

TOWN OF MIDLAND



2014 – 2015 Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

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A. DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN OF MIDLAND

The Town of Midland is a small urban community situated at the gateway to Georgian Bay's picturesque 30,000 Islands. As a culturally rich town, Midland has become the nerve center of North Simcoe for economic prosperity, enviable lifestyle in idyllic surroundings and an abundance of recreational pursuits.

Midland is a very safe, clean and hospitable community with a population of over 17,300. It is the central location of the Southern Georgian Bay area and has a population of approximately 47,900 in a 15-mile radius. In the summer months, the area population grows to over 100,000 due to over 8,000 cottages, resort hotels, provincial and national parks.

The Town of Midland consists of the following facilities:

- Administrative Building – 575 Dominion Avenue
Houses the Clerk's Department (By-law Enforcement and Parking), Tax and Treasury Departments, Public Works Department (Engineering), and Planning Department and Building Services.
- Police Services – 250 Second Street (adjacent to the Administrative Office)
- Fire Department – 550 Bayshore Drive
- Public Works Depot – 731 Ontario Street
- Parks Depot – 67 Fourth Street
- Harbour Office – Midland Town Dock (end of King Street)
- Midland Public Library – 320 King Street
- Water/Wastewater Treatment Centre - 200 Bay Street
- North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre – 527 Len Self Boulevard
Houses the Community Services Department, two ice surfaces, as well as various community groups.

B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Midland is committed to ensuring that the goods and services it provides and makes available to its residents and visitors are second to none and accessible to all. Over the years, and before mandated by the Province to do so, the Town has maintained a proactive approach to addressing barriers to its buildings, facilities, programs, practices, and services by implementing positive changes geared towards improved accessibility.

The Provincial government's enactment of *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001*, brought the importance of accessibility to the forefront. The goal of this legislation 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 this legislation the Town is obligated to develop an annual Accessibility Plan which it uses as a mechanism to further assist in the elimination of obstacles that inhibit full accessibility to its goods, services and facilities. The plan describes the measures the Town has taken over the past year and will take during the current and subsequent years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Town, including employees and members of the community at large.

In 2005, the Province introduced further legislation - *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. Unlike the ODA which is specific to government bodies, the AODA established mandatory accessibility standards for both public and private businesses and organizations including specific compliance timelines. The objective of the regulatory standards established under the authority of the AODA is to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025 in the areas of:

- customer service;
- transportation;
- information and communications;
- employment; and
- built environment.

The Province of Ontario is committed to a universally accessible Ontario. For that reason, organizations that do not comply with the regulatory standards within the timeframes allotted shall be required to pay an administrative penalty to a maximum of \$100,000, based on the impact of the contravention. Compliance reports will be required bi-annually and must be available to the public. In addition, an inspector may carry out an inspection to determine if the organization has met its compliance requirements. During the inspection, an organization will be required to produce, on demand, any documents or reports requested by the inspector.

C. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS REGULATION

The Customer Service Standards Regulation enacted on January 1, 2008, established standards that mandated every provider of goods or services to establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

As required under the Regulation, the Town of Midland's Accessible Customer Service Policy, adopted by Council on September 28, 2009, aims to ensure that service to those with disabilities is provided in a manner that promotes independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. Accessible customer service training has been provided to all members of Council, committee members, Town staff and volunteers. Training is ongoing and continues to be provided to all new employees, volunteers and Council members during orientation. It is also a condition of employment.

The Accessible Customer Service Policy is made available to the public through the Town's website, or in an accessible format upon request at the Municipal Office.

D. INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) came into effect July 1, 2011, and established mandatory accessibility standards in three areas: information and communications, employment and transportation.

Information and Communications

The purpose of the Information and Communications Standard is to facilitate access for people with disabilities to sources of information and communications that those without disabilities depend on daily. The requirements stipulated under this standard provide the framework necessary to assist both public and private businesses in achieving full accessibility in the areas of Information and Communication by 2025.

Employment

The requirements set out under the Employment Standard apply to paid employees. Through this Standard employers are mandated to provide for accessibility throughout the entire employment lifecycle. 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.

While not required to do so, the Town of Midland believes it makes good business sense to apply the requirements of the Standard to unpaid staff and volunteers where applicable.

Transportation

Unlike the other mandatory requirements established under the AODA, the Transportation Standard is sector specific and is applicable to transportation modes falling under the jurisdiction of local government, i.e. buses and taxis.

By making public services and vehicles accessible, people with disabilities, whether a resident or visitor, are afforded the convenience of accessible transportation enabling them the opportunity to live, work and participate in communities throughout Ontario.

Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) is the final standard and came into force January 1, 2013. The requirements mandated under this standard address a broad range of physical and architectural features specific to public spaces and designed to eliminate barriers in public spaces and buildings, i.e. recreational trails/beach access, outdoor eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, etc.

Incorporating accessibility into public spaces ensures that everyone is afforded the same opportunity for enjoyment of recreational spaces and barrier free access to public services.

E. AIM

The aim of this plan is to describe the measures the Town of Midland has taken in previous years and will take during the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use municipal facilities and services. **(Historical accounts of measures undertaken over the years are available in the Clerk's Department).**

F. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this plan is to:

1. Report on the measures the Town has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the Town assesses its acts, by-laws, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services that the Town will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the Town intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describe how the Town will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

G. MIDLAND ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, municipalities with a population in excess of 10,000 were mandated to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee. On August 26, 2002, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Midland instituted the Midland Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC).

The role of the Committee is to advise and assist the Town of Midland in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Midland for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility), including persons with disabilities. This objective is achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Each voting member of the Committee is an independent representative to the Committee and represent the concerns of all persons with disabilities. The members of this Committee work collectively for the purpose of developing a common approach that is reasonable and practical.

The Committee is comprised of seven members, with one member being a member of Council and the majority of the remaining six members being persons with disabilities.

The Midland Accessibility Advisory Committee meets bi-monthly on the first Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m., with additional meetings called by the Chair as required for review of particular plans, drawings and any other accessibility related matters that are time sensitive.

H. MONITORING PROCESS

The Municipality is committed to following through with this plan and has established a proactive monitoring process.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall meet on a regular basis to monitor this plan to ensure that targets are achieved and to re-evaluate the plan in order to adapt to changing circumstances. The Municipality will continue its endeavour to accommodate people with disabilities wherever possible. The Municipality is required to prepare an annual Accessibility Plan and Multi-year Accessibility Plan Status Report on the progress of measures taken to identify and remove barriers and to ensure compliance with the provincial legislation.

This Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are reviewed annually in consultation with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

The Town of Midland is located at 575 Dominion Avenue in Midland. The mailing address is:

575 Dominion Avenue
Midland ON
L4R 1R2

If you have any questions regarding the Accessibility Plan, please feel free to contact Karen Desroches at (705)526-4275 ext. 2208 or by email at kdesroches@midland.ca.

J. COMMUNICATION OF PLAN

The Town of Midland's Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report are available on the Town's web site. Copies are also available at Town Hall and all of our municipal facilities.

The Town of Midland will make every attempt to make this plan available to those with disabilities for their perusal, review and input.

K. OPERATIONAL REVIEW

Barrier Identification Methodology:

- Input received from Department Heads with respect to the accessible targets to prepare a draft plan for annual review by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The existing plan was reviewed for any required changes such as the removal of barriers, changes in target dates and the identification of any new barriers in the past year.
- Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report presented and reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee – March 2, 2015.
- Accessibility Plan forwarded to Midland Council for adoption – March 23, 2015.

L. Accessibility Achievements Accomplished in 2014, 2015

BARRIER	STRATEGY FOR REMOVAL AND PREVENTION
Parks and Recreation (including the NSSRC)	
Harbourside Park	Installed new fully accessible playground
Customer Service Counter to high	Lowered counter to an accessible height.
Soap Dispensers in some washrooms not accessible	Soap dispensers were moved for greater accessibility.
Signage – Boys and Girls Clubs	New signage added at the entrance to the Boys and Girls Club to better identify the automated door.
No signage on accessible restroom stalls by the Midland Minor Hockey Association office.	Signage installed.
Lip at emergency exit in the gymnasium inhibits wheelchairs	Barrier was removed.
Handles on the stalls in north hallway washrooms at the NSSRC were difficult to grab.	New handles have been installed that allow for better gripping.
Town Office – 575 Dominion Avenue	
Municipal Elections – Unassisted voting for visually impaired.	Audio-vote systems was used during the 2014 municipal election to assist visually impaired cast ballots.
Outside stairs not marked	Completed in 2014.
Architectural/site plans/subdivision plans	A representative from the Planning Department provides representation at Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings, on an as required basis.
Size of disabled parking spaces	Standardize the size of reserved disabled parking spaces – applies to all future developments – 2003 and ongoing.
Automated Phone System is too cumbersome.	Based on feedback from the public, the automated phone message was modified to reduce the confusion experienced by callers in locating the appropriate department by which to address their queries.
Public Works	
Snow accumulation at bus stops	Removal of snow in a timely fashion – ongoing
Steps onto bus are challenging for people with disabilities and elder	Driver provides hands-on assistance as required – ongoing.
A refurbished fully accessible bus was purchased in 2014 and will be put into service in 2015.	
Hugel and Eighth Street – button too high	A concrete apron was installed to provide access to the button
Audible Signal – Eighth and Yonge	An audible pedestrian signal was installed when the controller was upgraded.
Library	
Website is not equipped with text to speech technology to accommodate the visually impaired.	Text to Speech Technology installed in March 2015. Makes website more accessible for persons with visual impairments.

M. BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

The following barriers were identified. The Municipality will decide which barriers to address each year, keeping in mind budget restraints and feasibility. Facilities and services that are frequently used by the public, or that significantly affect people with disabilities will be given priority.

BARRIER/LOCATION	BARRIER TYPE	STRATEGIES FOR REMOVAL OR PREVENTION
Parks and Recreation		
Trails – Portions are unpaved and difficult to maneuver	Physical	Rotary Waterfront Trail connection to Penetanguishene to be completed in 2015. Minor connections are also to be completed in 2015.
Bayview Park		
Play structure	Physical	Current structure cannot be modified - would require replacing
McAllen Park		
Play structure	Physical	Current structure cannot be modified - would require replacing
Harbour Facility		
Stairs leading to Dock area#	Physical	Not feasible.
NSSRC (North Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre)		
Change Rooms – not accessible	Physical	Automated doors are currently being installed.
Parks Depot		
Security System number pads	Physical	Due to the significant cost of resolving the barriers identified and taking into consideration the age of the building, it is not recommended that work to correct these barriers be undertaken. A new Parks/Public Works Depot is to be constructed.
Breezeway entrances	Physical	
Doorway at the Boys and Girls Club entrance to too narrow	Physical	To be included in future budgets for consideration.

FIRE DEPARTMENT		
Accessibility of the front door	Physical	Refer to Section J, Special considerations
LIBRARY		
Voice recognition technology.	Technological	Research requirements and alternatives
PUBLIC WORKS		
Curbs	Physical	Continue with curb cutting and sidewalk accessibility program
Intersections	Physical	Audible signals – review is ongoing.
Delineation Markings	Physical	Continue providing delineation markings on ramps to assist visually impaired.
Audible Signal – Yonge and King - Sound is not distinct enough to indicate in what direction it is safe to cross	Physical	Adjustments MAAC members have attended the intersection. An Engineer's report has been obtained on the intersection and MAAC members have made recommendations. The signal was adjusted to allow pedestrians additional time to cross the intersection.
PUBLIC WORKS DEPOT		
No disabled parking space and signage at front of building	Physical	The barriers identified on the left impact employees who may be assigned to light duty, as well as the public. Due to the significant cost of resolving the barriers identified and taking into consideration the age of the building, it is not recommended that work to correct these barriers be undertaken. A new joint Parks/Public Works Depot is to be constructed.
No public access to depot offices (elevator)	Physical	
Front door not automated for accessibility	Physical	
Depot washrooms not wheelchair accessible	Physical	
Men's washroom – washroom stalls and shower room door and stall not accessible	Physical	
Lunchroom emergency exit door not wheelchair access and no outside ramp to driveway	Physical	
Rear door by time clock not wheelchair accessible – one side of double door should be wheelchair accessible	Physical	
Lead hand office not wheel chair accessible	Physical	
Town Office – 575 Dominion Avenue		
Grab bars in washrooms no longer meet accessibility requirements.	Physical	Not currently being considered for replacement.
Automated phone service difficult to maneuver.	Technological	Staff will continue to investigate options for improvement.

N. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Midland Transit System

The Municipality implemented a wheelchair accessible van service in December 2005. The Municipality has two accessible vans in operation each with the capacity to hold two wheelchairs or one scooter. The service is operated by Community Reach via a dedicated line for accessible transit at (705) 526-4321. Council continues to support accessibility issues related to Midland transit. Council granted permission to extend the accessible transit beyond the Municipality's boundaries, and this service came into use in early June of 2007.

In addition to the Municipal wheelchair accessible vans, the following are transit service providers:

- Red Cross – operates a door-to-door service, based out their Midland location at 850 Hartman Drive, Unit 105.
- Huronia Seniors Volunteer Care Team (Wheels 4 Wheels) – owns and operates a bus for disabled persons. The bus is available for community use and is operated by volunteers.
- RNR Patient Transfer Services Inc. transports both wheelchair and stretcher from the Midland area to any destination. These services are available on a call-in basis.

Leased Buildings

The Municipality presently leases various facilities to community groups and commercial enterprises. These facilities are flagged for continual review. Some community groups are also housed at the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre. Accessibility issues for the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre are included in this plan.

Fire Department Building Main Entry

The entrance door is the main public entry to the building. The door is on a magnetic lock system for security purposes. The public must activate the building intercom system at the main entrance and may communicate with staff in the building. If required, the individual is permitted to enter the building, once identified. The magnetic lock is released from any phone within the building, or when staff attends the door. If the door is a barrier, staff will provide assistance as has been past practice. Due to the entrance set-up and the need for a magnetic lock system, an automated door would not be feasible.

Municipal Elections

The Municipality has always considered wheelchair accessibility when selecting voting places to ensure that voters can vote independently and that is one of the reasons that one voting location was selected at the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre. The Municipality continues to utilize multiple accessible tabulators during its municipal elections including the tabulator used at the mobile poll which visits the various qualified institutions. Additional options to improve accessibility will be considered for the 2018 municipal election.

Web Site

The Town's website provides the option of increasing the font size. It also provides the phone number and extension to access the TTY (text telephone) phone line under contacts. The Town launched a new website in 2014 that meets or exceeds accessibility requirements. The Town will continue to consider ways to improve the accessibility of its website as technology progresses.

SCHEDULE 'A' – ONGOING BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED

	Barrier/Location	Removal/Prevention Strategy	Timing	Cost Estimate	Responsibility	Targeted Completion Date
	PUBLIC WORKS					
1.	Concrete curbs at sidewalk/road intersections.	Construct sidewalk ramps at all locations where there is an existing barrier, in order of usage volume of sidewalk. Include ramps in all new sidewalk works.	Ongoing	\$5,000/year \$70,000 total	Public Works Department, subcontracted to concrete contractors.	2020+
2.	Traffic Signals: Audible Signals at high pedestrian use areas	Monitor need for pedestrian actuated audible signals.	Ongoing	\$19,000/ intersection.	Public Works Department, sub-contracted to traffic signal electricians.	2018+
3.	Traffic Signals: L.E.D. (Light Emitting Diode) Signal Light	Install L.E.D. pedestrian signal heads in preference to incandescent bulbs for better visibility.	Ongoing	Retrofit cost.	Public Works Department, sub-contracted to traffic signal electricians.	2018+
4.	Concrete ramps: Sidewalk Delineation/Orientation Marks	Construct all new sidewalk ramps with delineation marks in the concrete to assist visually impaired.	Ongoing	Included in concrete ramp construction.	Public Works Department, sub-contracted to concrete contractors.	2018+

Schedule 'B'

2014 Multi-Year Plan Accessibility Progress Report

General Requirements

- Training sessions on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it relates to the legislation were held in April 2014 to accommodate employees, committee/board members and volunteers not able to participate in the initial training offered in the fall of 2013.
- A training booklet was developed to ensure new staff, committee/board members and volunteers are made aware of the Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Legislation.
- Procurement By-law 2014-48 was adopted by Council in June 2014 that encourages the procurement of goods and services with due regard to the product being accessible to people with disabilities or be capable of being made accessible through the use of technology.

Employment Standard

- Employees have been made aware of the process related to the development of individualized workplace emergency response plans should they require same.
- Notification of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities is standard on all internal and external job postings, and provided to candidates when selected for an interview.
- Employees are made aware of policies used to support employees with disabilities during the orientation process, including policies on job accommodations. A copy of the Town's Customer Service Policy is also provided.
- When requested, staff will consult with an employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication support to enhance an employee's ability to perform their job.
- The Town has established a Return to Modified Work Policy that takes into consideration the accessibility needs of employees. The policy is enacted in consultation with the employee as required.
- A policy has been established that provides for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.
- The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and any individual accommodation plans are taken into consideration during the performance management process, when providing career development and advancement, and redeployment.

Information and Communications Standards

- The Customer Service Feedback Form was modified to make it easier for people with disabilities to complete.
- The new website launched in February 2014 meets or exceeds accessibility requirements.
- Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request. Information advising the public of same is available on the Town's website and notice board.
- In 2013, the Town instituted an automated phone system. Staff continue to modify the automated message based on customer feedback to improve accessibility.

Transportation

- A policy on the safe use of accessibility equipment and features, acceptable modifications and procedures where temporary barriers exist or equipment fails or emergencies arise has been developed and is in practice.
- Support persons accompanying a person with a disability are not charged a fare. An identification card may be considered in the future.
- Public Meeting to be held April 2015.

Design of Public Spaces

- Rotary Waterfront Trail connecting link to Penetanguishene to be completed this year. Minor connections also to be completed this year.

Midland Accessibility Advisory Committee

During 2014/2015, the Committee reviewed and provided input on the following:

- Pedestrian crosswalk at William Street near the Javelin Coop
- Customer Service Feedback Form
- 2014/2015 Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report
- Attended the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre to provide input on the accessibility of the facility in anticipation of the 2014 Municipal Election.
- Upon conclusion of the Municipal Election, provided input on possible improvements for consideration during preparations for the 2018 Municipal Election
- Reviewed and provided feedback on a number of Site Plans.