



## Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Council Report

**Report Number:** C 23-46

**Subject:** Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2023

**From:** Cathy Addison, Municipal Clerk, Acting Accessibility Coordinator

**Date:** December 11, 2023

**Recommendation:**

That Council receives Clerk Report No. 23-46, Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2023, as information.

**Background:**

The objective of the Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2023 is to feature some projects that the Municipality has undertaken in 2023 to improve accessibility by both removing and preventing barriers within our facilities, programs, and services. This is an annual report presented to Council each year. This report demonstrates the Municipality is working towards ensuring all accessibility requirements are implemented, where possible.

A copy of this report will be posted on the municipal website on the Accessibility webpage.

**Comments:**

Our Deputy Clerk is the Municipality's Accessibility Coordinator; however, the Clerk has this acting coordinator position, in the Deputy Clerk's absence. The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula's population is less than 10,000 residents; therefore, a committee doesn't have to be established. The coordinator provides advice and recommendations to Council following consultation with people who reside in our municipality or comments from the travelling public. All efforts are made with regards the removal of barriers that exist within Municipal services, practices, and programs. This report will outline some of the municipal projects completed in 2023.

## **Accessibility Projects in 2023:**

### **National Accessibility Week**

- Promoted National Accessibility Week was May 28 to June 3, 2023, and this was promoted through postings on the municipal website and Facebook page.

### **Website AODA Compliance**

- As outlined within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Information and Communications Standards section reflects that all internet, websites, and web content must follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA. These guidelines make websites more accessible for people who use computers differently because of their disabilities.
- Alt text on all pictures within the website
- All documents OCR (Optical character recognition) and searchable.
- The Municipal webpages were revised to help the public better navigate the website.

### **Audio/Video Council Meetings**

- With ongoing upgrades, the audio/video technology in the council chamber the livestreaming and meeting recordings, constantly improving. The technology upgrades and new software allows the public to watch Council meetings comfortably from their homes and view the meeting recordings later.
- Web-based meetings allow greater participation - regardless of ability.
- Telephone (call-in) option is available for meeting participants in addition to accepting written correspondence.

### **Information and Communications Accomplishments**

- Continued maintenance of social media platforms to ensure accessibility compliance;
- Continued improvements to closed captioning of streamed Council and Committee meetings;
- Increased use of online forms;
- Increased ability to complete applications online;
- Increased partnerships to bring internet services in hard-to-reach areas of the municipality;
- Purchase of new Electronic Document Records Management System Software (LaserFiche). Implementation continues to occur and assists with location of documents;
- Simplified language on applications and forms;
- Council municipal Bulletins in the Bruce Peninsula Press, monthly newsletters and Council Highlights, assist with keeping everyone involved in an accessible manner.

## **Lion's Head Community Centre/Arena Renovations**

- This project will ensure the renovations to the facility including relocating change rooms to the main floor and other accessibility updates.

## **H-R Downloads Training Requirements**

- Staff used the H-R downloads to complete regular, scheduled training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act which includes information on how to interact and support customers with disabilities.
- New Staff are trained on accessibility and customer service as soon as possible after hiring, to ensure that even their earliest interactions are grounded in providing accessible, respectful customer service to individuals with varying abilities.
- The Municipality continues to provide customers with a number of options to connect with staff or attend appointments either by phone, web conference, email or in person – to ensure that each member of the public, regardless of abilities has access to the services of the Municipality. Alternatively, members of the public are encouraged to contact the Municipality to request information or support in an alternate format.

## **Tobermory Community Centre Washroom Petitions, Kitchen Upgrades, and ramp into Tourist Information Centre**

- The public washrooms at the Community Centre received new accessible bathroom petitions for ease of access for users.
- The new kitchen at the Tobermory Community Centre was completed in November and the counters area was lower to assist persons with disabilities accessing the area. The aisles between the cupboards and appliances are accessible for persons using the aid of walkers and/or wheelchairs.
- The new accessible ramp into the tourist information entrance provides easy access to the facility.



**New portions for ease of access to washrooms at the Community Centre**



**New access ramp in the Tobermory Chamber office**



**A bright and accessible kitchen at the Tobermory Community Centre**



**A lower countertop at the serving window, accessible pulls on cupboard handles, lever faucet, improved lighting and wide aisles all assist people with a variety of disabilities, using the Tobermory Community Centre kitchen.**

#### **Purchase of Raised Workstations for Staff**

- Some staff are using raised workstations that assists with persons that are unable to sit for a long period of time.

#### **New Playground Equipment for Tobermory and Lion's Head**

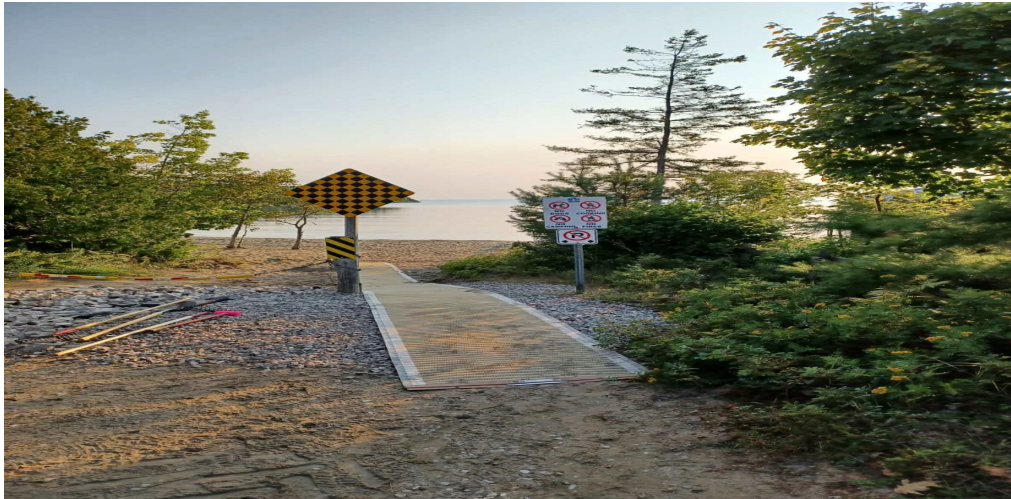
- New Playground equipment was installed at the School Bell Park in Tobermory and at the Lion's Head Beach Park, in November, 2023.
- The equipment has ground level accessible features for children with disabilities.



**New playground equipment at Lion's Head Beach Park**

## Dunks Bay Beach Mobi-Mat installation

- This past summer a mobi-mat was purchased and installed at the entrance to the Dunks Bay Beach area. The Mobi-mat assists with persons with mobile disabilities accessing the beach area.



**Dunks Bay Beach Mobi-mat**

**Recently replaced a section of sidewalk for Scott Street in Lion's Head**



## **Little Tub Harbour Accessible Ramps**

- There are three areas in Little Tub Harbour that provide stainless steel ramps to assist people with mobility disabilities to access the dock areas.



**Ramp at the boat launch area at Little Tub Harbour**

## **Filing of an Accessibility Compliance Report**

- As a public-sector organization, the Municipality is required to submit an Accessibility Compliance Report every other year. The report confirmed municipal compliance with the accessibility requirements under AODA and was approved by Council and submitted, in January 2023.

## **Initiatives Planned for 2024**

The Municipality is excited about the initiatives it has scheduled for 2024 and the ability to provide an even more inclusive, barrier-free community.

## **Consultations for the Lion's Head Arena Project or other Facilities**

- Staff will continue to work with the consultations to provide feedback regarding accessibility and the Lion's Head Arena project.
- Ensure new facilities and reconstruction are designed with accessibility features incorporated.

## **Employment**

- The Municipality will continue to welcome accommodations throughout the recruitment, selection process and employment life cycle.

## **Improvement to areas of sidewalks**

- Reduce the trip hazard for areas where paving stones have been used.
- Municipal Staff continue to assess sidewalk needs as replacements/new sidewalks are constructed and ensure they are compliant and easily navigable for members of the community.

## **Prepare for Accessibility requirements for the 2026 Municipal Elections**

- It seems early to be preparing for the 2026 municipal elections; however, work has already begun with Elections Ontario who will be managing the 2026 municipal voter's list.

## **Continue to consult people with various disabilities in the community**

- Staff will continue to consult people living in the community with disability, to improve accessibility throughout the municipality.

## **Complaints**

One (1) formal accessibility complaint was filed in 2023. This complaint was associated with the entrance to a private business in the Tobermory downtown area. The complaint was forwarded to the business owner, as the Municipality doesn't get involved with private business owners' accessibility requirements; however, service providers have a legal duty to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

In the end, accessibility is not just about meeting some guidelines. It's about making sure that everyone we provide services to feels supported. When we make our Municipality accessible to people with disabilities, everyone benefits.

## **Budget Implications:**

Funds required to meet accessibility standard requirements are allocated through the accessibility budget each year.



**Municipal Strategic Commitment:**

1. Creating a strong & resilient economy
2. Maintaining a transparent & responsible government
3. Supporting the sustainability of environment and infrastructure
4. Building a safe & vibrant community

Respectfully submitted:

Cathy Addison

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Cathy Addison  
Municipal Clerk

Approved by:

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Peggy Van Mierlo-West,  
Chief Administrative Officer