

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2026)



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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 was adopted in 2001. The purpose of these Acts is to create dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all individuals within Ontario, and to breakdown barriers for those with disabilities.

The AODA outlines various ways for municipalities, businesses and organizations to achieve a barrier-free province. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) sets requirements that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan ('Plan') is a requirement under the AODA and the IASR. The Plan offers an organizational strategy to prevent and remove barriers and enact the requirements contained within the standards. It is also a requirement that the Plan be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Town of Penetanguishene's Commitment

The Town of Penetanguishene is committed to ongoing efforts toward achieving the accessibility requirements of the IASR, as well as making improvements based on innovative ideas and input from its Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee ('WAC'), members of the public, and staff. The Town continues to plan to ensure its services, programs and facilities are inclusive and accessible for all.

The Town's Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee provides a broader perspective of accessibility needs and provides advice to Council on programs, policies and services to be provided to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Committee offers valuable feedback relating to reviewing site plans and drawings, capital projects and other operating programs and services offered within the Town.

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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview

The 2024-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a living document that is designed to continually meet the requirements of the AODA and its standards regulation. In addition to staff input, this Plan was developed through extensive consultation with the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee and members of the public as the different experiences and background are valuable in creating a Plan that supports an inclusive community through growth and change. The key aspect of this Plan will focus on monitoring and improving upon strategies that are already in place and looking at how to provide better services to the community through new opportunities and public feedback.

The Plan contains a section for each domain of the IASR, as well as an additional section that covers content beyond the scope of the Standards. Each section of the Plan sets out a standard-specific goal and identifies strategies for achieving these goals. Examples of specific actions to be undertaken are provided at the end of this document, however these are not intended to limit the potential scope of progress toward a barrier-free Town of Penetanguishene.

The identified priorities are all important throughout the duration of the Plan with the intention to help promote continual improvement, while still acknowledging that compliance timelines of the IASR will be adhered to. Opportunities to influence accessibility during the term of the Plan will be considered on an ongoing basis. The Plan will inform and work alongside other guiding documents and activities undertaken by the Town and community partners.

This Plan furthers the municipal commitment to continue building a barrier-free community in which people of all abilities can enjoy the full extent of life.

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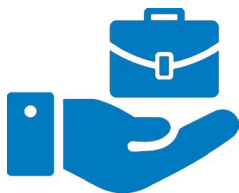
The Plan

The plan is developed around the following six areas, outlining goals and strategies for each, and defining how the Town of Penetanguishene hopes to improve.



1. Information and Communications

Goal: To ensure all information and communications conveyed by the Town of Penetanguishene is created, provided, and received in a manner that is accessible to people of all abilities.



2. Employment

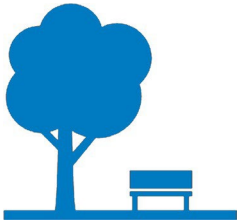
Goal: To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Employment Standard and take proactive action to ensure current and future employees do not face barriers at work.



3. Transportation

Goal: To support integrated transit and active transportation through a manner that meets the needs of all people.

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4. Design of Public Spaces

Goal: To ensure accessibility needs are met in newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces where community travels, meets, and gathers.



5. Customer Service

Goal: To prevent, identify, and remove barriers such that people of all abilities have equitable access to goods, services, and facilities.



6. Beyond the AODA

Goal: To create an accessible and inclusive community that is responsive to the needs of and improves well-being and quality of life for persons with disabilities.

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1. Information and Communication

Goal: To ensure all information and communications conveyed by the Town of Penetanguishene is created, provided, and received in a manner that is accessible to people of all abilities.

Strategy: To improve the accessibility of communications, the Town will use the following strategies:

1. Enhance capacity of all staff producing content intended for the public in an accessible manner.
2. Continue to review the municipal website for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.
3. Consider opportunities to enhance promotion of programs and services that offer content tailored to persons with disabilities.

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2. Employment

Goal: To ensure Town of Penetanguishene compliance with the requirements of the Employment Standard and take proactive action to ensure current and future employees do not face barriers at work.

Strategy: To enhance accessibility and inclusion in the workplace, the Town will:

4. Review the recruitment process to facilitate participation of all candidates.
5. Provide staff, volunteers and Council with accessibility training that is specific to their job duties.
6. Continue the periodic review of policies and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with the Employment Standard.
7. Prepare for future accessibility needs and ensure accommodation requests can be resolved in a timely manner.

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3. Transportation

Goal: To support integrated transit through the Town of Penetanguishene in a manner that meets the needs of people of all abilities.

Strategy: To meet the applicable requirements of the AODA Transportation Standard, the Town will:

8. Seek opportunities to enhance the Midland Penetanguishene Transit.
9. Undertake efforts to increase ridership of Midland Penetanguishene Transit.
10. Provide input to the County of Simcoe regarding accessibility of the LINX Transit Route.
11. Strengthen pedestrian linkages.
12. Explore and implement active transportation initiatives such as additional sidewalks, community connectivity through taxis and walkable communities.

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4. Design of Public Spaces

Goal: To ensure accessibility needs are met in newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces in the Town of Penetanguishene where community travels, meets, and gathers.

Strategy: To enhance accessibility and inclusion in the design of public spaces, the Town will:

13. Consider elements of Universal Design as the Town implements service changes and undertakes lifecycle upgrades of municipal facilities.
14. Ensure all municipal building plans, new construction and significant renovations, are reviewed by the WAC for comments and feedback on accessible design features.
15. Look for ways to provide information to developers through the planning process on the construction of new recreation trails and other public spaces.
16. Promote funding opportunities that support building owners and businesses to undertake accessibility upgrades.
17. Enhance accessibility in outdoor spaces and improve access to nature, including infrastructure for recreation and active transportation.
18. Integrate active transportation concepts into any new or proposed redeveloped spaces.

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5. Customer Service

Goal: To prevent, identify, and remove barriers such that people of all abilities have equitable access to goods, services, and facilities in the Town.

Strategy: To provide accessible customer service, the Town will:

19. Provide ongoing and refresher training to employees and volunteers on delivering accessible customer service.
20. Renew and raise awareness of accessibility assets available to the public, in partnership with economic development and tourism.
21. Review and update policies related to service provision to ensure adequate supports are in place for persons with disabilities.
22. Actively encourage public feedback about the way goods, services and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities.

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6. Beyond the AODA

Goal: To create an accessible and inclusive Town of Penetanguishene that is responsive to community needs and improves well-being and quality of life for persons of all abilities.

Strategy: Outside of legislative requirements, the Town will:

23. Participate in opportunities to educate and raise awareness amongst the public about accessibility and inclusion.
24. Explore partnerships with private sector providers of essential goods and services to make the broader community more accessible.
25. Leverage grants, plans, programs, and services being implemented to maximize accessibility benefits.

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Opportunities for Action

Table 1: Strategies and Sample Actions for Information and Communications

#	Description	Sample Actions
1	Enhance capacity of all staff producing content intended for the public to do so in an accessible manner.	Provide enhanced training on accessible documentation to staff producing or overseeing public-facing content.
2	Continue to review the municipal website for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.	Schedule user testing to identify areas for improvement. Plan for periodic website scans to ensure all content is WCAG 2.0 AA compliant and provide enhanced training for website users.
3	Consider opportunities to enhance promotion of programs and services that offer content tailored to persons with disabilities.	Look for new ways to promote programs and services in a variety of formats.

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Table 2: Strategies and Sample Actions for Employment

#	Description	Sample Actions
4	Review the recruitment process to facilitate participation of all candidates.	Articulate the availability of accommodations and alternative methods to candidates during the recruitment process.
5	Provide staff, Council, Board and Committee members with accessibility training that is specific to their job duties.	Develop and implement a job-specific training matrix relating to accessibility legislation, policies, and best practices in providing service to persons with disabilities.
6	Continue with periodic review of policies and procedures to ensure ongoing compliancy with the Employment Standards Act.	Work with HR to remain current and relevant in documentation and ensure all content is communicated to staff for their reference.
7	Prepare for future accessibility needs and ensure accommodation requests can be resolved in a timely manner.	Budget funds specifically for the provision of accommodations that may be sought by current and future employees. Continue to support flexible and non-traditional work arrangements such a work from home.

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Table 3: Strategies and Sample Actions for Transportation

#	Description	Sample Actions
8	Seek opportunities to enhance transit.	Solicit periodic feedback from transit users.
9	Undertake efforts to increase ridership of Midland Penetanguishene Transit.	Implement consistent Midland Penetanguishene Transit promotional campaigns and seek new opportunities to promote the service. ie. demographic research
10	Provide input to the County of Simcoe regarding accessibility of the LINX transit route.	Staff to remain aware of efforts relating to County accessible transit provision.
11	Strengthen pedestrian linkages.	<p>Ensure pedestrian crossings are timed to permit safe crossing for people of all abilities.</p> <p>Review snow clearing process for roads and sidewalks as it relates to travelability for persons with disabilities.</p>
12	Promote and strengthen active Transportation	<p>Strengthen linkages throughout the municipality to maximize active modes of transportation. ie. Sidewalks, curbs, trails etc.</p> <p>Promote active modes of transportation through communication channels</p> <p>Explore the provision of accessories to active modes of transportation to make it easier ie bikes, bike racks etc.</p>

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Table 4: Strategies and Sample Actions for Design of Public Spaces

#	Description	Sample Actions
13	Consider elements of Universal Design as the Town works toward upgrading municipal facilities and services.	Ensure accessibility is integrated into Community Design Standards and other municipal documents guiding capital projects.
14	Ensure all municipal building plans, new construction and significant renovations are reviewed by the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee for comments and feedback on accessible design features.	Maintain the internal practice of referencing members of the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee early in the planning process and consider additional supports to help obtain valuable feedback based on the size of the project.
15	Look for ways to provide information to developers through the planning process on the construction of new recreation trails and other public spaces.	Partner with Planning and Community Development Department to support the information available to developers relating to accessible requirements and opportunities.
16	Promote funding opportunities that support building owners and businesses to undertake accessibility upgrades.	Share information about opportunities to leverage Community Improvement Plan funds and other grant opportunities for accessibility upgrades.
17	Enhance accessibility in outdoor spaces and improve access to nature, including infrastructure for recreation and active transportation.	<p>Identify opportunities and invest in accessible recreation through the budget process.</p> <p>Create and promote opportunities for accessible cycling, including adaptive technology and creative bike sharing solutions.</p> <p>Explore locations for accessible pathways.</p> <p>Ensure adequate public seating and rest areas are available in parks and other public spaces.</p>

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Table 5: Strategies and Sample Actions for Customer Service

#	Description	Sample Actions
18	Provide ongoing and refresher training to employees and volunteers on delivering accessible customer service.	Develop internal training supports for training.
19	Renew and raise awareness of accessibility assets.	Promote online accessible washrooms map. Co-locate accessibility and tourism information. Promote accessible parking availability in the Town.
20	Review and update policies related to service provision to ensure adequate supports are in place for persons with disabilities.	Review opportunities to enhance supports as required.
21	Actively encourage public feedback about the manner in which goods, services and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities.	Promote Accessibility Feedback Form.

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Table 6: Strategies and Sample Actions for Beyond the AODA

#	Description	Sample Actions
22	Participate in opportunities to educate and raise awareness amongst the public about accessibility and inclusion.	Promote accessibility at public events. Provide public education regarding mobility scooter safety and other accessibility related topics.
23	Offer support to organizations, business, and institutions to enhance accessibility for their patrons.	Promote the Community Improvement Program as a funding mechanism to make accessibility upgrades.
24	Leverage grants, plans, programs, and services being implemented to maximize accessibility benefits.	Participate in local implementation of the Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy.
25	Promote National Accessibility Week (May / June)	

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Feedback and Contact Information

The Town of Penetanguishene encourages feedback from the public on accessibility, including suggestions relating to new initiatives and how we can improve our services. Feedback can be provided at [penetanguishene.ca](https://www.penetanguishene.ca) or by contacting the Clerk's Department to obtain a paper copy of the feedback form.

Corporate Services
705-549-7453
10 Robert Street West
Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2
[penetanguishene.ca](https://www.penetanguishene.ca)

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Accessibility Feedback Form

The Town of Penetanguishene welcomes your comments, suggestions and feedback regarding accessibility of its programs and services for persons with disabilities. Please complete the following form and it will be submitted to Penetanguishene Clerk's Department. Be sure to provide possible solutions that will assist us in resolving your issues.

Please include your contact information if you would like to receive a response from us.

Describe your accessibility concerns:

Describe any possible solutions:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

If you would like to receive a response, please indicate your preferred method of contact:

- Telephone
- Email
- Mail
- Fax

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City/Town: _____

Province _____ Postal Code: _____

Submit form by email, Phone: 705-549-7453, Fax: 705-549-7443, or mail to:

Clerk's Department
Town of Penetanguishene
10 Robert Street West, P.O. Box 5009
Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2

Notice of Collection: The personal information recorded on this form is collected and maintained in accordance with MFIPPA - the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used for the sole purpose of processing your request. Questions about the collection of personal information may be addressed to the Clerk's Department, Town of Penetanguishene, 10 Robert Street West, P.O. Box 5009 Penetanguishene, ON L9M 2G2, 705-549-7453.