability.
3. Web development staff continue to stay informed of WCAG regulations, attend training opportunities and explore website accessibility enhancements and monitoring compliance.
4. Explore opportunities to communicate municipal business in a variety of formats, based upon the needs of the community.

Employment Standard

Commitment: The Town is an equal opportunity employer providing inclusive and accessible recruitment and employment practices.

Progress: The Town continues to meet the requirements of the Employment Standard. Accommodation is available at all points in the recruitment process at the request of the applicant. The Town works with staff with disabilities to develop accommodation plans.

2019-2023 Goals:

1. Continue to update a list of staff who require assistance exiting the workplace during an emergency to ensure it is accurate. Modify and create plans as required.
2. Review the steps for creating individual accommodation plans and return to work process.
3. Update the Town’s intranet with accessibility resources for staff.
4. Ensure Human Resources staff remain informed of any updates to the Employment Standard and policies are kept up to date.
5. Explore opportunities for diversity and inclusiveness training for staff.

Transportation Standard

Commitment: The Town is committed to providing accessible transit services that meet all provincial legislation.

Progress: The Town has an agreement with The Corporation of The Town of Collingwood to manage the transit system, which is provided in accordance with requirements under the Transportation Standard. Currently, the Town does not license taxi cabs.

2019-2023 Goals:

1. Ensure accessibility is considered when investigating transit options for the Town.
2. Promote Specialized Transit provided within the Town.
3. Accessibility will be considered through the Town’s Master Transportation Plan process.

Design of Public Spaces

Commitment: The Town will ensure that public properties and facilities meet the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces standard as well as the Ontario Building Code.

Maintenance of Public Spaces: The Town will reasonably maintain public spaces and accessible elements of all accessible trails, playgrounds, paths of travel and outdoor eating areas. See Appendix A.
**Progress:** The Town continues to design public spaces with accessibility in mind and refers designs and drawings to the JAAC for input.

**2019-2023 Goals:**

1. Improve documentation and continually update maintenance procedures for the Town’s facilities in respect to the Design of Public Spaces Standard.
2. Consult with the JAAC about new or re-developed public spaces.
3. Consider implementing other accessibility improvements as recommended by the JAAC or public.

**Ongoing Review of this Plan**

Ongoing review and feedback are important for this plan to stay effective. The Town will continue to collect feedback and implement changes that will enhance the accessibility of its services. Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on this plan and accessibility matters in general.

Additionally, this plan will be reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Town’s Accessibility Committee annually and annual status reports will be provided to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Town of The Blue Mountains Council.
Appendix A: Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

The Town has procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public places. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Town include:

- Accessible parking
- Exterior paths of travel (walkways, sidewalks, stairs, ramps etc. that fall outside of the Ontario Building Code)
- Service counters
- Recreational trails and lookouts

Maintenance Procedures

Preventative maintenance schedules will be developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and will outline how elements will be restored if any become unavailable.

Notices of service interruption will inform the public of any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its duration and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place such as a front entrance as well as on the Town of The Blue Mountains’ website if circumstances require it.

Accessible elements of public spaces and buildings will be inspected on a regular basis. Elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified, and a plan will be developed to correct the defect or maintenance issue.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.
The Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee met on the above date at the Grey Highlands Administration Building with the following members in attendance:

Present: Councillor Dwight Burley, Christina Schnell, Andrew Edgcumbe, Catherine Sholtz, and Claudia Strelocke

Regrets: David Mollison and Andy Underwood

Staff Present: Kathie Nunno, Administrative and Accessibility Coordinator; and Jacquelyn Morrison, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator

Municipal Representatives: Brian Tocheri, the Town of Hanover; Wendi Hunter, the Township of Georgian Bluffs; Debbie Yip, the Municipality of Grey Highlands; Sarah Traynor, The Town of The Blue Mountains; Ryan Gibbons, The Town of The Blue Mountains; Debbie Anderson, the Municipality of Grey Highlands; Michael Benner, the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:08 PM.

The individuals present introduced themselves.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Chair Burley asked the Committee members to identify themselves before speaking.

Accessibility Plan Review
The Town of The Blue Mountains Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023

Sarah Traynor provided an overview of the Town of The Blue Mountains Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. She asked for feedback on the plan.

JAAC06-19 Moved by: Andrew Edgcumbe Seconded by: Christina Schnell

That the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee support The Town of The Blue Mountains Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023 as presented.

Carried

Reports

CCR-JAAC-11-19 Progress and Implementation of Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022

Kathie Nunno reviewed the above noted report.

Discussion occurred on the accessible door buttons and what to do if they are not working. Wendi Hunter suggested telling a building manager.

Discussion occurred on winter snow removal. Debbie Yip noted that staff receive training. She also highlighted challenges faced from the operation side. Sarah Traynor noted that municipal websites should have information on where to provide feedback.

Discussion occurred on mental health and the importance of being able to access a quiet room. Ryan Gibbons noted that many municipalities will accommodate this even if there is not a designated space. Kathie Nunno noted that every business with one or more employees is required to train their staff and volunteers on the accessible customer service standard, so everyone should be able to help. Customers need to ask for help when they need it. Discussion occurred on educating the public.

JAAC07-19 Moved by: Claudia Strelocke Seconded by: Andrew Edgcumbe

That Report CCR-JAAC-11-19 regarding the Progress and Implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2020 be received for information.

Carried

Review of Site Plans

Michael Benner provided general information on how to review site plans, such as distances, scale, hedges, trees, symbols, and the focus of the plan.
Sarawak Family Park (Township of Georgian Bluffs)

The Committee reviewed the Sarawak Family Park site plan. Wendi Hunter and Chair Burley provided information on the park. Ms. Hunter noted known changes that will be made to the plans, including changing the washroom door location and adding braille to signage.

Kathie Nunno noted a draft checklist that she had created related to accessibility for site plans. She asked for feedback from the Committee.

Debbie Anderson noted that many items are caught under the building code, such as height requirements. Ms. Anderson advised that all three washrooms are presented as barrier free. The legislated requirement is for one universal barrier-free washroom. There is opportunity to change the plans to make better use of the space while meeting legislated accessibility requirements bearing in mind that the project is using an existing washroom building.

The following items were discussed:

- parking;
- accessible playground equipment;
  - the playground equipment and access to the playground is not currently accessible
- Washroom building:
  - alert strobes and emergency alerts;
  - the position of the soap dispensers. It was suggested that the dispenser be located at the side of sink and that hand dryers be located lower;
  - different options for entering the buildings, such as a larger accessible door button;
  - whether a second bar would be available in the washroom; and
  - the change table. It was suggested that one washroom be a universal washroom that includes an adult change table.
- The mobi mat that goes to the water.

Georgian Bluffs will revise the plan and, if there is time, the site plan will be brought back to the Committee.

Moreau Park Pavilion – Proposed Drawings (Town of The Blue Mountains)

Ryan Gibbons noted that contract for Moreau Park Pavilion has been awarded. Discussion occurred on when the best time for consultation with the Committee should be. The Committee does not want to hold up development and welcomes the
opportunity to review plans. The earlier in the process, the better for JAAC comment. Discussion occurred on the accessibility requirements for new buildings.

Ryan Gibbons provided background information on the pavilion. The Committee suggested considering the addition of braille to signage and ensuring one washroom is universal and includes an adult change table.

Multi-Use Beach – Northwinds (Town of The Blue Mountains)

Ryan Gibbons provided an overview of the Multi-Use Beach project. The multi-use path will allow access to the park from the parking lot across the street. This project is at the final design stage and construction will begin in the fall. The Ministry of Transportation has approved the plans. The Committee discussed the slope of the path and Mr. Gibbons confirmed that the slope meets accessibility standards.

229 Bruce Street Park (Town of The Blue Mountains)

Ryan Gibbons provided information on the 229 Bruce Street Park project. He discussed the walkways and noted there is a slight slope around the centre of the park, but everything else is flat. Discussion occurred on the layout of the site and where the walkways connect. Discussion occurred on the lawn area and the Committee suggested that there be a designated seating area that is accessible. Accessible ground cover was suggested for the accessible area as grass is difficult to navigate.

Dundalk Arena (Township of Southgate)

Kathie Nunno noted that the Committee will attend the site on June 24th and suggested that members review the plans before the site tour.

Other Business

Chair Burley inquired about an update on the Meaford path. Staff will follow up.

Debbie Yip inquired about what to bring to the Committee on new development. Kathie Nunno noted that the Committee asked to receive the information as outlined in the motion passed at the first meeting. This would include trails master plans.

Grey County Administration Building

Kathie noted an update shared by Grey County housing staff on accessibility changes to the Grey County Administration Building:

1. Courtroom 1 in Provincial Offences will have an accessible door.
2. Council Chambers is accessible as the doors can be left open. The doors will automatically close if there is an alarm.

3. The Heritage Room at this point is not a possible site for an accessible door as it must remain fobbed by request of the health and safety committee.

4. It is possible to put an automatic door opener on one of the glass doors in the Valley room. These rooms are always open so there is no fob issue. There is an accessible washroom down the hall and this provides access to an accessible training room on either floor.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the follow up and felt the suggestions made sense.

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility: Training Webinar

Municipal accessibility advisory committee members and interested municipal staff are invited to participate in another webinar series. These webinars will talk about Design for Public Spaces Standards and review best practices regarding site planning for AAC members. Staff will forward the email from the Province to the Committee members regarding this great opportunity.

2019 Accessibility Compliance Report

The online report is now available for municipalities to complete.

Next Meeting Dates

The next meetings will be:

- June 24th in Southgate for a site visit;
- and at the call of the Chair in September.

On motion by Catherine and Christina, the meeting adjourned at 3:44 PM.

Dwight Burley, Chair