

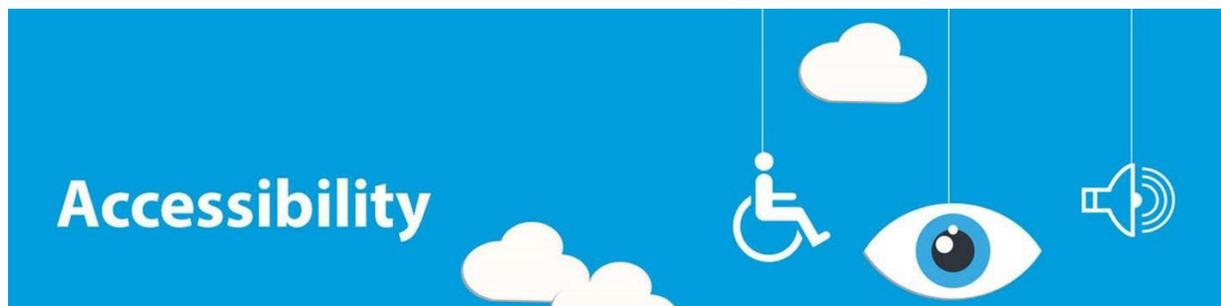


Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2020-2024

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Introduction

The Town of Penetanguishene's 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies, achievements and actions that the Town of Penetanguishene has put in place to remove barriers and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Plan details the Town's approach to building an inclusive organization for all who live, work and visit the Town of Penetanguishene.

Penetanguishene's 2015-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was the Town's second multi-year accessibility plan. The Plan aligned with the objectives of the Town's Strategic Plan and long-term vision while continuing to meet the Province's requirements for full development, implementation and enforcement by January 1, 2025. As such, the Town will continue this alignment between the 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the Town's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

Commitment to Accessibility

The Corporation of the Town of Penetanguishene is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons the Town serves. The Town will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Penetanguishene is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Accessible Format

This document is available in an accessible format at request. If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the Clerk at scooper@penetanguishene.ca or 705-549-7453 x211.



Background

One in seven people in Ontario has a disability. By 2036, that number of persons with disabilities will rise to one in five as the population ages. As such, persons with disabilities represent a significant growing part of Ontario's and the Town's population. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and participate in the community will have positive effects on future prosperity in Ontario. The Town of Penetanguishene acknowledges that has made great strides, has much that it can do to eliminate barriers to persons with disabilities.

A disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA") defines disability as follows:

- (a) 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 in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance device;
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) A mental disorder;
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.



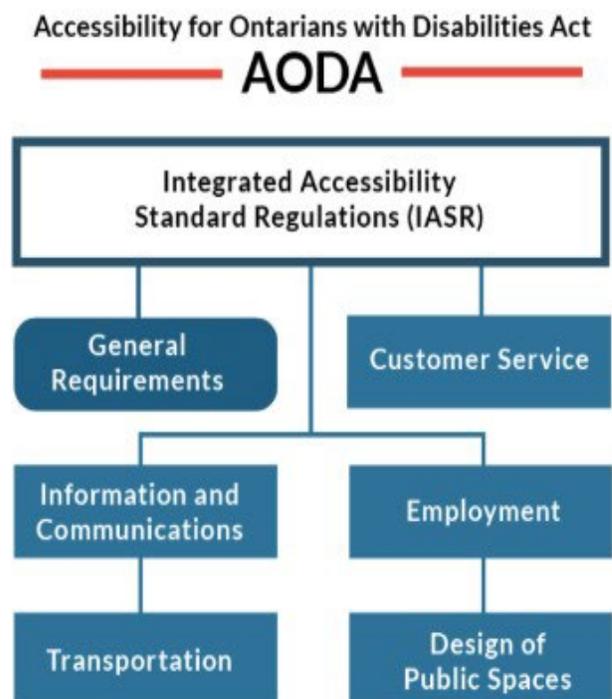
Accessibility Legislation

There are currently two active pieces of legislation in Ontario that specifically address accessibility: the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (the “ODA”).

Regulated accessibility planning in Ontario began with the ODA. The purpose of the ODA is to improve the quality of life and experiences of persons with disabilities by identifying, preventing and removing any barriers that may limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in society. Under the ODA, municipalities were required to have annual accessibility plans that would report on the measures taken by the organization to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

The AODA, which became law in 2005, builds on the progress made under the ODA. The AODA does not replace the ODA, but advances the goals of the ODA and is more comprehensive and prescriptive. Furthermore, the requirements under the AODA now apply to the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. The goal of the AODA is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in order to make the Province of Ontario fully accessible for all persons with disabilities by 2025. The AODA is made up of five standards and a number of general requirements, including:

- (a) Information and Communication
- (b) Employment
- (c) Transportation
- (d) Design of Public Spaces
- (e) Customer Service



The AODA standards form part of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (“IASR”). These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario have to identify, remove and prevent barriers to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the IASR has general requirements for every obligated organization. The general requirements apply to all the standards of the regulation and are as follows:

- (a) To develop, implement and maintain accessibility policies, including a **multi-year accessibility plan** and **annual accessibility status reports**;
- (b) To incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when **procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities**, except where it is not practicable to do so; and
- (c) To provide **training** on the requirements of the AODA and on the *Human Rights Code* as it relates to persons with disabilities.

Both the standards and the general requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* must be complied with. There is a schedule that obligated organizations must follow in regards to meeting the IASR standards and requirements. The timelines for compliance are established in relation to the organization’s classification under the IASR.

According to the IASR classifications of obligated organizations, the Town of Penetanguishene is defined as a “small designated public sector organization,” as the Town of Penetanguishene is a designated public sector organization with “at least one but fewer than 50 employees.” Municipalities with less than 50 employees must meet the majority of requirements of the IASR by 2016, except for accessible websites and web content under the Information and Communication Standards with a compliance date set in 2021. However, endorsing accessibility is an ongoing process and the Town of Penetanguishene must work diligently to ensure accessibility legislation standards and requirements are continually complied with.



About the Plan

The Town of Penetanguishene's 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the Town intends to reach its goal of building an inclusive organization. This plan includes an overview of the Town's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the AODA, including the IASR.

This plan includes a review of accessibility work completed throughout the duration of the previous 2014-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as well as new goals and actions to be completed in the future. Objectives identified within this plan are both long- and short-term, several of which being ongoing throughout the life of the plan.

The phased-in strategy of the Plan aims to prevent and remove barriers and addresses the current and future requirements of the Act. Penetanguishene will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan, post the information on its website and will provide it in alternative formats upon request. The Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Development of the Plan

To identify barriers to be addressed by municipal accessibility plans, every municipality is required under the AODA to consult with their Accessibility Advisory Committee ("AAC"). The formation of an AAC is not required when a municipality has a population of 10,000 people or less. Therefore, the Town of Penetanguishene is not required to form an AAC.



However, since Penetanguishene does not have an AAC, the Town utilizes the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee which includes a member who represents Accessibility.

AODA Progress and Accomplishments

The Town of Penetanguishene's first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Council and introduced in December 2013. This plan laid the groundwork for how the Town of Penetanguishene would meet the obligations set out in the IASR.

Extensive work has been carried out to ensure that the Town of Penetanguishene was in compliance with the general requirements and each of the five standards of the IASR. The Town has taken many steps towards accomplishing the goals put forward in the Town's 2015-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and ultimately, making Penetanguishene an accessible community. The following are milestones that have been achieved throughout 2015-2019:



General Requirements

- ✓ The Town of Penetanguishene's first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was introduced outlining how the Town will meet its obligations under the AODA (December 2013).

- ✓ The Town of Penetanguishene has included accessibility criteria relating to the procurement of goods, services and facilities into its **Purchasing/ Procurement Policy**.
- ✓ An **Accessibility Training** was established in 2015 to comply with the IASR training requirements. All Town employees, volunteers, persons who participate in the development of Town policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Town have been trained on the requirements of the IASR and the relevant portions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. This requirement is ongoing and forms part of the list of mandated training that must be completed when starting work or volunteering for the Town of Penetanguishene.

Information and Communication Standard

- ✓ Accessible formats for information or communication supports are provided upon request and take into account the disability of the member of the public requesting the information. This includes information for emergency or public safety made available to the public. The request can be made online, in person or over the phone.



- ✓ The Town has introduced staff to the use of plain language in their writing whenever possible, so as to limit potential barriers in information sharing. For example, the Town committees' terms of reference were updated in 2019 and use plain language throughout the document.
- ✓ Penetanguishene has committed to ensure website accessibility for persons with disabilities, including making the Town website and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA. As of January 2019, the Town's website was 87.4% accessible (as per Site improve, a software that measures and tracks accessibility issues for websites), whereas the industry benchmark for accessible websites was only at 67.7%.
- ✓ All Town policies are available in an accessible format and include a clause that specifies the accessibility of the document. Additionally, all future Town policies and official documents will include this. The clause reads as follows:

“If you require this document to be in an accessible format,

please contact the Director of Corporate Services at scooper@penetanguishene.ca or 705-549-7453.”

Employment Standard

- ✓ The Town implemented a **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy** to adhere to IASR requirements. The policy states the Town’s commitment to the accommodation for persons with disabilities throughout their employment, including supporting employees who have been absent from work due to a disability.
- ✓ In order to make the Town of Penetanguishene’s employment practices more accessible, applicants are made aware of the availability of accommodation. The Town’s recruitment process invites individuals of all abilities to apply to Town of Penetanguishene job openings and advertises the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment process. The Town’s **Recruitment and Hiring Procedures Policy**, as well as the **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy**, reflects the Town’s commitment to accommodating individuals with disabilities throughout the recruitment and hiring process as well as their employment with the Town.
- ✓ Town staff have continually been made aware of the Town’s accessibility plans and policies. This includes notifying current and new employees of existing accessibility policies for accommodating persons with disabilities.

Transportation Standard

For transportation, the standard sets out the requirements for transportation service providers. Particularly, features and equipment on vehicles, routes, and services offered must be accessible to people with disabilities. Although the Town of Penetanguishene provides transit through the procurement of the service through the Town of Midland, Penetanguishene is still committed to the requirements outlined in the Transportation Standard and will:

- ✓ Promote and support the County of Simcoe's accessible Linx Transit Service and the specialized transit service through the Township's social media pages and through engagement with residents.
- ✓ Stay current on new initiatives of how to provide accessible transportation, and learn from experiences and programs provided by other municipalities.
- ✓ Consult with the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.
- ✓ Identify progress made toward meeting the need for on-demand accessible taxicabs, including any steps that will be taken to meet the need.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- ✓ The Chief Building Official ensures compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standard and also all accessibility requirements *Building Code Act, 1992*.
- ✓ Accessibility requirements from the Design of Public Spaces standard were applied to outdoor playgrounds and exterior paths, including the splash pad. The splash pad includes an accessible pathway. The splash pad also has buttons for water access of the splash pad in accessible spots.
- ✓ Accessibility was incorporated into the Town of Penetanguishene's Recreation, Arts and Culture Master Plan, an initiative which aims to align current and future needs for parks, recreation, trails, arts and culture facilities, programs and services, including:
 - (a) Developing a playground replacement program to establish a plan to renew aging playground structures. The design of new and redeveloped playgrounds should consider accessible features.
 - (b) Engage persons with disabilities by embracing the principles of inclusivity through facility design and service delivery.

- ✓ The Town has procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces as well as procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under the Design of Public Spaces standard are not in working order. The procedures are as follows:

Departments that maintain accessible elements in public spaces shall:

- (a) Apply best practices in the preventative maintenance of accessible elements with periodic checks, such as annual inspections, or as deemed necessary, after storms or events that might affect accessible elements, or as part of any reports of vandalism or complaint

- (b) Apply best practices in the emergency maintenance of accessible elements with active response once notified
- (c) Repair as soon as possible
- (d) Provide public notification of temporary disruptions. The notice of maintenance or disruption of accessible elements will follow the same principles as the notice of temporary disruption laid out in the **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy**.

Customer Service Standard

- ✓ The Town's **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy** has been updated to adhere to the requirements of the IASR accordingly.

- ✓ All Town staff have been trained in the provision of the Town's goods, services or facilities, as the case may be, to persons with disabilities as dictated under the Customer Service Standard of the IASR.



- ✓ The Town has a feedback process in place for complaints and suggestions relating to the Town's provision of goods, services and facilities to those with disabilities. The form can be accessed online at the Town's website or in person at the Town's office. Once the complaint/suggestion has been made, the appropriate Town staff will be notified and will review the complaint/suggestion accordingly.
- ✓ In Recreation Programming and Day Camp, individuals with special needs will be accommodated whenever possible.
- ✓ All programs and classes are hosted at facilities that are fully accessible.
- ✓ The offers a limited SUBSIDY PROGRAM for recreation registrations for all ages, including youth, adults and seniors, applicable only to those residing in Penetanguishene. Besides Town-run programs, we also approve registrations from Penetanguishene Minor Hockey Association, Penetanguishene Skating Club, North Simcoe Girls Hockey Association for subsidy (Penetanguishene Residents). Eligibility for this program is managed by We Are The Villagers

2020-2024 Accessibility Goals

The Town of Penetanguishene shall continue to be proactive in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to ensure that everyone can participate fully in a diverse and growing community. Barriers encountered by persons with disabilities include:

Attitudinal – personal attitudes and behaviors and how we interact with persons with disabilities;

Physical – design of physical spaces that make it difficult for persons with disabilities to move around easily;

Information/Communication – difficulty accessing sources of information and communications;

Organizational/Systemic – decision-making, policies, procedures, or practices that unfairly discriminate and can prevent individuals from participating fully in a situation and are often put into place unintentionally; and

Technological – poor technologies, systems or devices that can prevent people with disabilities from accessing information.

By addressing such barriers, people with disabilities will be able to maintain their dignity and live more independently in a community that supports them. The Town of Penetanguishene can address these barriers by continuing to comply with all of the AODA requirements and actively assessing accessibility needs as they arise. The Town of Penetanguishene 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aims to create a more inclusive community that people of all abilities can participate in.



The Town of Penetanguishene shall continue its commitment to building an inclusive Penetanguishene community. Some general goals and ongoing initiatives for Penetanguishene throughout 2020-2024 include:

- The Town's accessibility policies and plans shall continue to be complied with, and reviewed by staff to ensure the Town is providing an adequate level of accessibility standards to those with disabilities. As such, the Town shall review the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every year or as the need arises. Other Town accessibility plans and policies will also be reviewed and updated regularly in order to stay up to date with all accessibility legislation.
- Accessibility Compliance reports shall be filed with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. The upcoming reports are due:
 - December 31, 2019
 - December 31, 2021
 - December 31, 2023
 - December 31, 2025
- Accessibility training shall be provided to all new employees, as well as all current employees in respect of any changes to the Town's accessibility policies.
- The Town shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features into procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities as per the Town's **Purchasing Policy**.

Information and Communication Standards			
Goal	Proposed Action	Action(s) Taken	Time Frame
I.1	The Town shall meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Level AA regarding Town websites and web content.	- Use an online auditing tool to scan the Town's website content for accessibility and identifying errors.	January 1, 2021
I.2	Accessible documents	- Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to accessible formats - Train all Town of Penetanguishene staff on making documents (word, PDF, etc.) accessible.	January 1, 2021
I.3	To provide alternative methods to convey and communicate information to residents based on their abilities.	- Create a statement to be added to the Town's website to inform the public that documents are available in an accessible format upon request.	2020
Employment Standards			
E.1	Eliminate accessibility barriers in existing policies and procedures for employees.	- Regularly review policies, procedures and practices to ensure accessibility.	Ongoing

Goal	Proposed Action	Action(s) Taken	Time Frame
<p>E. 2</p> <p>Update the Town's Emergency Response Information for all Town buildings and facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website updates with more detailed fire and safety information for Town facilities for people with disabilities - Accessibility means are considered when completing emergency management mock sessions. 		<p>Ongoing</p>
Design of Public Spaces Standard			
<p>D. 1</p> <p>Park trail development, including a set of intrapark trails providing accessible links to park amenities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Town shall consult with the public and persons with disabilities when constructing new or redeveloping existing trails - 		<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>D. 2</p> <p>Council Chambers accessibility updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review sound system and live streaming options 		<p>To be determined</p>

Goal	Proposed Action	Action(s) Taken	Time Frame
<p>D. 3</p> <p>Incorporate accessible features into the Town's recreation playgrounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penetanguishene's play structures will be replaced or retrofitted to comply with Annex H of the CSA Standard-Z614-14 (establishes minimum accessibility requirements for newly constructed playspaces as well as renovations and retrofits to existing playgrounds). 		<p>Ongoing</p>

	Goal	Proposed Action	Action(s) Taken	Time Frame
Customer Service				
C.1	The Town will ensure that our programs and services are easy to navigate and that our customers are given options	- Enhancements to physical wayfinding, including improved signage throughout all buildings and increasing font size on posted signs.		Ongoing

	Goal	Proposed Action	Action(s) Taken	Time Frame
C.2	Increase self-serve options for residents to perform tasks themselves.	- Regularly review policies, procedures and practices to ensure accessibility.		Ongoing

Leading the Way Forward: A Final Word

The Town of Penetanguishene is a government that is future-oriented and accountable. Accessibility planning at the Town of Penetanguishene and the requirements under the AODA support the Town of Penetanguishene's Strategic Plan. Accessibility is embedded in many key strategies as to create a community that is accessible and inclusive for all residents throughout the various stages of their lives.

Council, employees, volunteers and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the Town's behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of this 2020- 2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the Town's goods, services, programs and facilities. Ensuring an accessible Penetanguishene will be a team effort.

The Town of Penetanguishene's 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan sets out the path to an accessible Penetanguishene by reducing and eliminating barriers, making Penetanguishene a community of choice, and a community where persons of all abilities can actively participate and have a sense of belonging.

Contact Information

The Town of Penetanguishene is committed to ensuring accessibility is a reality throughout all facilities and business operations. There is still so much to accomplish, and as we progress, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact us with your questions, ideas or comments.

Stacey Cooper, Clerk

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Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2

scooper@penetanguishene.ca