

# The Corporation of the Township of Springwater



## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016-2020

This document is available in accessible formats upon request.

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 Council Resolution: C 105 2016

# Springwater Township Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016-2020

## 1. Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was passed by the Government of Ontario in 2005 to augment the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) that had been adopted in 2001. The purpose of these Acts is to create dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all individuals within Ontario, and to break down barriers for those with disabilities. The Acts stipulate various ways for all government offices, businesses and organizations to achieve a barrier-free province. Through the appointment of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Township of Springwater is continually working towards these goals set out by the Province to be inclusive to all.

## 2. Profile of the Municipality

The Township of Springwater is a lower-tier municipality located in the County of Simcoe and was incorporated on January 1, 1994. The municipality is a collection of urban and rural communities with several settlement areas. About half of the Township's 53,000 hectares are utilized for agricultural purposes; another third of the land base is forested.

As per the 2011 Canadian Census, the population is 18,220 which is a 4.4% increase since the 2006 census. The population of Springwater is anticipated to continue to identify growth in the 2016 census.

## 3. Definitions

**Accessible Formats:** May include, but are not limited to, large print, plain language, recorded audio, or electronic, such as Word, PDF, Rich Text, or HTML, formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Device:** A technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

**Barrier:** As defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), a barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, or a policy or practice.

**Communication Supports:** May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

**Communications:** The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.

**Disability:** Includes any one of the following:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

**Information:** Data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital, or images, that convey meaning.

**Medical Aid:** An assistive device which may include, but is not limited to, respirators and portable oxygen supplies.

**Mobility Aid:** A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.

**Mobility Assistive Aid:** A cane, walker, or similar aid.

**Service Animal:** Any animal specially trained to provide support or perform tasks for a person with a disability to benefit the individual's daily life.

**Support Person:** Another person, identified by the service provider, who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

#### **4. Our Commitment**

The Township of Springwater is committed to the promotion of an accessible municipality, to be compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, and meeting the accessibility needs of persons with a disability in a timely manner. The Township will continue to develop, implement and maintain policies which govern how the municipality will achieve accessibility measures as required through the AODA.

Throughout 2015-2019 the Township of Springwater will be working on ensuring the successful and sustainable implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (IASR). A significant number of the provisions of the regulation will continue to be in practice throughout 2015-2019, guiding us as we improve goods, services, and facilities for people with disabilities.

Fostering an inclusive and accessible Township is a significant undertaking. To get there, the Township of Springwater will focus on two priorities:

- Meet the accessibility standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), within the timeframe set out in the standards, through the efficient use of resources.
- Build awareness with the Township of Springwater employees to support identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for people with disabilities.

## **5. Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The Township's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was first formed on November 7, 2005. In 2015 the County of Simcoe and the Township established a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (Joint AAC). The purpose of the Committee is to discuss accessibility in the community, and to advise Council of legislative updates, community concerns and accessibility activities.

Section 29.3 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* stipulates that "A majority of the members of the committee shall be persons with disabilities." There are five formally appointed members of the Committee. Each of these individuals offers a unique perspective to assist the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee in fulfilling its mandate. The Committee also includes one member of County Council and one member of Springwater Township Council. This Committee is supported by both Simcoe and Springwater staff.

The Joint AAC will continue to advise Council about upcoming changes to regulations regarding accessibility standards within the Province, assist in the preparation of reports and other documentation regarding accessibility within the municipality, review site plans or drawings, provide feedback on infrastructure projects, and follow any other function(s) stipulated within the Act. When necessary the Committee meets in consultation with community members with disabilities to aid in providing a barrier-free Township.

In accordance with Section 29 (4) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, S.O. 2005, the mandate of the Springwater Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be to:

- Advise Simcoe County Council and Springwater Township Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which Council may seek its advice under Section 29 (5) of the Act;
- Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the *Planning Act* that the Committee selects; and
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

## 6. Duties of Municipal Councils

The Township of Springwater Council shall continue to be advised by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee on accessibility regulations that are relevant to the municipality. Council will strive to implement recommendations regarding policies, purchases and infrastructure for the betterment of the Township. As Accessibility Standards continue to become regulations, the Committee will advise which standards apply to Township facilities and services and inform Council. Each set of standards will include a date by which the municipality is required to enact all necessary changes to be compliant with the regulations.

## 7. Barrier Identification

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to prevent, identify and remove barriers and obstacles that stand in the way of persons with disabilities from being able to access services, facilities and information. 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, assuming that all visually impaired persons can read Braille.

**Technological Barriers:** Occur when technology cannot 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.

## 8. Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The AODA makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to create comprehensive accessibility standards in all areas of daily life and calls on all (business community, public sector, the not-for-profit sector and people with disabilities or their representatives) to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards. Through this Act, various working committees were established with the mandates of developing standards in specific areas that include:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Accessible Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Built Environment
- Employment Accessibility

### **Accessible Customer Service Standard**

The Accessible Customer Service Standard became law on January 1, 2008. Throughout 2008 and 2009, the AAC worked on the development of the required policy and procedures to ensure municipal compliance. The final policy was approved by Council on September 21, 2009 (Resolution C-506-2009) and a compliance report was sent to the Ministry of Community and Social Services in March 2010. Through the coming years, the Committee will continue to monitor this program to ensure compliance.

Township staff shall continue to enhance Accessible Customer Service Standards through policies, procedures, training and new Council orientation, awareness, programs, social media campaign initiatives, increased website accessibility formats through document checker software, shared resources and cultivate accessibility partnerships to increase accessibility and disability awareness.

### **Integrated Accessibility Standards**

On July 1, 2011, the Integrated Accessibility Standards became law; the purpose of the integration was to align three of the four remaining standards that encompass transportation, information and communication, and employment.

The *Transportation Standard*, at this time, does not apply to the Township of Springwater as the municipality does not have a public transit system. The Committee will continue to follow this standard so that, if Springwater develops a public transit system or licenses taxis in the future, the service will be accessible to all residents.

The *Information and Communication Standard* has many implications for the Township. The municipality is required to develop policies, procedures and a statement of commitment towards providing accessible information and communications. The policy outlines:

- How Springwater will address requests for information in alternate formats;
- How Springwater will address requests for communication supports and services;
- How Springwater's procurement policies address accessibility;
- The criteria used to determine what information and communications will be made available in plain language

Other features of this standard include training, emergency and public safety information (including evacuation procedures and incidents that threaten life, property, operations or the environment and related procedures), technical requirements (including websites), and priority areas (including health, education, libraries, legal, financial, elections and voting).

The goal of the *Employment Standard* is to help employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Features of this standard include the requirement for accessible employment policies and training, recruitment, assessment, selection and hiring requirements, retention requirements, and indicators of progress, which are all currently practiced within the policy guidelines.

Springwater took many steps throughout 2012 to be in compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards before the required due dates. On June 18, 2012, Council approved the comprehensive Accessibility Policy (Resolution C 268 2012) which outlines Springwater's commitment to accessibility. This commitment continues today with many improvements being made up to present day and reflected in the 2015 Annual Accessibility Status Report.

### **Built Environment Standard**

The Built Environment Standard was released on September 10, 2010, and a version for public review on August 15, 2012. Ontario Regulation 413/12 was made on December 12, 2012 to include the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) as part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

The standards for public spaces will only apply to new construction and planned redevelopment. The Built Environment Standard will have impacts on public spaces with the following characteristics:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public-use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services
- Maintenance

The Standard includes technical requirements such as surface and widths of public trails, slope of ramps, number of accessible parking spaces per lot, signage and number of accessible service booths. Exceptions were also noted in several categories including facilities of heritage, cultural and natural significance. A compliance date for municipalities, including Springwater, has been set for January 1, 2016.

There were changes made to the Ontario Building Code effective January 1, 2015 to accommodate barrier-free designs in buildings of new construction or with major renovations. The Township will ensure that municipal buildings having significant renovations or any new builds will meet these standards.

Similarly, accommodation of barrier-free designs will be implemented on new construction or major renovations of recreational outdoor spaces; such as, playgrounds.

## 9. Annual Reporting

An annual status report is made available to the public which provides annual updates on the progress of measures taken in improving accessibility and in implementing the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR)* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. The annual status report initiatives attached as (APPENDIX 1) will be reviewed by the Joint ACC, and will assist with setting goals for the coming year.

As well, the Township submits an Accessibility Compliance Report to the Province of Ontario bi-annually. This will ensure the Township continues to meet all of the requirements through the AODA.

## 10. Feedback and Comments

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Township of Springwater's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general.

Obtaining feedback is an integral part of the evaluation process. The Township will continue to review and expand strategies to engage key stakeholders in providing accessibility related feedback, including persons with disabilities. Please contact the Township to express your accessibility related comments through the contact information outlined in Communication of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan below:

## 11. Communication of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Copies of this document are available at the following locations:

- Springwater Township Office
- Springwater Public Library Branches (Elmvale, Midhurst, Minesing)
- Corporate Web Site ([www.springwater.ca/accessibility](http://www.springwater.ca/accessibility))

Copies may be obtained by contacting the following:

The Township of Springwater  
Attn: Deputy Clerk  
2231 Nursery Road  
Minesing, Ontario L0L 1Y2 Canada  
Tel. (705) 728-4784 ext. 2042  
Fax (705) 728-6957  
E-mail: [info@springwater.ca](mailto:info@springwater.ca)

**This document is available in accessible formats upon request.**

**APPENDIX 1**  
**2015 Annual Status Report**

In 2015, the Township achieved the following accessible items:

<b>2015 Accessibility Initiatives</b>	<b>Description</b>
Access Awareness Week	Launched a Social media campaign for Access Awareness Week which took place from May 31-June 6.
10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AODA	Township staff attended the 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AODA celebration and training event hosted by the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers (AMCTO) in Fergus, Ontario.
Accessible Library Resources	Springwater Libraries now have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More ebooks, audio books and large print materials available.</li> <li>• Large screens available for communicating information.</li> <li>• Clear signs posted within the libraries, noting the book categories of the shelves.</li> </ul>
Internet Broadcast of Council meetings	The Township purchased a webcam for the Council Chamber. Meetings are now broadcasted live, allowing residents to view the meetings from any accessible location with internet access.
Purchase of Siteimprove software	Siteimprove is an accessibility checker for the Township's website. This software monitors all pages and documents, and generates reports for staff noting areas of compliance and sections requiring improvements. Through the AODA the Township's website must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A.
Reconstruction of Sidewalks	During the reconstruction of sidewalks, the Public Works Department installed the following accessible panels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stone Street and Lawson Avenue (2)</li> <li>○ Lawson Avenue and John Street (3)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Robinson Road and Lawson Avenue (1)</li> <li>○ Kerr Street and Shaw Street (1)</li> <li>○ Kerr Street and Flos Crescent (2)</li> <li>○ Kerr Street and Ritchie Crescent (2)</li> <li>○ Mill Street East and Horne Street (1)</li> </ul>
Minesing Community Hall repair	A patio stone was repaired at the Minesing Community Hall to improve ease of access
International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Recognized the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2015 through the Springwater Link and Social Media.
Customer Service Feedback	Added a second location for feedback form on Township website front page for ease of access
Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee	The Township along with the County of Simcoe have formed a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, which allows both Springwater and Simcoe to share resources.
Report to Accessibility Directorate	2015 was a reporting year for the Accessibility Compliance Report, which is submitted to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. The Township successfully submitted this report and met all compliance standards.

Notwithstanding the above initiatives, Township staff continue to follow the principles of the Multi-Year Plan by ensuring all printed materials and web content are accessible through clear print guidelines, and serve all customers in a manner to meet their needs while providing materials in an accessible format.

## APPENDIX 2 – Overview of Multi-year Accessibility Plan

Priority A – within 1 year

Priority B – 1-2 years

Priority C- 3-5 years

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Customer Service Standard</b>		
Accessible Customer Service training provided to all new staff and volunteers	A	Annually
Accessible Customer Service Policies reviewed by Joint ACC	C	To ensure consistency in providing Accessible Customer Service
<b>Information and Communications Standard</b>		
Continued review of feedback/communication policy to ensure processes are in line with new initiatives	C	
Continued monitoring through Siteimprove software of pages and documents, and reports requiring improvements to meet accessible formats	A & C	Due to the volumes of existing documents on the website prior to the purchase of Siteimprove Software, updating is being conducted on an ongoing bases of these existing documents; however, any new documents are now cited for reformatting immediately, if required, through the Siteimprove software.
<b>Facilities</b>		
Finalize facility accessibility audit checklist	A	
Incorporate Built Environment Standards in any new or proposed renovation plans for Township facility's or recreational outdoor spaces i.e. playground	C	Will apply to all new construction or renovations, were applicable
Minesing, Hillsdale and Elmvale Community Halls to receive installation of visual and audible fire alarms	A	These installations will occur this year

Valender Park installation of accessible washroom	A	Currently underway
Recreation Master Plan (5 Year forecast) is before Council on February 17, 2016 the status of Community Hall buildings will be assessed on an individual basis.	C	Pending outcome of meeting