



Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2026-2030

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Executive Summary

The Township of Springwater is committed to fostering an inclusive community that respects the dignity and independence of those with disabilities. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the steps the Township will take over the next five years (2026-2030) to improve accessibility and eliminate barriers in municipal policies, programs, services, and infrastructure in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

Legislative Framework

This plan complies with;

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (O.Reg. 191/11)
- Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)
- Ontario Human Rights Code

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Township's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was first formed in 2005 and after ten years, the County of Simcoe and the Township established a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (Joint AAC). Since its creation in 2015, additional municipalities have joined including the Townships of Oro-Medonte, Adjala-Tosorontio, Tay and the Town of Midland.

The Joint Committee has many benefits and provides for a broader perspective of accessibility needs and the opportunity to comment on County-wide initiatives. Each municipality has one community member representative and one elected official representative. All of the members offer a unique perspective to assist the Joint AAC in fulfilling its mandate and to advise Council on upcoming changes to accessibility regulations, assist in the preparation of reports and other documentation regarding accessibility within the municipality, review site plans and drawings, provide feedback on infrastructure projects, and follow any other function(s) outlined under the Act.

Overview of 2021-2025 Accessibility Achievements

When planning for the future it is important to understand where we came from and what the past successes were. Over the past five years the Township of Springwater has accomplished a great deal with respect to removing barriers and evolving our communities to be more inclusive. Included in this document are some highlights of the previous achievements identified in the annual status reports for the 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.



2021-2025 Achievements

General

- 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.
- All new Township employees completed the required AODA orientation training through a variety of mediums, online and in-person including AccessForward provided links from the Ontario Government and 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

- The Township maintained its compliance with the Customer Service Standards, including the legislative requirements for use of service animals, support persons, and assistive devices.
- The Township notified the public when there was a service disruption to facilities, programs and services that are used by persons with disabilities.
- Training on accessible customer service is provided to all new employees, as part of the Township's orientation training.

Information & Communication

- 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, and 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 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 provided documents in alternative format and/or with communication support, upon request.
- 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).

Employment

- The Township continued to articulate the availability of accommodations during the recruitment process and having alternate methods to prepare candidates.
- The Township maintained its compliance with the employment standard by monitoring and documenting employment policies and procedures, where required, to provide accommodations in all stages of hiring and employment. The County communicates to employees about workplace emergency response information and plans.

Transportation

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

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

- The Committee received and reviewed the Township's Annual Status Report annually.
- The Township and participating municipalities prepared annual Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan, for each year. The work plan outlined projects and tasks for the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for each year from 2021-2025.

Promote Accessibility & Disability Awareness

- The Township shared messaging related to the County of Simcoe's #ItStarts Campaign.
- The Township of Springwater held a flag raising at the Township Administration Centre for Dyslexia Awareness Month in October.
- 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 Township utilized social media to promote and celebrate National AccessAbility Week, annually.



2021 Specific Achievements

General

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

Customer Service

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Information and Communication

- 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 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 ensure all COVID-19 signage at all facilities was accessible throughout 2021.

Design of Public Spaces

- An accessible walking trail was constructed at the Anten Mills Community Park.
- The new Elmvalle 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 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 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.

2022 Specific Achievements

General

- Springwater Township Public Library staff members participated in mental health training and homelessness in libraries training.

Customer Service

- 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.
- 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 Communication

- 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'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 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.

Design of Public Spaces

- 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, and asphalt trail throughout the park area and amenities.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

- 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 & Disability Awareness

- The Springwater Public Library CEO presented at the Ontario Library Association's Super Conference and the Child and Youth Expo on Dyslexia Friendly Libraries.



2023 Specific Achievements

General

- Springwater Township Public Library staff members participated in mental health training, homelessness in libraries and sensory Storytimes training.
- New Committee, Board and Council members were trained as required on accessible customer service, other Ontario accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relates to person with disabilities.
- Township staff shared with the newly appointed Elmvale BIA the BIA Handbook on the AODA from the Ontario BIA Association, a link to free AODA training and the Province's Guide on Planning Accessible Events.
- Township staff shared with the newly appointed Community Recreation Associations a link to free AODA training and the Province's Guide on Planning Accessible Events.
- The Springwater Township Public Library hosted a Centre for Equitable Library Access training for Springwater and neighbouring libraries. The Centre for Equitable Library Access collection is Canada's largest collection of alternative format books and online resources for people who have difficulty reading print due to a visual, physical or learning disability.

Customer Service

- The Springwater Township Public Library hosted a Tech Tools for Accessibility evening at the Elmvale Branch.
- The Springwater Township Public Library hosted a decodable book story walk at the Elmvale and Midhurst branches.

Information and Communications

- Springwater Township Public Library updated signage for the washrooms in the library branches that includes Braille.

Design of Public Spaces

- The Township implemented a Temporary Outdoor Patio Program for restaurants where accessibility requirements were a focus including ensure the patios are accessible for everyone including having a patio that is easily accessible from the sidewalk as well as ensuring the sidewalks are safe and usable for pedestrians including people using mobility devices and caregivers with strollers.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

- The Committee completed in person facility reviews of the Township of Springwater's Public Library – Elmvale Branch and the Elmvale Community Centre.



Promote Accessibility & Disability Awareness

- The Springwater Township Public Library CEO presented at the Atlantic Provinces Library Association on dyslexia friendly libraries.
- The Springwater Township Public Library CEO participated on an American-led committee on decodable books.

2024 Specific Achievements

Customer Service Requirements

- The Township celebrated its 30th anniversary with an event where residents had the opportunity to engage with Township employees about available services. The event's design took into consideration accessibility and provided wide aisles and spaces with a terrain of crushed limestone screening, allowing for persons using assistive devices to access the event. The event was service animal friendly, and included accessible parking, washrooms, and seating areas. An audio technician was hired to ensure that all speeches and entertainment were delivered at clear and comfortable volumes. Staff were trained in disability awareness and etiquette, ensuring a welcome atmosphere for all attendees. Additionally, all promotional materials adhered to AODA information and communication standards.

Information and Communications Standard

- The following online forms were introduced in 2024: short-term rental licenses, special event permits, backyard chicken applications, and property standard appeal applications.
- Specific website improvements included the Township's building guides, applications, and building permit submission portal, all of which were updated to comply with the AODA digital accessibility standards. A technical bulletin section was also added to provide clear interpretations of key building code items.
- The Township developed a mobile app compliant with the WCAG 2.0 requirements and accessible by screen-readers for residents to access Township information and services. Specific services available on the mobile app include but are not limited to: media releases including emergency alerts and road closures, Township newsletters, Council information and webcasts, access to My Springwater (the Township's webpage for online tax and utility billing), access to online forms, registration for recreation programs, information on parks and community halls, a Township event calendar, and a "Report a Concern" feature.

Employment

- The Township implemented online recruitment/applicant tracking and onboarding modules through its human resources information system.

Transportation

- The Township utilized their website and mobile app to promote and support the County of Simcoe's Linx Transit Service including the specialized transit service for accessible transit.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- The Township converted Homer Barrett Park's and Parr Boulevard Park's playground surfacing from sand to "Fibar", an engineered wood chip material that provides a surface possible for wheelchair mobility in addition to cushioning falls.
- The Township updated the pathways from Shaw Street and Ritchie Crescent to Homer Barrett Park to be accessible and in compliance with AODA standards, as well as improved the pathway's surface to assist with mobility devices.

2025 Specific Achievements

Information and Communications Standard

- Staff developed online forms for noise exemptions, and business license applications including refreshment vehicles, special events, short-term rentals, and signs to further enhance digital accessibility.
- Staff developed and implemented additional online form options for utilities and continue to look for additional services that can be moved to online versions for accessibility and convenience.
- The Township will strive to include diverse imagery and multimedia that represents persons with various disabilities.

Employment

- Staff reviewed and updated the Township's human resources policies, integrating accessibility considerations from the outset. This initiative aims to ensure policies and practices align with the AODA standards. Additionally, an online reference check form was implemented for candidate's references to use during the recruitment process.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- Upgrading various sidewalks to AODA compliant widths and installing tactile plates at corners of reconstructed sidewalks as required.
- Redesign of the Hunter Russell Trailhead and bridge with focus on accessibility during the design phase.
- Upgrade sand-based playgrounds to woodchips. Specifically, Parr Boulevard and Glen Huron Parks.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

- The Committee completed in person facility reviews of the Elmvale Arena.



2026-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Moving forward into the next Accessibility Plan for 2026-2030, the Township of Springwater will be working on ensuring the continual and successful implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). A key aspect of this Plan will focus on monitoring and improving upon standards and priorities that are already in place and looking at how to provide better services to the community through new opportunities and public feedback. Below are the key priorities over the next five years.

Multi-Year Accessibility Goals for 2026 – 2030

General Requirements

Goal	Action	Responsible Department
Update policies	Review and update all accessibility policies.	Clerk's
Training	Mandatory accessibility and human rights training for all staff and Council.	Human Resources
Procurement	Embed accessibility criteria into RFP's and vendor selection.	Finance

Information and Communication

Goal	Action	Responsible Department
Website Compliance	Ensure WCAG 2.1 Level AA for all municipal web content.	Information Technology
Accessible Documents	Provide alternative formats (large print, braille, etc.) upon request.	All Departments
Public Engagement	Host accessible public meetings (Captioning, ASL interpretation).	Communications



Employment

Goal	Action	Responsible Department
Onboarding	Integrate online and in person orientation program.	Human Resources
Recruitment	Ensure accessible formats and communication in hiring.	Human Resources
Accommodation and return to work	Update return to work policies for injured/disabled employees and accommodation process.	Human Resources

Design of Public Space

Goal	Action	Responsible Department
Trails and Parks	Apply Design of Public Spaces Standards to new builds.	Recreation, Parks and Facilities
Sidewalks and signals	Install tactile walking surface indicators and audible signals.	Engineering
Parking	Ensure accessible parking standards in all municipal lots.	Planning



Monitoring and Evaluation

- Annual Status Reports will be published and posted online.
- Progress will be reviewed by the JAAC and presented to Council.
- Public Feedback will be gathered through annual surveys and forums.

Community Engagement

- Public consultation on accessibility issues.
- Collaborations with local community organizations that focus/specialize in disability.
- Inclusion in municipal strategic planning.

Feedback and Contact Information

The Township always encourages feedback from the public on accessibility, including suggestions about new initiatives and how we can better provide our services. This is everyone's community and there's value in our experiences and how it provides different perspectives.

Copies of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the annual status reports are available on the Township's website www.springwater.ca and at the Administration Centre, located at 2231 Nursery Road, Minesing. To provide feedback or request a document in an alternative format please contact the Clerk's Department at:

Email: info@springwater.ca

Telephone: (705) 728-4784 ext. 2015

Mail: 2231 Nursery Road, Minesing ON, L9X 1A8



