
To: Mayor and Council

From: Jennifer Marshall, Deputy Clerk

Date: March 15, 2023

Subject: 2022 Annual Accessibility Status Report

Report Highlights

- Council approved the 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in 2020.
- As per the AODA, annual status reports need to be presented outlining updates and implementation of the Plan.
- In 2022 the Township held an accessible municipal election, made significant accessible upgrades to the North Simcoe Rail Trail and consulted with the public in an innovative, accessible way for the development of the Community Hub Master Plan.

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:

- Customer Service
- Information & Communication
- Employment
- Transportation

- Design of Public Spaces

Below is a summary of the Township's achievements for 2022 in relation to the standards that were outlined in the Multi-Year Plan and general compliance.

General Requirements

The general requirements outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation includes the establishment of policies, accessibility plans, procurement, self-service kiosks and training.

2022 Achievements

- The Township's Procurement By-law outlines the incorporation of the AODA requirements into the procurement activities of the Township including the requirement for third parties that provide goods and services to members of the public on behalf of a public sector organization to be in compliance with the regulations under the AODA.
- Springwater Township Public Library staff members participated in mental health training and homelessness in libraries 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 relates to persons with disabilities.

Customer Service Standard

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

2022 Achievements

- The Township of Springwater held its 2022 Municipal and School Board Election in October. Residents were given the option to vote by telephone, vote by internet from the comfort of their home and using their own device or vote using the in-person electronic method at a Voter Help Centre. Advanced voting was available 10 days prior to Election Day. In addition, the Township held five Voter Help Centres where residents could come into an accessible building and receive assistance with voting if required. The Voter Help Centres were very well received as outlined below:

Voting at Voter Help Centres

Date and Time	Location	Number of Voters
Saturday, October 15, 2022 11:00 am to 3:00 pm	Minesing Community Centre	24
Tuesday, October 18, 2022 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Administration Centre	25
Thursday, October 20, 2022 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Administration Centre	19
Saturday, October 22, 2022 11:00 am – 3:00 pm	Elmvale Arena Springwater Room	102

- All election workers at the Voter Help Centres were trained on accessible customer service as required under the Act as well as specific accessible customer service training as it relates to the Township's election process.

Information and Communications Standard

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

2022 Achievements

- The Springwater Township Public Library added a greater selection of decodable books for those with dyslexia and reading disabilities.
- Any 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 created by its many departments and consultants.

- The Township continued to utilize fillable online forms making them easier for applicants to fill out and submit to the Township. Alternative accessible forms such as fillable PDFs and word versions of these applications forms are kept on hand in case of a request for an alternate format.
- The Township continued to utilize accessible templates for reports to Committees and Council.
- The Township launched a new hybrid format for Council meetings where Council members, staff, delegates, and members of the public can participate in the meetings virtually or in person. Council meetings continued to be live streamed to YouTube.
- 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's consultant for the creation of the Community Hub Master Plan began a visioning exercise in 2022. A number of diverse and accessible ways to reach community members were utilized including an online survey and in person consults at frequented locations throughout the Township such as community halls, farmers markets, bus stops and community events.
- The Township's consultant for the creation of a Community Based Strategic Plan began engaging with the Community through focus groups and an online survey.

Employment

The employment standard requires that employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.

2022 Achievements

- Continued to articulate the availability of accommodations during the recruitment process and having alternate methods to propose candidates.
- The Township implemented a Flexible Work Arrangement Policy which provides staff with the option of a 4-day work week and includes options for remote work, flexible work and hybrid work. Improved mental health is one of the many benefits of this new work arrangement cited by staff.

Transportation

The transportation standard sets out the requirements for transportation service providers. The Township of Springwater does not directly provide municipal

transportation services; Springwater is still committed to the requirements of the Transportation Standard.

2022 Achievements

- The Township utilized social media to promote and support the County of Simcoe's Linx Transit Service including the specialized transit service.

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.

2022 Achievements

- The North Simcoe Rail Trail resurfacing project was complete. 30 KM of the trail were upgraded with material suitable for use as an accessible surface, compact limestone screenings, replacing culverts along the trail for proper drainage and leveling and placing compact limestone screenings to the existing base of 4 trail entrance parking lots. The project also included the installation of 30 trail entrance gates to meet accessible standards.
- The Stonemanor Park – Phase 2 was constructed and opened with many accessible features including:
 - Accessible playground and surface
 - Asphalt and plexipave sport court with access from the sidewalk and road by asphalt pathway
 - Asphalt trail throughout the park area and amenities

AODA Compliance

- The Township of Springwater was selected for a desk audit by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to confirm compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). Various Township policies and plans were submitted to confirm compliance with the following:
 - Accessibility Policies
 - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
 - Training
 - Accessible Feedback
 - Accessible Employment Policies

As a result of the audit, the Township was required to make minor updates to the wording and the addition of the specific accessibility training provided to all

Township staff and volunteers were required to the Township's Accessibility policy to bring it into compliance.

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.

2022 Achievements

- The Committee reviewed and received the Township's 2021 Annual Status Report.
- The Committee reviewed and endorsed the Township's 2022 Election Accessibility Plan.
- The Committee participated in a focus group with the Township's consultant regarding the Community Hub Project and provided valuable input for the project visioning.
- The Committee received and provided feedback on the preliminary conceptual design on a proposed 1KM Simcoe County Museum accessible trail and approved funds from the County of Simcoe Accessibility Improvements Budget to purchase two new vehicles (golf cars) for patrons to tour the museum grounds.
- The Committee reviewed Ontario Trails Council Draft Trailability Guidelines and provided feedback to the Ontario Trails Council.
- The Committee reviewed the North Simcoe Rail Trail resurfacing project where up to 30 KM of the trail to be upgraded with material suitable for use as an accessible surface, compact limestone screenings, replacing culverts along the trail for proper drainage and leveling and placing compact limestone screenings to the existing base of 4 trail entrance parking lots. The project also included the installation of 30 trail entrance gates to meet accessible standards.
- The Committee was able to complete in person facility reviews of the County of Simcoe's Social Housing building in Victoria Harbour and the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio Municipal Office.

Promote Accessibility and Disability Awareness

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.

2022 Achievements

- The Township of Springwater held a flag raising at the Township Administration Centre for Dyslexia Awareness Month in October. Patricia DeGuire, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Keith Gray, Dyslexia Canada's Founder and Chair and Alicia Smith, Executive Director of Dyslexia Canada joined the Township for the flag raising.
- The Township and Springwater Public Library further participated in the "Mark it Read" public awareness campaign by illuminating the Administration Centre and Elmvale Library Branch in red lights.
- The Springwater Public Library CEO presented at the Ontario Library Association's Super Conference and the Child and Youth Expo on Dyslexia Friendly Libraries.
- The Township utilized social media to promote and celebrate National AccessAbility Week from May 29 – June 4

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, Manager of Legislative Services/Township 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 \(AODA\)](#)

Background or Relevant Reports on Subject

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