

The Corporation of The Town of Thessalon

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

November 18, 2021

Submitted to:

Mayor and Council

Submitted by:

Robert P. MacLean (2021)

Clerk Treasurer

Coordinator of the Accessibility Working Group

Amended and Approved by Council: September 18, 2023

Contents of Plan

Executive Summary.....1

Aim.....1

Objectives.....2

Description of the Town of Thessalon.....2

Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning.....3

Barrier Identification Process.....4

Recent barrier Removal Initiatives.....4

Digital Format and Accessibility Disclaimer.....5

Review and Monitoring Process.....7

Communication of the Plan.....7

Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* is to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards or rules so that all Ontarians will benefit from accessible services, programs, spaces, and employment. The standards help organizations to prevent or remove barriers that limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, and the attitudes of service providers toward them.

This report describes the measures the Town has taken in the past and the measures the Town will take during the current and future years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Town, including staff and members of the community at large.

This year the Town committed itself to identifying the barriers within the municipality and working towards continual improvement of access to municipal facilities.

Aim

This report describes the steps in establishing a plan and will identify measures to be taken to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Town, including staff.

Objectives

This report:

1. describes the process by which the Town of Thessalon will identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. will review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities
3. lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services the Town will review in subsequent years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. describes the measures the Town will take in the coming year(s) to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. describes how the Town will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

Description of the Town of Thessalon

Approximately 80 km east of Sault Ste. Marie and 50 km west of Blind River on Highway 17, and at the junction of Hwy. 129, sits the Town of Thessalon. Located on a two-mile point of land extending into the north shore of Lake Huron, the Town is bordered by water on three sides with the Thessalon River winding through the center. Covering 4.38 square km, this town offers its citizens and tourists access to all the amenities found within larger communities. It provides a viable hospital and medical service, an array of retail and specialty stores, while at the same time supporting an industrial region. Thessalon's accessibility to water bodies as well as to open field and wooded areas, allow for endless seasonal activities for young and old alike. Collectively, these factors make the Town of Thessalon an enjoyable place to live. The Town has a population of approximately 1,300.

Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Thessalon is committed to:

- the continual improvement of access to all municipally-owned facilities, premises, and services for those persons with disabilities
- the provision of quality service to all members of the community with disabilities

The legislation requires that each municipality prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable Council to meet these commitments.

Commitment

The Town of Thessalon is committed to providing accessible municipal facilities, services, programs and documents to its residents and visitors. The Town of Thessalon strives to prevent and remove barriers to ensure to create a welcoming environment for all ages and abilities. As the Town of Thessalon continues to develop and grow; a sense of inclusion and belonging is at the forefront. Accessibility policies, training, procedures and practices are continually reviewed to ensure equal opportunities for all.

The Town of Thessalon is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Town of Thessalon continues to develop and enhance the community to become inclusive for all and in doing so will consult with the public and persons with disabilities, when required, as per the AODA.

Barrier Identification Process

The Town of Thessalon identifies barriers through:

- recommendations from the public;
- inspecting the Town's facilities, including outdoor parks and other public areas;
- research

Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

Thessalon Memorial Community Arena

(2021) An application was submitted for funding through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) Canada Community Revitalization Fund. The funding application included the addition of a two-stop elevator to improve accessibility to the Upper Deck located on the second floor. The application is awaiting approval.

Marina

(2021) An application was submitted for funding through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) Community Enhancement Program – Enhance Your Community Stream. The funding application included a retrofit of the Marina building to include two barrier-free washroom facilities, the addition of an attached pavilion engineer-designed with a concrete pad foundation, and barrier-free access. The funding request is awaiting approval.

Lakeside Park

(2021) An application was submitted for funding through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) Community Enhancement Program – Rural Enhancement Stream. The funding application included the renovation of the two washroom facilities located in Lakeside Park.

The proposed renovation includes the adaptation of fully accessible, barrier-free showers and toilets, as well as hands-free features to accommodate recovery efforts due to the impacts of COVID-19. The funding application is awaiting approval.

(2020) Ramps paved at Washroom 2 entrance

Roadway/ Sidewalk/ Parking Lot Improvements

Improvements include:

- Water Street Paving (2021)
- Dawson Street Paving (2021)
- Lakeside Drive Reconstruction including widening (2021)
- Paved pathway and lookout adjacent to Lakeside Drive (2021)
- River Street Paving (2020)
- Medical Centre Parking Lot Paving (2020)
- Federation Street and Ontario Street Intersection Paving (2020)

The above projects have resulted in smoother surfaces enabling improved accessibility and enhanced travel.

Digital Format

- The Accessible Digital Format Policy was approved by resolution of the Council on February 16th, 2021.
- The Accessible Digital Format Policy establishes guidelines as per the AODA standards that took effect January 1, 2021 for receipt of documents for an agenda, submitted quotations or tenders, as well as, all materials and communications products produced or purchased (e.g., consultant reports, feasibility studies, plans, etc.) by the Town of Thessalon for the release to the public.
- The Policy enacts:
 - That each publication received by the Town of Thessalon shall be provided in an accessible digital format
 - That payment from the Town of Thessalon may be withheld from contractors/suppliers etc. until documentation is provided in an accessible format, if requested
 - That upon request, tenders must provide an electronic accessible document

Accessibility Disclaimer

The Town of Thessalon is committed to responding to the accessibility needs of the community. This commitment extends to our website. The Municipality's website has been designed to be meet the Province of Ontario's Accessible Information and Communications Standard (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005).

Whenever possible, documents (PDF, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint) are posted to the website as accessible documents. An ongoing effort is being made to make historical documents available and compliant with the standard, although at this time there are some limits in our ability to do so.

The Municipality recognizes situations where it is not practicable or possible to present content in an accessible format. In these cases, best efforts are used to provide citizens an accessible alternative or assistance in acquiring the information they need. Should you need assistance in obtaining an accessible alternative for non-accessible content, contact the Municipality by dialing 705-842-2217 or townofthess@thessalon.ca

Accessibility Policies

Policies will be developed as new accessibility requirements are presented.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

Council continues their commitment to ensure that existing barriers are removed and steps are taken to prevent future barriers.

Monitoring will continue, to ensure that all applicable Integrated Accessibility Standards are being met by the required deadlines.

Council members, staff, and volunteers have been trained in order to fulfil our obligations with regard to the Accessibility Standards. A training plan has been developed as each new standard is implemented to ensure that all staff are trained in the standards that are applicable to their respective job duties.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available at the Thessalon Municipal Office and on the Town's website. It is available in an alternate format upon request.

This plan will be reviewed at least once every five years with the next review to be completed no later than December 31, 2026.