



Committee Report

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| To: | Chair Sholtz and Members of the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee |
| Committee Date: | September 14, 2022 |
| Subject / Report No: | CCR-JAAC-10-22 |
| Title: | Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 - 2027 |
| Prepared by: | Kathie Nunno, Contract and Accessibility Coordinator |
| Reviewed by: | Tara Warder, Clerk; Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO |
| Lower Tier(s) Affected: | Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, Hanover, Southgate, The Blue Mountains, and West Grey |
| Status: | |

Recommendation

1. That report **CCR-JAAC-10-22** be received; and
2. That the **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2027** be adopted as presented.

Executive Summary

Grey County is legislated to completely review and update its multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years.

The draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2027, presented with this report for review, comment, and consideration, is a new document with a present and future focus.

Background and Discussion

Grey County Council adopted the first accessibility plan on October 4, 2005. The first multi-year plan was adopted November 5, 2013, with the 2018 – 2022 plan being adopted September 13, 2018. As the multi-year accessibility plans are intended to be living documents, the prior plan has been reviewed and updated annually.

The 2023 – 2027 plan provides a clean, fresh approach. It no longer seemed useful to include much of the historical progress and requirements in this version as they are still available in the prior plans. As well, progress toward the plan's goals is detailed in the annual progress reports.

Discussions with Grey County's departments for the 2022 progress report laid the foundation for the plan's five-year update.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.1

O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.

Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7

Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19 – Ontario.ca

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial or resource implications currently. Future amendments to the plan may include budgetary considerations. There is potential for some accessibility-related projects to fall within specific departmental budgets between 2023 and 2027.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Senior Management Team, Administrative Standards Committee
- External (list)

Appendices and Attachments

Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2027



Accessibility

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2023-2027 Inclusive Programs, Services and Spaces for All

Adopted by Grey County Council on

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Grey County's Commitment to Accessibility

Grey County is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services to people of all abilities in a timely manner.

Progress

Continuous improvement in accessibility and inclusivity is a Grey County priority. Every year a progress report on the multi-year accessibility plan is presented to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Grey County Committee of the Whole for consideration. These reports are posted on [grey.ca/accessibility-information](https://www.grey.ca/accessibility-information).

Making our world accessible:

- Improves quality of life.
- Creates more independence and social integration.
- Leads to better health.
- Improves communication.
- Brings people together.
- Increases economic potential.

Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (GCJAAC) provides Grey County Council, staff, and participating member municipalities with advice about accessibility requirements and comments on site plans. The committee meets approximately four times per year, plus additional meetings and consultation as required.

The Terms of Reference for the GCJAAC 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 <https://www.grey.ca/accessibility-information>

2023 – 2027 Goals

- Review and update the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

AODA and IASR

(Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) and (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation)

Along with general requirements that apply to all accessibility standards, the IASR has 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 accessibility standards.

Information and Communications Standard

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

2023 – 2027 Goals

- Broaden communication: find and connect with the stakeholders.
- Improve wayfinding signage (Age-Friendly Community Action Plan).

Feedback

Grey County is always open to suggestions about ways to improve the 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 519 372-0219 x 1223, emailing accessibility@grey.ca, or by mail to:

Grey County
Attention: Kathie Nunno
595 9th Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 3E3

There is an Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form which is attached as a resource to the [Accessible Customer Service Policy](#).

2023 – 2027 Goals

- Increase corporate awareness about accessibility feedback.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports / Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information / Accessible Websites and Web Content

Grey County websites and documents inform how to request alternate formats.

2023-2027 Goals

- Arrange plain language training for appropriate staff.
- Arrange accessible document training in Word and PDF for appropriate staff.
- Update Grey County's corporate style guide for accessible documents.
- Consider accessibility when rolling out the Corporate Communications Strategy.
- Review GIS mapping tools for improved accessibility.

Employment Standard

The employment standard includes: Recruitment / 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. Grey County is an equal opportunity employer providing inclusive and accessible recruitment and employment practices.

2023-2027 Goals

- Continue to prioritize accessible recruitment and employment practices.
- Update job descriptions to include accessibility requirements specific to each role.

Transportation Standard

Conventional Transportation

With funding from the Province of Ontario's Community Transportation Program, Grey County operates intercommunity transit routes. The local transportation company, Driverseat Owen Sound, was contracted to provide the Grey Transit Route ("GTR") service. Full compliance with accessibility legislation is anticipated by 2026.

Grey County is committed to providing conventional transportation that is compliant with legislation.

2023-2027 Goals

- Work with Driverseat (GTR Service Provider) to develop a conventional transit emergency preparedness and response policy.
- Work to make sure Grey County conventional transit is completely compliant with accessibility legislation.
- Make sure that any vehicles added to the service, either contracted by a third party or acquired by Grey County, meet the legislated technical requirements.
- Present Driverseat's Conventional Transit Accessibility Plan for annual review with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Built Environment (Design of Public Spaces)

Grey County meets or exceeds the requirements of the IASR Built Environment Standard and the Ontario Building Code. Grey County reasonably maintains public spaces and accessible elements of all accessible trails, outdoor eating areas, and paths of travel. Grey County does not currently own any playgrounds

2023-2027 Goals

- Improve documentation and continually update maintenance procedures and preventive maintenance schedules for Grey County facilities with respect to the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

- Make sure new structures at Moreston Heritage Village are built with accessibility in mind, and continue consulting with the GCJAAC about new builds.
- Add an automatic door to the Heritage Room meeting room at the Grey County Administration Building.
- Consider implementing other accessibility improvements as recommended by the GCJAAC or the public.
- Increase support to local municipalities to ensure planning applications/site plan submissions that include public spaces are presented to the GCJAAC for review and comment.
- Accessibility Coordinator and GCJAAC work with Planning Department staff to assist with accessibility in the following initiatives:
 - Healthy Communities
 - Recreational Trails Master Plan
 - Age-Friendly Community Action Plan
 - Healthy Development
- When redeveloping exterior paths of travel connected to County-owned bridges, Grey County Transportation staff will consult with the GCJAAC about the need for, design and placement of rest areas.

Customer Service Standard

Grey County continues to provide high-quality, accessible services to people of all abilities who access Grey County programs and services. Services are designed to provide programs that consider accessibility and respect everyone's dignity and independence.

2023-2027 Goals

- Phone system and auto attendant.
- Address barriers to providing inclusive childcare.
- Use MailChimp subscription service to send out notices of service interruption for all County functions.
- Continue to remove barriers by adding accessible features to housing units.
- Add push button door openers to the main doors at Grey Gables and Rockwood Terrace.
- Improve policies for routine maintenance of accessibility features and activation of distress buttons in universal washrooms.

Consultation

Under the AODA, Grey County is sometimes required to consult with individuals, persons with disabilities and a municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. Grey County is committed to working with persons with disabilities and its accessibility advisory committee.

Nothing About Us Without Us is a motto to promote awareness of the inclusion of persons with disabilities. When consultation occurs early in the process, there is time to consider suggested improvements to remove the barriers and challenges that people with disabilities encounter. Consultation is addressed throughout the legislation.

When we make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities, people of all abilities benefit.

2023-2027 Goals:

- Intentionally make consultation with people with disabilities part of the corporate culture.
- Improve communication with people of all abilities by finding and connecting with community groups and stakeholders.

Barriers

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 categories of barriers to consider. These include:

Physical Barrier: Buildings, public spaces or features that restrict, or impede physical access. Examples: a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate a person in a motorized scooter; lighting that is too bright or too dim; a very noisy/busy area; and obstacles preventing passage.

Communication Barrier: An obstacle that prevents the transfer, processing, or interpreting of information. Examples: a print brochure with text too small to read; a document that is confusing or too complicated.

Attitudinal Barrier: Judgement and assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Example: assuming all visually impaired persons can read Braille or talking with a support person instead of the client.

Technological Barrier: When technology doesn't support 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 license to apply for a job that doesn't involve driving prevents a person with a visual impairment from applying.

2023 – 2027 Goals:

- The Contract & Accessibility Coordinator will work with Grey County staff to identify barriers in all departments.
- Work toward removing barriers using SMART goals: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

- Create relationships with organizations and groups to identify and remove accessibility barriers.

General Requirements

Accessibility Policies

Grey County is committed to keeping policies current and available to the public.

Accessibility Plans

Grey County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was created by Grey County staff in consultation with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. It is a living document that is updated as needed. The plan is fully reviewed every five years.

Ongoing review and feedback are important for this plan to stay effective. Grey County continues 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.

This plan is reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator annually, and annual status reports are presented to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comment and to Grey County Council for consideration

This multi-year plan is available online at <http://www.grey.ca/accessibility-information>.

For more information about accessibility at Grey County, please contact:

Kathie Nunno
Contract & Accessibility Coordinator
accessibility@grey.ca
519-372-0219 ext.1223

The current and past plans are available in alternate formats upon request.

Procuring or Acquiring goods, Services, or Facilities

Grey County considers accessibility during procurement, use and benefit of County services, programs, goods, and facilities in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people of all abilities. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors, and other stakeholders. The County integrates accessibility into all County 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.

2023 – 2027 Goals:

- Update the Grey County Purchasing Policy to expand on procuring accessible goods, services, and facilities.

Self-Serve Kiosks

Grey County considers accessibility when designing, procuring, and acquiring self-serve kiosks.

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 also receive job-specific training. Staff and senior management are responsible for 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.

2023-2027 Goals:

- Review Accessible Customer Service Policy: 2024.
- Review Pets and Animals in the Workplace Policy: 2024.
- Improve identifying and delivering job-specific accessibility training.
- Roll out new software for staff training: 2022/23.
- Make it easy for the public to find Grey County policies.
- Review accessibility compliance and consideration when updating standard operating procedures and policies.

Other Accessibility Legislation

Ontario Municipal Elections

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.

- The municipal clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.
- The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

The Blind Persons Rights Act

Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7

Ontario Human Rights Code

Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19 - Ontario.ca

- Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods, and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

Ontario Planning Act

Grey County's Planning department supports accessibility and awareness of barriers as part of inclusive design in *Recolour Grey: Healthy Community & Residential Subdivision Guidelines*. It includes consideration for the diversity of housing units, accessibility for parks, open spaces and trail networks, age-friendly and family-friendly design highlighting AODA requirements for accessible spaces, and road design considering various forms of transportation.

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13

- Plans showing the location of all buildings and structures to be erected and showing the location of all facilities and works to be provided in conjunction therewith and of all facilities and works required under clause (7) conditions to approval of plans, including facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Drawings showing plan, elevation, and cross-section views for each building to be erected, except a building to be used for residential purposes containing fewer than 25 dwelling units, which drawings are sufficient to display facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

2023 – 2027 Goals

- Work with local municipalities to ensure appropriate applications are submitted to review and comment by the GCJAAC as legislated.

Other Accessibility Projects and Goals: 2023-2027

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

1. Increase accessibility awareness.

Promote awareness so inclusiveness and accessibility become part of corporate culture.

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

This project started during the last five-year accessibility plan but was interrupted by COVID. 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.

3. Improve accessibility support to 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 to— comment. The AAC can look at plans from a unique perspective and provide valuable input to make developments more inclusive and welcoming. Work with local municipalities to promote universal design and accessibility guidelines for site plan control.

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

Legislation requires that the multi-year accessibility plans include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces as well as procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

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.
- An outdoor eating area at Grey Roots Museum and Archive.
- Adult change table and elevator at the Grey County Administration Building.

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.