



Accessibility

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

Progress Report 2022

Received by Council April 17, 2023

Accessible formats and communications support available upon request.

Town of The Blue Mountains Commitment to Accessibility

The Town of The Blue Mountains (The Town) is committed to providing programming and services that consider the diverse needs and abilities of the people it serves. This 2022 Progress Report is the annual update on the progress of the measures taken to improve accessibility and implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

This Progress Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2022 to implement the strategies outlined in the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as adopted by Town of The Blue Mountains Council on September 30, 2019.

Reporting Requirements

The Town successfully submitted the 2021 Compliance Report as required by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. The next Compliance Report is due by December 31, 2023. A Desk Audit was conducted by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility on compliance progress to date and was submitted in January 2023. The Town was found to be in compliance.

Progress on the AODA Regulations

The following pages outline the Town's 2022 accomplishments in **Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces**.

There are also general requirements that apply across all accessibility standards.

General Requirements

Procurement:

- Accessibility is considered in all Town procurement.
- Accessibility and ergonomics are considered when purchasing new equipment or office furniture.

Training:

- All employees hired in 2022 have received comprehensive AODA Training.
- Job specific training is provided in accordance with the needs of each position (i.e., accessible document training).

Feedback:

The Town is committed to ensuring its goods or services are provided in an accessible manner. Feedback is welcomed as it may identify areas requiring change and encourage continuous service improvements. Feedback may be provided in person, in writing or electronically using our [Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form](#).

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

- Resources including “A Guide for Making Small Businesses Accessible” and the Government of Ontario’s Guide to Accessible Festivals and Events have been posted on the Town’s Accessibility page.
- An Evacuation Chair has been purchased and installed at Town Hall to assist persons with a mobility disability in evacuating the second floor in the event of an emergency. Refresher training is scheduled for 2023 for Staff on how to use the chair to assist in an emergency.
- All staff receive accessible customer service training as part of their new employee orientation.
- The Accessible Customer Service Policy has been reviewed and updates made to include a Statement of Commitment as required under the Customer Service Standard.
- Council selected internet and telephone voting as the methods of voting for the 2022 municipal election. Internet and telephone voting made voting more accessible for those unable to attend a voting location.
- Detailed information about each voting method was set out in the “Town of The Blue Mountains, Municipal Election Procedures for Use of Vote-Counting Equipment and Alternative Voting Method (Internet and Telephone)”, posted to the Town website, or available from the Clerk’s Office. This document was provided in an alternative format upon request.
- The Clerk prepared an accessibility plan for the election which outlined staff training to assist members of the public with disabilities with voting, providing election information in alternative formats, and assistance to electors. Curbside voting was available for electors with mobility issues, and staff at nursing and retirement homes that were locked down were trained to assist residents with voting.

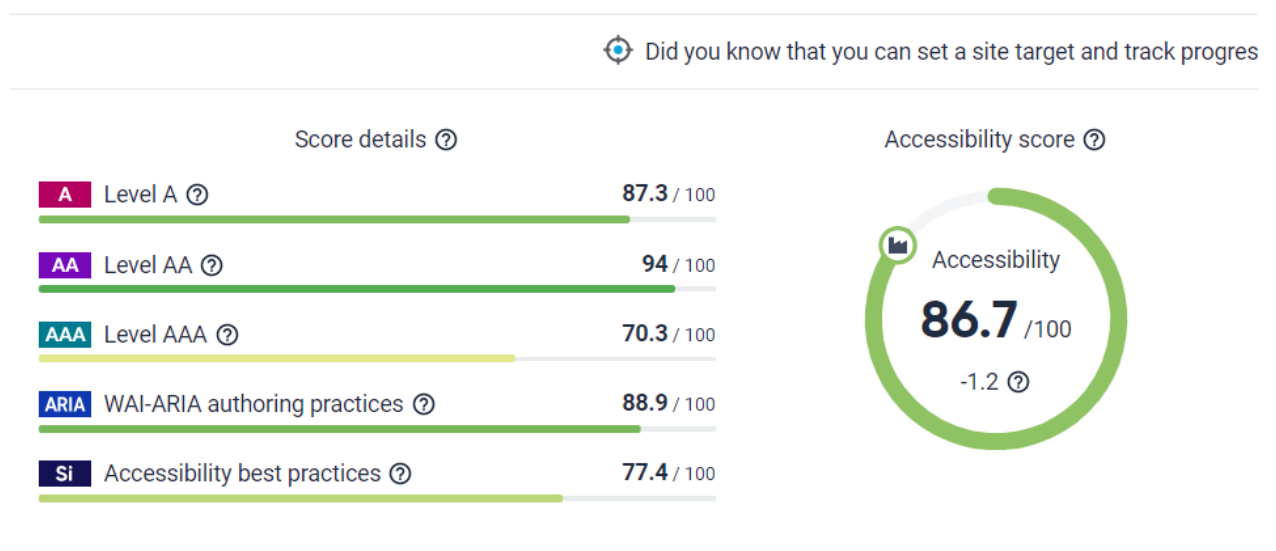
Information and Communications Standard

- Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are livestreamed, recorded and the video is posted to the Town website. Committees of Council Meetings are recorded, and

the videos are posted to the website. All livestreaming and video recordings have closed captioning available. There has been improved closed captioning for Council and Committee meetings.

- Revisions to Procedural By-law. Council has revised its Procedural By-law to allow any member of the public to participate virtually to provide verbal deputations and verbal public comments in response to a Public Meeting Notice.
- Website development staff continue to stay informed of WCAG regulations and attend training opportunities.
- The Town continuously strives to produce all digital media in a fully accessible format.
- Website Development – The Town developed a new municipal website that launched in 2021. As part of the development process, the website was designed and built according to WCAG 2.0 AA standards. To monitor and maintain accessibility on the website, the Town procured Siteimprove, which is an online tool used to review and evaluate the accessibility of the municipal website. The Town’s website team has worked diligently to improve the accessibility score within Siteimprove, which currently is 86.7/100. The industry benchmark for Government organizations in Siteimprove is 85.2/100.

Accessibility Overview



Employment Standard

- Human Resources continues to create individual emergency response plans for employees who have permanent or temporary accessibility needs.
- Each job posting includes, “In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) please advise the Human Resources Department to ensure your accessibility needs are accommodated throughout this process. Personal information provided by the applicants is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001 and will be used for the purpose of candidate selection.”

- All offers of employment include, “The Town has an accommodation process in place and provides accommodations for employees with disabilities. If you require a specific accommodation because of a disability or a medical need, please contact Human Resources so that arrangements can be made for the appropriate accommodations to be in place before you begin your employment.”
- Human Resources is continuing to review all job descriptions to ensure they are free of systemic barriers.
- Job Interviews for open positions and staff meetings have transitioned to a virtual/in person hybrid. For interviews, candidates are given the option to interview virtually or in person. This was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, provided the added benefit of improved accessibility for candidates and employees. Not only from increasing the accessibility for employees and candidates to participate more easily and safely, but also for those who may have a hearing impairment as an example and find it difficult to hear and participate in larger, in-person group meetings. Staff and candidates now have the option to choose whether in person or virtual is best for them, which allows for flexibility for disabilities.

Transportation Standard

- The Grey Transit Route (GTR) offers extended service from Owen Sound to Craigeleith. The GTR also provides accessible services upon request.
- The Blue Mountains and Collingwood Transit Link provides service from Collingwood to Craigeleith. Accessible service is available upon request.
- Collingwood is implementing a new specialized accessible service for transportation. This service will be an in-house service.
- Accessibility will be considered through the Town’s Transportation Master Plan process. The Transportation Master Plan has goals and objectives regarding accessibility, specifically for the design and operations of active transportation and public transportation.

Design of Public Spaces

2022 Projects included:

- Washroom enhancements at Little River Park. Work on the washrooms began in July 2022 and will be finished in 2023. The washrooms will be fully accessible.
- The Town received funding for a new pavilion and accessible washrooms at Moreau Park.
- The Town purchased mobility mats to provide accessible access to the waterfront at Little River Park.

2023 Projects will be determined through the budget process and will consider AODA compliancy.

Joint Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Town of The Blue Mountains is a member of the Grey County Joint Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. Grey County's Joint Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Grey County Council and staff members, as well as participating municipalities, on ways to identify, prevent, and remove barriers from municipal services, by-laws, policies, programs, and facilities.

Ongoing Review of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Ongoing review and feedback are important for the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility 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.

The Town's Accessibility Coordinator will continue to review the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan annually and prepare annual Progress Reports for review by the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Town of The Blue Mountains Council.