

To: Mayor and Council

From: Jennifer Marshall, Deputy Clerk

Date: May 4, 2022

Subject: 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Report

Report Highlights

- Council approved the 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in 2020.
- As per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), annual status reports need to be presented outlining updates and implementation of the Plan and be posted on the Township's website.
- In 2021 the Township had many achievements in relation to the Integrated Accessibility Standards including the implementation of new technology in a number of areas to enhance accessibility for residents and streamlining processes.

Background

As required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), section 4(1) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) states that municipalities shall establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Act and regulations.

The Township of Springwater's 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Council in 2020, and as required, an annual status report is prepared on the implementation of the Plan as per legislation. The status report allows the Township to outline and communicate the past year's achievements in regards to accessibility. Springwater is committed to achieving a barrier free community and is proud of the goals it has achieved thus far.

Conclusion

The Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan primarily focuses on the five (5) Integrated Accessibility Standards that have phased-in compliance deadlines. These standards were established to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The standards are:

- Information & Communication
- Employment

- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces
- Customer Service

Below is a summary of the Township's achievements for 2021 in relation to the standards that were outlined in the Multi-Year Plan. In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Township's 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Report is posted to the Township's website.

Customer Service Standard

The standard outlines requirements for removing barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services, and/or facilities.

2021 Achievements

- In November 2021, the Clerk's Department launched CivicWeb Portal, an interactive, easy-to-use tool for all things related to Township Council and Committees. The portal increases public engagement, accountability and transparency, and allows for a centralized location to access up-to-date agendas, minutes, and records.
- The Springwater Township Public Library offered curbside pick-up to patrons for physical materials and made safe accommodations when required.
- To participate in "Mark it Read" for Dyslexia Awareness the Township and Springwater Township Public Library, Elmvale Branch offered a [Dyslexia Awareness Panel](#) of tweens/teens who shared their experiences with dyslexia.
- Two (2) Springwater Township Public Library staff members took "Blindness Etiquette" training through the CNIB.
- All Springwater Township Public Library staff members took training on Dyslexia Awareness and reading disabilities, Workplace Diversity, and Inclusion training.
- Springwater Township Public Library staff members participated in Mental Health training, Understanding Gender and Sexual Identity training and Truth and Reconciliation training.
- All Township employees completed AODA Customer Service Standards Refresher Training.
- All new Township employees completed the required AODA orientation training on HRdownloads, a human resource information system that tracks and keeps required records of all training completed. The training included accessible customer service, other Ontario accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.
- The Township implemented an online portal, using a software called CityView, to apply for building permits and to submit by-law enforcement complaints, making the process more accessible and streamlined for residents and Township employees.

- Council approved the use of alternative voting methods; the use of in-person electronic and remote internet/telephone voting for the 2022 municipal election. This method allows for a more accessible municipal election for Springwater residents, allowing them to vote from the comfort of their home or place of work and utilize the tools and equipment that meet their specific needs. By including the in-person option, residents who need assistance can come to a physical voting location.

Information & Communications Standard

The standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities.

2021 Achievements

- The Springwater Township Public Library added a greater selection of free digital resources such as PressReader, a global magazine and newsprint app and Kanopy, an online streaming movie service.
- The Springwater Township Public Library added decodable books for those with dyslexia and reading disabilities.
- Virtual programming offered by the Springwater Township Public Library included closed captioning.
- The Springwater Township Public Library continued to offer resources such as:
 - CELA Library Collection for any person who has trouble reading print because of a visual, physical, or learning disability,
 - Audio books on CD, Playaway and downloadable, including DAISY (Digital Accessible Information Systems) audio books,
 - C-Pen Scanning Reader pens (that read text aloud),
 - Large print books,
 - WonderBooks.
- The Township continued to incorporate accessibility features into both internal and external documents including webpages created by its many departments and external consultants.
- The Township continued to utilize accessible templates for reports to Committees and Council, helping to ensure agenda items are accessible.
- The Township continued to live stream all Council meetings to YouTube, with meetings being held virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Township continued to utilize a software application called Siteimprove to regularly check the accessibility features of the public website, based on criteria set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).
- The Township continued to ensure all COVID-19 signage at all facilities was accessible throughout 2021.

Design of Public Spaces

The design of public spaces standard outlines the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be accessible for people with disabilities.

2021 Achievements

- An accessible walking trail was constructed at the Anten Mills Community Park.
- The new Elmvale Food Bank parking lot was painted with lines ensuring the required number of accessible parking spots, access aisles and signage were incorporated.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Township continued to participate in the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee with the County of Simcoe, Township of Tay, Township of Oro-Medonte and Township of Adjala-Tosorontio. This joint committee has many benefits and provides for a broader perspective of accessibility needs and the opportunity to comment on County wide initiatives. Springwater has one community member representative, Liz Grummett and one elected official representative, Councillor Moore, that sit on the Committee.

2021 Achievements

Due to COVID-19, the Committee did not meet in-person and held four (4) virtual meetings in 2021.

- The Committee reviewed and received the Township's 2020 Annual Status Report.
- The Committee reviewed the proposed walking trail at the Anten Mills Community Park and its various accessible features such as benches, the trail surface and entrances to the trail.
- The Committee approved its 2022 work plan that was prepared by the participating municipalities which outlines the Committee's objectives for the year in conjunction with each municipalities Multi-Year Accessibility Plans.
- The Committee was able to complete virtual facility reviews for the three branches of the Tay Township Public Library, the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio Accessibility Updates to 3 Municipal Public Parks, and the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio and Township of Oro-Medonte's Administration Centres.

General

Events such as proclamations, flag raisings and social media campaigns are an important way for the Township to promote accessibility and disability awareness throughout the Township.

2021 Achievements

- The Township of Springwater and the Springwater Township Public Library participated in the first ever flag raising in Canada for Dyslexia Awareness.

Compliance Reporting

2021 Achievements

- The Township completed its 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report and submitted it to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility by the December 31st deadline.

Financial Implications

The costs incurred for the achievements outlined in this report were funded through the corresponding departmental budgets.

Pillars of Commitment

The above initiative supports the following Strategic Pillars of Commitment:

- Community Development

Approvals

Submitted by: Jennifer Marshall, AMP, Deputy Clerk

Reviewed by: Renée Ainsworth, Dipl. M.A., AOMC, Clerk

Financial Implications Reviewed by: Jas Rattigan, CPA, CGA, Director of Finance

Approved by: Jeff Schmidt, CPA, CGA, Chief Administrative Officer

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Applicable Municipal Policy or Legislation

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)

Attachments

Not Applicable

Background or Relevant Reports on Subject

[2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)