



Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Council Report

Report Number: DC 22-01

Subject: Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2021

From: Tessa Swanton, Deputy Clerk/Accessibility Coordinator

Date: January 24, 2022

Recommendation:

That Council receives Deputy Clerk Report No. 22-01, Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2021, as information.

Background:

The purpose of the Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2021 is to highlight some projects that the Municipality has undertaken in 2021 to improve accessibility by both removing and preventing barriers within our facilities, programs, and services.

A copy of this report will be posted on the municipal website on the [Accessibility webpage](#).

To request this report in an alternative format, please contact Tessa Swanton, Deputy Clerk, at deputyclerk@northernbruce.ca or (519) 793-3522 X239.

Comments:

Accessibility Projects in 2021

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 municipal communications.

Facebook Page

- The Municipality created a Facebook page as another communication channel. As of January 12, 2022 the Facebook page has 620 followers with an even broader audience viewing municipal posts when they are shared by viewers.

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 allows the public to watch Council meetings comfortably from their homes and view the meeting recordings at a later date/time (recordings will begin once the new server has been installed and WIFI is stable). Live closed captions will be added to Council meetings as an accessibility feature and this cost has been included within the 2022 Accessibility Budget. The technology upgrades included some accessible hearing devices from Listen Technologies. This hearing device amplifies audio and is a highly

reviewed convenient and reliable assistive listening device. The listening devices will be made available to in person meeting attendees upon request. A sign will be posted in the council chamber to advertise that the listening devices are available.

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. A Voter Help Centre will be available for people who require assistance casting their ballot.

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.

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.

Passage of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2026

- Council approved the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2026 that includes information regarding barriers to accessibility, MNBP's strategic commitment, 2017-2021 accessibility achievements, feedback from the public on the 2022-2026 Plan, public consultation survey, and photographs of accessibility initiatives.

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 in 2021.

New Accessible Customer Service Window and Wall in Front Office Space

- The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges and resulted in the need to adapt how we conduct daily municipal operations. The new accessible customer service window in the Municipal Office will allow everyone to access a receptionist while protecting staff and members of the public.
- The customer service window complies with accessible service requirements as outlined within the Design of Public Spaces Standard, AODA and the Ontario Building Code (OBC). There is an accessible route to the customer service window which is greater than the preferred minimum width of 1830 mm (72 in.). The height from the finished floor to the top of the counter falls within the height requirement of between 710 mm (28 in.) and 865 mm (34 in.). The clear knee space requirement measurement (enough room under the counter for the knees of a person sitting in a wheelchair) complies with accessible design requirements. The accessible customer service window has been clearly identified with signage. The counter surface width meets the minimum width of 920 mm (36 inc.).



Initiatives Planned for 2022

Online Campground Bookings

- The new Lion's Head Beach Park Campground booking portal went live on January 19, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. This accessible portal allows people to book their campsite online, eliminating the need for speaking on the telephone or sending

an email. The program is compatible with various accessibility devices. Staff will assist people with bookings over the telephone and via email upon request.

Communication Boards

- On September 27, 2021 Council approved the installation of communication boards throughout the Municipality. The communication boards are being donated by Families for Autism Grey Bruce. Currently, the boards are in the design phase and will be installed in the spring of 2021 in various locations, such as the Lion's Head Beach Park, Tobermory School Bell Park, Tobermory Community Centre, and downtown Tobermory area. Communication boards allow people with disabilities and diverse communicators to communicate their own feelings and decisions with their peers. The boards can assist non-verbal children and adults, as well as adults living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Election Accessibility Plan 2022

- Section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act requires that the clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. The Plan will include information on staff training, election information, notice of temporary service disruption, staff assistance, assistance to electors, help centre, internet voting, telephone voting, assistance to candidates, and feedback.

Consultations for the Lion's Head Arena Project

- January 2022 consultations have resulted in some insightful feedback regarding accessibility and the Lion's Head Arena project. Some recommendations include desks and reception areas within the library area being designed at an appropriate height for children and people using a wheelchair; and purchasing equipment that promotes inclusivity for everyone using the ice surface, such as sledges, sticks, a telescopic delivery stick and a sport chair.

Live Closed Captions for Council Meetings

- The Municipality's online meeting software, iCompass, offers a new feature for live closed captions for meetings that are live streamed with their Video Manager HD program. Once meetings are live streamed and recorded using the software, live closed captioning can be implemented where text is generated automatically and can be edited prior to publishing. Closed captioning improves comprehension and retention of media content for all viewers. This cost has been included within the 2022 Accessibility Budget for Council's consideration.

Accessible Picnic Tables

- Accessible picnic tables are proposed for several parks and facilities throughout the Municipality. Following a delegation from Launch Pad, staff contacted the organization for pricing. Costs are estimated around \$375.00 per accessible

picnic table. The tables will be constructed by youth in the Hanover area who are looking to enhance their skills. This project has been allocated for consideration in the 2022 Accessibility Budget.

Complaints

One formal accessibility complaint was filed in 2021. This complaint was associated with the entrance to a private business in a downtown area. A formal letter was sent to the business owner outlining the complaint and municipal staff worked with the business owner to remediate the front entrance of their building and make the entryway more accessible for people with disabilities.

Attachments:

Nil

Budget Implications:

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

Municipal Strategic Commitment:

- Well managed and fiscally responsible municipal government is enhanced
- Health, safety, and education of the community are enhanced
- Citizen involvement is enhanced
- Economic development strategies are enhanced
- The option(s) recommended creates value across all strategic priorities
- The option(s) recommended makes Northern Bruce Peninsula a municipality of choice for high performance public servants

Respectfully submitted:

Tessa Swanton

Tessa Swanton,
Deputy Clerk

Approved by:

Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Peggy Van Mierlo-West,
Chief Administrative Officer