



Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Council Report

Report Number: C 23-10

Subject: Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2022

From: Cathy Addison – Municipal Clerk – Acting Accessibility Coordinator

Date: March 13, 2023

Recommendation:

That Council receives Clerk Report No. 23-10, Accessibility Annual Status Report for 2022, as information.

Background:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law in 2005. Under the Act, organizations must meet accessibility requirements in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, and the design of public spaces, with staggered compliance dates.

This Accessibility Annual Status Report is the annual update that the Municipality of Northern Bruce provides on the measures taken in improving accessibility and implementing the AODA. This report highlights strategies and actions approved by Council to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services and facilities.

Due to our population, the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula is not required to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Hence the Deputy Clerk is appointed as the Accessibility Coordinator and due to the current mat leave, the Clerk is in an acting role.

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

Comments:

In 2021, the COVID-19 global pandemic continued to impact Municipality operations and services. As such, some of the facilities had to modify or cancel some services and

programs while supporting the needs of people with disabilities during the second year of the pandemic. The front entrance area was modified in 2021 to allow residents and visitor just to access the entrance area. This was continued in 2022 and the area is fully accessible for persons with disabilities. This also ensured staff was further protected from the spread of COVID too.

MNBP is required to provide training on the IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code to all employees, volunteers and persons who participate in developing municipal policies, or who provide services or goods on behalf of MNBP. This training is provided through HR Downloads and a record of the training is kept on file.

Accessibility Projects that were undertaken in 2022, consisted of the following:

National Accessibility Week

- Promoted National Accessibility Week through postings on the municipal website and Facebook Page (May 29-June 4, 2022).



Website

- Funds have been allocated in the 2023 budget to update the current website and make more user friendly. This will assist easier navigation tools for persons with 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 have created accessible fillable forms through Adobe Acrobat and are building fillable forms into the website that are submitted online.

Facebook Page

- The Municipality created a Facebook page as another communication channel. As of March 1, 2023, the Facebook page has **891** followers with an even broader audience viewing municipal posts when they are shared by viewers.

Audio/Video Council Meetings

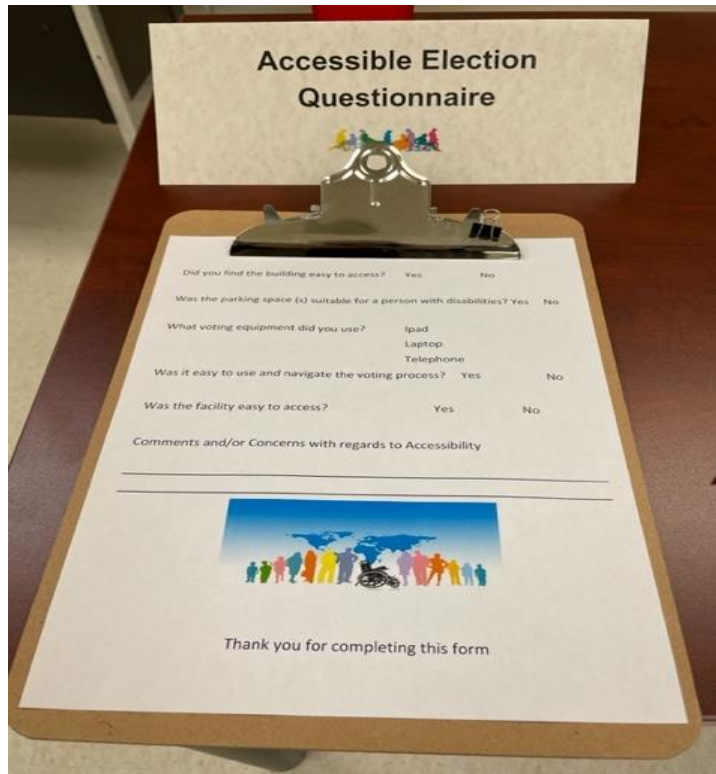
- Staff began live streaming Council meetings on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricting public gatherings. To improve transparency and participation, Council approved the implementation of audio/video technology in the council chamber including livestreaming. The technology upgrades and new software allows the public to watch Council meetings comfortably from their homes and view the meeting recordings at a later date/time. The new fiber was installed in late 2022 which has greatly improved the continuity. Recording will begin in late winter of 2023.

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 was setup and was available for people who require assistance casting their ballot in person. Positive feedback was received from some of our residents and visitors for this option.



The voting stations were setup for ease of access to each station while providing privacy while the voter finalized their voting.



Accessible Election questionnaire were at the Voter Help Centre and voters were pleased with the accessibility options offer during the election period.

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.
- The plan was developed and adopted Council under By-law 2022-08.
- A mandatory report with regards to Accessibility Initiatives undertaken for the 2022 Municipal Election was adopted by Council on November 15, 2022.

Payment Options

- Staff are maintaining and continuing with accepting online payments options and this is a great customer service option from an accessibility perspective. Some people with disabilities issues may not be able to drive, and having this service allows people to pay their accounts from the leisure of their home.

Training for all Municipal Office Staff on Accessible Documents

- Creating Accessible Documents continues, and training for staff who create, and upload documents have been provided with a guide to assist with the process.

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 will be presented to Council on March 13, 2023.

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. This has been a huge benefit to persons with disabilities.

Consultations for the Lion's Head Arena Project

- Consultation continued in 2022 with feedback regarding accessibility features throughout the new addition to the Lion's Head Arena project. This will be an ongoing venture throughout construction.

Accessible Picnic Tables

- Eleven (11) accessible picnic tables were purchased in the spring of 2022. These tables were placed in parks and facilities throughout the Municipality.

Sidewalks

- A new section of sidewalk was installed on Moore Street in Lion's Head making it easier for persons accessing the hospital and clinic area. Another new sidewalk was installed from Hayes Drive to the intersection of Bruce Road 9 and 29. Both new sidewalks were designed to AODA standards. Upgrades to sidewalks is a continuous project.

Complaints

No complaints were filed in 2022 with regards to accessibility issues. During the Municipal Election, people who attended the voting location were pleased with the efforts provided

for persons with disabilities. The MNBP welcomes feedback on how services and programs are delivered to persons with disabilities.

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. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is the Municipality's five-year playbook to guide us as we move beyond minimum compliance to a culture which embraces accessibility by design.

The Municipality is committed to providing an accessible environment in which people with disabilities can access Municipal services, programs, facilities and public spaces with dignity and independence. As we work towards these goals, we will continue to meet our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and look for ways to go above minimum compliance.

In 2023, Staff will be looking at new playground equipment for School Bell Park that will include accessible components.

Budget Implications:

Funds required to meet accessibility standard requirements have been 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

Cathy Addison
Municipal Clerk

Approved by:

Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Peggy Van Mierlo-West,
Chief Administrative Officer