

Strategic Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2020 - 2025

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

September 2020

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A message from the Mayor

At the Town of Collingwood, we value accessibility, and look to provide accessible options with all of our services. We are committed to creating and maintaining accessible environments where residents and visitors can have access to programs and services in a way that will respect their dignity and independence. As Mayor, I fully support the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and I am committed to working with Council and Staff to establish policies, practices, and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA.

Municipal governments play an important role in the planning and development of communities and through the dedicated efforts of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Town of Collingwood has established a wide range of municipal processes created to ensure that public services and facilities are accessible to everyone. It is a priority of the Town to ensure accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, streets, parks, meeting places, programs, services, public buildings and elections.

By making accessibility a priority, the Town of Collingwood ensures that it continues to be a great place to live, work and play for everyone.



Brian Saunderson
Mayor of Collingwood

A message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Town of Collingwood's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is made up of dedicated volunteers, appointed by Council to provide input and guidance on accessibility needs, to make recommendations for improvements and to increase awareness across all Town facilities, programs and services.

The Town's Strategic Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed by the AAC in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #11. It is intended to guide the Town of Collingwood in achieving its vision of providing all people with consistent opportunity and access to Town goods, services and facilities.

The Town of Collingwood recognizes that accessibility is essential to build on our unique profile as a major tourist destination, a retirement community and a community that attracts businesses. Many of our businesses recognize that accessibility can strengthen their bottom line and grow their client base and many of our leisure activities include people with varying abilities.

Council Members, staff and residents alike agree that accessibility represents freedom, equality, independence and community for all. Through this Plan the AAC will continue its work in identifying physical and/or attitudinal barriers Town-wide, with universal access in mind.

As a Committee, we welcome and encourage comments, input, and feedback in our continuing efforts to make Collingwood the most accessible community in Ontario. For more information, **please contact:**

Collingwood Accessibility Advisory Committee
c/o Clerk Services
P.O. Box 157, 97 Hurontario Street
Town of Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z5

Phone: (705)445-1030
Email: clerks@collingwood.ca

AAC Committee Members

Margaret Adolphe, *Chair*
Heather Grasman, *Vice-Chair*
Roslyn Steels
Sherill-Ann Monaghan
Martina Ernst

Staff Resources

Sara Almas, *Clerk*
Jennifer Parker, *Coordinator of Community Wellbeing & Inclusion*
Stefanie Hochrein, *Recording Secretary*

Collingwood's Commitment to Accessibility

The Town of Collingwood is committed to providing persons of all abilities consistent opportunity and access to all Town goods, services, and facilities while ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices are provided in a timely manner and address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the municipal government on a wide range of municipal processes to help make public services and facilities accessible to everyone. Under the AODA, municipal councils in Ontario are empowered to implement accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

Responsibilities:

The three main responsibilities of the Committee are to:

1. Advise municipal council on:
 - the requirements and implementation of [accessibility standards](#)
 - the preparation of accessibility reports
 - other matters for which the Council may seek its advice
2. Participate in the review of site plans and drawings (as described in section 41 of the Planning Act when required)
3. Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations

Membership:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is comprised of seven (7) voting members, all of which are citizen members appointed by Council. A majority of the members are required to be persons with disabilities as required by legislation.

Key Qualifications & Eligibility Requirements of Citizen Members include:

- eligible to vote in the Town of Collingwood municipal election,
- should represent skill sets and/or interest in the following areas: youth, adults, seniors, persons with disabilities, keen awareness of accessibility issues, expertise in construction or design of public spaces,

- demonstrated leadership (mandatory for chair), and
- good communication skills, demonstrate initiative, and positive attitude.

Meetings:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings are generally held once a month in the Braniff Room at the Collingwood Townhall, 97 Hurontario Street or at the call of the Chair, with the provision that at least four meetings be held per year. A regular meeting schedule is established each year which may be reviewed from time to time.

Accessibility Advisory Committee | 2020-2025 Commitments

The AAC's five-year accessibility plan includes both new and continuing priorities and commitments that will help achieve the Town of Collingwood achieve its goal of being an inclusive multi-generational community by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility. The **two (2) primary goals** of the AAC's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are as follows:

1. Increase the visibility of accessibility and the AAC to help integrate accessibility into the full range of Town initiatives and services
2. Emphasize the importance of universal access for all people throughout the community (Advocacy & Awareness)

These two goals informed the development of seven (7) key priorities/commitments for 2020-2025, listed below:

- Commitment 1:** Accessible Customer Service
- Commitment 2:** Clear and Accessible Communications
- Commitment 3:** Accessible Employment & Workplaces
- Commitment 4:** Accessible Transportation Services
- Commitment 5:** Enhancing Accessible Public Spaces
- Commitment 6:** Accessible Procurement
- Commitment 7:** Governance & Policies

Commitment 1 – Accessible Customer Service & Programming

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the municipality to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.

Proposed Action(s):

- Work with the corporate customer service leadership to foster excellence in accessible customer service delivery. Share best practices in different service delivery channels and collaboratively develop strategies for continuous improvement in accessible service delivery.
- Review the customer service policy and common service standards to identify opportunities to reinforce and promote requirements that enhance accessible customer service.

- Ensure that in the case of planned or unplanned service disruptions, notice is provided explaining the reason for the disruption, estimated duration, and any alternative facilities or services available.
- Encourage more digital online services that are easily accessible and result in an improved customer experience.
- Ensure that all employees continue to complete mandatory training to support excellence in accessible customer service.
- Work with various departments that provide programs to explore and identify more inclusive and diversified programming opportunities.

Expected Outcome(s):

- An accessible Collingwood that includes ensuring people with disabilities receive quality goods and services in a timely manner, supported by effective policies, procedures, tools and resources that promote accessibility in customer service.

Commitment 2 – Clear and Accessible Communications

The Information and Communications Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the municipality to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Proposed Action(s):

- Promote the Accessibility Plan through the Town’s website and relevant accessibility materials in easily accessible formats.
- Continue to monitor and train staff on accessible communication content and design.
- Ensure that digital services are designed with accessibility at its core, striving for all users to have equal access to information and functionality.
- Ensure all forms are accessible by 2022 that meet the highest standards of quality, usability and accessibility.
- Provide consistent notices in public spaces and online notifications to the public regarding accessible formats and communications support, upon request.
- Each quarter the Committee will prepare a local or regional accessibility-related fact or story for dissemination by the Town’s Communications Officer. These contributions should emphasize good news whenever possible.
- Explore American Sign Language training opportunities.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Enhanced accessibility as it relates to communication supports, formats, website(s) and web content.

- Ensure staff have the tools and resources to effectively develop information and communications in accessible formats.

Commitment 3 – Accessible Employment & Workplaces

The Employment Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out accessibility requirements that the municipality must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing Town of Collingwood employees with disabilities.

Proposed Action(s):

- Review our human resources policies in consultation with the Human Resources Manager to prevent or remove systemic employment barriers, ensure they are compliant with legislation and reflect best practices.
- Collect more data to evaluate our recruitment and accommodation practices to ensure that employment-related policies and programs are evidence-based including both quantitative and qualitative data. This will include an employee survey that will provide new demographic insights that will inform future priority-setting. The survey will include questions on disability and accommodation, and the data collected can be used to inform program and policy decisions.
- Continuing to attract diverse talent by applying an inclusion lens into all recruitment processes to identify, mitigate, and eliminate potential biases and barriers and be more inclusive in all aspects of the recruitment process.
- Continue to build accessibility awareness through resources for staff and how to respond to the needs of employees with an illness, injury, and/or disability through a Duty to Accommodate.
- Promote principles and practices of respectful workplaces through resources that help address employee responsibilities for contributing to respect in the workplace by eliminate low intensity rude or disrespectful behaviours that erode productivity, engagement, teamwork, diversity and service
- Promote the Employee Assistance Program to support employees in the areas of mental health and wellness through a wide range of supports and resources.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Ensure that qualified people with disabilities are provided equal opportunity for employment, engagement, and advancement within the Town organization.
- Accommodation practices will be reviewed to ensure people with disabilities are able to participate fully and meaningfully as Town employees.

Commitment 4 – Accessible Transportation Services & Systems

The Transportation Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation, sidewalks and trails so that everyone can easily travel in Collingwood.

Proposed Action(s):

- Meet with the Trails and Active Transportation Committee annually to review opportunities and challenges and provide input and guidance with an accessibility lens.
- Continue to support transit as a more accessible, affordable, convenient, and a safe mode of travel.
- Provide input and support staff in acquisitions for services and transit needs.
- Work with the Public Works & Engineering Department to understand opportunities and challenges with respect to public transit and obtain driver feedback through the contract service provider to provide further insight.
- Communicate accessible transportation opportunities into regional transit links (LINX).
- Work with the Public Works & Engineering Department to understand opportunities and challenges with respect to winter and regular maintenance to determine how best to create a safe and accessible environment for all individuals including those with mobility challenges.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Collingwood continues to support and promote transportation services and active transportation for the people that are barrier-free.

Commitment 5 – Enhancing Accessibility of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the municipality to ensure that newly constructed, or significantly renovated public spaces (e.g., parks, accessible parking) are accessible.

The municipality also complies with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment.

Proposed Action(s):

- Provide guidance to Council and Staff to improve accessibility design requirements with the goal to move to universal design principles that comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontario Building Code and Design of Public Spaces standard.

- When constructing or renovating municipal facilities including parks and playgrounds, ensure all features, such as elevators, doors, washrooms, parking, and furnishings, will be fully accessible or appropriate accommodations available that preserves individual's dignity and independence.
- Continuously improve the physical accessibility of our service areas removing barriers and providing accessible alternatives, so that all customers may be served in a manner that respects their dignity and independence.
- Implement emergency and preventative maintenance and respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing.

Expected Outcome(s):

- Greater accessibility into, out of and around municipal facilities and public spaces. This includes incorporating accessibility retrofits where possible during renovations.

Commitment 6 – Accessible Procurement

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the municipality is required to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.

Proposed Action(s):

- Continue to communicate and define to vendors their obligations to meet accessibility requirements, including repercussions of non-compliance.
- Support and promote accessible and electronic bidding processes.
- Promote ongoing mandatory procurement training that includes accessibility requirements. Training will be provided for new and existing employees, as appropriate to their job duties, to educate them on common understanding of obligations under the AODA.

Expected Outcome(s):

- A procurement program that considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement process to help ensure that goods and services at government facilities are accessible.
- Becoming barrier-free will also improve the opportunity of doing business with the municipality for all suppliers, including those with disabilities.

Commitment 7 – Governance and Policies

In addition to the Standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the municipality is committed to going beyond to ensure that barriers to accessibility are identified and addressed across the organization.

Proposed Action(s):

- Invite the Mayor and/or Chair of the Corporate and Community Services Standing Committee and CAO to attend an AAC Meeting at least annually.
- Review and update the Barrier Complaint Policy and promote its use both internally and externally to identify and eliminate accessibility barriers.
- Determine the best solution regarding accessibility advice and guidance in the site development process including opportunities to encourage accessible affordable residential design.
- In accordance with the Community Based Strategic Plan's (CBSP) objective of 'Enhancing Public Trust', the Committee will schedule an annual public report to the Corporate & Community Services Standing Committee to review priorities for the year and accomplishments related to the CBSP and our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as well continuing to promote accessibility awareness.
- From time to time, the AAC may also bring strategic issues related to accessibility before the Corporate & Community Services Standing Committee.
- Work with the Business Development Centre, the Collingwood Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) the Chamber of Commerce, Breaking Down Barriers and other organizations to encourage local businesses to enhance their accessibility.
- Annually review capital projects, programs & services.

Expected Outcomes:

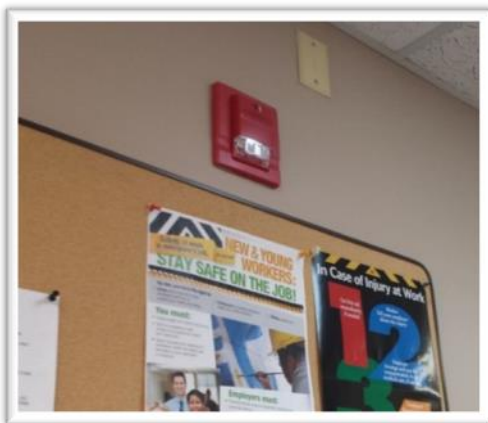
- Clear roles and accountability at all levels of the organization.
- Employees are supported to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent and remove them.
- Accessibility incorporated into the site development process.

Collingwood's Accessible Public Spaces, Services and Programs

The Town strives to ensure that its residents and visitors of all abilities can visit and enjoy our facilities, programs, and services. The buildings listed below has accessibility features to ensure that everyone is included. If you are planning to visit one of these facilities, you may want to check out these features.

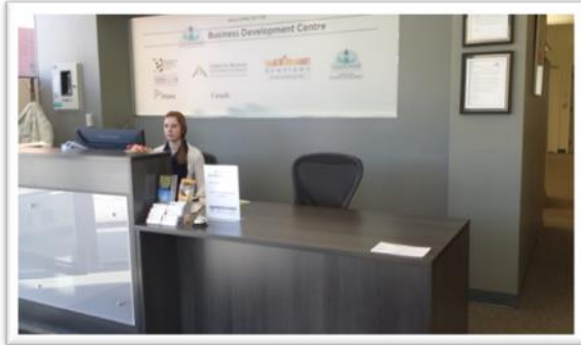
Collingwood Town Hall (97 Hurontario Street)

- Designated accessible parking available on Hurontario Street and in the municipal parking lot behind the Business Development Centre
- Street level access with clear path of travel (no steps)
- Power assisted doors (exterior and interior)
- Lowered service counter (refer to image to the right)
- Elevator to access the second level of the building
- Accessible washrooms on the second level of the building
- A manual wheelchair and a transfer chair are available
- Documents available in alternative formats (by request)
- Fire alarms that have both an audible and visual flashing light signal
- Accessible Hearing Supports in Council Chamber (2020)



Business Development Centre (105 Hurontario Street)

- Designated accessible parking available on Hurontario Street and in the municipal parking lot behind the BDC
- Street level access with clear path of travel
- Power assisted entrance door
- Lowered service counter
- Universal washroom available



Collingwood Curling Club (250 Hume Street)

- Designated accessible parking
- Street level access with clear path of travel
- Power assisted entrance door and lobby door to the change rooms
- Power assisted doors to the rink surface
- Elevator to access upper level spectator areas
- Accessible change rooms available
- Accessible washrooms available



Eddie Bush Memorial Arena (97 Hurontario Street)

- Designated accessible parking available on Hurontario Street and in the municipal parking lot behind the BDC
- Street level access with clear path of travel
- Power assisted entrance and door to the arena
- Accessible washroom available in the lobby

- Ramping to allow access to the viewing area and companion seating available
- Four of seven change rooms are accessible



Central Park Arena (85 Patterson Street)

- Designated accessible parking
- Street level access (clear path of travel)
- Motion sensor entrance door
- Push button door opener at rink entrance
- Accessible washrooms on main floor and second floor
- Elevator to access second floor mezzanine, meeting room and washrooms
- All change rooms accessible
- Ramping to allow access to the viewing area



“The Station” (45 St. Paul Street)

Home to the Collingwood Museum

- Designated accessible parking available
- Street level access with clear path of travel.
 - The museum is a single level building with an accessible entrance on the east side of the building.
 - There are no steps prohibiting entry.
- Power assisted entrance door
- Men’s and women’s accessible washrooms
- Audio exhibits are available

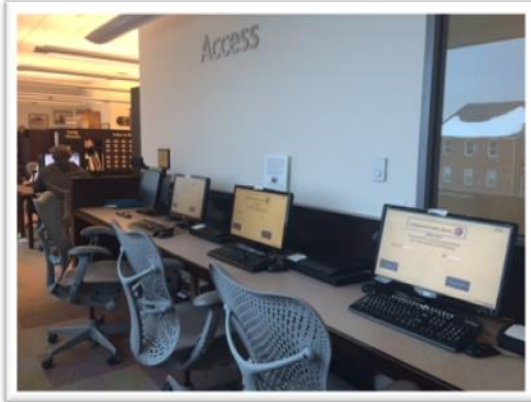


Public Library and Municipal Offices (55 Ste. Marie Street)

- Designated accessible parking available in the library parking lot and in the municipal parking lot adjacent to the building
- Street level access with clear path of travel at front and parking lot entrance
- Power assisted door at front and parking lot entrance
- Service counter lowered
- A universal washroom in the Library and on the 2nd floor
- Two accessible washrooms in the FreeSchools World Literacy Room
- An elevator to allow access to the second and third floors
- A bank of computers for public use that have enhanced accessibility features
- Baskets to make it easier for library users to carry books and documents within the library
- Wheelchair available for public use
- Infra-red Assistive Listening system for use during meetings, presentations, etc.
- DAISY player and DAISY disk books (available for checkout)
- CD Audiobooks available



- Specialized memberships that provide special accommodations for clients of Breaking Down Barriers and for people registered with CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) or CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access)
- Desktop video magnifier



Sunset Point Washroom and Canteen (Sunset Point Park)

- Designated accessible parking available in the parking lot
- Men's and women's washrooms have accessible features however, they do not have power assisted doors (doors are left open)



Centennial Aquatic Centre (451 Third Street)

- Motion sensor entrance door
- Push button door opener to the main entrance of the pool
- Three large accessible parking spaces (one larger than the other two) with direct access to a cut curb concrete sidewalk into the pool (75 regular sized parking stalls)
- Accessible washroom stalls in change room areas
- Ramp access to therapeutic pool and lift for large pool
- Waterproof wheelchair
- Audible and visual fire alarms as well as emergency system shut off
- Push button entry to male and female change rooms

- Accessible/family change room with lift and change table
- All programming is recognized as accessible including Aqua Therapy



The Fire Hall (45 High Street)

The new Fire Hall was designed on one level to be fully accessible and to avoid the potential problems that elevators can present in an emergency.

The front entrance and the parking lot were redesigned before construction once the Accessible Design of Public Spaces Standards were released. The counters are at a level that is comfortable for people in wheelchairs, scooters, or those who just want to sit while speaking to Fire Department employees.

The entrance is spacious to make it easy for people with mobility devices to maneuver. The building also makes use of natural light, so it is welcoming for people with low vision.

Outdoor Spaces

Collingwood is proud of its outdoor trails and parks and wants to ensure that they are accessible for everyone. A portion of the Harbourview Park Boardwalk was replaced and rebuilt to a new 10-foot width. The Cenotaph recently had an accessible ramp installed at the east end and extra width installed at the west end to accommodate accessible seating.



A new floating dock with connecting ramp and boat launcher and fully accessible pathway from land to water at Harbourview Park will support barrier free recreation, social boating activities, and participation in competitive paddling sports.

Transit Terminal

Collingwood's downtown bus shelter and washroom facility on the corner of Pine Street and Second Street is a fully accessible building.



Accessible Town Services and Programs

Customer Service

Town employees are committed to providing excellent customer service in person, on the phone, through written correspondence and by email. We provide significant communication to the public through the website, live streaming of meetings and the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Electronic participation for Committee and Board members at meetings.

The Town continues to provide excellent customer service for people of all abilities by trying to prevent service disruptions. However, if a disruption occurs the, Town is committed to providing appropriate notice using methods such as website, newspaper, as well as through social media. In addition, Collingwood employees are trained to provide accessible customer service.

Policies

Policies and procedures used by employees reflect our commitment to both accessibility and feedback from Collingwood residents.

Planning

The Town is working on proposed changes to the Official Plan to increase the prominence of accessibility in our goals, objectives, and urban design standards. Collingwood is committed to incorporating barrier-free design and building neighbourhoods that are *“well connected, accessible and transit-supportive...with a sense of place and belonging as the primary building blocks for achieving complete communities”*.

Information and communication

The Town goes over and above regulation requirements to make sure that we are providing accessible information and communication supports. The Town also ensures that the following statement appears on the website: “Town of Collingwood documents are available in alternate formats or with communication supports, on request.”

Employment

Job Postings and Interviews:

Collingwood has added a statement on the Human Resources page of our website which assures potential job applicants that the Town of Collingwood is committed to making our interview process fully accessible for people of all abilities. It advises candidates that if they are selected for an interview, they should let the Manager of Human Resources know if they require an accessibility accommodation. This statement is also included on all Town job postings.

Employee Accommodation Plans:

Collingwood creates written individual accommodation plans in consultation with the employee and their needs. This practice was implemented in 2011, before it became a requirement under the Accessible Employment Standards. Flexibility and regular discussions between the employees affected and their supervisors concerning the terms of the plan have been part of the spirit of these accommodations.

Return to Work Plans:

This same spirit of flexibility and individualized accommodation is evident in Collingwood’s Return to Work Plans for staff that require a Return to Work accommodation plan following an illness or injury.

Transportation:

The Red Cross's specialized transit service has reduced their booking wait times from seven days to three days for non-emergency bookings.

The Town of Collingwood has increased the independence of many residents by providing a transit Link to The Blue Mountains, and have successfully worked with the County of Simcoe to establish an accessible transit link to Wasaga Beach and Barrie. These services have greatly benefitted people who work in one municipality but live in another. They have helped Collingwood families whose children can take the bus to ski at Blue Mountain Resort. They have also greatly enhanced the independence of people with disabilities.

Collingwood provides accessible service through our Colltrans buses, the accessible shuttle and through the specialized transport provided for the Town by the Red Cross. We work with our partners, Landmark Bus Lines and the Red Cross, to continue to increase the accessibility of our transit services.

Snow Removal:

The issue of snow removal as an accessibility concern for pedestrians of all ages and abilities was a dominant theme. The Town is reviewing its policies and procedures to take the points raised into account, while appreciating the demands that come with unpredictability of snowfalls. The Public Works and Engineering Department has also provided timely and effective responses to any complaints received.

We want to hear from you!

You can help us respond to accessibility barriers or challenges you experience by going to our website, clicking on the Accessibility link at the bottom of the home page and completing a Barrier Complaint Form, which you'll find on the right hand side of the page. There you will also find a general Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form in the same location. (See Appendix A for a snapshot of this page.)

In addition, the Town has a 'Contact Us' link on our website at the top of the page where you can voice your comments or concerns to staff about issues in the community. We hope to hear from you. By sharing your accessibility experiences with us, the municipality can ensure that Collingwood truly is a place where people of all abilities can live, work, and play!

For more information, please contact:

Clerks Department
Town of Collingwood
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