



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee

January 2023

**This document is available in alternative formats, upon request.
Please see Page 3 for details.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee is an established community resource that creates, develops, and implements the objectives of Huron County and its 9 municipalities be it mandated by legislation or inspired by local community groups and people from across Huron County sharing the vision of Huron County's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

It is the responsibility of the Huron County Accessibility Committee to advise Huron County Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility

standards. Since inception, the Huron County Accessibility Committee has been promoting and developing a barrier-free Municipality for citizens of all abilities including persons with disabilities. Through local media, public events, award ceremonies and speaking engagements the Committee continues to educate and advise on accessibility issues while broadening awareness within Huron County and its lower tier municipalities.

As the provincial legislation and regulations mature, the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue its efforts in promoting awareness, while implementing educational and training guidelines, policies and standards defined by The Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Communication supports and accessible formats are available upon request. (e.g., digital, large print, braille)

For additional information, please contact:

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This report is available online at: **<http://www.huroncounty.ca>**

If your inquiry is specific to a municipality, please contact them directly.

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ONGOING GOALS

Huron County continues bettering its communities for all abilities including those with disabilities.

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) believes in taking action. That action today will improve tomorrow and strengthen our communities for all. By improving the quality of life for people with disabilities today we ensure access for those who face disabilities tomorrow.

The HCAAC is determined to provide Huron County businesses with the knowledge and information needed to create barrier free communities and economies.

The HCAAC created 3 sub committees to assist with removing barriers:

- Accessibility Education Sub Committee
- Accessibility Review Sub Committee
- Directive and Regulation Review Sub Committee.

The Accessibility Education Committee

The Accessibility Education Committee meets as required to develop and implement programs to educate agencies, businesses, and the broader private sector and to plan for special events that will bring awareness to the community regarding accessibility. This Committee will develop resources for the private sector about the AODA, Huron County's Universal Design and Accessibility Guideline for Site Plan Control, and the importance of identifying, preventing, and removing barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities.

In the past, this Committee has partnered with local Chambers of Commerce/BIA's to raise awareness of the AODA and the responsibility of businesses and not-for-profit organizations.

The Accessibility Review Sub Committee

The Review Committee is responsible for advising Councils, within 30 days, on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a public municipal building prior to purchasing, construction, renovation, or lease. The Accessibility Standards for the built environment focuses on removing barriers in four areas:

1. Public Spaces
2. Buildings

3. Trails and beaches
4. Outdoor play spaces

This will make it easier for all Ontarians- including those with disabilities, seniors, and families to access the places where they work, travel, shop, and play.

As a large public sector organization, the Design of Public Spaces Standard only applies to new construction and planned redevelopment on or after January 1, 2016.

Ontario's Building Code has been updated to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings.

This Sub Committee is responsible for drafting, periodically reviewing and updating the document titled "Huron County Universal Design and Accessibility Guidelines" and providing it to local Municipalities to assist in their review of site plans under section 41, Site Plan Control Area, of the Planning Act. The Committee may, if requested by a local Municipality, review a site plan under Section 41 of the Planning Act to ensure facilities designed are accessible for persons with disabilities.

This Sub Committee does site plan reviews which helps to break down barriers before they happen during construction of new buildings and renovations of old buildings. A building plan review form is on our website. Site Plan Review Checklists assist in the reviews. Forms and checklists are updated and reviewed regularly to adapt to changes in current standards.

Plans and spaces such as municipal offices, libraries, arenas, washrooms, additions, renovations, etc. have been reviewed. The word is out in Huron County on the importance of accessibility in ensuring inclusion for all.

The following is a listing plan reviews and/or spaces from 2022:

- Huron East – Seaforth Splash Pad and recreational area
- North Huron – Wingham Fire Hall Washroom Plan review
- Huron County Economic Development Office review
- Huron East - Brussels Morris Grey Community Centre renovation review
- Huron East - Seaforth Agricultural Society site visit/accessibility review. North Huron - Belgrave Community Centre site visit/accessibility review

The Sub Committee reports back to Council, advises participating municipalities and public businesses that requested a review on the accessibility of buildings, structures, or premises in relation to the updated Building Codes and Huron County's Universal Design and Accessibility Guideline for Site Plan Control document. These reports will provide County staff with valuable information on items that need to be addressed during building upgrades.

Directive and Regulation Review Sub Committee

The third and final Sub Committee that assists the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee in breaking down barriers is the Directive and Regulation Review Sub Committee.

The Directive and Regulation Review Sub Committee will review any relevant regulations and directives and identify concerns, provide solutions, and provide recommendations to the Accessibility Coordinator, such as drafting new policies identified in IASR.

The Accessibility Coordinator will gather input from the Directive and Regulation Review Committee, the Municipal Working Group and the Senior Management Team and draft a response to the Ministry of Economic Development Employment, Job Creation and Trade and write County Council identifying areas of concern and workable solutions and recommendations.

This Sub Committee will review the draft response and provide final feedback to the Accessibility Coordinator.

Summary

In Summary, with the implementation of the Accessibility Education Sub Committee; Accessibility Review Sub Committee; and the Directive and Regulation Review Sub Committee, the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has been successful in removing and avoiding barriers in our communities.

BACKGROUND

Disability impacts the lives of many Ontarians, and the numbers of people with disabilities is increasing as the population ages. Today, over 15% of Ontario's population has a disability, including more than 40% of people over age 65. About 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability. That is one in seven people. Over the next 20 years, as the population ages, the number will rise to one in five Ontarians. More than half of the

population has a friend or a loved-one with a disability and is influenced by them when deciding which businesses to solicit. Creating municipalities where every person who lives or visits can participate fully makes good sense — for our people, our businesses, and our communities.

Although our governments have dedicated tremendous resources towards the vision of a barrier free Ontario, the reality is that persons with disabilities still face barriers which prevent them from participating in all aspects of society. As a community we must learn to see barriers as our fellow citizens with disabilities live with them.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 calls on the business community, public sector, not-for-profit sector and people with disabilities or their representatives to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards. Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to prevent or remove barriers to accessibility for all citizens.

MESSAGE FROM THE HURON COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S CHAIR

AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT

One of Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee's (HCAAC's) greatest strengths lies in our Committee Members, who pursue so passionately a vision of informing, educating and inspiring residents from across Huron County on making Huron County accessible for people of all abilities and ages, eventually leading to a fully inclusive society for all.

Despite Covid-19 impacts that began in March 2020 the HCAAC has continued to meet virtually via ZOOM to discuss, review and focus on accessibility.

The HCAAC has continued to invest time and effort into the development of accessibility training to employees/staff of all kinds through continuous learnings on training requirements defined in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation and focus on:

- Customer Service
- General Requirements
- Human Rights
- Employment
- Information & Communication, and
- Design of Public Spaces

What training each staff is required to take is based on the job responsibilities, for example, if you are a Facilities staff you are required to take the minimum training which includes Human Rights, General Requirements and Customer Service. If you have a management position you are required to complete all training modules. All staff are required to receive training on accessibility standards for customer service and use of assistive devices (magnifying glass, large print, voice to text, etc.)

It is a goal of the HCAAC to continue to provide businesses with training opportunities and provide training material to increase their awareness and knowledge of the Government Legislation. It is our hope to also increase engagement between HCAAC and local businesses.

GOVERNANCE

The Accessibility Committee has been working together virtually over 2021 and 2022 and looks forward to continuing that work in 2023. We have a great blend of energized

individuals mixed with some experienced Committee members that have brought their knowledge and experience to the Committee. In the fall of 2022, we have interviewed new Committee members to join us in 2023 as several Committee members have reached the end of their maximum number of terms they can participate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Committee members for their dedication, commitment, and passion for creating an inclusive society.

Thank you.

Warden Glen McNeil,
Committee Chair

COUNTY COUNCIL (2023)

Huron County is governed by County Council, which is made up of fifteen (15) members from area municipalities. Each municipality located within Huron County, is represented at County Council by their representatives - Mayors or Reeves, Deputy Mayors, or Deputy Reeves.

At their Inaugural Session in December (every 2 years), County Council elects a Warden from among the Councilors. The Warden is the executive officer of the Corporation and the head of County Council. The Warden chairs County Council meetings, sits as an ex-officio member on all Standing Committees, and represents the County at a wide range of functions and activities.

In 2022, there was a Municipal election which has resulted in some new members of County Council and local Municipal Councils.

Huron County includes the following nine lower tier, or local municipalities:

- Corporation of the **Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh**
(Formerly Ashfield, Colborne, and West Wawanosh Townships)
- Corporation of the **Municipality of Bluewater**
(Formerly Hay and Stanley Townships, plus the Villages of Bayfield, Hensall and Zurich)
- Corporation of the **Municipality of Central Huron**
(Formerly Goderich and Hullett Townships, and the Town of Clinton)
- Corporation of the **Town of Goderich**
- Corporation of the **Township of Howick**
- Corporation of the **Municipality of Huron East**
(Formerly Grey, McKillop and Tuckersmith Townships, Village of Brussels, and Town of Seaforth)
- Corporation of the **Municipality of Morris – Turnberry**
(Formerly Morris and Turnberry Townships)
- Corporation of the **Township of North Huron**
(Formerly Village of Blyth, Township of East Wawanosh, and Town of Wingham)
- Corporation of the **Municipality of South Huron**
(Formerly Stephen and Usborne Townships and Town of Exeter)

Starting in 2021, each of the 9 municipalities are encouraged to provide a summary of their local accessibility projects, achievements, and proposed activities in the Annual Accessibility Plan. A template for this summary is in this Appendix.

HURON COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HCAAC)

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee is made up of 9 voting members including:

- 5 persons with a disability as defined in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)
- 1 person from professional discipline
- 1 citizen representative
- 1 elected official
- Warden as ex-officio

The HCAAC is supported by 6 non-voting members including:

- chair of the ODA Municipal Working Group
- 1 person from County Planning Department
- 1 Municipal Building Official
- Huron County CAO
- the Accessibility Coordinator
- and the County Clerk

Other Huron County staff may support the committee in various capacities.

For 2023 the HCAAC includes:

Voting Members: Warden, Member of Council, and 7 Committee members

Non-Voting Members:

- Chairperson Municipal Working Group: Chandra Alexander (2022)
- County Planning Department: Planner
- Municipal Building Official: Jeanette Zimmer
- Huron County CAO: Meighan Wark
- County Clerk: Susan Cronin
- Accessibility Coordinator

OUR VISION

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will inform and inspire people from across Huron County on making Huron County accessible for people of all abilities and ages. Age-Friendly Community Planning and the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities go together.

OUR MISSION

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will assist Huron County Council and participating municipalities to fulfill the purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by providing vision and advice to council regarding the removal of barriers by 2025.

OUR MANDATE

The authority to establish the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) originated from the provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and will continue to exist under the provisions of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The HCAAC is the advisory committee to Huron County Council and participating municipalities fulfilling the purpose of the ODA and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THE HCAAC

The objectives of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee are revised and updated annually in November and are used as a resource that outlines the role and responsibilities of the HCAAC and provides a monitoring tool to ensure all tasks are completed and not forgotten. (See Appendix 1) This document is divided into two sections:

- Objectives mandated by legislation under the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IASR)
- Objectives driven by communities to accomplish the committee's vision of informing and inspiring people from across Huron County on making Huron County accessible for people of all abilities.

LAST YEAR'S GOALS

- Under the requirements of the Ontarians with Disability Act 2001, the HCAAC continued to create and post a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and an Annual Accessibility Plan Update that contains the goals of Huron County and last year's successes.
- Under the requirements of both the ODA and the AODA, the HCAAC continued to review, in a timely manner and advise municipalities, local businesses and County Council on the accessibility of building plans and drawings for renovation and new

construction, and the purchase or lease of public buildings as well as review exterior site plans as requested.

- Provided advice to County Council and participating municipalities with respect to government directives and regulations relating to the status of persons with disabilities including regulations for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and more specifically the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation. The HCAAC will continue to provide advice, tools, and direction to Huron County Council and participating municipalities on obtaining full compliance within timelines set out in the Regulation.
- The Committee continued to enhance relationships with County Council, local municipalities, businesses.
- The Committee will join forces with volunteers and members of Huron County council and staff at events to promote inclusion for all.
- The Committee will keep Huron County Building Officials updated on "new" legislation with regards to the built environment, public spaces, and site plans.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has worked diligently to achieve the goals defined within the approved plan. Recognized achievements include:

- **Accessibility Plans:** The County of Huron has created an Annual Accessibility Plan under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 and a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Update under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, with annual updates on successes. The County of Huron has completed both requirements with the documents approved by County Council at the December 2022 County Council meeting. These documents were shared with the 9 local municipalities for their review and approval.
- **Site Plan Reviews:** These reviews were done virtually via ZOOM in 2022 with some site visits starting to occur in the Fall. The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has been actively engaged with municipalities and organizations, county staff as well as private businesses in conducting Site Plan Reviews in a timely fashion. The committee believes public awareness will continue to stimulate

community participation and the sub-committee's time and commitment. The committee has developed checklists to assist in Site Plan Reviews.

- The Committee reviewed 6 plans and/or spaces.
- 2022 Accessibility Awards of Merit for Barrier-Free Design: This Award promotes public awareness of the importance of barrier-free design and recognizes excellence in accessibility design. Awards are presented to the owner of a building or facility that has been designed or renovated with special regard to accessibility for persons with a disability. There are 2 award categories – Business and Public Sector organizations. The following is a listing of the 2022 Award Nominees/Recipients:

Business Category Award

Sweets N' Treats, Blyth
McDonald's, Wingham
Deams Holdings Inc / Blyth Library

Public Sector Category Award

Huron County Library & Museum

- The Committee continues to promote the Stop Gap program that was started in Huron County in 2014. This program encourages businesses to get involved in creating barrier free communities.



This picture shows an example of a Stop Gap Ramp. Please see their website at <https://stopgap.ca/> for more information.

- Government Directives and Regulations: The Accessibility Advisory Committee has provided updates and advice about new government directives and regulations to County Council and the Municipal Working Group. The Municipal Working Group is made up of one volunteer/staff member from each lower tier. Each member of the group reports back to and shares newly developed resources and material approved by County Council to their Mayor/Councilors.

Sandra Thompson Memorial Accessibility Champion Award

The Accessibility Champion Award was established in 2022 to honor the memory of Sandra Thompson and to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Sandra Thompson was dedicated to promoting accessibility in Huron County, was a leader in inspiring others to improve accessibility in our community and worked as the Accessibility Coordinator for the County of Huron until 2016. She was from the Bluevale area.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities falls on December 3 each year. This day is endorsed by the United Nations and is important because we need to realize just how many people there really are who are impacted by disability.... World-wide there are currently one billion people! That is saying that one in every seven people in the world are facing challenges and barriers due to some specific type of disability. In Ontario, the data tells us that 24.1% of the population (age 15 and older) identify as having a disability.

The Accessibility Champion Award recognizes and honours an individual in Huron County who:

- has shown dedication and commitment to promoting accessibility in our community
- has demonstrated exemplary commitment & leadership towards advancing accessibility
- is working to build a more inclusive community
- is making a difference in the lives of people living with a disability

Nominations included: a detailed description of the nominee's work and initiatives; A signed testimonial(s) that speak to the contributions and impact of the individual to accessibility in the County of Huron.

- Continued connectivity with County Council, Lower Tiers, and Businesses. Due to the continued Covid-19 impacts on curtailing events and activities, contact in 2022 with municipalities and the community has been via phone/virtual ZOOM meetings, email, and minimal face-to-face contact.

- The Municipal Accessibility Working Group continues to meet via ZOOM two times per year. Topics related to accessibility were discussed including municipal accessibility projects, review of Accessibility Plans for the 2022 municipal elections, and ideas for providing training on accessibility to their new Councils.
- An Accessibility Tour of Blyth was held with the Huron County Building Officials and Municipal Planners to show and discuss various accessibility features of recreational facilities, parking, sidewalks, playgrounds, entrances, and businesses.
- The Committee continues to encourage local businesses to get involved in creating barrier free communities. HCAAC presented a “Accessibility and your Business” webinar May 25 via ZOOM. This webinar was organized by the Huron Economic Development Department and was held to celebrate National Accessibility Week (May 29-June 4, 2022) This webinar was part of the Department’s Small Business Webinar Series.
- The HCAAC continued in 2022 to participate in the Back Alley Artist Extravaganza in Clinton. Our 4’x4’ art board was created to promote the HCAAC, accessibility and that ‘everyone is welcome’ in Huron County. The art board has been donated to the Clinton Public Library for display at their facility after the Art Show finished in the fall.



- A Portable Accessible Washroom has been a focus of discussion for HCAAC and a special Sub-Committee formed. A funding application was made to the Inclusive Community Grants Program of the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. On October 31, 2022, the Committee was informed that the application was not successful. We are seeking feedback on our application from the Regional Development Advisor. Other sponsorships and partners are being approached.

- County staff and IT Department: Website accessibility is an important focus. Accessibility training is required by all County employees.
 - Background: New public websites and significantly refreshed websites were required to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014. Furthermore, by January 1, 2021, all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012, must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
 - WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted standard for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Following the WCAG 2.0 guidelines makes content accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, including:
 - Blindness and low vision
 - Deafness and hearing loss
 - Learning disabilities
 - Cognitive impairments
 - Mobility impairments
 - Speech impairments
- The HCAAC continues to promote the development of accessibility training to employees/staff through continuous learnings on training requirements defined in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. These learning opportunities are customized into six modules:
 1. Customer Service
 2. General Requirements
 3. Human Rights
 4. Employment
 5. Information & Communication
 6. Design of Public Spaces
- All new County staff received required training within an appropriate period. All staff are required to receive training on accessibility standards for customer service and use of assistive devices.

- Upon request, provide information in accessible formats and with communication supports at the same cost charged to others. Publicized the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on website and documents.
- Continue to work with IT and Human Resources departments to train staff on Accessibility Standards.
- ZOOM Webinar “Showcasing the Accessibility features of the Goderich Waterfront” The purpose of the webinar was to show & discuss accessibility features of the Goderich Main Beach area, recreational facilities / parking areas, washrooms, change rooms, playground, and signage. Invitations were extended to Municipal Staff, including those involved with parking, public works, parks and recreations, Councillors, Planners.
- Provide Information on accessibility to Community Groups, including the G2G Rail Trail Association. Items for them to consider from Section 2.2 Recreational Trails from the Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces, include:
 - Rest areas
 - Amenities along the trail
 - Trail slope
 - Need for and location of ramps to access the trail from parking areas
 - Edge protection
 - Signage – larger lettering in Helvetica or Verdana, high tonal contrasting letters (white) on dark background (black)
 - Clear paths with no obstructions
 - Hard surfacing of trail
- The “Huron County Universal Design and Accessibility Guidelines” is being reviewed and updated with the assistance of the Planning and Development Department. This review started 2022 and will be completed in 2023. An updated version will be provided to local Municipalities in 2023. This document assists in their review of site plans under section 41, Site Plan Control Area, of the Planning Act.

- Upon request, provide information in accessible formats and with communication supports at the same cost charged to others. Publicized the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on website and documents.
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is part of Huron County's procurement process.

2023 GOALS

- Under the requirements of the Ontarians with Disability Act 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), the HCAAC will continue to create and post a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Update and an Annual Accessibility Plan that contains the goals of Huron County and last year's successes.
- Under the requirements of both the ODA and the AODA, the HCAAC will continue to review in a timely manner and advise municipalities and local businesses on the accessibility of building plans and drawings for renovation and new construction, and the purchase or lease of public buildings as well as review exterior site plans as requested.
- The Committee will continue to enhance relationships with County Council, local municipalities, businesses, the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board, and the Avon Maitland District School Board.
- The 2023 County Council Tour of Huron County will include a focus on accessibility
- The Huron County Library locations will be reviewed for accessibility.
- Awards Program for Businesses and the Public Sector will continue to celebrate organizations and individuals who are working to build a more inclusive society. The award program promotes public awareness of the importance of barrier-free design and to recognize excellence in accessibility design.
- Continue to celebrate an accessibility champion in Huron County through the Sandra Thompson Memorial Accessibility Champion Award. This individual will be recognized and help celebrate the International Day of Person with Disabilities on December 3.
- To increase awareness and create a stronger presence in the community, the Committee will explore ways to promote National Access Awareness Week.
- The Committee will keep Huron County Building Officials updated on all new

legislation with regards to the built environment, public spaces, and site plans.

- Develop new programs and promote existing programs to engage local businesses in developing barrier free communities. Example, Accessibility and your Business webinars; Stop Gap, a program that encourages businesses to get involved in developing barrier free communities while getting recognized in the community for their efforts and participation.
- To proceed with the Portable Accessible Washroom project. Seek out sponsors and funding opportunities.
- The HCAAC will work with the County's IT department by providing recommendations to help make the County's website user friendly for persons of all abilities. A continued key focus within Huron County is training staff to create documents in accessible formats.
- Continue to work with IT and human resources departments to train staff on accessibility standards.
- 5-year Multi-year Plan will be updated and presented to Council.
- The activities for 2023 will be summarized in the 2023 Accessibility Update Report
- Each of the 9 Municipalities are encouraged to add a summary of their accessibility projects in the Appendix for 2023.

BARRIER FREE COMMUNITIES, BETTER BUSINESSES AND BOTTOM LINES

People with disabilities regularly face barriers that prevent them from working, shopping, travelling and simply living and volunteering in their communities. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 was passed leading to the creation of five standards in accessibility in the areas of Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and the Built Environment. Recognizing the leadership role of our government by passing the act in 2005, its local communities and private businesses that are now tapping into new customers while harnessing a larger, more diverse work force.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

What is the return on investment or benefits to employers for hiring people with disabilities? The following are some of the benefits as reported by employers. Hiring people with disabilities:

- Contributes to a better rate of attendance, punctuality, employee morale,

teamwork, and safety in the workplace.

- Often leads to a reduction in staff turnover; people with disabilities have proven to be skilled and loyal employees.
- Shows that the company values diversity and is a tangible example of good corporate citizenship.
- Increases the purchasing power for individuals with a disability and their families.
- Reflects the demographics of your community and enhances the community's understanding of people with disabilities.
- May free up resources to complete other tasks and increase productivity.
- Allows the person with a disability to be a role model to the staff and community and others with a disability.
- May include free corporate marketing when your new employee talks about where they work.
- May require accommodations for your new employee, but the change may make your company more robust, innovative, and adaptive.

QUICK FACTS

- Improved accessibility in Ontario can help generate up to \$9.6 Billion in new retail spending and 1.6 billion in new tourism spending.
- Currently, Canadians with disabilities influence the spending decisions of 12-15 million other consumers.
- In the next 20 years, an aging population and people with disabilities will represent 40% of total income in Ontario-that being \$536 Billion
- 1 in 7 people in Ontario have a disability. That is 1.85 million Ontarians.
- By 2036, as our population ages, 1 in 5 people in Ontario will have a disability

APPENDIX 1: 2023 Priorities for HCAAC

Objectives Mandated by Legislation

1. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Updates

Under the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS), the County of Huron is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Plan outlines the organization's strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in the County's programs, services, and facilities, over a 5-year plan.

HCAAC Responsibility

Huron County's Accessibility Coordinator will review and revise the Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan highlighting the previous year's successes in consultation with the HCAAC and County staff annually.

Once approval is obtained from County Council, the revised Multi 5- Year Accessibility Plan will be posted on the County website as directed in the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS).

Council Responsibility

County Council will approve the revised Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan and send a copy to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

The Clerk will share the plan with the CAO and Senior Management Team to ensure all departments work towards implementation of the Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan.

Local Municipal Councils will approve the revised Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan and staff will ensure that all departments work towards implementation of the Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan

Committee Responsibility

HCAAC Municipal Working Group Representatives will present the revised Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan to their Councils for approval.

Once approval is obtained for the revised Multi 5- Year Accessibility Plan, it will be posted on lower tier websites and will be implemented.

Timeline Targets

Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan written every 5 years, effective January 2014.

The Multi 5-Year Accessibility Plan update will be reviewed, maintained, updated and successes reported on and posted on the website annually.

County Council to approve by January 1st

Local Municipal Councils to approve by January 1st

2. Annual Accessibility Plan

Under the requirements of the ODA, the County of Huron is required to create and post an Annual Accessibility Plan that contains the goals of Huron County and last year's successes.

HCAAC Responsibility

Huron County's Accessibility Coordinator will create the Annual Accessibility Plan in consultation with the HCAAC and County staff as appropriate and will present annual plan to committee by December each year.

Council Responsibility

County Council will approve and send a copy of the Annual Accessibility Plan to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade as directed in the ODA, 2001.

Committee Responsibility

HCAAC Municipal Working Group will present the Annual Accessibility Plan to their Councils for approval.

Timeline Targets

County Council will approve the Annual Accessibility Plan by January 1 each year.

Local Councils will approve the Annual Accessibility Plan.

3. Alignment of Both Plans

The identified goals of the Annual Accessibility Plan are in alignment with the Multi-Year Plan

HCAAC Responsibility

Once approval is obtained from County Council, the Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on the County website as directed in the ODA 2001.

Council Responsibility

The Clerk will share the plan with the CAO and Senior Management Team to ensure all departments work towards implementation of the Annual Accessibility Plan.

Committee Responsibility

Municipal Working Group member: Once approval is obtained; the Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on lower tier websites and will be implemented.

Timeline Targets

The identified goals are in alignment with the Multi-Year Plan.

4. Review of Building Plans for Renovation, Construction, Purchase, Lease and Exterior Site Plans

Under the requirements of both the ODA, 2001 and the AODA, 2005 the HCAAC must review in a timely manner and advise municipalities and businesses on the accessibility of building plans for renovation and new construction, and the purchase or lease of public buildings as well as review exterior site plans as requested.

The Committee will use the Illustrated Guide of the Accessibility Standards for Outdoor Spaces produced by GAATES and supported by Ontario Government.

HCAAC Responsibility

The HCAAC ~ Accessibility Review Committee is responsible for meeting and reviewing site plans and providing comment and recommendations in a timely manner.

Council Responsibility

Huron County Council is responsible for keeping appropriate lower tier staff informed of their duty to request site plan reviews with the HCAAC prior to purchasing, construction, renovation, or lease.

County Council to review and approve if appropriate.

Committee Responsibility

The Municipal Working Group is responsible for keeping appropriate lower tier staff informed of their duty to request site plan reviews with the HCAAC prior to purchasing, construction, renovation, or lease.

If approved the Municipal Working Group will share the resource with building officials.

Timeline Targets

The HCAAC Accessibility Review Committee will accommodate as quickly as possible, not being any longer than 30 days.

Ongoing

5. Provide Accessibility Information to the County and local Municipalities

Provide info on Accessibility Directives and Regulations relating to the status of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

HCAAC Responsibility

To gather comments on proposed regulations and standards, the Accessibility Coordinator will work with the Directive and Regulation Review Subcommittee. The Accessibility Coordinator will also collaborate with staff from various departments across the County and the Municipal Working Group to further identify concerns on how the proposed regulation may be implemented.

Council Responsibility

The Accessibility Coordinator will prepare regular updates for County Council. The update will provide a summary of the requirements outlined in the regulations and standards and an overview of the County's readiness to meet the requirements.

Committee Responsibility

The Municipal Working Group will provide comments and concerns with the Accessibility Coordinator on the requirements of the regulations and standards.

The Municipal Working Group will share updates with appropriate staff at their Municipality.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

Objectives Driven by HCAAC and Community

These objectives are driven by Passion to Accomplish the Committee's Vision of Informing and Inspiring People from Across Huron County on Making Huron County Accessible for People of All Abilities

1. Connect with local School Boards

The Committee will continue to enhance relationship with the Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron Perth Catholic District School Board and focus on the importance of changing societal stigmas associated with individuals living with a disability. The greatest change starts with our youth.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee encourage joint ventures with the local school boards.

The Subcommittee will explore options for participating with the School Boards for National Access Awareness Week.

Council Responsibility

County Council will be consulted with in the development stages.

Committee Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee will consult with the Municipal Working Group during development stages.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

2. Develop relationships with County Council, Municipalities, and local businesses

Develop information sources for new legislation.

Webinars / Presentations to BIA's, lower tiers and to agencies and business by individuals with disabilities, putting a face to accessibility issues.

Provide regular council updates.

Review municipal facilities and make recommendations to improve accessibility.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Coordinator will provide regular County Council updates keeping Council informed.

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee will develop accessibility information for local businesses. This information will be accessible online / weblinks / and therefore always available.

Council Responsibility

County Council will encourage municipalities to participate in and host a presentation at one of their Council meetings.

County Council will provide their feedback and suggestions on the content of the information packages.

Committee Responsibility

The Accessibility Coordinator will work with the Municipal Working Group to schedule presentations at a Council Meeting.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

3. Accessibility Awards of Merit for Barrier-Free Design Program

Continue to implement our annual awards program to celebrate organizations and individuals who are working to build a more inclusive society. The award is to promote public awareness of the importance of barrier-free design and to recognize excellence in accessibility design.

The awards are incorporated with National Access Awareness Week or other events.

To increase awareness and create a stronger presence in the community, the Committee will continue to host National Access Awareness Week Celebrations and media events.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee will continue to implement an annual awards program recognizing public sector organizations and private businesses or individuals.

Council Responsibility

County Council to promote National Access Awareness Week.

Committee Responsibility

Municipal Working Group to suggest nominees and to share nomination forms with County Building Inspectors as they have the greatest knowledge of who is building and/or renovating with barrier-free design being a focus.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

4. Promotion of the Stop Gap Ramp Project to Municipalities

The Ramp Project provides free deployable entry ramps to businesses with single stepped storefronts that can prevent access to people.

HCAAC Responsibility

No action required.

Council Responsibility

Be aware of Program

Committee Responsibility

No action required.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

5. Training for business

Prepare a list of training options on accessibility for local businesses.

Explore opportunities to host events to bring awareness of accessibility.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee and the Accessibility Coordinator develop Information Pkg on Governments Regulations.

Explore social media options to use when providing the training.

Council Responsibility

County Council to review Information Package

Committee Responsibility

The Municipal Working Group Representatives will share the material with their Council, local business organizations and Economic Development staff

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

6. Accessible Websites

The HCAAC will work with the County's IT Department and other staff by providing recommendations on making the County's website more accessible.

Beginning January 1, 2014: new public websites, significantly refreshed websites and any web content posted after January 1, 2012, must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A

Beginning January 1, 2021: all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012, must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (live captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio)

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Coordinator, Clerk, Corporate Communications Specialist, and Information Technology Staff to review options for staff training on creating accessible documents.

Council Responsibility

County Council to support accessibility update requirements to County websites.

Committee Responsibility

The Municipal Working Group Representatives will share the material with the Council, local business organizations and Economic Development staff

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

7. Events

Actively participate in local events such as Dream Big and Discovery Abilities.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Sub-Committee and the Accessibility Coordinator to outline activities.

The Coordinator will help organize volunteers to support the events.

Council Responsibility

County Council will receive request.

Committee Responsibility

Municipal Working Group will approach their Council to attend events.

Timeline Targets

TBD

8. Sandra Thompson Memorial Accessibility Champion Award Program

The Accessibility Champion Award was established in 2022 to honor the memory of Sandra Thompson and to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Sandra Thompson was dedicated to promoting accessibility in Huron County, was a leader in inspiring others to improve accessibility in our community and worked as the Accessibility Coordinator for the County of Huron until 2016. She was from the Bluevale area.

The award is to promote public awareness of the importance of accessibility and to recognize an individual in our community who is an accessibility champion.

The award is recommended to be incorporated with The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3 each year) or other events.

HCAAC Responsibility

The Accessibility Education Subcommittee will continue to implement this annual award program recognizing an individual in our community.

Council Responsibility

County Council to promote The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (falls on December 3 each year)

Committee Responsibility

HCAAC and sub-committees, and Municipal Working Group to suggest nominees.

Timeline Targets

Ongoing

Note: The HCAAC Objectives will be reviewed annually (November by the Committee) to assess progress and to update and add new initiatives accordingly.

APPENDIX 2

Consultation with the HCAAC

Development Requiring Consultation with the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee Under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, AODA 2005

Design of Public Spaces Standard, Integrated Accessibility Standards 191/11

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/accessibility/DOPS%20Guidelines%20\(short\)%20FINAL%20April%202014%20EN-s.pdf](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcass/accessibility/DOPS%20Guidelines%20(short)%20FINAL%20April%202014%20EN-s.pdf)

Organization Compliance Dates

Affected Organizations	Compliance Dates
Ontario Government and Legislative Assembly	January 1, 2015
Designated public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2016
Designated public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2016
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2017
Private and not-for-profit organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2018

Municipal Development under the Design for Public Spaces Standard that require consultation with the HCAAC and the public:

Development Requiring Consultation with HCAAC	Design Elements	Page Number in “Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces”
Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes (all compliance dates apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail slope • Need for, and location of ramps on trails • Need for, location and design of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rest areas ○ Passing areas ○ Viewing areas ○ Amenities on trail ○ Any other pertinent feature Consultation on Beach Access Routes	23-24

Development Requiring Consultation with HCAAC	Design Elements	Page Number in “Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces”
Outdoor Play Spaces (Private and not-for-profit organizations with 49 or fewer employees are not required to comply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities Accessibility Features	50-51
Exterior Paths of Travel (Private and not-for-profit organizations with 49 or fewer employees are required to comply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and placement of Rest Areas 	81
On-Street Parking (Only Designated Public Sector organizations of 1-49 and 50+ employees are required to comply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces 	99-101

The “Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces” can be found online at: <http://www.gaates.org/DOPS/default.php>

Or at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2c3Xbwb7aY3aUFpd3ZReUJzbG8/view>

Overview of Appendix 3

This following Appendix 3 is a section of the Annual Plan. Where each of the 9 municipalities can add their own Appendix 3 to summarize the accessibility actions/ activities/ accomplishments in their own municipality.

Pictures are encouraged to be added to this Section. Each picture will be described in alt text.

The HCAAC will gather Appendix 3's and share this Section with other municipalities to show examples of what is being done throughout Huron County to provide universal accessibility.

APPENDIX 3: Municipality Summary Municipality of _____

Summary of Accessibility-Related Projects

1. Accessible Projects Completed in _____ (*this year*)
 -

2. Accessible Projects Ongoing in _____ (*this year and next year*)
 -

3. Accessible Projects Proposed in _____ (*next year*)

Appendix 3.1 Municipal Accessibility Project

For information, this Section includes a Summary of Municipal Accessibility Projects undertaken by our local municipalities.

Please see below.

APPENDIX 3: Municipality Summary

Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Summary of Accessibility-Related Projects

1. Accessible Projects Completed in 2021

a) Municipal Office Renovation – with significant accessible upgrades including Ramp w/ tactile warning strips, power operated entry doors, barrier-free path of travel (power doors from lobby area to/from reception area and council chambers), accessible public washrooms w/ power door operators, accessible-height reception area, and braille signage. Employee facing upgrades include: Ramp, accessible entry door, barrier-free path of travel (power door operators or lever-style door hardware throughout office), accessible kitchen elements including low microwave below counter, barrier-free staff washroom w/ power door operator and emergency hardware.

b) New Municipal Website: Website complies with all mandated features required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, specifically Ontario Regulation 191/11 standards to be met by large organizations. It features ‘Accessibility Checking’, a testing tool aimed at helping you fix accessibility issues before they happen. It also meets ADOA standards for accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

2. Accessible Projects Ongoing in 2021 and 2022

a) Implementation underway with meeting management software, eSCRIBE. Complainant with accessibility requirements such as AODA and WCAG 2.0.

3. Accessible Projects Proposed in 2022

a) New parking lot painting, with new accessible decals.

APPENDIX 3: Municipality Summary

Township of North Huron

Summary of Accessibility-Related Projects

1. Accessible Projects Completed in 2022

- New Municipal Website – Website complies with all mandated features required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, specifically Ontario Regulation 191/11 standards to be met by large organizations. It features ‘Accessibility Checking’, a testing tool aimed at helping you fix accessibility issues before they happen. It also meets ADOA standards for accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

- Opening of the Blyth Fire Hall and Public Works Facility – The newly built Blyth Fire Hall and Public Works Facility is a full accessible building used for staff resources. The building includes accessible and automatic door hardware and an accessible floor plan to accommodate all patrons and meet AODA standards and requirements.
2. Accessible Projects Ongoing in 2021 & 2022
- Construction of Accessible Washrooms at the Wingham Fire Hall - Reconstruction of the Wingham Fire Hall washrooms will begin in 2022. The construction will include constructing of a separate washroom and shower facilities for female firefighters, and installing accessible showers, doors, sinks and toilets. This reconstruction of the space will meet accessibility standards set out for public buildings under AODA requirements.
 - Implementation of Accessible Documents - Administrative staff continue to convert existing Township documents into an accessible format. Staff have started by converting frequently used documents such as by-laws and policies and continue to implement accessible templates for various documents moving forward. These documents meet AODA standards for accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines in order to be displayed on the new Township of North Huron website.
3. Accessible Projects Proposed in 2022
- Construction of Accessible Ramp and Doors at North Huron Municipal Office - The construction of the accessibility ramp and three sets of accessible entrance doors at the North Huron Municipal Office is expected to begin in Spring of 2022 and be completed within the year. The project will include the removal and disposal of existing railings, concrete stairs and associated foundations and the build of a new accessibility ramp and three sets of accessible doors to better serve and accommodate patrons and employees using the facilities.
 - Installation of Accessible Door Hardware - Additional accessible door hardware will be installed at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex to increase accessibility and use of the facility by all patrons. Automatic door hardware will be installed on the exterior access door at the rear of the facility as well as five interior doors. This update to the facility will exceed AODA's prescribed requirements.
-

APPENDIX 3: Municipality Summary

Municipality of South Huron

Appendix 2 to South Huron Accessibility Report – CL#039 -2021
1 CL#039-2021

2021 update and progress on the AODA Regulations

The following outlines our progress in 2021 and goals and next steps in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas, all of which are part of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR), ON Reg. 191/11.

- Customer Service

- Information & Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (and Built Environment)

There are also a number of General Requirements that apply across all of the accessibility standards. Any updates to the IASR will be reflected in the Annual Status Update Reports to the Accessibility Plan.

Customer Service

- All new and seasonal staff receive training upon hire or return, a refresher course will be provided every 5 years for full time staff.
- An internal web working group was created to ensure staff across the organization has training related to the functions of the website to conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA.
- The website is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure its functionality and content remain accessible.
- The municipality continues to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request.
- South Huron is a member of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) and also attends Accessibility working group meetings.

Information and Communications

- South Huron records and where possible live streams its Council meetings on the municipal website. Watching the meetings online or a recording of a meeting is an effective way that we are reaching our residents who are not able to attend our meetings in person.
- South Huron uses eScribe software in the creation of agenda packages. The software meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA when producing Council Reports.
- South Huron Council chambers has an audio system, including microphones and speakers.
- Staff continue to attend computer and in-house training to continue the development of accessible forms and documents and continues to update templates for accessibility on the website.
- Added a small caption within the footer of every page about alternative formats/accessing information.
- Bi-weekly hub in newspaper states that our information is accessible and to contact municipality about receiving information in alternative formats.

Feedback

The Municipality of South Huron welcomes input from the public in order to help identify ways in which we can improve accessibility in facilities, goods and services. Members of the public are encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Municipal Clerk or complete the [Customer Service Feedback](#) form on the municipal website.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request to the Clerk.

General Requirements

- Procurement The Municipal Procurement By-law incorporates accessibility criteria into the procurement of goods and services.
- Reporting o Reports are produced annually on the progress and implementation of the multi-year Accessibility Plan, and this information is be posted on our website and will be available in alternate formats, upon request.
 - The multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated once every five years.
 - The Municipality, as legislated, will file Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
 - The Corporate Accessibility Policy has been updated to reflect changes to any of the standards
 - Records will continue to be maintained for training provided on accessibility, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals who attended.

Employment

- All employment advertisements inform applicants of our ability to make accommodations throughout the recruitment process, if required.
- All of the requirements in the Employment Standard continue to be maintained by the Municipality including those pertaining to the following: o Recruitment, assessment and selection
 - Accessible formats and communication supports for employees
 - Workplace emergency response information
 - Documented individual accommodation plans
 - Return to work process
 - Performance management
 - Career development and advancement
 - Redeployment
- Human Resources continuously monitors the status of employee training.
- Employees are assigned training in AODA Customer Service Standards, Understanding Human Rights and, Information and Communication Standards and Employment Standards as required.

Design of Public Spaces (and Built Environment)

- As per standard operational practices, the following is conducted on a regular basis either through legislative or municipal policy requirements: o Repair, maintenance, and removal of barriers on municipal trails, sidewalks and public spaces
 - Fire Code inspections of private, public, and municipal facilities
 - Building Code inspections of new or renovated facilities
 - Health and safety inspections of all municipal facilities
 - Emergency management measures to promote the safety of the community within times of emergency

Goals and Next Steps for Accessibility

- Ensure the Municipality of South Huron continues to meet compliance with the AODA, its regulations and all other related pieces of legislation and continue with organizations commitment to accessibility.
- Review Municipality of South Huron's policies and practices to ensure accessibility compliance as part of normal policy review process.
- Strive to ensure that new facilities, programs and services are designed and created with accessibility features incorporated

- Continue to develop resources and training materials for staff, volunteers and contractors and promote awareness and education regarding accessibility requirements and obligations throughout the corporation.
- Work with corporate departments to explore new and innovative ways to remove and prevent barriers to access.
- Ongoing training for staff on the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy
- Continue to monitor accessibility issues, trends and legislative changes.

Highlights and Initiatives

- Accessibility Review Committee – North-East Corner of Highway 4 (Main Street North) and Thames Road East (County Road 83) review
- 2022 Election Accessibility Plan will be provided to the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee for review prior to finalizing.
- South Huron Zoning By-Law and South Huron Official Plan to be converted to an accessible format in 2022.
- Fire Master Plan and Community Risk Assessment only additions to “Not deemed practicable to be made accessible document list” for 2022
- On-Line permitting for building permits that is accessible to anyone with any device, browser, and operating system