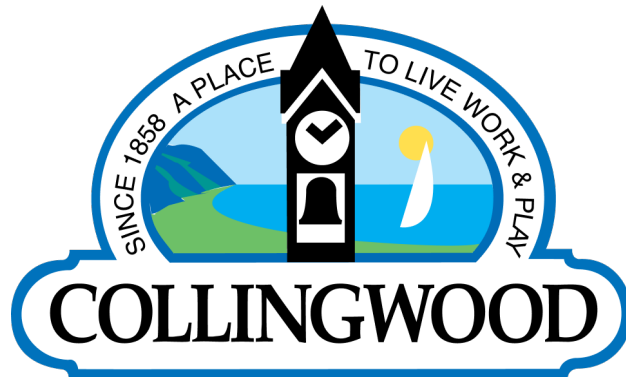




Town of Collingwood Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026-2030

A place to live, work and play for people of all abilities.



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A Message from Collingwood Council

Collingwood Council is pleased to present the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2026–2030.

The Town of Collingwood is committed to building a community where everyone can live, work, and play, regardless of ability. Accessibility helps ensure that residents, visitors, employees, and families can fully participate in community life.

This plan reflects both the Town's responsibilities under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and our shared commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming community. Council recognizes that accessibility is an ongoing effort that requires collaboration, thoughtful planning, and learning from the experiences of people who face barriers in their daily lives.

We would like to thank the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Town staff, community partners, and residents who contributed their ideas and perspectives to this work. Your input helps us continue building a more accessible Collingwood for everyone.

Mayor Yvonne Hamlin, Deputy Mayor Tim Fryer, Councillor Kathy Jeffery, Councillor Deb Doherty, Councillor Chris Potts, Councillor Rob Ring, Councillor Chris Baines, Councillor Steve Perry, Councillor Ian MacCulloch



A Message from Our Chief Administrative Officer

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the Town's continued efforts to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

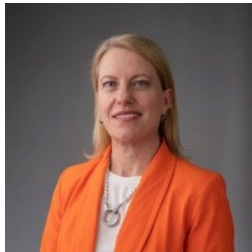
The plan includes practical actions the Town will take between 2026 and 2030 to improve accessibility across programs, services, facilities, and communications. It was shaped

through engagement with employees, community members, youth, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Collingwood has already made important progress in areas such as recreation programs, digital communications, and public spaces, and we recognize there is more work to do. This plan reflects our commitment to making accessibility part of everyday decision-making across the organization.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan and continues to support accessibility in our community.

Together, we can continue working toward a community where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and able to participate fully.



Sonya Skinner
Chief Administrative Officer

A Message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is proud to support the Town of Collingwood in its continued efforts to build a community that is accessible and inclusive for people of all abilities. Accessibility is about more than meeting legislative requirements. It is about ensuring that residents and visitors can participate fully in community life, whether that means accessing services, enjoying recreation programs, navigating public spaces, or connecting with others.

Through our work with Town Council and staff, the Committee helps provide guidance and lived-experience perspectives on accessibility initiatives, policies, and projects. Members of the community, including people with disabilities and their allies, play an essential role in identifying barriers and highlighting opportunities to improve accessibility across the Town. Their input helps ensure that accessibility considerations are reflected in planning, design, and decision-making.

The development of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects collaboration between the Town, community members, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. By continuing to

work together and listening to the voices of people with disabilities, Collingwood can continue to make meaningful progress toward creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and able to participate fully in community life.



Sandra Grafe, Chair

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Town of Collingwood

Accessibility Advisory Committee Members - Chair: Sandra Grafe; Vice-Chair: Kelly Allen; Committee Members: Lana Roman, Gina Northcott, Heather Grasman, Kathryn Bloomfield, and Casey Morrison.

Introduction

Land Acknowledgement

Collingwood is located on the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, which includes Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and Saugeen First Nation. This area is also home to many Indigenous peoples including Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. We recognize the enduring presence, knowledge, and contributions of Indigenous peoples and are committed to learning, listening, and building respectful relationships.

About the Town of Collingwood

The Town of Collingwood is located on the southern shore of Georgian Bay and is known for its natural beauty, active lifestyle, and strong sense of community. Collingwood is a four-season destination that offers recreation, arts, culture, and local events for residents and visitors alike.

Collingwood's historic downtown features local restaurants, shops, and cultural spaces, while the waterfront and harbourfront area continue to grow as important community gathering places.

As our community continues to grow and evolve, Collingwood is committed to ensuring that programs, services, facilities, and public spaces are accessible and welcoming for people of all abilities.



Collingwood's Commitment to Accessibility

The Town of Collingwood is committed to creating a community where everyone feels welcome, included, and able to take part in everyday life.

Through engagement, we heard that people value Collingwood's strong sense of community and belonging. This plan builds on that foundation by strengthening how accessibility is considered in everything the Town does.

Accessibility is not just about meeting legal requirements. It is part of how the Town plans, makes decisions, and delivers programs, services, and spaces in a way that respects dignity, independence, and inclusion.

Accessibility is part of how the Town plans and makes decisions. This plan supports the Town's Community Based Strategic Plan and will be considered as other plans are developed or updated. This includes master plans, department work plans, and the annual budget.

This means accessibility will:

- Be considered early when planning projects, programs, and services
- Be included in future plans, such as parks and recreation, transportation, and facilities
- Be part of how departments plan their work each year
- Help guide decisions about where to invest time and resources
- Be supported through partnerships with community groups, businesses, and others

Over the next five years, the actions in this plan will be carried out through the Town's regular planning and budget processes. As other plans are updated, accessibility will be included to help create a more inclusive and barrier-free community over time.

Collingwood's Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice to employees and Town Council on improving accessibility across municipal services, facilities, and programs. The Committee helps identify barriers and provides input on how the Town can better serve residents and visitors with disabilities.

The AAC's key responsibilities include:

- Advising employees and Council on accessibility standards and accessibility planning

- Providing input on accessibility considerations in planning and development processes, including site plan applications under Section 41 of the Planning Act, through staff review and coordination with the AAC
- Providing input on accessibility initiatives and reports
- Supporting the development and review of the Town's accessibility plans and progress reports

As required under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the committee is also consulted on the design of public spaces, including recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, accessible parking, and other elements of the built environment.

The committee meets monthly in collaboration with the Town's Accessibility Coordinator to discuss initiatives, concerns, feedback and other agenda items.

Members were actively involved in developing this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, including participating in consultations, reviewing key findings, and helping to inform the actions outlined in this plan.

At the time this plan was developed, the Accessibility Advisory Committee included Heather Grasman, Kathryn Bloomfield, Gina Northcott, Casey Morrison, Bethany Wilson, Kelly Allen, and Sandra Grafe. The Town is grateful for their time, lived experience, and ongoing commitment to advancing accessibility in Collingwood. Their contributions were instrumental in shaping this plan.

More information about municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees can be found on the Ontario government's website: [Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/municipal-accessibility)

Executive Summary

The Town of Collingwood is committed to building an inclusive community where everyone can live, work, and play, regardless of ability. As a growing four-season community on Georgian Bay, accessibility is essential to ensuring that residents, visitors, and employees can fully participate in community life.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026–2030) outlines how the Town will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. It meets the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and reflects the Town's commitment to accessibility beyond compliance.

Accessibility is embedded in how the Town plans, makes decisions, and delivers services. It is integrated into corporate strategic planning, departmental work plans, capital projects,

and the annual budget process. Over the life of this Plan, accessibility will continue to be considered early in decision-making and supported through ongoing partnerships and collaboration.

The Plan was developed through engagement with employees, residents, persons with disabilities, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and community stakeholders. This input identified both progress achieved and ongoing barriers that directly informed the priorities and actions in this Plan.

The Town has made progress in areas such as customer service, recreation programs, public spaces, digital communication, and accessible transit. Key opportunities remain in improving transportation, older infrastructure, digital accessibility, wayfinding, and consistency of service delivery.

This Plan sets out practical actions to address these barriers over the next five years. Implementation will be supported through departmental planning, annual budgeting, accessibility champions, and ongoing monitoring and public reporting.

Through this Plan, the Town reaffirms its commitment to continuous improvement and to creating a community that is accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all.

Requesting Accessible Formats

The Town is committed to making this Accessibility Plan available in formats that meet the needs of all people, including people with disabilities. In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, the Town will provide alternate formats and communication supports on request, in a timely manner, and in consultation with the person making the request to meet their accessibility needs.

You can request this Plan in the following alternate formats:

- Print
- Large print
- Braille
- Audio
- Electronic formats compatible with screen readers

How to Give Accessibility Feedback

The Town welcomes feedback from employees, residents, and members of the public on accessibility barriers and on this Accessibility Plan. Feedback helps the Town identify

barriers, strengthen planned actions, and support ongoing progress toward a more accessible, inclusive community for all.

The Town welcomes feedback on accessibility, particularly from people with disabilities and the broader disability community. Feedback may be submitted by mail, telephone, online or email:

Attention: Accessibility Coordinator

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 157
97 Hurontario Street
Collingwood, Ontario
L9Y 3Z5

Telephone: 705-445-1030

Website: [Service Feedback Form](#)

Email: service@collingwood.ca

Accessibility Requirements

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was introduced in 2005 to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities. The goal of the legislation is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that people of all abilities can participate fully in everyday life.

The AODA applies to public sector organizations, businesses, and non-profit organizations across Ontario. Requirements vary depending on the size and type of organization. As a municipality, the Town of Collingwood must meet the accessibility requirements that apply to the public sector.

Under the AODA, the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR) sets accessibility standards in several key areas:

- **General Requirements:** Organizations must develop accessibility policies and multi-year accessibility plans, consider accessibility when purchasing goods, services, and facilities, and provide accessibility training to employees and volunteers.

- **Information and Communication:** Public information must be accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing accessible formats and communication supports upon request and ensuring websites and digital content meet accessibility standards.
- **Employment:** Organizations must ensure that recruitment, hiring, and workplace practices support employees and applicants with disabilities. This includes providing workplace accommodations and accessible employment processes.
- **Transportation:** Public transit services must be accessible and provide appropriate communication and support for riders with disabilities.
- **Design of Public Spaces:** Accessibility must be considered when building or redeveloping outdoor public spaces such as sidewalks, trails, parks, and parking areas.
- **Customer Service:** Organizations must ensure that people with disabilities can access goods, services, and facilities in an inclusive and respectful way. This includes accessible customer service policies and staff training.

Municipalities are also required to develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) outlining how they will meet these standards and work toward removing barriers. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The Town of Collingwood also prepares annual accessibility status updates to report on progress. These updates, along with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, are made available to the public and in accessible formats upon request.

In addition, the Town maintains accessibility policies that outline our commitment to providing accessible programs, services, and facilities.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects both the Town's compliance with the AODA and our ongoing efforts to build a more accessible and inclusive community for residents and visitors.

You can find the Town of Collingwood's Accessibility site at [Accessibility | Town of Collingwood](#).

Accessibility Plan Development Process

The Town of Collingwood partnered with a third-party organization specializing in accessibility consultations to help gather feedback and better understand accessibility barriers and opportunities within the community. In addition to identifying areas for

improvement, this collaboration highlighted several successful initiatives and practices already in place. These positive findings demonstrate the Town's ongoing commitment to accessibility and celebrate the progress made toward creating a welcoming, inclusive environment for all residents and visitors.

To inform the development of the plan, the Town engaged with employees, community members, persons with disabilities, and local stakeholders. Input was gathered through a combination of staff engagement, community feedback, and targeted discussions to better understand existing barriers and opportunities for improvement.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) played an important role throughout the process. Members participated in discussions, reviewed key findings, and provided input to help shape the priorities and actions included in this plan.

The consultant conducted an accessibility review to support the development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This work included:

- Reviewing relevant Town policies, plans, and documents to assess alignment with accessibility requirements
- Gathering and analyzing feedback from employees and community members
- Engaging with staff across service areas to understand current practices and challenges
- Facilitating discussions with the AAC and incorporating their feedback
- Identifying barriers and opportunities to improve accessibility across programs, services, and facilities

Insights gathered through this process helped identify key priorities and informed the actions outlined in this plan.

How This Plan is Organized

This plan outlines the accessibility standards and requirements set out in the AODA and the IASR that the Town of Collingwood will work toward over the next five years.

In addition to the legislated standards, this plan also includes a section on **Governance and Culture**. While this is not a formal requirement under the AODA, it reflects feedback received from employees, community members, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, as well as best practices for advancing accessibility across the organization.

The plan includes the following areas:

- Governance and Culture

- General Requirements
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Design of Public Spaces
- Customer Service
- Public Library

Each section of the plan includes the following components:

- **Recent Progress:** Highlights of recent efforts made by the Town to improve accessibility.
- **Key Opportunities:** Areas where barriers may still exist and where improvements have been identified through consultations with Town staff, the community, and the Collingwood Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **Planned Actions:** Actions the Town will take over the next five years to address barriers and improve accessibility. These actions will inform annual accessibility status updates that will be shared publicly on the Town's website. These actions are informed by existing Town initiatives, operational plans, and capital projects, and will be advanced through ongoing departmental work and the Town's annual planning and budget processes.

Governance and Culture

Accessibility is most effective when it is considered early in planning, decision-making, and service design. Governance and culture help ensure that accessibility is a shared responsibility across the organization.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve governance and culture.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to improve how accessibility is supported across the organization:

- We have a dedicated Accessibility Coordinator, and accessibility leads in departments to support staff and share guidance.
- We work with an active Accessibility Advisory Committee that reviews projects and provides lived-experience input.

- We track accessibility feedback through Service Collingwood and record actions taken.
- We partner with local organizations such as [Breaking Down Barriers](#) and [E3 Community Services Inc.](#) to strengthen our accessibility work and build community connections.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Accessibility often depends on individual staff rather than being built into planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes.
- Employees and residents are not always clear on how decisions are made or how input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee is used.
- Ongoing issues (such as winter maintenance and older infrastructure) are handled on a case-by-case basis instead of through long-term planning.
- Employees value accessibility but want clearer direction and expectations in their day-to-day work.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Clearly outline how accessibility is considered in decisions, including when departments, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Council are involved.
- Provide an annual public update that highlights progress, ongoing barriers, and next steps.
- Improve how accessibility feedback is collected, tracked, and used to inform decisions, including through corporate service tools and ongoing engagement efforts.
- Clarify and share the role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, including how and when staff should work with the committee.
- Reinforce accessibility as part of the Town's service excellence through staff onboarding, leadership messaging, and internal communications.
- Embed accessibility into planning and decision-making processes across all departments.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with community organizations and other levels of government to support accessibility and inclusion, building on ongoing intergovernmental and regional collaboration initiatives.

General

The General Requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation set the foundation for accessibility planning. These requirements include developing accessibility policies, training employees, considering accessibility in purchasing, and maintaining a multi-year accessibility plan.

This section outlines how the Town of Collingwood is meeting these requirements, the barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to strengthen accessibility.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to remove barriers for people with disabilities:

- We maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and provide annual public updates on our progress.
- We have corporate accessibility policies and procedures that apply across the organization.
- We provide mandatory *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) training to employees, along with additional learning opportunities on topics such as mental health, de-escalation, and inclusive customer service.
- We include accessibility requirements in many procurement and contracting processes and work with vendors who understand accessibility standards.
- We offer several ways for residents to share feedback and report barriers, including online forms, email, phone, and in-person contact through Service Collingwood.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Many people know that the Town has an accessibility plan and policies, but are not always sure what they include, who is responsible, or how progress is tracked.
- Accessibility training is widely available, but some employees see it as a one-time requirement and would like more practical, role-specific training.
- Accessibility requirements are not always applied consistently when working with vendors, especially for documents, designs, and digital tools.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Clearly communicate our accessibility policy, including roles and responsibilities, so employees and residents understand how accessibility is managed across the Town.
- Provide regular, updated accessibility training, including practical and role-specific content for supervisors, content creators, and frontline staff.
- Strengthen accessibility requirements in procurement by clearly outlining expectations for accessible documents, designs, and digital tools in templates and contracts.
- Continue to improve how accessibility considerations are integrated into corporate policies and processes.
- Enhance tools and systems used to track accessibility-related work and compliance as part of ongoing operational improvements.
- Align accessibility practices with broader corporate policies and processes, including procurement, training, and service planning initiatives already underway across the organization.

Information and Communication

Accessible information helps residents, visitors, and employees find, understand, and use Town services and information. This includes websites, documents, public notices, and communication supports for people with disabilities.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve information and communication.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to improve access to information and communication:

- We have updated the Town website to better align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and regularly review high-traffic pages for accessibility.
- We use accessible templates for Council reports, presentations, and public-facing documents, and encourage staff to use built-in accessibility checkers.
- We provide training on accessible document creation and web content, and we continue to build internal expertise.
- We provide documents in alternate formats and offer communication supports upon request through Service Collingwood.

- We share timely updates about closures, service disruptions, and emergencies through the website, social media, and alert systems.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- The redesigned website is a major improvement, but some users still find it difficult to navigate and would benefit from clearer structure and simpler language.
- Accessible document practices are improving, quality and formatting could be more consistent across departments, especially for technical content, forms, and consultant reports.
- Online services can exclude residents who have limited internet access, lower digital literacy, or who prefer non-digital options.
- Employees who create content want more practical, role-specific training and tools to support accessible and user-friendly communication.
- Residents shared that they want important information, including emergency updates and service changes, shared in multiple formats and through different channels.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Set clear accessibility standards for documents, web pages, and forms before they are published, including when plain-language summaries are needed.
- Clarify that departments are responsible for the accessibility of their content, while continuing to provide support and tools through the Accessibility Coordinator and communications.
- Include accessibility requirements for documents and digital products in contracts with consultants and vendors, including accessible source files.
- Provide regular, practical training and tip-sheets for staff who create web content and public documents, with a focus on readability and user experience.
- Make alternate ways to access services (such as phone and in-person support) more visible on key pages.
- Review how emergency and high-priority messages are shared to ensure information is available in multiple accessible formats and channels.
- Transition paper-based forms and services to accessible digital formats where appropriate, building on ongoing service modernization efforts.

- Expand accessible online service delivery, including enhancements to corporate service platforms such as the Service Collingwood portal and ongoing digital service improvements.

Employment

The Employment Standard helps ensure that people with disabilities have fair access to job opportunities and workplace supports. This includes accessible recruitment, workplace accommodations, and emergency planning for employees with disabilities.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve accessibility across the employee experience.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to support accessibility in the workplace:

- We include an accessibility statement in job postings and provide interview questions in advance to support fair and accessible hiring.
- We use accessible job posting templates to improve clarity and consistency.
- We develop individual accommodation and return-to-work plans with employees and adjust them as needs change.
- We ask new employees about emergency accommodation needs and create personal emergency response plans when required.
- We provide an Employee Assistance Program, wellness days, and flexible or hybrid work arrangements where possible.
- We provide training beyond *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* requirements, including mental health awareness, de-escalation, and diversity and inclusion topics.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Employees feel supported overall but are not always clear on how accommodation decisions are made or what documentation is required, especially for non-apparent (non-visible) disabilities.
- Managers want more guidance and confidence in supporting employees with disabilities while balancing operational needs.

- We do not currently have strong data on disability representation or common accommodation needs, which makes it hard to plan ahead.
- Some staff workspaces and washrooms are not fully accessible, limiting where employees with mobility disabilities can work or attend meetings.
- Recruitment materials and job requirements can sometimes be more complex than necessary, which may discourage some applicants.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Develop and share clear, plain-language guidance on requesting and managing workplace accommodations, including roles and responsibilities for employees, managers, and Human Resources.
- Provide focused training for supervisors and managers on supporting employees with disabilities, including non-apparent disabilities, and managing performance fairly with accommodations in place.
- Identify ways to track common accommodation needs (while protecting privacy) to better plan facility improvements, training, and supports.
- Review recruitment materials and job postings to ensure they use plain language and reflect the actual requirements of the role.
- Improve accessibility in staff areas, including entrances, washrooms, and circulation routes, as part of becoming a more inclusive employer.
- Communicate more clearly and regularly about available supports, including accommodation processes, mental health resources, and flexible work options.
- Continue to advance inclusive workplace practices through recruitment, training, and organizational initiatives that support employee accessibility and well-being.

Transportation

Accessible transportation helps residents travel safely and independently within the community. The Transportation Standard sets requirements for accessible public transit services and communication with passengers.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve accessibility across local transportation.

Accessible Taxicabs

The Town recognizes that accessible on-demand transportation, including taxi and similar services, plays an important role in creating a more accessible community.

In accordance with Section 79 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Town consults with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, riders, and the public to assess the need for accessible, on-demand transportation options. Feedback gathered through this consultation is used to inform service planning and identify opportunities to improve transportation accessibility within the community.

Though the Town does not currently licence Taxicabs, the Town will continue to:

- Monitor community needs related to accessible, on-demand transportation options.
- Engage with partners, service providers, and the community to better understand gaps and opportunities.
- Consider how municipal planning, advocacy, and partnerships can support improved access to transportation services.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to improve accessible transportation:

- We provide both accessible fixed-route transit services and specialized Transit+ services to support various mobility needs.
- Transit+ offers a door-to-door service option to better support residents who require additional assistance.
- We have introduced improved securement equipment for mobility devices and trained drivers on how to use it safely.
- We regularly check buses to ensure accessibility features and signage are in place and working.
- We provide guidance to drivers on announcing stops and supporting riders when technology is not working as expected.
- We work with regional partners to support accessible connections to nearby communities.
- In 2025, we gathered feedback from riders, residents, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to better understand needs related to accessible, on-demand transportation. This feedback has helped identify current service gaps and inform priorities for future improvements.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Transportation is one of the most common barriers for people with disabilities, especially related to specialized transit capacity, service hours, and service in newer or outlying areas.
- Snow and ice can block bus stops, curb cuts, and accessible parking spaces, making it harder to safely access transit and Town facilities.
- Some riders have difficulty using transit tools and information, such as maps, parking apps, and online payment systems.
- Riders would like drivers and staff to have stronger awareness of non-apparent disabilities and provide consistent, respectful customer service.
- Current routes and schedules may not fully reflect recent growth and changes in where people live and work.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Review demand and capacity for fixed-route and specialized transit to better understand wait times, trip denials, and peak demand. We will use this information to guide service improvement recommendations.
- Continue to assess the need for accessible, on-demand transportation options by consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, riders, and the broader community.
- Examine routes and schedules to identify gaps in access to key destinations such as medical services, workplaces, schools, and shopping.
- Provide enhanced training for drivers and front-line employees on disability awareness, respectful communication, and supporting riders with non-apparent disabilities.
- Work with Public Works and contractors to identify opportunities to improve winter maintenance around transit stops, curb cuts, and accessible parking areas in consideration of set service levels.
- Improve transit and parking tools by making apps, maps, and online information easier to use, written in plain language, and compatible with assistive technologies.
- Provide clearer information about accessible transit services, including eligibility and booking, in multiple formats and channels.

- Improve accessible transit services through ongoing service reviews, infrastructure planning, and future transit initiatives, including exploration of zero-emission fleet options and service enhancements.

Design of Public Spaces

Accessible public spaces help ensure that parks, sidewalks, trails, and other shared spaces can be used by people of all abilities. The Design of Public Spaces Standard applies to new construction and major redevelopment projects.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve accessibility in public spaces.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to improve accessibility in public spaces:

- We have added accessible features to parks and waterfront areas, including accessible play equipment, beach access mats, docks, and improved trail sections.
- We have delivered accessible design features in new and redeveloped spaces, such as Sunset Point Park, accessible playgrounds, and waterfront areas.
- We have improved accessibility at several civic facilities, including upgrades to washrooms, elevators, and entrances.
- We have included accessibility in climate adaptation and waterfront planning work.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Many older facilities, sidewalks, crossings, and public spaces are still difficult to navigate for people using mobility devices, older adults, and others with mobility or sensory barriers.
- Pedestrian crossings and continuous accessible routes are not always consistent in terms of signal timing, curb design, and safe connections between parking and destinations.

Residents would like more benches and rest areas, as well as better information about trail conditions, surfaces, slope, and available amenities.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Ensure accessibility is considered early in the planning and design of public space projects, including downtown streetscapes, waterfront improvements, and park upgrades.
- Integrate accessibility improvements into capital projects, including sidewalks, trails, parks, and municipal buildings, as part of ongoing infrastructure and asset management programs, and planned upgrades such as facility improvements and accessibility-related retrofits.
- Review high-use pedestrian crossings and routes to identify and address barriers such as short signal timing, difficult curb ramps, and missing links between parking and sidewalks.
- Develop and share accessible maps or descriptions for key trails and routes, including information on surface type, slope, width, rest areas, and access to washrooms.
- Add more seating and rest areas in key locations, such as along walking routes and near transit stops.
- Where feasible, include accessibility improvements when making infrastructure updates to older facilities and outdoor spaces, focusing on areas with high use and known barriers.

Maintenance of Accessible Elements

The Town of Collingwood is committed to maintaining accessible elements in public spaces to ensure they remain usable and safe for all residents and visitors.

To support this, the Town will:

- Maintain accessible features (such as sidewalks, trails, curb ramps, entrances, and accessible parking areas) through regular inspections and preventative maintenance plans.
- Address accessibility-related maintenance issues through established service request processes.
- Respond to issues requiring urgent attention through emergency maintenance processes.
- Provide public notice of temporary disruptions affecting accessible elements, including the reason for the disruption, expected duration, and available alternatives where possible.

Customer Service

Accessible customer service ensures that people with disabilities can access Town services in a respectful and inclusive way. This includes employee training, support for service animals and support persons, and providing different ways for people to access services and share feedback.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve accessible customer service.

Recent Progress

The Town of Collingwood has taken steps to improve accessible customer service:

- We operate Service Collingwood as a central point of contact, available by phone, email, online forms, and in person.
- We have improved physical accessibility at several service locations, including lowered counters, power-assisted doors, accessible washrooms, and seating areas.
- We offer accessible recreation programs and supports, such as low-sensory swims, inclusive lessons, accessible change rooms, lifts, and ramps at our aquatic facility.
- We offer customer service training, along with additional training in areas such as mental health awareness and de-escalation.
- We share public notice of service disruptions and provide accessibility-related complaint and feedback forms on the Town website.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Staff are committed to providing good customer service, but frontline staff can feel unprepared to respond to complex situations involving mental health, housing, or crisis.
- While physical accessibility has improved, communication can still be challenging at some service counters, especially where there are glass barriers or limited visual supports.
- Some residents find online systems difficult to use or prefer phone or in-person service and are concerned about relying too much on digital options.
- Employees want clearer guidance and tools for serving people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or who use communication aids, as well as clearer expectations around service animals and support persons.

- Accessible customer service practices are not always consistent across all Town facilities, particularly outside Town Hall.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Improve communication supports at in-person service counters, such as shared screens or simple written tools, to help people understand forms and information.
- Clarify procedures and escalation paths for frontline staff when responding to complex situations, including when to involve other departments or community partners.
- Update customer service training to include more practical scenarios, with a focus on non-apparent disabilities, communication supports, service animals and support persons, and supporting inclusive programming and participation across service areas, including recreation.
- Review customer service areas across Town facilities to identify and address accessibility gaps, including counters, signage, seating, and wayfinding.
- Continue to offer multiple ways for residents to access services (online, phone, and in person) and clearly communicate these options.
- Continue to improve service accessibility through enhancements to corporate service delivery tools and processes, supporting multiple ways for residents to access services.

Library Services

The Collingwood Public Library plays an important role in providing accessible information, programs, and community spaces. Accessibility is supported through collections, programs, technology, and building features.

This section outlines current progress, barriers identified through engagement, and the actions we will take to improve accessibility in Library services.

Recent Progress

The Collingwood Public Library has taken steps to improve accessibility:

- We offer collections in multiple formats, including large print, audiobooks, Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) books through the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), e-books, e-audiobooks, and early literacy read-along materials.

- We have improved physical access to the building with features such as automatic doors, an elevator, and accessible washrooms.
- We maintain an accessible library website and have trained staff to create and update accessible online content.
- We use communication supports, such as American Sign Language (ASL) reference charts, to assist with basic communication when an interpreter is not available.
- We partner with community organizations, including initiatives like the Happy Day Café, to support inclusive employment and participation.
- We provide disability awareness training for staff, including experiential learning, and include accessibility in emergency procedures.
- Consultation feedback indicated that the Library is seen as a welcoming and inclusive space that already supports accessibility in many areas.

Key Opportunities

Through engagement, we heard that:

- Parking and arrival can be challenging, especially in the winter, due to limited accessible parking and concerns about safe routes to the entrance.
- Some signage and wayfinding can be difficult to read or understand, particularly in larger collection areas of the Library.
- Some assistive technologies are not widely used, which suggests a need to better match tools with current needs and improve awareness.
- Uncertainty in applying service animal requirements in practice, including distinguishing between service animals and support animals, responding to behavioural concerns, and managing interactions with patrons.
- Youth want more inclusive programming and opportunities to share input on Library spaces and services.

Planned Actions

Over the next five years, we will:

- Work with Town employees to improve accessible parking near the Library, and ensure safe, clearly marked routes from parking areas to the entrance, including in winter.
- Develop and apply clear, accessible signage and wayfinding throughout the Library, using high-contrast, easy-to-read formats.
- Review existing assistive technology to confirm what is in use, what is needed, and how best to promote and support these tools for patrons and staff.

- Provide updated guidance and training to staff on service animal requirements, including distinguishing between service and support animals, and supporting consistent approaches across Library services.
- Develop and implement practical guidelines to support staff in responding to service animal situations, including managing behaviour-related concerns and communicating expectations with patrons.
- Continue to provide and update disability awareness training for Library staff, including a focus on non-apparent disabilities and inclusive communication.
- Create regular opportunities for youth and people with disabilities to share feedback on Library programs, spaces, and services, and use this input to guide future changes.
- Enhance access to technology and services through ongoing upgrades to digital resources, public computers, and accessible formats available to Library users.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Town is committed to tracking progress and sharing updates on accessibility improvements in a clear and transparent way.

Implementation Approach

Implementation of the actions in this Plan will be supported through departmental work planning, internal coordination, and the Town's annual planning and budget processes. This approach will allow actions to be advanced over time while aligning with available resources, operational priorities, and emerging needs.

Departments will integrate accessibility considerations into their ongoing work and contribute to advancing the actions outlined in this Plan through existing programs, projects, and service improvements.

Tracking Progress

Progress will be tracked through a combination of:

- Departmental reporting and internal coordination
- Accessibility feedback received from residents, employees, and stakeholders
- Ongoing review of initiatives, projects, and service improvements

This approach will help ensure that accessibility actions remain responsive to community needs and aligned with broader Town priorities.

Public Reporting

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Town will publish an annual status update, including progress toward implementing this Plan.

Progress updates will be posted on [Accessibility Plans | Town of Collingwood](#).

Oversight and Contact

Overall implementation is overseen by the Town's Coordinator, Accessibility, Customer and Corporate Services:

Email: service@collingwood.ca

Phone: 705-445-1030

Department Coordination

The Town will coordinate implementation through Accessibility Champions in each department. Champions will support day-to-day progress by:

- Identifying and addressing barriers within their area of responsibility
- Advancing planned improvements and timelines
- Sharing updates for Town-wide tracking
- Escalating cross-department items to the Accessibility Coordinator as needed

Definitions

Accessibility

Accessibility refers to how services, technology, locations, devices, environments, and products are designed to accommodate persons with disabilities. Accessibility means giving people of all abilities equal opportunities to take part in life activities. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the term implies conscious planning, design, and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population by making everything more usable and practical for all people.

Assistive Technologies/Devices

Devices that have been developed with features specifically helpful for people with disabilities.

Barrier

According to the *Accessible Canada Act* (2019), a barrier is “anything, including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice, that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”

Disability

According to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* disability is defined as “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 on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- a) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- b) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- c) a mental disorder, or

- d) 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”)

Notice of Service Disruption

A notice of disruption is a notice containing the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration (including start date and time and estimated restore date and time), and a description of alternate facilities or services, if available.

Service Disruption

A planned or unexpected interruption in facilities or services during normal hours which may affect access to facilities, programs, goods or services. This includes interrupted access to roadways, elevators, parking, programs, goods and services caused by construction, maintenance or repairs, electrical or IT shutdowns, service closure, washroom closure or hallway obstructions.

A planned service disruption is a disruption known at least three days in advance, with an expected duration of three hours or more.

An unplanned service disruption is an unexpected disruption without prior notification, with an expected duration of three hours or more.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines or WCAG are technical standards on web accessibility. WCAG covers a wide range of recommendations to make websites fully accessible.