



Committee Agenda

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

April 8, 2019 – 2:00 PM

Bay Room, Grey County Administration Building

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Committee Member Introductions**
3. **Election of the Chair and Vice Chair**
4. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**
5. **Review of “Making Accessibility Happen” Webinar**
6. **Review of Report CAOR-CW-17-18 County-Wide Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee**
 - a. **Discuss What is Needed for Members to fulfill their role**
 - b. **Discuss How the Committee can best meet the Member Municipalities’ needs**
7. **Review Grey Highlands Draft Multi Year Accessibility Plan**
8. **Grey County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**
9. **Other Business**
10. **Next Meeting Dates**
 - a. **June 2019**
11. **Adjournment**

To:	Warden Halliday and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	August 9, 2018
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CW-17-18
Title:	County-Wide Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
Prepared by:	Rob Hatten
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	County-wide
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee of the Whole as presented per Resolution CW200-18; Endorsed by County Council on September 13, 2018 per Resolution CC85-18.

Recommendation

1. That report **CAOR-CW-17-18 County-Wide Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee** be received; and
2. That staff bring back a report with a **Terms of Reference for a county-wide Accessibility Advisory Committee for Council consideration**; and
3. That consideration be given in the **2019 operating budget for part time staff resources to oversee the Accessibility Coordinator functions**.

Executive Summary

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, requires Grey County and its local municipalities with 10,000 or more residents to have an accessibility advisory committee. All municipalities, regardless of size, are required to consult with persons with disabilities on certain projects. These committees provide valuable input that helps make Grey County communities more inclusive and age-friendly. Having a formal joint accessibility advisory committee will help municipalities remain compliant with provincial legislation and promote greater consistency for accessible policies and practices throughout the County.

Background and Discussion

The expectation for an Accessibility Advisory Committee

Municipalities in Ontario that have more than 10,000 residents are required to create an accessibility advisory committee (AAC) and involve it in planning processes. Two or more municipalities may set up a joint committee instead of having their own. Members of a joint

committee may be chosen in a way that works best for the community and the only requirement is that the majority of committee members have to be people with disabilities.

Although municipal staff are expected to support the AAC as a key resource, the intent is for the committee to determine its own work plan and priorities.

The Province encourages municipalities to consult with their AACs about how to implement and maintain compliance with the provinces accessibility standards, to prepare compliance reports, and any other matters where a council seeks the committee's advice.

By law, an AAC must be consulted on the following matters:

- Creating, reviewing and updating multi-year accessibility plans
- Developing accessible design criteria in the construction, renovation or placement of bus stops and shelters
- When determining the proportion of on-demand accessible taxis
- About the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces when building new or making major changes to existing on-street parking spaces
- Before building new or making major changes to existing recreational trails (not back country trails) and to help determine particular trail features
- Building or making major changes to existing outdoor play spaces
- The placement of rest areas along exterior paths of travel

Municipal AACs are also expected to review site plans and drawings from developers. These include site plans for subdivisions, municipal offices, community centres and recreational centres. The AAC must also comment on public municipal buildings that are constructed, purchased, leased or significantly renovated.

In addition to all of these requirements, the AAC can also be a resource for providing advice about municipal programs and services. They can identify barriers in our policies and procedures and provide advice for improving our services so they become more inclusive for everyone. For example, Grey County's AAC has commented on major changes to Grey County's websites, they have reviewed our accessible customer service training, and given advice on our Workplace Accommodations Procedure.

Challenges recruiting and maintaining municipal AACs

Recruiting for a municipal AAC has proven to be a challenging task for Grey County and its local municipalities. These are volunteer committees and it can be difficult to recruit enough interested members, specifically members who identify themselves as having disabilities. Recruitment is made more difficult when Grey County and the local municipalities compete for membership. When calls go out for new members at the start of each term, or to replace members throughout the term, very few applications are received and it isn't uncommon to require multiple advertising cycles to recruit a qualified applicant. The process is time consuming for staff and ad costs can become significant.

Once committees are established, staff coordinate regular meetings to review the above mentioned matters for AAC feedback and advice. Coordinating these meetings can be difficult too as committee members may have jobs with conflicting schedules or their level of individual ability may limit their independence and ability participate in a meeting.

These challenges are not unique to the County and each municipality is in a unique position in terms of AAC function and overall compliance with accessibility legislation. Also, with Grey County's continued growth, some municipalities are getting closer to the 10,000-resident threshold and will soon require formal committees.

Earlier this year County staff contacted the CAOs and Clerks at each of the local municipalities surveying them to see if they would be interested in creating a joint AAC for the entire county. Five municipalities were quick to indicate they would be interested in the County playing a larger role in the coordination of a joint committee. Some local municipalities already have well-established AACs and may be less interested in a joint committee.

Benefits of a joint AAC

Some of the main benefits of a joint municipal AAC include:

- Consistent AAC input across the county
- Greater opportunity to recruit qualified members
- Administrative support for local municipalities
- Pooled staff knowledge and resources
- AAC agendas that are more rewarding and meaningful for committee volunteers
- Reduced costs for participating local municipalities
- Potential for the County's Accessibility Coordinator to become a bigger resource for local municipalities

Some upper tier municipalities in Ontario have already adopted joint accessibility advisory committees with their local municipalities, and neighbouring municipalities. Some examples include Perth County, Elgin and Middlesex Counties, Huron County, Lennox and Addington, Kitchener with Waterloo and the Region of Waterloo.

How it could work

There are two different models being considered for how a Grey County AAC could function. Both would see a County accessibility coordinator taking on the main administration and coordination role for the committee. The coordinator would work with the Clerk's department to schedule meetings and manage agendas and minutes.

Under one model the coordinator would be in direct contact with a staff lead for accessibility at each municipality. The staff lead would attend each joint AAC meeting as a non-voting member to present materials, participate in discussions and share knowledge. Each local staff member would be responsible for reporting the AACs recommendations back to their local council. Each municipality would still be responsible for managing their own accessibility compliance, such as bi-annual reporting, policy creation, budgeting etc.

Under a more comprehensive model, the Grey County accessibility coordinator would fulfill all of the responsibilities above. They would ensure compliance for all of the participating municipalities, update each Council, complete required reporting etc. This model has been adopted by Perth County (including the City of Stratford) and the counties of Elgin and Middlesex.

Other considerations

- Additional staff resources will be required to fulfill the AAC coordinator responsibilities. The amount of resourcing is dependent on which delivery model is chosen and the number of municipalities that chose to participate.
- Terms of reference will need to be developed that is agreeable to all participating parties.
 - Committee membership will need to be considered, such as number of members and representation from each participating municipality.
 - Having political representation from each municipality on the committee is unrealistic.
 - Number of public members needed to fulfil the committees role
- Direction needs to be given soon to allow time to prepare for recruitment of committee members for the 2019-2022 term.
- More dedicated resources for Accessibility would help make Grey County services more inclusive. Staff will be more knowledgeable of the AODA and the ODA as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code. Being public sector, we have a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship and are at a higher risk of human rights complaints if our services and spaces are not accessible.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

Financial and Resource Implications

A joint municipal AAC would increase workload for County staff while reducing workload at the local level. Provision may need to be made in the 2019 budget to accommodate this change.

Relevant Consultation

Internal Kim Wingrove, Heather Morrison

External local municipalities, other county Accessibility staff members

Appendices and Attachments

None

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2018-2022
Inclusive Programs, Services and Spaces for All

This plan was created by Municipality of Grey Highlands staff in consultation with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Plan is available in alternate formats upon request such as print, electronic, plain text and verbal. Other formats may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, communication supports are also available upon request.

This multi-year plan is available online at www.greighighlands.ca

For more information about Grey Highlands' Accessibility initiatives, please contact Debbie Yip, Human Resources Manager at 519-986-2811, hr@greighighlands.ca or in person at:

Municipality of Grey Highlands
206 Toronto Street South
Unit 1
Markdale, ON
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Municipality of Grey Highlands' Commitment to Accessibility

The Municipality of Grey Highlands (Grey Highlands) is committed to providing programming and services that consider the diverse needs and abilities of the people we serve. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will guide Grey Highlands as we strive to provide services that go beyond compliance and improve the experiences of the public, staff and anyone who interacts with Grey Highlands.

A Background on Accessibility at Grey Highlands

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The AODA sets a roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. This is to be achieved through mandatory standards that public, private and not-for-profit organizations need to meet. Grey Highlands needs to meet the deadlines and requirements of the large public sector organization description under the act.

AODA Standards include:

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

In addition to the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, Grey Highlands must follow the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The OBC was recently updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces of buildings are accessible.

Consultation

Under the AODA, Grey Highlands is sometimes required to consult with individuals, persons with disabilities and a municipal Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC). Grey Highlands is committed to working with these persons and its JAAC to ensure legislation is met.

Implementation

Accessibility is an important element of providing excellence in government service and aligns with Grey Highlands Strategic Plan. Providing accessible and inclusive programs and services is part of Grey Highlands' culture for customer service. Grey Highlands supports the Province's goals of making Ontario accessible by 2025 and will work within its means to meet all requirements of accessibility legislation and to eliminate barriers in our services and workplaces. These include barriers that are: physical, attitudinal, systemic, communication, and technological.

Structure

The Accessibility Coordinator refers to Grey Highlands' staff for accessibility. This position oversees compliance reporting as well as participates on the JAAC; however, all staff and departments have a role to play in the implementation of this plan and in ensuring the programs, services and materials Grey Highlands offers meet accessibility legislation.

The JAAC reports to Grey County's Committee of the Whole. The JAAC provides an advisory role and final decisions are the responsibility of Grey Highlands Council.

What is a disability?

Under the AODA, a "disability" is defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder;
- or, an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*.

This broad definition includes disabilities of different sensitivity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities which may be temporary or have effects that come and go over time.

Barriers

This multi-year plan will help Grey Highlands strategize ways to identify, address and prevent barriers that limit persons with a disability from fully participating in our programs and services.

Barriers are obstacles that prevent someone with a disability from doing a day-to-day activity that many people take for granted. The traditional definition of a barrier has been expanded beyond physical obstructions. There are several other categories of barriers to consider. These include:

Physical Barrier: Buildings, public spaces or features that restrict or impede physical access. Example: a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate a person in a motorized scooter.

Communication Barrier: An obstacle that prevents the transfer, processing or interpreting of information. Example: a print brochure with text too small to read, or a document written in a way that is too complicated to understand.

Attitudinal Barrier: Prejudgments and assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Example: assuming all visually impaired persons can read Braille or treating a support person as if they are your client.

Technological Barrier: When technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. Example: a website that doesn't provide for increased text sizes.

Systemic Barrier: Policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. Example: requiring a valid driver's licence for a position prevents a person with visual impairment from applying for the job.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Grey Highlands Council and staff members, on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in municipal services, programs and spaces. The committee meets approximately four times per year plus additional meetings and consultation as required.

Our Progress on the AODA Regulations

The following pages outline our accomplishments and our commitments over the next five years in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas: **Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.**

There are also general requirements that apply across all the accessibility standards.

General Requirements

Procurement: People with disabilities will be treated equitably with respect to the procurement, use and benefit of municipal services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, and integration. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities. Furthermore, the Municipality will ensure that accessibility is integrated into all municipal initiatives, business practices, boards, committees and departments. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services or facilities, an explanation will be provided, upon request.

Reporting: Reports will be shared with Grey Highlands' Council on the progress and implementation of this multi-year accessibility plan and this information will be posted on www.greyhighlands.ca and will be available in alternate formats upon request. The multi-year accessibility plan will continue to be updated once every five years with other updates made throughout the term as required. Reports will be filed bi-annually with the Accessibility Directorate.

Minutes of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will be provided to Council.

Training: All Grey Highlands' employees and volunteers receive mandatory accessibility training. Everyone will receive general training on accessibility which will include legislation, requirements (AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Human Rights Code) and customer service training. Staff will also receive necessary job-specific training to ensure their day-to-day work is accessible. Staff and department heads will have the responsibility of staying up to date with changes within their designated fields (example: a web designer taking WCAG training). The Accessibility Coordinator is available to provide additional support as needed.

All staff receive accessibility training during orientation. Additional job-specific training is provided on a case-by-case basis as necessary. For example, all staff who will create documents for the Municipality will receive accessible document training in conjunction with training on Grey Highlands' document management system.

2018-2022 Goals:

1. Improvements can be made to better identify which staff receive job-specific training and to identify more opportunities for staff development.
2. Consider implementing lunch and learn style refresher training for staff.

Feedback: Grey Highlands is always open to suggestions about ways to improve accessibility of our programs and services. The public is encouraged to share their comments by contacting us in person at the address below, by calling 519-986-2811, emailing [info@ greyhighlands.ca](mailto:info@greyhighlands.ca) or by mail to:

Municipality of Grey Highlands
Attention: Debbie Yip, Human Resources Manager
206 Toronto Street South
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NOC 1H0

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

Our Commitment: Continue to provide staff with the training they need to provide high-quality accessible service to people of all abilities who access Grey Highlands' programs and services. To design and provide programs and services that consider accessibility and respect the dignity and independence of the people we serve.

Progress: Grey Highlands trains all new employees on accessibility and the Accessible Customer Service Standard as part of mandatory orientation. Public facilities are designed with accessibility in mind and major updates to the facilities have improved. Grey Highlands continues to listen to feedback to find ways to improve the accessibility of our programs and services.

2018-2022 Goals

1. Provide refresher training to staff about accessible customer service.
2. Hire a Customer Service Coordinator to evaluate and recommend changes to providing exceptional customer service.

Information and Communications Standard

Our Commitment: Grey Highlands is committed to providing information and communications about our programs and services in an accessible manner to people of all abilities.

Our Progress: Grey Highlands follows accessible document design principles and ensures procured design services are accessible. All public documents are made electronically accessible to the best of our ability. Where necessary, documents can be made available upon request at no expense to the requestor. Grey Highlands' website is designed to the WCAG 2.0. Grey Highlands is also committed to producing information in plain language and has provided opportunities for staff to improve their writing skills.

2018-2022 Goals

1. Arrange opportunities for plain language training for staff on an annual basis.
2. Web development staff continue to stay informed of WCAG regulations and attend training opportunities.
3. Ensure all digital media, such as videos or podcasts, produced by Grey Highlands are fully accessible.

Employment Standard

Our Commitment: Grey Highlands is an equal opportunity employer providing inclusive and accessible recruitment and employment practices.

Progress: Grey Highlands continues to meet the requirements of the Employment Standard. Accommodation is available at all points in the recruitment process at the request of the applicant. Grey Highlands works with staff with disabilities to develop accommodation plans.

2018-2022

1. Update list of all staff who require assistance exiting the workplace during an emergency to ensure it is accurate. Modify and create plans as required.
2. Develop a review process for new job postings to ensure they are free of systemic barriers.
3. Ensure Human Resources staff remain informed of any updates to the Employment Standard and policies are kept up to date.

Transportation Standard

Our Commitment: If Grey Highlands begins providing public transportation services, the municipality is committed to providing accessible services that meet all provincial legislation.

Progress: Grey Highlands does not currently provide a public transportation program, nor does it license taxicabs as regulated under the Transportation Standard.

Design of Public Spaces

Our Commitment: Grey Highlands' will ensure that public properties and facilities meet the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces standard as well as the Ontario Building Code.

Maintenance of Public Spaces: Grey Highlands will reasonably maintain public spaces and accessible elements of all accessible trails, playgrounds, paths of travel and outdoor eating areas. See *Appendix A*.

Our Progress: Grey Highlands continues to design public spaces with accessibility in mind and refers designs and drawings to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for input and advice.

2018-2022

1. Improve documentation and continually update maintenance procedures for Grey Highlands' facilities in respect to the Design of Public Spaces Standard.
2. Ensure new structures are built with accessibility in mind and continue consulting with the JAAC about new builds.
3. Consider implementing other accessibility improvements as recommended by the JAAC or public.
4. Install an elevator, create an entrance ramp and accessible co-ed bathroom at the Kimberly Hall.
5. Relocate flood room door to prevent customers from crossing ice and sloped floor.

Ongoing Review of this Plan

Ongoing review and feedback are important for this plan to stay effective. Grey Highlands will continue to collect feedback and implement changes that will enhance the accessibility of its services. Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on this plan and accessibility matters in general.

Additionally, this plan will be reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator annually and annual status reports will be provided to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Grey Highlands Council.



Appendix A: Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Grey Highlands has procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public places. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Municipality include:

- Accessible parking
- Exterior paths of travel (walkways, sidewalks, stairs, ramps etc. that fall outside of the Ontario Building Code)
- Service counters
- Recreational trails and lookouts
- Others?

Maintenance Procedures

The Facilities Manager is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of accessible elements. Preventative maintenance schedules will be developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and will outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable.

Notices of service interruption will inform the public of any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its duration and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place such as a front entrance as well as on the Grey Highlands' website if circumstances require it.

Accessible elements of public spaces and buildings will be inspected on a regular basis. Elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to Senior Management. The manager will develop a plan to correct the defect. If other staff members discover issues with accessible elements, or receive feedback from the public about issues, they will notify the Facilities Manager.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2018-2022

Inclusive Programs, Services and Spaces for All

Adopted by Grey County Council on August 9, 2018.

This plan was created by Grey County staff in consultation with the Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Plan is available in alternate formats upon request such as print, electronic, plain text and verbal. Other formats may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, communication supports are also available upon request.

This multi-year plan is available online at www.Grey.ca/accessibility.

For more information about Grey County's Accessibility initiatives, please contact Rob Hatten, Communications Manager, at rob.hatten@grey.ca, call 519-372-0219 ext.1235, or in person at:

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Grey County's Commitment to Accessibility

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AODA Standards include:

- Customer Service
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In addition to the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard, Grey County must follow the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The OBC was recently updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces of buildings are accessible.

Consultation

Under the AODA, Grey County is sometimes required to consult with individuals, persons with disabilities and a municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Grey County is committed to working with these persons and its AAC to ensure legislation is met.

Implementation

Accessibility is an important element of providing excellence in government service and aligns with the third goal of Grey County's Corporate Strategic Plan (2017-2019). Providing accessible and inclusive programs and services is part of Grey County's culture for customer service. Grey County supports the Province's goals of making

Ontario accessible by 2025 and will work within its means to meet all requirements of accessibility legislation and to eliminate barriers in our services and workplaces. These include barriers that are: physical, attitudinal, systemic, communication, and technological.

Structure

The Accessibility Coordinator refers to Grey County's staff lead for accessibility. This position oversees compliance reporting as well as the AAC; however, all staff and departments have a role to play in the implementation of this plan and in ensuring the programs, services and materials Grey County offers meet accessibility legislation.

The AAC reports to Grey County's Committee of the Whole. The AAC provides an advisory role and final decisions are the responsibility of Grey County Council.

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- a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder;
- or, an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*.

This broad definition includes disabilities of different sensitivity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities which may be temporary or have effects that come and go over time.

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Systemic Barrier: Policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. Example: requiring a valid driver's licence for a position prevents a person with visual impairment from applying for the job.

Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Grey County Council and County staff members, as well as participating member municipalities, on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in County services, programs and spaces. The committee meets approximately four times per year plus additional meetings and consultation as required.

The Terms of Reference for the AAC can be found at the following link: [AAC Terms of Reference](#)

More information about the Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee, including current membership, can be found online at www.Grey.ca/Accessibility.

Our Progress on the AODA Regulations

The following pages outline our accomplishments and our commitments over the next five years in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas: **Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.**

There are also general requirements that apply across all of the accessibility standards.

General Requirements

Procurement: People with disabilities will be treated equitably with respect to the procurement, use and benefit of County services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, and integration. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities. Furthermore, the County will ensure that accessibility is integrated into all County initiatives, business practices, boards, committees, departments and divisions. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services or facilities, an explanation will be provided, upon request.

Reporting: Reports will be shared with Grey County Council on the progress and implementation of this multi-year accessibility plan and this information will be posted on www.Grey.ca and will be available in alternate formats upon request. The multi-year accessibility plan will continue to be updated once every five years with other updates made throughout the term as required. Reports will be filed bi-annually with the Accessibility Directorate.

To date, reporting to Council has lapsed. Grey County's accessibility coordinator will create a plan to provide an accessibility report in the final quarter of each year.

Training: All Grey County employees and volunteers receive mandatory accessibility training. Everyone will receive general training on accessibility which will include legislation, requirements (AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Human Rights Code) and customer service training. Staff will also receive necessary job-specific training to ensure their day-to-day work is accessible. Staff and department heads will have the responsibility of staying up to date with changes within their designated fields (example: a web designer taking WCAG training). The Accessibility Coordinator is available to provide additional support as needed.

All staff receive accessibility training during orientation. Additional job-specific training is provided on a case-by-case basis as necessary. For example, all staff who will create

documents for the County will receive accessible document training in conjunction with training on Grey County's document management system.

2018-2022 Goals:

1. Improvements can be made to better identify which staff receive job-specific training and to identify more opportunities for staff development.
2. Consider implementing lunch and learn style refresher training for staff.

Feedback: Grey County is always open to suggestions about ways to improve accessibility of our programs and services. The public is encouraged to share their comments by contacting us online through the Contact Us web form, in person at any Grey County location, by calling 1-800-567-4739, emailing communications@grey.ca or by mail to:

Grey County
Attention Rob Hatten
595 9th Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 3E3

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

Our Commitment: To continue providing staff with the training they need to provide high-quality accessible service to people of all abilities who access Grey County programs and services. To design and provide programs and services that consider accessibility and respect the dignity and independence of the people we serve.

Progress: Grey County trains all new employees on accessibility and the Accessible Customer Service Standard as part of mandatory orientation. Public facilities are designed with accessibility in mind and major updates to the Grey County Administration Building have improved accessibility through: more accessible parking, accessible service counters, a proper elevator, wider hallways, a universal washroom and more. Grey County continues to listen to feedback to find ways to improve the accessibility of our programs and services.

2018-2022 Goals

1. Provide refresher training to staff about accessible customer service.
2. Seize opportunities to make Grey Roots Museum, and more specifically Moreston Heritage Village, more accessible to the public and consider a 'Stop Gap' style of ramp system.
3. Implement an assisted listening solution for the Grey County Council Chambers.

Information and Communications Standard

Our Commitment: Grey County is committed to providing information and communications about our programs and services in an accessible manor to people of all abilities.

Our Progress: Grey County follows accessible document design principles and ensures procured design services are accessible. All public documents are made electronically accessible to the best of our ability. Where necessary, documents can be made available upon request at no expense to the requestor. Grey County's website is designed to the WCAG 2.0. Grey County is also committed to producing information in plain language and has provided opportunities for staff to improve their writing skills.

2018-2022 Goals

1. Arrange opportunities for plain language training for staff on an annual basis.
2. Web development staff continue to stay informed of WCAG regulations and attend training opportunities.

3. Ensure all digital media, such as videos or podcasts, produced by Grey County are fully accessible.

Employment Standard

Our Commitment: Grey County is an equal opportunity employer providing inclusive and accessible recruitment and employment practices.

Progress: Grey continues to meet the requirements of the Employment Standard. Accommodation is available at all points in the recruitment process at the request of the applicant. Grey County works with staff with disabilities to develop accommodation plans.

2018-2022

1. Update list of all staff who require assistance exiting the workplace during an emergency to ensure it is accurate. Modify and create plans as required.
2. Develop a review process for new job postings to ensure they are free of systemic barriers.
3. Ensure Human Resources staff remain informed of any updates to the Employment Standard and policies are kept up to date.

Transportation Standard

Our Commitment: In the event Grey County begins providing public transportation services, the County is committed to providing accessible services that meet all provincial legislation.

Progress: Grey County does not currently provide a public transportation program nor does it license taxicabs as regulated under the Transportation Standard. Rural transportation continues to be a popular political and social topic in the community and Grey County has been involved in a pilot transportation program. Grey County works with a lead agency to provide the actual transportation services of this pilot. This lead agency, and any other that could be selected in the future, would provide accessible service and meet all legislation.

1. Ensure Accessibility is considered with the creation of any transportation service by including comments and participation from the Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee.
2. Consider opportunities for Grey County to play a larger role in making affordable accessible transportation more available in the County.

The Built Environment (Design of Public Spaces)

Our Commitment: Grey County's public properties and facilities are places where the public will ensure all newly created and majorly renovated buildings and outdoor public spaces meet the requirements of the Built Environment standard as well as the Ontario Building Code.

Maintenance of Public Spaces: Grey County will reasonably maintain public spaces and accessible elements of all accessible trails, paths of travel and outdoor eating areas. Grey County does not currently own any playgrounds. See *Appendix A*.

Our Progress: Grey County continues to design public spaces with accessibility in mind and refers designs and drawings to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for input and advice.

2018-2022

1. Improve documentation and continually update maintenance procedures for Grey County facilities in respect to the Design of Public Spaces Standard.
2. Ensure new structures at Moreston Heritage Village are built with accessibility in mind and continue consulting with the AAC about new builds.
3. Add an automatic door to the Heritage Room meeting room at the Grey County Administration Building.
4. Consider implementing other accessibility improvements as recommended by the AAC or public.

Other Accessibility Projects and Goals: 2018-2022

The Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee has identified a number of projects outside of the scope of Provincial legislation that will improve accessibility of our communities. Below are projects that will be considered during the plan period.

1. **Build a map of accessible municipal buildings and their features that includes all nine member municipalities.**

A map showing locations and hours of accessible facilities will help both residents and visitors to the area plan their daily excursion. Access to features like accessible washrooms is critical to people who need them and this information is not always readily available. Grey County will follow the Municipality of Meaford's lead and consult with GIS (Geographical Information System) staff and Tourism staff to create a map of public facilities.

2. **Improve support from the County for local municipalities.**

Grey County will explore opportunities to collaborate with local municipalities to improve accessibility across all municipal services with a more consistent approach to accessibility.

3. Develop an annual accessibility budget for internal projects.

Having a small annual budget available to make improvements to programs and services would be beneficial. Unused funds could be added to a reserve for larger projects in the future.

4. Have the AAC become more involved in community planning and site plan reviews.

Site plans for developments are typically the responsibility of the local municipality and Grey County's AAC does not have an opportunity comment. The AAC can look at plans from a unique perspective and provide valuable input to make developments more inclusive and welcoming.

Ongoing Review of this Plan

Ongoing review and feedback are important for this plan to stay effective. Grey County will continue to collect feedback and implement changes that will enhance the accessibility of its services. Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on this plan and accessibility matters in general.

Additionally, this plan will be reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator annually and annual status reports will be provided to the Grey County Accessibility Advisory Committee and Grey County Council.

Appendix A: Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Grey County has procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public places. Accessible public space elements maintained by the County include:

- Accessible parking
- Exterior paths of travel (walkways, sidewalks, stairs, ramps etc. that fall outside of the Ontario Building Code)
- Service counters
- Recreational trails and lookouts

Maintenance Procedures

Maintenance managers at each Grey County public facility are responsible for maintaining accessible elements. Preventative maintenance schedules will be developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and will outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable.

Notices of service interruption will inform the public of any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its duration and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place such as a front entrance as well as on the Grey County website if circumstances require it.

Accessible elements of public spaces and buildings will be inspected on a regular basis. Elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the onsite maintenance manager. The manager will develop a plan to correct the defect. If other staff members discover issues with accessible elements, or receive feedback from the public about issues, they will notify the onsite maintenance manager.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.