



Town of Saugeen Shores

Accessibility Plan

2024-2028

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Introducing Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed by the Government of Ontario in 2005. The purpose of the Act is to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards to create dignity, independence, and equal opportunity for all individuals within Ontario, and to remove barriers for those with disabilities.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11, as established by the AODA, requires designated public sector organizations, including municipalities, to develop a multi-year accessibility plan every five years. The accessibility plan is to outline the municipality's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and meet the requirements established under the Regulation.

The focus of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan) will be on removing barriers and improving overall accessibility for employees, residents, and visitors. The Plan will also act as a guide to ensuring accessibility considerations are incorporated into the everyday operations within the municipality.

The 2024-2028 Plan, beginning January 2024 to December 2028, is a living document for the municipality that is designed to continually meet the AODA requirements and its standards Regulation. An annual review of the municipality will be conducted to identify barriers and develop a strategy for their removal. A **workplan** will be created to track improvements and monitor the status of each priority.

Town of Saugeen Shores (the Town) is committed to fulfilling the requirements under the AODA. This Plan outlines the steps the Town is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Contact Information

The Municipal Office is located at 600 Tomlinson Drive in Port Elgin, Ontario with the following methods to contact:

Mailing Address:
Town of Saugeen Shores
Attention: Deputy Clerk
600 Tomlinson Drive, PO Box 820
Port Elgin, Ont., N0H 2C0

Phone Number: 519-832-2008 or Toll-Free at 1-866-832-2008

Website: www.saugeenshores.ca

The main contact for the Town's Multi-year Accessibility Plan is the Deputy Clerk, who can be reached by calling or mailing the Municipal Office, or by emailing clerk@saugeenshores.ca.

Definitions

1. "AAC" stands for the Accessibility Advisory Committee for the Town of Saugeen Shores.
2. "Council" means the Municipal Council of the Corporation of the Town of Saugeen Shores;
3. "Barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.

People with disabilities may face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, at work, at school, in parks, in recreational facilities, in the streets, in stores, restaurants, etc.

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities [Act](#)]

4. "Disability" means:
 - 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
 - b. a condition of mental impairment or a 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, or
 - 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*; ("handicap")

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities [Act](#)]

5. "Plan" means the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Town of Saugeen Shores.
6. "Town" means the Corporation of the Town of Saugeen Shores.

Saugeen Shores Accessibility Advisory Committee

Section 29 of the AODA states that every municipality with a population of not less than 10,000 shall establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee and that the majority of members of the Committee shall be persons with disabilities.

The Town of Saugeen Shores, having a population of over 10,000, established an Accessibility Advisory Committee to advise Council each year about the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of The Plan.

The Committee composition consists of the following:

- 7 members of the public,
- 1 Council representative,
- 1 alternate Council representative, and
- 1 staff resource.

The Deputy Clerk of the Town is the Staff Resource to the Committee.

The Committee meets monthly in addition to scheduled special on-site meetings, when required. All members of the Committee have attended specific training dealing with the AODA. The Committee also receives orientation training from the staff resource regarding procedural matters dealing with meetings of the Committee and reporting to Council. Members of the Committee are appointed every two (2) years.

The Deputy Clerk is the contact person identified to handle inquiries related to accessibility that can inform the public of the Plan, provide copies, and direct persons to the appropriate Department for follow-up.

The duties of the Committee are identified in the Committee's [**Mandate**](#), and includes visiting and evaluating public areas in the municipality (for example facilities and parks). These tasks and responsibilities are incorporated into the annual report that is provided to Council to highlight the documents and standards the Committee reviewed throughout the year.

Jurisdiction of the Plan

The Plan referred to in this document is under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Saugeen Shores.

Key Elements of the Plan

Mission Statement

To manage the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers in a consistent manner, the Town of Saugeen Shores and the Accessibility Advisory Committee will conduct annual reviews of identified barriers to establish a strategy to improve accessibility and decrease barriers.

Vision Statement - Commitment to Accessibility Planning

Improving accessibility is important for all residents and visitors.

The Town is committed to:

- The participation and consultation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its multi-year accessibility plans.
- The continual improvement of access to facilities and services for people with disabilities.
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.
- The assigning of responsibilities to departments and/or staff, to lead the efforts to meet the legislative requirements and commitments of the Plan.
- The development of a workplan or strategy to meet compliance deadlines for accessibility laws and the Town's priorities.

Values

The [Town's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan](#) identifies five (5) core values (listed below), which also apply to accessibility planning. These values reflect the community and shape the culture, decision-making, and accountability. The following values of this Plan also help incorporate the accessibility goals and priorities for the municipality.

Below are the five (5) mentioned values and how they relate to accessibility planning:

1. **People-Centered** – Considering accessibility needs in everything we do.
2. **Transparent** – Open and accountable in communicating updates and improvements for accessibility.
3. **Service** – Tracking progress and completing tasks to meet the needs of our community.
4. **Inclusive** – Being a welcoming and respectful municipality for people with disabilities.
5. **Stewards** – Planning for a more accessible environment for our future generations.

Legislative Background

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province.

Under the AODA Act, 2005, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, update them at least once every five (5) years, and post them on the municipality's public website. This document has been updated to reflect the Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation requirements.

Five standards were developed under the AODA: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and Customer Service. In 2011, these standards were combined into a single standard, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

As referenced above, this Regulation includes five (5) standards which are listed below. Some of the requirements are developing policies to ensure that our communication is accessible to people with disabilities; ensuring the Town can provide information in a format that considers an individual's disability; ensuring that the Town Website is compliant with applicable standards; and developing policies on ensuring potential employees with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations during the recruitment phase.

In addition to meeting the standards as prescribed in the IASR, general guiding principles are established for each of the five standards, below. These five principles act as a guide to achieve greater accessibility and remove barriers for each standard.

1. Information and Communications

Information and communications are a large part of the Town's daily business, making it crucial to ensure that information and communications are created and presented in a way that considers accessibility.

The Town will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing, and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites and print communications materials, face-to-face interactions, emergency procedures, public safety information, and educational and training resources.

The Town is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and in an accessible format to people with disabilities. The Town will make reasonable efforts based on the needs of the community and the resources available. For this policy reasonable efforts by the Town shall be based on the frequency of indications for needs of service, the availability of the service requested, the relative cost compared to the overall budget, best practices recognized by similar rural municipalities, and Provincial regulation.

2. Employment

The requirements set out under the Employment Standard apply to paid employees. Through this Standard, employers are mandated to provide accessibility throughout the entire employment cycle. Incorporating accessibility into all facets of the employment process benefits everyone by broadening the talent pool and assisting employers in supporting and maintaining a skilled workforce.

3. Transportation

Access to transportation is needed for going to work or school, shopping, and other aspects of daily life. This standard is to address aspects of accessible public transportation, where applicable.

4. Design of Public Spaces

This standard is to help remove barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces for persons with disabilities, and to consider barrier free public spaces beyond the Building Code [Act](#).

The focus is to be on built public open spaces and streetscape elements as well as building elements in a range of occupancies. Occupancies may include the following:

- business and industrial occupancies,
- multi-residential occupancies including hotels, motels, etc.,
- assembly occupancies such as theatres,
- recreational facilities, and
- interior and exterior transportation infrastructure (boarding platforms, facilities, bus stops, etc.).

Per the Act, the proposed accessibility standard will set out the policies, practices, or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers for the built environment for persons of all age groups with a range of disabilities, visible and hidden, and establish mandatory implementation dates.

5. Customer Service (Regulation 429/07)

This standard applies to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods and services to the public or to other businesses that have one or more employees. These standards address business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

The Town will continue to focus on providing policy, training support, and continue to improve services and programs to meet these regulations.

Conclusion

As the Town embarks on its 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the goal of making programs and services accessible to all residents remains. The evolution of accessibility in Saugeen Shores is moving beyond meeting legislative requirements and into a phase of maintaining and including accessibility considerations on an operational basis.

The Town would like to express its thanks to the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, partner organizations in the field of accessibility, staff, residents, and all who participate in the creation of this Plan.

This document is available in alternate formats upon request, by contacting 519-832-2008 or clerk@saugeenshores.ca.