

Report



Report No. CS2022-02	To: Council	Prepared By: Yvonne Aubichon
Meeting Date: January 26, 2022	Subject: 2021 Annual Accessibility Report	Motion # _____
Roll #:		R.M.S. File #:

Recommendation(s):	Requires Action <input type="checkbox"/>	For Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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It is recommended:

1. That Report No. CS2022-02, presented by Yvonne Aubichon, Clerk be received; and
2. That the Annual Accessibility Report be added to the Township website in accordance with Provincial Legislation.

Background:

Section 4(1) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), requires that municipalities establish, implement, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that is reviewed at least once every five (5) years. This plan is reviewed by the Township’s Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC), approved by Council and made available to the public.

The Township of Oro-Medonte’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was updated, reviewed by the JAAC and subsequently approved by Council in 2019. As part of the plan and consistent with legislation, there is a requirement to prepare an annual status report to be reviewed by the JAAC, received by Council and posted to the Township’s website.

Analysis:

The intent of the municipality’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to prevent, identify and remove barriers and obstacles that could impact individuals with disabilities from accessing services, facilities and information.

The Township’s Plan aligns with the standards identified within the Act; specifically:

- Customer Service,
- Information and Communications,
- Employment Accessibility and,

- Built Environment.

In addition, the plan also references the role of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC). The Township is represented on the JAAC through participation by a Ward Councillor and a resident. During 2020 and 2021, the Committee completed the following:

- Approved site plan review guidelines
- Implementation of the previously approved process, plan and checklist for the completion of accessibility facility reviews of County and Township owned and operated facilities.
- Review of the 2020 Work Plan, approval of the 2021 Work Plan, draft 2022 Work Plan
- Provided memorandums on the following Ministry Releases:
 - Ontario Establishes a New Framework to Continue Progress on Accessibility
 - Amendments to the Barrier-Free Design Section of the Ontario Building Code
 - New Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence and Roadmap to Wellness Plan
 - Ontario's Supports During COVID-19 Pandemic; and
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - Legislative Updates on Information and Communications Standards and Employment Standard,
- Despite the pandemic, the Committee pivoted in 2021 to continue accessibility reviews and/or virtual tours of the following locations:
Library facilities in the Township of Tay, 3 Public Parks in Adjala-Tosorontio and Administration Centre in the Township of Oro-Medonte and provided subsequent feedback regarding these presentations.
- The Committee reviewed site plans for various outdoor spaces throughout the County; such as, 400 Newton St, Victoria Harbour, Midhurst Subdivision Trails and Anten Mills Proposed Walking Trail.
- The Committee also made recommendations on items such as:
 - Bradford Ontario Works Office - Barrier Free Features; and
 - The Committee received and adopted Annual Accessibility Reports from the County and respective Township's

Unfortunately all other awareness activities were prohibited due to COVID-19 Restrictions.

The following is a summary of the achievements the Township has had with respect to the standards outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

Customer Service

The Customer Service Standard mandates that service providers must find ways to break down barriers that prevent customers with disabilities from accessing the services they need.

- As part of the Township's on-boarding process all new staff members including summer students, volunteer firefighters and Township volunteers were trained on the Integrated Accessibility Standards and the Township's Accessibility Policy. In 2020/2021 the Township updated the AODA training to include a recorded zoom meeting to allow for training to be completed by all employees prior to the commencement of their employment and to maintain training records in accordance with legislation.
- The Township implemented the issuance of electronic parking passes, facility bookings and various permits, providing enhanced accessibility for residents to municipal services.
- Implementation of Cloudpermit software solution for residents, builders, and the community. Cloudpermit is an online application system that allows an individual to apply and track their building or septic permit, make payments, request inspections and receive email updates on the building permit process. Cloudpermit was tested in December 2021 and scheduled to go live to public January 1, 2022. Cloudpermit allows an applicant to get up to date information on the status of their permit at a time and place convenient to them.
- An online payment method was implemented through PayPal; creating enhanced payment options for residents and visitors to access municipal services from any location.
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED's) have been installed at various locations within the Township and will be made available at other sites on a continued basis, availability of these units throughout the Township provides enhanced accessibility to these potential life-saving devices.

Information and Communications

This standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide and receive information and communications that are accessible for individuals with disabilities.

- The Township continued, in accordance with Township Accessibility Policy, to provide documentation in an accessible manner. Factors such as font size and style, colour contrast, spacing, use of white space, and use of formatting techniques such as bold, italics, underlining and capital letters are all components for consideration. We do provide our documents in alternative format and/or with communication support as requested.
- In 2021 the Township employed a staff member under the title of "Website Information Coordinator", whose responsibility is specific to, but not limited to,

website AODA compliance. This staff member has undertaken the responsibility of ensuring web content remains and continues to be uploaded and presented up to WCAG Level AA compliance. Processes have been implemented to ensure web compliance is consistently met, and is continuously improved during the lifespan of the website. Improvements are on-going through the processes of ensuring numerous standards are met, including but not limited to; colour contrast sufficiency, alternative text standards, hyperlink visibility, webpage hierarchy (heading levels), implementation of accessible imagery, and on-going webpage content monitoring.

- Regular Council Meetings continue to be livestreamed with videos posted to our YouTube Channel to ensure those who wish closed captioning have that capability. Livestreaming and video archives enables those who are unable to attend meetings in person to view the business of the corporation. With the onset of COVID 19 restrictions the Township extended its livestreaming capabilities to include Special Council Meetings and Development Services Meetings. In response to the 2020/2021 pandemic, the Township introduced electronic Council and Committee meetings and electronic meeting participation; thus providing greater accessibility opportunities for those wishing to participate in governance related matters.
- Electronic meetings were also extended to staff, interest groups, task forces, round tables, etc. providing greater options for residents with disabilities to participate and get involved in their community.

Employment Accessibility

This standard outlines requirements for organizations to remove barriers for individuals with disabilities regarding employment (recruitment, retention, performance etc).

- As part of our on-boarding process the Township continues to train all new staff members including summer students, volunteer firefighters and Township volunteers on the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Township's Accessibility Policy with respect to the availability of accommodation. The Township maintains training records in accordance with legislation and accommodation is addressed upon request.
- Continued digitization of files will eliminate the need for physical storage, enabling accessibility to all users.

Built Environment

This standard outlines the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for individuals with disabilities.

- In 2021 Braestone/Georgian International has substantially completed Starfall Park which was developed with input from the Township's previous accessibility advisory committee. The park was designed to reduce barriers to play and participation with integration being a key design element.

- In 2021 the Township initiated a Parks and Recreation Master Plan which will provide a 10-year plan for the provisions of parks, recreation, trails and associated facilities and programs. As part of the initial community engagement program a household survey was sent to all Oro-Medonte residents, surveys were completed by key stakeholder groups and a youth survey was also completed. The initial engagement program also consisted of a geo-spatial on-line crowdsourcing tool and feedback boards posted throughout the community. A key aspect will be reviewing all types of barriers to facilities, public spaces and program and the development of strategies to reduce and eliminate these barriers. As the plan advances specific consultation will take place with the JAAC. The plan will also look at developing specific master plans for the larger Township community parks.
- A facility review of the Administration Centre Building was conducted with JAAC on October 14, 2021. At the request of Committee a follow up staff report to the facility review is being presented to the Committee on January 20, 2022 (see Report CS2022-01).

Financial / Legal Implications / Risk Management:

These service level enhancements were approved through the 2021/2022 multi-year budget.

Policies/Legislation:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Corporate Strategic Goals:

- Foster Safe and Inclusive Community Living & Business Growth
- Modernize Township Services
 - Streamline Permitting Process
 - Digitize and Enhance Records Management System
 - Update the Township's Website
 - Improve Delivery Services

Consultations:

- Deputy CAO/Director, Development Services
- Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
- Director, Operations & Community Services
- Director, Human Resources

Attachments:

None

Conclusion:

Despite the many changes required to facilitate business continuity during the Pandemic, as outlined above, the JAAC in conjunction with the Township, remained committed to removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted:

Yvonne Aubichon, Clerk

Approvals:

Donna Hewitt, Director, Corporate Services

Andria Leigh, Deputy CAO/Director, Development Services

Date

January 12, 2022

January 13, 2022