



Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-2026

This document is available in an alternative format upon request.

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Introduction

In 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed by the Government of Ontario to expand on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) that was passed in 2001. The Human Rights Code promotes and protects the rights of people with disabilities to be free from discrimination. These Acts and Code outline accessibility standards focused on dignity, integration, independence and equal opportunity for all Ontarians.

The AODA identifies various approaches for businesses, governments, and organizations to remove barriers to accessibility. The development of a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is one aspect of complying with the AODA and acts as valuable resource in identifying and removing barriers to accessibility within the Municipality. In addition, the Municipality's Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy establishes requirements for the Municipality in the areas of Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service.

The AODA defines a disability as follows:

“(a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

(c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

(d) a mental disorder, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”).

Barriers to Accessibility

The AODA and accessibility plans aim to remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing services, facilities, and information. Barriers to accessibility can be described as anything that prevents an individual from participating in aspects of society based on their disability. Barriers can be organized into five types:

Environmental Barriers

Physical barriers within buildings or outdoor spaces that restrict or limit physical access for people with disabilities.

To prevent environmental barriers:

- Design accessible spaces including entryways and exits from buildings, parking, customer service counters, meeting spaces, and washrooms.

Communication Barriers

Lack of consideration for people with disabilities when sending or receiving information.

To prevent communication barriers:

- Use clear and simple language
- Create accessible documents when presenting to the public
- Use clear and large fonts
- Use closed captions when posting videos
- Place signage that is easy to read with contrasting colours
- Make meetings organized and easy to understand

Attitudinal Barriers

Judgements, assumptions, and perceptions that discriminate against people with disabilities. Attitudinal barriers are often related to lack of knowledge or understanding.

To prevent attitudinal barriers:

- Avoid making assumptions
- Encourage the public to submit feedback on accessibility concerns
- Educate the public by posting information relating to accessibility on the website and Facebook page (promote National Accessibility Week)

Technological Barriers

When technology cannot be or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software.

To prevent technological barriers:

- Ensure the municipal website is compliant with current accessibility laws and standards
- Ensure website content and attachments can be read using a screen-reader

Systemic Barriers

Policies, procedures, or practices established by an organization that limits people with disabilities from participating and does not consider accessibility.

To prevent systemic barriers:

- Advertise a an accessible recruitment process that encourages applications from people with disabilities where accommodations are available upon request
- Support community groups that consider accessibility and are removing barriers
- Offer Individualized Employee Accommodation Plans

Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula's Commitment

The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula (the Municipality) is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Municipality is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to non-discrimination. The Municipality is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

One of the major roles of municipalities is to plan and develop our communities in the areas of roads, parks, transportation, housing, libraries, recreation, emergency services, facilities, elections, and more. Included within this role is enforcing barrier-free access requirements under the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and ensuring that new development incorporates accessible features that can be used by future generations.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview

The creation of a Municipal Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a requirement under the AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (ISAR). The purpose of the plan is to act as an organizational strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and enact requirements within the standards. In addition, the Plan highlights key priorities that are important to Northern Bruce Peninsula residents and was developed in consultation with the public as their opinions are valuable. The Plan must be reviewed and updated every five years. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a guiding document and certain goals or priorities are subject to change.

The five standards of the ISAR are:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Design of Public Spaces
- Transportation

The five ISAR standards have been incorporated into this Plan.

Overview of 2017-2021 Accessibility Achievements

There are several achievements to recognize from 2017-2021 with respect to improving accessibility in Northern Bruce Peninsula. Achievements include removing barriers and creating more inclusive communities. A comprehensive list of achievements are identified within our annual Accessibility Status Reports.

2017 Achievements

Accessible Fire Rating Sign Installed on Highway 6

- A sign with larger font and contrasting colours was installed for better visibility.

Placement of Additional Accessible Picnic Tables

- Accessible picnic tables were placed at various locations.

Renovations to Bruce Peninsula Family Centre

- Accessible taps, sinks, and a lower countertop were installed.

2018 Achievements

Launch of New Municipal Website

- The new municipal website was designed to promote a user-friendly experience with a fresh and modern layout.

Renovations to Front Entrance/Reception Area at Municipal Office

- Installation of accessible desks, work stations, automatic door openers, signage, and building entrance/reception area.

Development of the 2018 Election Accessibility Plan

- Internet and telephone voting methods were utilized for the 2018 election eliminating travel barriers.

Purchase of a Second Mobi-mat

- A second mobi-mat was purchased to allow water/beach access to enhance mobility and access at beaches/parks.

2019 Achievements

Accessible Sidewalk at School Bell Park

- An accessible sidewalk was extended into the School Bell Park in Tobermory for easier access to accessible swings and playground equipment.

Accessible Bucket Swings

- Two accessible bucket swings were installed at Lion's Head Beach Park and School Bell Park in Tobermory for older children.

Tobermory Concession Stand Washrooms

- Bathroom renovations were completed at the Tobermory Concession Stand washrooms to improve access.

Service Animal Signage

- Signage for “Service Animals Only” was purchased and installed.

Online Burn Permits

- Burn permits transitioned to an online system for where the public can easily obtain a burn permit by creating an account and renewing annually.

2020 Achievements

HR Downloads Online Training

- Provides AODA and other accessibility training to Municipal employees.

Accessibility Requirements for Site Plan Control Agreements

- The Clerk has mandated that accessibility requirements be considered when preparing new Site Plan Control Agreements, such as the need for accessible parking spaces.

New Accessible Customer Service Window and Wall in Front Office Space

- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the need to adapt to new service delivery processes. The accessible customer service window in the Municipal Office allows everyone to access a receptionist while protecting the public and municipal staff.
- A wall was constructed in the front office space of the Municipal Office that eliminated a trip hazard while creating more useable space for staff.

Accessibility Audit

- Successful completion of AODA Desk Audit.

2021 Achievements

National Accessibility Week

- Promoted National Accessibility Week through postings on the municipal website and Facebook Page (May 30-June 5, 2021).

Website AODA Compliance

- As outlined within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Information and Communications Standards section reflects that “by January 1, 2021, all internet, websites, and web content must comply with 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.”
- Webpages within the municipal website are AODA compliant. All webpages were scanned by our website provider to detect any noncompliance and all necessary changes were completed. Staff detected some accessibility non-compliance within third-party documents posted on the website, therefore all third-party non-compliant documents were removed and replaced with website links (all non-compliant third-party documents must be removed to comply with new

regulations). Links to third-party websites are permitted despite whether the linked website is accessible.

- Staff compiled a list of all attached documents within the website and updated municipal documents to meet the new accessibility requirements.
- An accessible template for Council reports was created and staff are encouraged to scan finished reports through the accessibility checker on Word prior to approval.
- Staff began working on creating accessible fillable forms through Adobe Acrobat and are building fillable forms into the website that are submitted online.

News V3 Module

- An improved V3 News Module was configured into the Municipal website that allows the public to subscribe to Municipal News and receive clear communications.

Facebook Page

- The Municipality created a Facebook page as another communication channel.

Audio/Video Council Meetings

- Staff began live streaming Council meetings on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricting public gatherings. To improve transparency and participation, Council approved the implementation of audio/video technology in the council chamber including livestreaming and meeting recordings. The technology upgrades and new software allow the public to watch Council meetings comfortably from their homes and view the meeting recordings at a later date/time. Closed captions will be added to meetings.

Accessibility Policy

- Policy/By-law No. 2021-27 Integrated Accessibility Standards was passed on April 26, 2021 including several schedules: Accessible Meeting and Event Guidelines, Employee Individual Accommodation Plan, Emergency Response Plan and Individualized Emergency Response Plan Form, Disruption in Service Notification, Customer Service Feedback Form, and Record of Customer Feedback Form.

Internet/Telephone Voting Approved for the 2022 Municipal Election

- Council approved internet/telephone voting for the 2022 Municipal Election allowing all electors to vote safely and comfortably from their homes. Voter help centre(s) will be available for people who require assistance casting their ballot.

Online Harbour Applications and Campground Bookings

- Harbour applications and Lion's Head Beach Park Campground bookings can be completed through the Municipal website.

Funding Received for Lion's Head Community Centre/Arena Renovations

- Provincial funding was received to renovate the facility including relocating change rooms to the main floor and other accessibility updates.

Agreement with Celtic Sports and Arts Centre. Inc. for the Provision of Shuttle Services within the Village of Lion's Head

- The public/private partnership allows the company to operate a shuttle bus around Lion's Head while offering free transportation to seniors and children under 5 years of age. The shuttle bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift/ramp.

Training for all Municipal Office Staff on Accessible Documents

- Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat Professional Accessibility Training (online) was completed by municipal staff. Staff greatly benefited from training on how to create and remediate accessible documents in Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat programs. This training will ensure that accessible documents are being created across all departments.

Tobermory Community Centre Door

- Installed an outward facing door at the Tobermory Community Centre serving as a separate entrance to the Information Centre.

Purchase of Ergonomic Office Chairs

- Ergonomic office chairs were purchased for some office staff that will assist in better sitting posture and any accessibility needs.

2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

What we heard

The following sections provide an overview of what we heard from the community through the public survey posted on [Let's Talk NBP](#) (Bang the Table), the Municipality's community engagement platform. Some of the feedback received relates to planned accessibility initiatives, which confirms that these priorities are responsive to the priorities of the community. Some comments were not within the scope of the Municipality and these comments were shared with the appropriate organizations/authorities (such as private operators or groups).

Customer Service

This includes but is not limited to recreational programs and services, customer service provided at harbour offices, the Lion's Head Beach Park Campground, Municipal Office, community centres, and Lion's Head Arena.

Public Comments:

- Good online application forms on the municipal website
- Permanently allow online participation in Council and Committee meetings
- Implement flexible meeting times for Council and Committee meetings with no penalization for missed meetings
- Excellent customer service from staff at the Lion's Head Marina

2022-2026 Goals:

- Ensure new staff, council, and committee members receive accessible customer service training through HR Downloads
- Continue the use of fillable applications forms on the website
- Investigate and implement new software and programming to improve and simplify customer service, such as online parking pass registration

Information and Communications

This includes but is not limited to technology and signage, the Municipal website, the Municipal Facebook page, printed materials and other Municipal correspondence, water and property tax billing, charts and maps, and public meetings, consultations and events.

Public Comments:

- Install clearer paid parking signage
- Place paper copy surveys in well-used facilities, such as the bank, pharmacy, grocery store, etc.
- Facilitate in person meetings between Council, staff and the public (seniors) to gather input
- Council Meeting Highlights provide a good summary of Council meetings
- Continue publishing Council minutes in the Bruce Peninsula Press newspaper
- Reorganize the website for easier access to join online Council meetings
- Better publicize Let's Talk NBP, the Municipality's online engagement tool

2022-2026 Goals:

- Ensure paid parking areas are well signed
- Offer paper copies of surveys and documents to the public upon request
- Continue holding public meetings to gather feedback on important Council decisions (virtually and/or in person)
- Continue writing and posting Council Meeting Highlights and publishing minutes in the Bruce Peninsula Press
- Continue updating the municipal website and reorganizing information to improve accessibility
- Continue using the municipal Facebook page to share important municipal information and communications

Employment

This includes but is not limited to opportunities for employment and volunteering with the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula, including our online application submission form on the Municipal website and job postings.

Public Comments:

- Accept in person/hard copy employment applications
- Consider organizing a volunteer job fair in the Municipality
- Continue updating policies and procedures

2022-2026 Goals:

- Continue advertising that the Municipality is an equal opportunity employer committed to an inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection process and welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. Accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.
- Encourage employment opportunities, economic development, local businesses and growth
- Support and promote local job fairs
- Update employment policies and procedures as required

Design of Public Spaces

This includes but is not limited to Municipal facilities, sidewalks, pathways and roads, and Municipally-owned parks.

Public Comments:

- Avoid interlocking pathways
- Improve grading along Main Street and Webster Street
- Construct shoulders into roads in Lion's Head for people using walkers and wheelchairs
- Design spaces for residents rather than focusing on tourism
- Improve and construct additional cycling paths
- Encourage local businesses to provide accessible main entrances
- Improve accessibility in Tobermory and Lion's Head: issues with narrow sidewalks, dangerous curbs, steps to access restaurants and stores, and narrow aisles
- Great boardwalk by the Tobermory Harbour
- Construct an accessible washroom at the Lion's Head Harbour
- Construct more wheelchair friendly sidewalks
- Improve access/egress from the road to the Golden Dawn (bad slope)
- Install more accessible washrooms for wheelchair users
- Promote wheelchair friendly retail environments
- Amalgamate Lion's Head Marina single sex washrooms into one accessible facility for all users
- Place an accessible dock at the Lion's Head Marina

2022-2026 Goals:

- Completion of the Lion's Head sidewalk construction project including the installation of 659 metres of sidewalks and repair of some poured concrete curbs throughout the Village of Lion's Head; sidewalks will be wheelchair, walker, and stroller accessible
- Place at least one accessible portable washroom in locations where portable washrooms are located and ensure new/renovated washroom facilities incorporate accessible washrooms
- Consider installing an accessible kayak launch and/or accessible dock at the Lion's Head and/or Tobermory Harbour and investigate funding opportunities
- Place accessible picnic tables in public parks and areas within the Municipality
- Encourage accessible retail spaces
- Install communication boards at the Lion's Head Beach Park and downtown Tobermory area
- Completion of Lion's Head Community Centre/Arena renovations incorporating accessible features and designs in accordance with AODA and Ontario Building Code (OBC) regulations

Transportation

This includes but is not limited to accessible parking at Municipal facilities and private transportation companies operating within the Municipality.

Public Comments:

- Increase the number of accessible parking spaces based on the high senior population
- Doing well providing resident parking passes
- Provide resident transportation to connect to existing transportation systems south of the Municipality
- Ensure accessible parking spaces are properly sized and situated to safely access sidewalks/pathways safely
- Increase accessible parking in Dyers Bay, Tobermory, and Lion's Head

2022-2026 Goals:

- Investigate new accessible transportation opportunities and support accessible private transportation initiatives
- Ensure ample accessible parking in new parking lots and facilities
- Attempt to increase accessible parking spaces in existing parking areas when reviewing parking designs

Consultation

Under the AODA, the Municipality is required to consult with individuals and people with disabilities. The Municipality is committed to working with members of the community and visitors to ensure legislation is met and the Municipality is accessible.

A survey was created as outlined within Appendix A to gather feedback regarding accessibility in the Municipality relating to the five Integrated Accessibility Standards.

The survey was advertised in the local Bruce Peninsula Press newspaper, municipal Facebook page, municipal website, and emailed to community groups. The survey acted as a valuable tool to receive clear comments and recommendations for improvements. A print copy of the survey and alternate formats were available upon request at the Municipal Office.

General

Accessibility Policy

The Municipality's Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy establishes requirements for the Municipality in the areas of Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service. The policy is posted on the municipal website and available in alternate formats upon request. The policy outlines the Municipality's commitment to accessible procurement, reporting, and training.

Feedback and Contact Information

The Municipality encourages feedback from the public regarding accessibility including suggestions on how to improve services and ideas on new initiatives.

Copies of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the most recent annual status and compliance reports are available on the municipal website. To provide feedback or request a document in an alternative format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at deputyclerk@northernbruce.ca or (519) 793-3522 X229.

Appendix A: Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Consultation Survey

We need your help to make Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula services, programs, and buildings more accessible for people with disabilities!

The purpose of this survey is to record your experiences with Municipal services, programs, and facilities, as we create the next Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Accessibility Plan as part of our commitment to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The answers you provide today will help inform the Municipality of gaps and barriers that currently exist for people with disabilities and provide us with ideas on how to reduce and/or eliminate existing barriers.

For accessible survey formats or communications supports (paper, large font, etc.), please contact deputyclerk@northernbruce.ca or 519-793-3522 X229.

1. Customer Service- This includes but is not limited to recreational programs and services, customer service provided at harbour offices, the Lion's Head Beach Park Campground, Municipal Office, community centres, and Lion's Head Arena.

- a) What is the Municipality doing well in this area?
- b) What barriers do you, your clients, family members or friends face in this area?
- c) What could be done to improve accessibility in this area? (Please rank your ideas by importance, with 1 being the most important)

2. Information and Communications- This includes but is not limited to technology and signage, the Municipal website, the Municipal Facebook page, printed materials and other Municipal correspondence, water and property tax billing, charts and maps, and public meetings, consultations, and events.

- a) What is the Municipality doing well in this area?
- b) What barriers do you, your clients, family members or friends face in this area?
- c) What could be done to improve accessibility in this area? (Please rank your ideas by importance, with 1 being the most important)

3. Employment- This includes but is not limited to opportunities for employment and volunteering with the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula, including our online application submission form on the Municipal website.

- a) What is the Municipality doing well in this area?
- b) What barriers do you, your clients, family members or friends face in this area?

- c) What could be done to improve accessibility in this area? (Please rank your ideas by importance, with 1 being the most important)

4. Design of Public Spaces - This includes but is not limited to Municipal facilities, sidewalks, pathways and roads, and municipally owned parks.

- a) What is the Municipality doing well in this area?
- b) What barriers do you, your clients, family members or friends face in this area?
- c) What could be done to improve accessibility in this area? (Please rank your ideas by importance, with 1 being the most important)

5. Transportation- This includes but is not limited to accessible parking at Municipal facilities and private transportation companies operating within the Municipality.

- a) What is the Municipality doing well in this area?
- b) What barriers do you, your clients, family members or friends face in this area?
- c) What could be done to improve accessibility in this area? (Please rank your ideas by importance, with 1 being the most important)

You can request accessible formats of Municipal public documents and we welcome your comments on the accessibility of our services, programs and facilities through the following channels:

- by phone at (519) 793-3522 X 229
- by email at deputyclerk@northernbruce.ca
- in person at the Municipal Office (56 Lindsay Road 5, Lion's Head, ON, N0H 1W0)

Appendix B: Photographs of Accessibility Initiatives



Accessible desks in the renovated front office area at the Municipal Office



Accessible entryway to the front office area at the Municipal Office with automatic door openers



New front doors with automatic door openers at the Municipal Office



Accessible bucket swing at the Lion's Head Beach Park



Accessible bucket swing and extended accessible sidewalk at the School Bell Park in Tobermory



Communication board example, communication boards are scheduled for installation in 2022 at the Lion's Head Beach Park and downtown Tobermory area



Accessible reception counter at the Municipal Office