



CORPORATE REPORT
The Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach
Meeting Date: 1/25/2024

DATE: 12/4/2023
SUBJECT: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Reports for 2023
CONTACT: Laura Borland, Deputy Clerk
REPORT NUMBER: 2024/01/25-01

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report titled: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Reports for 2023, to the Council meeting of January 25, 2024, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- **Note the summary and highlights of the report (key element, stats, etc.) Multi-Year Plan and Progress Reports provide the overall approach of how the Town is meeting the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation**
- **A Progress Report is mandated to be submitted to Council annually.**
- **All Operating Departments and staff have provided their progress in regards to Accessibility Accomplishments for 2023**

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, the Town's Accessibility Plan was adopted into a multi-year format, initially covering the years 2013 to 2017. The legislated Multi-Year Plan and Progress Reports provide the overall approach of how the Town is meeting the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). In December 2017, the Plan was updated with a new five (5) year Plan (2018-2022 which was then further updated for 2022-2026) to enable the Town to stay on track for meeting requirements, highlight achievements that have been made and make any adjustments needed to meet the timelines and requirements under the IASR. A Progress Report is mandated to be submitted to Council annually.

DISCUSSION:

As per the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, all Operating Departments and staff have provided their progress in regards to Accessibility Accomplishments for 2023.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) has been circulated a copy of these reports and has formally received them for information at their January committee meeting.

Attached, for information, is the Multi Year Accessibility Plan's 2022 Progress Reports. These reports will be added to the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Plan for information.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

No financial implications are associated with this annual report.

CONCLUSION:

As per the IASR, a Progress Report is mandated to be submitted to Council annually pertaining to the requirements under the Act. Staff are submitting this report to be received for information.

Authored by:

Laura Borland,
Deputy Clerk

Appendices:

Appendix A: 2023 Town of Wasaga Beach Annual Status Report – Accessibility Accomplishments



2023 Town of Wasaga Beach Annual Status Report - Accessibility Accomplishments

The Town of Wasaga Beach has established a multi-year accessibility plan to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and to meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

This Annual Status Report details the required annual update for 2023 on the progress of measures taken to improve accessibility. The purpose of this report is to track our organization's progress and make the public aware of our initiatives.

This report is available online at: <https://www.wasagabeach.com/en/services-and-payments/accessibility-services.aspx?mid=54252>.

To request an alternate format of this annual status report, please contact:
Laura Borland, Deputy Clerk
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Clerk/Administration/Records & FOI/Accessibility Committee Initiatives & Accomplishments

- Clerk provides support to the Wasaga Beach Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Accessibility Advisory Committee were involved in the following:
 - Multi Year Accessibility Plan & Progress Report review
 - Developing an accessibility public education program in the primary grade schools for sensitivity awareness (**postponed due to covid – hoping for 2024 return**)
 - AAC Chair is a standing member on the County of Simcoe Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Clerk's Department provides assistance to staff and the public on accessibility matters
- Using accessible font Arial and size 12pt on all templates for documents including staff reports, memos, letters, agendas, minutes, resolutions, by-laws
- Oversee the use of four mobi-chairs for residents and tourists. These floating wheelchairs allow users to easily transition from the beach to the water. They are available on a first-come basis at the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Office.
- Creation of Communication Cards to keep at Customer Service Counters to assist those with hearing impairments.
- Oversee, along with the Provincial Parks, the mobi-mats located at Beachfront.
- AAC Communication Board Program at Municipal Parks – installed Communication Boards for non-verbal individuals at all 13 municipal playgrounds

Human Resources and Training Initiatives

- Provide Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training as part of the orientation program for new employees, committee members, volunteers and elected officials

- Provide ergonomic information and assistance when required for staff
- Include a description of accessible opportunities in all job postings
- Offer accommodations to interview candidates
- Assist in workplace accommodations and disability management
- Review the Emergency Plan and Accommodation Form with all new hires and implement action plan as required

Information Technology and Communications Initiatives

- To enhance accessibility on our website, we have successfully integrated Monsido tools, empowering our staff to maintain our website's accessibility on a daily basis. Our current compliance level stands at 81.59%, with industry standards at 88.28%. We are dedicated to achieving and surpassing these standards by the end of 2023.
- In our commitment to inclusivity, we have introduced four hearing assistive devices for council meetings. With the recent installation of our advanced sound system in the council chambers, we now offer the public the option to utilize listening devices provided by us or to download a dedicated app on their personal devices for seamless listening.
- We are pleased to announce the launch of additional online payment services, including the creation of a centralized payment portal on our website. The "Virtual Town Hall" project is currently in its testing phase and is scheduled for public release by the end of 2024. This initiative will provide the public with a central platform for conveniently handling tax and water bill payments. Furthermore, we are committed to ongoing development and expansion of this service in the coming year and beyond.

Recreation and Facilities Initiatives

- Director of Recreation and Facilities provides assistance to Accessibility Advisory Committee as needed. A tour of the new Twinpad Arena and Library is planned for the AAC once the public opening date of the facility is announced.
- Annually painting sidewalk ramps blue so they are easily recognizable
- Rec Guide both spring/summer and fall/winter issues are formatted for text to audio (TTA) in the digital format
- Planning underway for accessible washroom upgrades on both floors of the town hall as well as utilizing grant funding to upgrade the elevator to be far more user friendly by the end of 2024.
- Paving projects for both the Food Trucks area surround the stage west of first street as well as access to the former Dome Site for new commercial tenants at the Town's beachfront properties were completed in the spring of 2023.

Public Works, Engineering, Roads and Parks Initiatives

Roads

- Undertook sidewalk improvements and replacement/repairs throughout Town to eliminate vertical sidewalk discontinuities (trip hazards >2cm)
- Installed an accessible concrete sidewalk ramp at the end of the sidewalk on Jenetta Street.
- Completed the asphalt widening on the west side of 39th Street South from Knox Road West to the south limit of Worsley Elementary School to incorporate a pedestrian walkway

- Completed the asphalt widening on the west side of 45th Street North from Shore Lane to the north limit of Beacon Restaurant property to incorporate a pedestrian walkway
- Constructed an accessible asphalt ramp at the north west quadrant of the intersection of Mosley Street and 45th Street to permit access to the pedestrian push button for the traffic signal
- Completed an asphalt sidewalk in the north boulevard of Mosley Street between the west limit of the Beacon Restaurant property to 47th Street North.
- Completed the asphalt widening on the north side of Mosley Street from 47th Street North to 58th Street North to incorporate a pedestrian walkway, and provided a landing area for accessibility to the pedestrian push button, at the signalized intersection of Mosley Street and 58th Street.
- Completed the asphalt resurfacing and roadway widening, to incorporate a pedestrian walkway, on Klondike Park Road from Judith Court to about 200 metres past Watson Avenue.

Engineering

- Completed the detail design of River Road West Urbanization (Veterans Way to Blueberry Trails), including integration of dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- Commenced construction of River Road West Urbanization in late fall of 2023 for the project to be substantially completed in 2025.
- Continued with the detail design for road improvements to Mosley Street between 45th Street and Beachwood Road, including an off-road multi-use trail on the south side for cyclists and pedestrians as well as sidewalk on the north side.
- Continued with the detail design for Beach Area One Roadways, including streetscaping, designated bike lanes/cycle track and boardwalk.
- Directed the developer to commission the pedestrian push buttons for crossing of River Road West at Village Gate Drive to facilitate crossing to the paved shoulder on the north side, providing pedestrian accommodation into Town.
- Completed Ramblewood Drive urbanization from 45th Street to 58th Street (Part B) including surface course asphalt and pavement markings to delineate new cycle lanes on both sides of the street as well as construction of concrete sidewalk on the north side for pedestrians.

Transit

- Strengthened fully accessible specialized transit system, in partnership with the Town of Collingwood and Clearview Township. Implemented mobile app and online booking to help riders and transit service provider with trip planning and tracking.
- Acquired an accessible van for TransitPLUS door-to-door specialized transit service.
- Launched pilot project for on-demand transit service, to expand service to unserved areas, on the east side of Town.
- Launched mobile app and online booking with on-demand transit service for riders to book their rides. Mobile app and online booking to help riders and transit service provider with trip planning and tracking. On-demand transit service aligns with Simcoe County LINX and neighbouring (municipal) transit systems.
- Awarding contract to install two (2) new transit shelters slated for late 2023.

Parks

- Completed trail resurfacing and access upgrades on the Carly Patterson Trail.
- Built six (6) accessible picnic tables.
- Installed accessible communication boards, at all thirteen (13) parks.

- Paved the accessibility ramp at Glendale Park Playground and Redberry Park.
- Nearing the completion of the new Playground project on River Road East, including accessibility features
- Completed the Oakview Woods Playground Redevelopment project, including accessibility enhancements

Planning

- The Planning and Building front counter is served by a lift access for those who have difficulty or are incapable of attending to the second floor of Town Hall via the public stairwell.
- When necessary and upon request staff will meet with members of the public on the ground floor at a desk in the lobby.
- Working with other Town Departments to implement the Goals of the Age Friendly Community Plan including measures to improve accessibility in Town infrastructure (sidewalks and trails), transportation, housing, healthcare, and other services.
- Circulate Site Plan Applications and Plans of Subdivision to the Accessibility Committee for review and comment on accessibility design.
- Ensure that new commercial, institutional, and industrial site plan proposals incorporates accessibility features into the design of the development.

Building Initiatives

- Administration and interpretation of the ongoing enhancements to the accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code so they are more understandable and accessible to our residents.
- Provide service enhancements such as serving residents on the main floor of Town Hall or at their place of residence when requested.
- Provide pre-construction meetings for accessibility upgrades at personal residences to ensure that construction of accessibility upgrades begins on the right path.
- Renovations on the second floor are now complete and the new accessible service counter is available to those who require it.
- Rolling out a new software platform that will allow our residents to access all of our services through an online portal, thus eliminating the need to attend Town Hall in order to attain a building permit.

Treasury Initiatives

- Continuing to provide Dog Licence, Parking Permits and other sales and services from the main floor Treasury Department counter to provide customers more accessible and efficient service.
- Maintaining e-billing and continuing with accepting online payments options. Expanded the online payments to be offered for the Recreational programming portal on BookKing. Implemented online payments through the Cityview Portal. In 2021 started to accept online bus pass purchases through Transit Portal. Developed online payment processing through Town website.
- Conducted a review of the customer service counter in Treasury with regards to the accessibility requirements and determined no changes were required.

- Assist residents and visitors with the lift in order that they can reach other departments within our building. Applied for accessibility grant (2nd application) to support installation of a new lift in 2022. Grant was approved in 2023. Spending to be completed in 2024.
- Included in 2023 budget are renovations to the Townhall washrooms to make them accessible washrooms. These renovations are expected to be completed in 2024.
- Assist customers by using Video Relay Services” (VRS) to provide them with information they require.
- Assist Roll Book users by finding the information they are looking for.
- Call staff from the By-law Department to come up stairs to provide customer service when needed.
- Continue providing notices and bills printed on white paper only.
- Assist customers by coming out from behind the counter or meeting with them at the seating area if easier for them.
- Implementation of Town Hall software going live in 2024 to provide residents access to online tax, and water and sewer account information.

By-Law Enforcement Initiatives

- Proactively patrolling/ enforcing all accessible parking spots to ensure valid permits are visible
- Should it be requested or if an individual is finding it challenging to use stairs to By-law Department, will speak with individual upstairs in hallway. Note: A desk and chair have been added to the bylaw office for customers to use while filling out paperwork or waiting to see officers.
- Additional accessible parking spaces have been added to Spruce Street parking lot (Beach 1) with new Signage.
- Taxi owners and operators signing off that they will not charge a higher fare or additional fee for persons with disabilities, or from charging a fee for the storage of mobility assistive devices.
- Continue to explore the option of providing more services online, including dog licensing (done), yard sale permits and business licensing applications.
- All administrative processes done in the Bylaw Department can be done online or by email (dog licensing, complaints, yard sale permits, first attendances, business license applications, etc.), and can now pay over the phone.
- New paid parking initiatives have accessible friendly payment options for on-street parking.
- 18 new parking machines installed while ensuring accessibility requirements are being met.
- The Department increased the promotion of HONK Mobile payments for all municipal parking lot to ensure online payment options to park in Wasaga Beach are accessible friendly.
- Additional accessible parking spaces have been added to Spruce Street (Beach 1) with new Signage to ensure street parking is available here.
- Rolling out a new software platform that will allow our residents to access all of our services through an online portal, thus eliminating the need to attend Town Hall in order to attain Bylaw related services.

Library Initiatives

- Launched on site Food Pantry to provide access to snacks / meals for individuals with limited access to nutrition;
- Took Bookmobile and library services to the Wasaga Beach Ministerial Foodbank to ensure vulnerable individuals had access to library services;

- Partnered with Empower Simcoe to offer on-site access to housing assistance for those who are housing insecure;
- Took Bookmobile to Simcoe County Housing on Zoo Park Road to offer library services and pop-up programming to more vulnerable citizens of Wasaga Beach;
- Reviewed library website navigation plan to improve information sharing on proposed new website to be launched in 2023; Website Launched November 2023
- Participated in Simcoe County #ITSTARTS campaign to promote acceptance and inclusion;
- Doubled up sessions to remove barriers to access for popular library programs;
- Offered library programs through online platforms to make participation accessible for residents from home; Continued to offer hybrid program options where possible after Covid restrictions lifted.
- Provided Books on Wheels collection deliveries monthly to members with disabilities, ailments or transportation limitations;
- Offered Wi-Fi hotspots to community members to provide all residents with access to the Internet;
- Offered free Wi-Fi, public computers, and tablets to individuals to provide equal access to technologies;
- Library staff completed Understanding Homelessness training to better support individuals with housing insecurity;
- Received second Daisy Reader to provide individuals with sight disabilities a user-friendly device for listening to books;
- Received an electronic magnifying device for individual with visual impairments;
- Provided curbside pick-up of collection materials for library members with limited mobility or COVID-19 concerns;
- Partnered with the *Centre for Equitable Library Access, CELA*, to provide accessible library service -- books and other materials to Canadians with print disabilities;
- Provided an assistive mobility device for visitors needing assistance;
- Supported Age Friendly Community Advisory Committee initiatives that address the needs of the older adult population, including the isolated.

Fire Department Initiatives

- Station 2 renovation completed in spring of 2023 which included improvements to meet current accessibility standards (i.e. doors, washroom etc).
- Upon request, assist individuals with installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their homes.
- Implement online version of the inquiry and citizen complaint form available on the town website.
- Ensure that all forms meet current accessibility standards.
- Provide accessible station tours for community members.
- Maintain communication assistance cards available on trucks and in the office.
- Partner with Accessibility Advisory Committee to complete a Thanksgiving food drive.