



Corporation of the Township of Horton
2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

People with disabilities make up a significant part of our community. It has been projected that by 2036, twenty percent of all Canadians will have some form of disability. In response to these statistics, the Ontario Legislature adopted the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005 with the goal of making Ontario accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025.

To achieve this goal, the AODA was implemented and includes requirements that all organizations must meet, with deadlines specific to an organization's type and size.

The AODA is made up of five standards, including:

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Township of Horton is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan every five (5) years. This plan outlines the Township of Horton's strategy to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, and meet its requirements under the IASR.

In accordance with the requirements set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the Township Horton will:

- Post the accessibility plan on its website www.hortontownship.ca.
- Provide the plan in an accessible format upon request.
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.
- Prepare an annual status report and post it on the Township of Horton's website.

Township of Horton's Commitment to Accessibility

The Township of Horton is committed to eliminating barriers (where possible) and improving accessibility, for persons with disabilities, in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. The Township is also committed to modifying service delivery, programming, and other workplace processes, policies, and procedures to ensure equal access for all residents and customers. The Township recognizes the diverse needs of our residents and customers and will continue to make every effort to provide the same access and rights to municipal services as all other members of our community, for those persons with disabilities.

As the Act envisions an accessible Ontario by 2025, this plan spans a 5-year timeframe from 2024 to 2028. The purpose of this plan is to provide a status update on the Township's progress in the field of accessibility and to highlight areas where the Township will endeavor to improve upon in coming years. Each section will provide an overview of the relevant requirements and

the Township's compliance, as well as a reference to any related By-law, policy, or procedure that the Township has enacted. Appendix A, attached, includes the Accessibility Successes from the 2019-2023 Plan.

The Township of Horton has determined the current level of accessibility for each municipal building and property and noted what needs to be completed in order to bring these up to regulations. These items are noted in Appendix B (Further Goals).

Municipal Highlights

The Corporation of the Township of Horton was established January 1st, 1850.

Horton Township offers a unique blend of country living with nearby urban centers. Our Township borders the Township of Renfrew and is only 45 minutes away from Ottawa, Ontario – Canada's capital. Residents enjoy the tranquility and privacy that rural properties provide and have access to the modern-day conveniences such as shopping, hospitals, theatres, schools, churches, and restaurants.

The Ottawa River, the CN trail, the Algonquin Trail, the covered outdoor rink, and the local Community Centre are just a few of the recreational opportunities available within the Township.

Come and experience the friendly community atmosphere that Horton Township offers and enjoy "rural living within urban reach".

Horton Township owned buildings and properties include:

1. Municipal Office
2. Fire Station
3. Public Works Garage
4. Community Centre
5. Boat Launch
6. Landfill Site

Barriers

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to prevent, identify and remove barriers. Barriers are obstacles that stand in the way of people with disabilities from being able to do many of the day-to-day activities that most people take for granted. A barrier is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. The traditional definition of a barrier used in the context of accessibility has been expanded to include obstacles beyond physical boundaries. There are several other categories of barriers to consider, such as:

Environmental Barriers: features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate entry by person in a motorized scooter.

Communication Barriers: obstacles with processing, transmitting or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read or documents not available in alternative formats.

Attitudinal Barriers: prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, if all visually impaired persons can read Braille.

Technological Barriers: when technology cannot be or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.

Systemic Barriers: barriers within an organization's policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, listing a driver's license as an employment qualification for an office position may prohibit persons with visual impairments from applying.

Summary of Progress on AODA and IASR Standards and Regulations

The following is a summary of the Township of Horton's progress in terms of complying with the AODA's various legislative standards.

Accessible Customer Service Regulation (ACSR)

The Township of Horton is compliant with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation

1. Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Township developed and recently updated an Accessible Customer Service (ACSR) Policy, which is available on the Township's website.

2. Service Animals and Support Persons

The Township permits service animals and support persons to accompany persons with disabilities.

3. Temporary Disruptions

The Township continues to provide the public with notice of planned service disruptions at Township facilities and of Township services. These notices are posted on the Township of Horton's website, social media channels and details the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption will last and alternative ways for customers to access goods, services, and facilities during the disruption.

4. Training

The Township continues to provide training to new hires, volunteers, and all other necessary personnel, as per the regulations. Annual training refreshers are also provided to all employees.

5. Feedback Process

The Township has developed a feedback process and continues to seek feedback on issues regarding accessibility. The feedback form can be found on the Township of Horton's website. Feedback will be considered as part of the continuous improvement of the Township's accessibility efforts. Individuals are also able to contact the Township of Horton with any feedback through the "Contact/Feedback" form on the Township's Website. If individuals are not able to utilize online services, the Township of Horton also receives and responds to feedback by phone, in person, and by regular mail.

6. Documents

The Township provides requested documents in accessible formats, upon request. There is no charge for providing a document in an accessible format.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) & Information and Communication Standards

The Township of Horton is compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation in the following aspects:

1. Policy Development

The Township has developed and implemented an Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, adopted in 2015 and updated in 2023.

2. Multi-Year Accessibility Plans & Annual Status Report

The Township of Horton will prepare a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlining a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address any current and future requirements of the AODA. The Township of Horton is committed and will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan, post the information on the Township's website, and will provide it in accessible alternative formats upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

3. Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

As stated in the IASR Policy, when procuring goods, services, or facilities, the Township shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the Township shall provide an explanation, upon request.

4. Training

As stated in the IASR Policy, All Township employees, volunteers and third parties providing goods and services on the Township's behalf shall be required to undergo

training on the requirements of the AODA accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place as soon as it is practicable and upon completion, the Township shall keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

5. Self Service Kiosks

This section does not currently apply to the Township of Horton. Any future self-service kiosks will be accessible, if installed.

6. Website

The Township of Horton is committed to making information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities. The information provided and the means to communicate are key to delivering programs and services to the public.

the Township of Horton implemented a website refresh in 2020 which continues to meet the WCAG 2.0 (Level AA) Standards. This new website is intended to be more user-friendly with a new search feature and pop-up feature for urgent and emergency notifications. Township staff also continues to update content and add newly accessible documents to the website as required.

7. Accessible Formats & Communications Supports

Some staff members have been trained on how to create accessible documents and the Township has utilized new software to assist in the preparation of accessible PDF documents for the municipal website and will endeavor to train more staff members on the creation of accessible documents as appropriate. Various online forms and payment options are available on the Township's website and staff are reviewing other areas where online payments can be implemented.

8. Emergency Procedures, Plans, or Public Safety Information

The Township's public emergency information can and will be provided in an accessible format upon request. The Township will venture to create all new public safety information in accessible document formats.

Employment Standards

1. Recruitment

The Township of Horton shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities:

- During the recruitment process when job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process;
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Township of Horton shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability;

- Notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

All Job Postings indicate the following statement:

“The Township of Horton is an equal opportunity employer. The Township is committed to providing a barrier-free workplace. If accommodation is required during the selection or interview process, it will be available upon request. The job posting is available in an accessible format upon request. We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.”

2. Selection

The Township of Horton is committed to maintaining an accessible selection process. Applicants selected to proceed to the interview phase in the selection process will be notified of the availability of accommodations upon request.

3. Notice to Successful Applicants

The Township of Horton has amended the standard offer letter for successful applicants to include a statement outlining the Township’s policies to accommodate employees with disabilities. The Township also incorporates this notification requirement into the verbal job offer.

4. Informing Employees of Supports

The Township of Horton will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that consider an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability. The Township will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that considers an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability.

5. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

In addition, and where an employee with a disability requests it, the Township of Horton will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job;
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace; and
- consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

6. Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee’s disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and the Township is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee’s consent, to the person designated to aid. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee’s overall

accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Township reviews its general emergency response plan.

7. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

The Township of Horton is committed to documenting a process for developing individual accommodation plans, as well as providing these plans to employees as required. A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities. If requested, these plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information.

8. Return to Work Process

The Township shall have in place a documented “Return to Work” process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. This “Return to Work” process shall outline the steps that the Township shall take to facilitate the return to work.

9. Performance Management, Career Development, and Redeployment

The Township shall consider the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, performance management and when considering redeployment.

Transportation Standards

The Township of Horton does not currently provide conventional transportation services (bus, taxi-cab services, etc.). Therefore, this section of the IASR does not apply to the Township. However, Council does provide an annual contribution to the Sunshine Coach Service in Renfrew that provides accessible transportation for people in Renfrew and area who are living with disabilities that render the use of conventional modes of public transportation inappropriate to their needs.

Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standards addresses accessibility planning in a range of public spaces, including trails/beach access routes; outdoor public eating areas; play spaces; accessible parking; exterior paths of travel including sidewalks; accessible pedestrian signals; service counters; fixed queuing lines; waiting areas and the emergency and preventative maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces. These standards only apply to new construction or the redevelopment of existing public spaces and buildings.

1. Recreation Trails and Beach Access Routes

The Township is committed to creating and maintaining accessible trails on any new construction and major changes to existing features, as per the regulation. The Township of Horton does not have any beach access routes.

2. Outdoor Public Eating Areas

The Township of Horton currently does not have any outdoor public eating areas; therefore, this section is not applicable.

3. Outdoor Play Spaces

The Township of Horton currently does not have any outdoor play spaces; therefore, this section is not applicable.

4. Exterior Paths of Travel

The Township of Horton currently does not have any exterior paths of travel; therefore, this section is not applicable.

5. Parking

The Township of Horton is committed to creating accessible parking lots that are new or redeveloped, as per the regulation. In 2017, the Township rehabilitated and upgraded the Municipal Office and Fire Department Parking Lot, to include 2 accessible parking spaces. Points of entry and emergency exits are curbed or at grade level, improving accessibility in and out of the office. The Horton Community Centre has designated accessible parking near the main entrance. Parking at the Horton Boat Launch is at grade level to the dock and washrooms.

6. Service Counters, Queuing Guides, and Waiting Areas Accessible

The Township of Horton Municipal Office was renovated in 2010 to include an accessible service counter and waiting area. Any future work that is new or redeveloped will be per regulation.

7. Maintain the Accessible Parts of Public Spaces

The Township is committed to maintaining all accessible features of our public spaces. The Municipal Office has an accessible automated door as well as an accessible washroom for members of the public. This allows for accessible access to all Council and Committee Meetings held at the Municipal Office. The Horton Community Centre also has accessible automated door as well as an accessible washroom for members of the public.

Appendix A: 2019-2023 Accessibility Successions

The following is a list of completed, ongoing, and needed goals from each Municipal building or property:

Municipal Office:

Completed:

- ✓ Accessible main entrance (entry way & automatic door opener);
- ✓ Accessible lobby/waiting area;
- ✓ Accessible service counter;
- ✓ Accessible parking spaces near main entrance;
- ✓ Accessible washroom (size & handrail);
- ✓ Emergency Response Plan developed and enacted in 2022;
- ✓ Website meets WCAG 2.0 (Level AA) Standards;
- ✓ Contrasting colour on entry doors;

Ongoing/Needed:

- ✗ Install automatic door opener for accessible washroom;

Fire Department & Public Works Garage:

No public access

Landfill Site:

**Limited public access, accessible support upon request.*

Community Centre/Outdoor Rink:

Completed:

- ✓ Elevator lift from floor onto stage;
- ✓ Elevator lift from main floor to second floor;
- ✓ Accessible main entrance (entry way & automatic door opener);

Ongoing/Needed:

- ✗ Accessibility ramp to rink & change rooms/washrooms

Boat Launch:

- ✓ Fully accessible washrooms;
- ✓ Accessible dock with ramp;