

Township of The Archipelago

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2026

Making our Community Accessible for All



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Township of The Archipelago Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2026

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.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 Township of The Archipelago's 2022-2026 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 Township of The Archipelago is committed to meet the obligations outlined in the amended regulation and will work towards incorporating these requirements into the Township of The Archipelago's Accessibility Plan.

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 Township will take during the coming year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. The measures that the Township 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 its acts/bylaws, 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 Township's website
- Provided in an accessible format upon request
- Reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The Township of The Archipelago has committed to a five year plan that is reviewed annually by staff.

2.0 Organization

The Township of The Archipelago is located in the District of Parry Sound and was created in 1980 with the amalgamation of the new municipalities of Georgian Bay South Archipelago and Georgian Bay North Archipelago. There is no senior level of municipal government in the District of Parry Sound.

The Township has a permanent population of 979 and a seasonal population of approximately 12,800.

The total land portion of the Township is approximately 85,000 hectares in size and the many bays, rivers, lakes and water channels which constitute such an important part of the Township cover an area about three times that size. In the Township there is one small settlement area, that being Pointe au Baril. All development undertaken in the Township is on the basis of private water supply and individual private septic tank systems.

2.1 Municipal Services

The Township of The Archipelago consists of the following departments: Administration; Finance; Operational Services; Development and Environmental Services and Corporate Services.

Municipal facilities considered in the plan are:

- Administration Building
- Operational Services Building
- Georgian Cliffs Memorial Park Cemetery
- Pointe au Baril Community Centre
- Pointe au Baril Nursing Station
- Pointe au Baril Wharf
- Pointe au Baril Lighthouse
- Holiday Cove Marina
- Site 9 Landfill
- Bayfield Waste Transfer Station
- Crane Lake Transfer Station
- Devil's Elbow Waste Transfer Station
- Healey Lake Transfer Station

3.0 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.

3.1 Barrier Identification Process

Barrier identification is through any process of methodology used to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Examples of a barrier identification process include review of documents and publications, conducting public meetings, surveys and/or audits, the use of customer feedback forms and other mechanisms.

3.2 Types of Disabilities

Barriers exist as a result of various forms of disability. In developing this Plan, the Township 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
- Intellectual
- Mental Health
- Learning
- Other – resulting from accidents, illnesses, and diseases

3.3 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:

Architectural Barriers:

- Includes building design, shape and dimensions of rooms, width of doorways, stairways, inaccessible bathrooms.

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 or 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 video, 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. 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 a 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.

4.0 Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The AODA's accessibility standards establish rules and timelines that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to effectively identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

Extensive work has been carried out to ensure that the Township was in compliance with the General Requirements and each of the Five Standards. The following are milestones that have been achieved up to the end of 2021:

4.1 General Requirement Successes

- Developed a multi-year accessibility plan outlining strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.
- Training on integrated standards and Human Rights Code rolled out to staff.

4.2 Custom Service Standard Successes

- Creation of a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which goods, services and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities.
- Implementation of accessible custom service procedures at Township transfer sites to allow residents that identify a mobility challenge to remain in their vehicle when disposing of waste and recycling materials.

4.3 Information and Communication Standard Successes

- Ongoing efforts to ensure that the Township website is accessible for persons with disabilities.

4.4 Employment Standard Successes

- Creation of Individual Accommodation Plan procedure to support employees who need temporary or permanent work accommodation.
- Township's recruitment process updated to provide accommodations for those with disabilities or whose disabilities increase over time.
- Acknowledgement statement on job applications updated to include statement of availability of accessibility accommodations in recruitment process.

4.5 Design of Public Spaces Standards Successes

- Installation of automatic door operators in the Pointe au Baril Community Centre.
- Installation of a ramp to the front access door at the Pointe au Baril Community Centre and completion of additional modifications to the building's side door access to create a shallower slope, in the event that alternative access is needed at the side of the building.

4.6 Transportation Standard Successes

This standard is not applicable, as the Township of The Archipelago does not provide transportation services.

5.0 Moving Forward: Strategies and Actions

The Township of The Archipelago continues to be proactive in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to ensure that everyone can participate fully in a diverse and growing community. By addressing barriers, people with disabilities will be able to maintain their dignity and live more independently in a community that supports them. The Township of The Archipelago 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aims to create a more inclusive community that people with all abilities can participate in.

5.1 General Requirement Goals

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to promoting accessibility across all operations by regularly reviewing policies, training staff, and ensuring services and facilities are inclusive. Efforts focus on fostering awareness, maintaining compliance, and providing accessible information and feedback opportunities to support an equitable community for all. This commitment guides efforts in the areas outlined below:

- Continue to monitor and update accessibility policies, as necessary.
- Continue to monitor and update the Archipelago's accessibility plan, as required.
- Continue to incorporate accessible design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities, unless it is not practical to do so.
- Train new employees on the requirements of the IASR and Human Rights Code, as it relates to people with disabilities.
- File an accessibility compliance report every two years.
- Promote accessibility awareness within the organization as well as all the communities we serve through education and awareness campaigns.
- Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.
- Post the Annual Status Report on website, if any, and provide the plan in an accessible format upon request.
- Ensure that the Township's feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing and arranging for the provision of accessible formatted and communication supports upon request.
- Develop policies on the provision of goods, services and facilities, that are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence and equality, make them available to the public, and provide them in an accessible format, upon request.
- Ensure ongoing compliance.

5.2 Custom Service Standard Goals

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to providing accessible and inclusive customer service that meets the diverse needs of all individuals. Barriers will be identified and removed to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to access services with dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. This commitment guides efforts in the areas outlined below:

- Create Accessible Customer Service Procedure to incorporate all requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- Procurement of library content in a variety of formats and increased digital content offered.
- Evaluate Township programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents and visitors with disabilities in Township operated programs and services.
- Provide notice whenever facilities or services used by people with disabilities are disrupted. Ensure that the notice clearly explains the reason for the disruption, the expected duration, and a description of alternative facilities, if available. Notices will be posted at the affected location, on the Township website, and shared through other key public communication channels.
- Ensure ongoing compliance.

5.3 Information and Communication Standard Goals

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to ensuring that all information and communications are accessible to everyone. Ongoing improvements to the Township website, public documents, and communication practices support the goal of ensuring that all residents and visitors can access the information they need in a format that works for them in a timely matter and at no extra cost. This commitment guides efforts in the areas outlined below:

- Create Accessible Information and Communications procedure to incorporate all requirements of the Information and Communications Standard.
- Create an accessible communications request procedure that outlines staff role in consulting with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format and ensure that accessible formats and communication supports will be provided to persons with disabilities (i) in a timely manner that considers the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and (ii) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Continue work to ensure that the Township website and web content meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA.
- Create a brand standards style guide defining standards and general practices for digital and print media will be created in conjunction with the update to the branding guidelines. The style guide will incorporate accessibility considerations including font, style, colour, contrast and use of language.
- Continue to ensure that any process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports.
- Ensure that the public is made aware that accessible formats and communication supports of physical assets (i.e. brochures, notices, posters) available at the Township office are also available in accessible formats upon request, and that this information is clearly and properly advertised at the municipal office.
- Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to accessible formats.
- Continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents.
- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats.
- Ensure ongoing compliance.

5.4 Employment Standard Goals

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible workplace where employees with disabilities are supported, valued, and able to fully participate. This commitment includes developing clear procedures, providing necessary accommodations, and ensuring all employees are informed about policies and supports. This commitment guides efforts in the areas outlined below:

- Create an Accessible Employment procedure.
- Update orientation materials to inform new employees of policies and procedures to support employees with disabilities during on-boarding and orientation.
- Continue the practice of preparing individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for Township employees with disabilities.
- Ensure ongoing compliance.

5.5 Design of Public Spaces Standards Goals

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to creating and maintaining public spaces that are accessible, safe, and welcoming for all residents and visitors, including persons with disabilities. This commitment includes regular maintenance, thoughtful design, and ongoing consultation to ensure public facilities and outdoor spaces meet or exceed accessibility standards. Efforts will continue to enhance accessibility features, promote inclusive use, and ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and best practices. This commitment guides efforts in the areas outlined below:

- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance of accessible elements.

- Complete an accessibility audit of Township owned facilities (i.e. Municipal Office, Pointe au Baril Community Centre, Pointe au Baril Cemetery, Holiday Cove, and Township transfer sites).
- Consult with persons with disabilities and the public during the 2023 Pointe au Baril Facilities Plan Project.
- Ensure public parking lots possess the minimum number and type of accessible parking spaces that meet the prescribed standards.
- Construct or redevelop public use eating areas that include minimum number of accessible tables and have a firm, stable and level surface.
- Outfit all public restrooms with brail signage to assist with persons with visual impairments.
- Install an accessible ramp at Holiday Cove Marina to allow employees and members of the public unimpeded access to the Marina office area.
- Install hand rails on public docks at Holiday Cove Marina and Pointe au Baril Wharf.
- Incorporate technical requirements in new construction or redevelopment plans, as prescribed.
- Ensure ongoing compliance.

5.6 Transportation Standard Goals

This standard is not applicable, as the Township of The Archipelago does not provide transportation services.

6.0 Conclusion

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides a path to a barrier-free Township of The Archipelago by reducing and eliminating barriers, making the Archipelago a municipality of choice, and one where persons of all abilities can actively participate and have a sense of belonging. Council, employees, and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the Township's behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the Township's goods, services, programs and facilities. Ensuring an accessible Archipelago will be a team effort.

7.0 Accessibility Plan Feedback

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to providing accessible customer service to all of our citizens. We welcome your comments and feedback regarding the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Assistance may be provided in an alternate format or necessary communications support.

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