



Township of Georgian Bluffs

Multi-year Accessibility Plan

2019 – 2023



Georgian Bluffs Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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

This Plan is also available online at www.georgianbluffs.ca

For more information about the Township of Georgian Bluffs' Accessibility initiatives, please contact the Clerk at 519-376-2729 ext. 243, office@georgianbluffs.on.ca or in person at:

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Introduction

Disabilities affect people of all ages and background. Some people are born with one or more disabilities. Many others develop disabilities through illness, injury or aging. People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. Statistics Canada reports that approximately 1.8 million Ontarians have disabilities - about 13.5% of the population. Because disability tends to increase with age, it is estimated that 20% of the population will have disabilities by the year 2020. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on future prosperity for the Province. Municipal governments play an important role in the planning and development of communities: in our streets, parks, meeting places, programs, services, public buildings and elections.

From the initial legislation, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA), to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and associated regulations, the Province has set requirements for provincial and municipal governments, broader public sector organizations and private sector organizations to make their policies, programs and services accessible for all. The goal of the legislation is to achieve full accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025.

Both the ODA and the AODA require municipalities to create accessibility plans, and for municipalities with a population of 10,000 and over, establish accessibility advisory committees.

Established under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 161/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR), last updated in 2016, sets standards of accessibility to be met for the following areas:

- customer service
- transportation
- information and communications
- design of public places
- employment

Through adoption of a multi-year accessibility plan, the Township must address how it will identify and remove barriers to accessibility as required by the legislation.

The Township has the opportunity to demonstrate accessibility leadership within and outside of the municipality.



Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Through adoption of this 2019-2023 Multi-year Accessibility Plan, the Township of Georgian Bluffs renews its commitment to providing, to the greatest extent possible, municipal policies, services, programs and facilities that are accessible to residents, ratepayers and visitors of all abilities.

The Township recognizes and confirms its commitment to the core principles of Province of Ontario accessibility legislation:

- Dignity – Service is provided in a way that allows persons with disabilities to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.
- Independence – All people shall have the opportunity do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- Integration – Service is provided in a way that all persons with disabilities can benefit from the same service, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as other customers, unless alternative measures are necessary to enable persons with disabilities to access services.
- Equal Opportunity –Persons with disabilities have opportunities to access services, programs and facilities equal to those opportunities given to others.



Achievements from the 2016-2018 Accessibility Plan Update

Focus	Strategy	Accomplishments
Focus on Asset Management and Legislative Compliance	Strategy 2 – Continue to review legislative compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility Commitment Statement adopted by Council in April, 2016• Published agendas, minutes and other documents include statement regarding availability in other formats upon request• Member of Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
	Strategy 3 – Include accessibility as a component for all communication documentation	Strategy 1 – Review training programs
Focus on Training, Policy Review and Grants	Strategy 2 – Review existing accessibility policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training materials developed and rolled out for staff – recently added as part of day one orientation for all new staff• Accessibility training for Council members included as part of joint orientation program presented by Grey County• Employment standards requirement – notice of accommodation for applicants included on website and all job postings, inclusion of accommodation and return to work policies, plans and procedures in HR Manual
Focus on Elections and next Multi-year plan	Strategy 1 – Provide advice regarding accessibility for the 2018 municipal election	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• utilized online and telephone voting (improved accessibility over other methods)• created and implemented 2018 municipal election accessibility plan



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Focus	Strategy	Accomplishments
Other accomplishments		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upgrade to Council horseshoe in Council Chambers to improve accessibility• Joint project with Order of Good Cheer to establish fully accessible washroom facilities at Sarawak Family Park – completion anticipated 2019



Strategies for 2019-2023

All measures taken to implement the strategies that follow will be brought to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for comment and feedback. This document will also be made available on the Township website (and in alternate formats as requested) and feedback invited from the public. IASR Standards for Transportation are not reflected in this plan, since the Township does not provide any transportation services, and does not regulate (license) taxis, limousines, or other transportation providers.

1. Standards Area – Customer Service

Strategy 1 Update and Improve Existing Accessibility Policies

Specific Policies include:

- Accessible Customer Service, including specific reference to guide dogs and service animals,
- Service Disruption and Customer Feedback.

Strategy 2 Improve Availability of Accessible documents

- Investigate means of providing traditionally inaccessible documents – e.g. plans and drawings – in more accessible formats.
- Continuously update website to improve accessibility. (also under Standards Area 2)

Strategy 3 Update Training to Reflect Policy and Service Improvements

- Provide in-person and online training opportunities for staff and Council members, including experiential training.
- Develop printed Accessible Customer Service information for contractors and third-parties providing service on behalf of the Township.



2. Standards Area – Information and Communications

Strategy 1 – Improve Accessibility to Council and Committee Agendas, Minutes and Meetings

- Implement meeting management system
- Provide for video streaming of Council and Committee meetings
- Improve audio-visual systems in Council Chambers through update and enhancement of existing system.

Strategy 2 – Improve mechanisms for Customer Feedback and Notice of Service Disruption

- through implementation of policy developed under Area 1, Strategy 1, improve forms and processes, including online (website), in person, and via email.

Strategy 3 – Update Township Website to Conform with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 Level AA

- Continuous improvement, with the assistance of Township's website service provider.

Strategy 4 – Review Emergency Management Plan

- reconfirm accessibility of Emergency Management Documents
- ensure persons with disabilities are accounted for in Emergency Management Plan

3. Standards Area – Employment

Strategy 1 – Review and Update Required Policies

Policies include:

- Accommodations during recruitment processes,
- Accommodations for employees with disabilities,
- Performance Management,
- Return to Work.



4. Standards Area – Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

Strategy 1 – Recreation & Trails Master Plan

- Ensure developed plan conforms with IASR
- Present proposed Master Plan to Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for input and feedback
- Seek specific input from residents and ratepayers with disabilities

Strategy 2 – Implement Full Accessibility for Sarawak Family Park

- Washroom facility redesign and rebuild underway
- Enhance paths of travel, access to and from parking, picnic facilities and beach for full accessibility

Ongoing Review

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed within one year of adoption by Council of the Township of Georgian Bluffs, and annually thereafter. As part of each annual review, progress reports regarding implementation will be presented to Council, and published on the Township website for public review, comment and input.