

Appendix 1 to By-law 2023-25

TOWN OF MIDLAND



**2022 – 2026
Multi-Year Accessibility and Transit Plan**



Town of Midland Commitment

The Town of Midland is committed to providing sound governance and accountability through a focus on service excellence. That means ensuring that the goods and services it provides and makes available to its residents and visitors are fully accessible to all and provided in a manner that promotes independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.

This document represents a multi-year accessibility plan as prepared by the Town staff in consultation with the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee.

The development and implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan advances and strengthens the municipality's commitment to make the Town of Midland a more accessible community. The plan outlines the measures the Township has taken to date, as well as future plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities that use the facilities and services of the Town of Midland. The plan also outlines the Town's strategy for meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

In the development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Town commits to the following:

- To post the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on the Town's website and provide it in an accessible format upon request.
- To review and update the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every five years in conjunction with the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee.
- To prepare an annual status report on the progress measures taken to implement the strategies within the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- To post the annual status report on the Township's website and provide the report in an accessible format upon request.

Background

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

The Town of Midland has been working towards an inclusive and accessible organization for a number of years as documented in its annual accessibility plan. The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, requires municipalities of a certain size to complete an annual accessibility plan. The annual plan addresses the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the municipality's by-laws, policies, programs, practices, services, and facilities. Prior to the Ontarians with



Disabilities Act, 2001, the municipality was already taking steps to improve accessibility and inclusion.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Under the authority of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS), the Township has moved from an annual accessibility plan to a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines actions undertaken by the Township to achieve its priorities and that identifies future goals that will assist the Township in meeting the compliance requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards. The AODA requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. To assist in this endeavor, the AODA contains accessibility standards in the areas of:

- Accessible Customer Service
- General Requirements
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

Accessible Customer Service

The Standard for Accessible Customer Service came into force in 2008. To date, the Township has successfully met the requirements of this standard through the development of an Accessible Customer Service policy and through ongoing training. The next three standards, which also include a general requirements component, have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS).

General Requirements

The General component of the Integrated Accessibility Standard focuses on the establishment of accessibility policies, accessibility plans, the procurement of goods and services, self-service kiosks, and training requirements.

Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standard was designed to assist Ontario businesses and organizations in making their information accessible for people with disabilities. This standard focuses on websites and accessible formats and communication supports.

Employment

The Employment Standard was designed to assist Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of recruiting, hiring, and supporting.



employees with disabilities. This standard focuses on policy and procedure requirements.

Transportation

The Transportation Standard was designed to make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario. This standard applies to:

- conventional transportation services, Midland Penetanguishene Transit Service
- specialized transportation services, Midland Accessible Transit.
- municipalities with specific requirements for those that license taxicabs or provide conventional transportation services.
- certain ferries.
- other transportation services, for example
 - public school boards that provide transportation services
 - hospitals, colleges, and universities who provide transportation services (for example, shuttle buses)

Objective

In accordance with the ODA and AODA, this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan serves as a mechanism to assist the Town in eliminating obstacles that inhibit full accessibility to its goods, services, and facilities.

The aim of this plan is to describe the measures the Town of Midland has taken in previous years and will undertake in the future to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use municipal facilities and services.

This plan also highlights the efforts the municipality will undertake to achieve full compliance with the standards established under the AODA.

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

Procurement

The Town is committed to incorporating accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, and will provide an explanation upon request should this not be feasible or practical. The Town passed a new procurement



By-law in 2014 and, in doing so, incorporated an accessibility clause that affirms its pledge to work towards a fully accessible community.

Self-service Kiosks

The Town will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Customer Service Standards Regulation

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

As required under the Regulation, the Town of Midland established an Accessible Customer Service Policy which was adopted by Council on September 28, 2009. The policy reaffirms the Town's commitment to the provision of exceptional and accessible customer service for everyone.

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

Customer feedback is strongly encouraged and is a critical component in assisting the Town in identifying and breaking down barriers. A Customer Feedback Form was developed and is available on the Town's website, and at the Town's various municipal facilities.

Highlights of IAS Compliance

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) enacted July 1, 2011, established mandatory accessibility standards in three areas: information and communications, employment, and transportation. The Regulation was amended on January 1, 2013, to incorporate the Design of Public Spaces Standard.



Information and Communications

The purpose of the Information and Communications Standard is to facilitate access for people with disabilities to sources of information and communications that those without disabilities depend on daily.

In fulfilling this requirement, the Town will strive to provide information and communications about its goods, services, and facilities in an accessible format and in a timely manner, in consultation with person(s) making the request, at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

The Town's website provides the phone number and extension to access the TTY (text telephone) phone line under contacts. The Town launched a new website in 2014 that meets current accessibility requirements. As technology progresses, the Town will continue to consider ways to improve the accessibility of its website. The Town has achieved the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 - Level AA.

The Town's website and web content is monitored by "Site Improve." The Town receives weekly Quality Assurance Reports highlighting the overall accessibility of its website and identifying any issues that require correcting.

Employment

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

In accordance with the IASR, accessibility has been incorporated into all aspects of the Town's recruitment and employment process.

Transportation

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

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



In accordance with the IASR, the Town will continue to hold an annual public meeting involving persons with disabilities to receive feedback on its accessibility plan.

Design of Public Spaces

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

The Town remains committed to its motto “In pursuit of the quality of life” and believes that incorporating accessibility into public spaces ensures that everyone is afforded the same opportunity for enjoyment of recreational spaces and barrier-free access to public services.

The Town will continue to review and evaluate the physical and architectural attributes of its exterior public spaces to determine modifications, if any, that may be requested to enable full accessibility for everyone.

Training

Training on the Accessible Customer Service Policy, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the Human Rights Code as it relates to the legislation has been provided to all members of Council, committee members, Town staff and volunteers. Training is ongoing and continues to be provided to all new employees, volunteers, and Council members during orientation. It is also a condition of employment.

Accessibility & Seniors Advisory Committee

The Town of Midland’s Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) was established on August 26, 2002, in accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. In 2023 the Midland Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Midland Seniors Council were combined to form the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee which aligns with the Province of Ontario's amalgamation with the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility.

The Committee will be comprised of 7-9 members with the majority being persons with disabilities. The purpose of the Committee is to champion issues related to the provision of an accessible community on behalf of all Town of Midland citizens, and to represent and provide advice on seniors’ perspectives on municipal matters. Develop safe, convenient, and accessible sidewalks, trails, parks, and public spaces, increases



freedom and access for those that have limited mobility options available to them and supports them in accessing their daily needs.

To this end, the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee will undertake to:

- review and provide feedback on municipal by-laws, policies, programs and services, and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.
- promote awareness and understanding of the needs of people with varying abilities.
- conduct an annual review of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and progress report, provide feedback on the Town's progress in achieving AODA compliance, and advise on any amendments to the Plan that may be required as the result of changing circumstances.
- provide advice and recommendations to Town Council concerning opportunities to make the Town of Midland a more age-friendly community, focused on the services, roles and responsibilities within the Town of Midland's jurisdiction related to housing, transportation, communications, and civic participation.
- review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act.

Barrier Identification Methodology

Input is received from Department Heads with respect to the accessible targets to prepare a draft plan for annual review by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The existing plan was reviewed to gauge the status of existing barriers, possible changes in target dates, and proposed remedial action required to eliminate any new barriers that have been identified during the past year.



Midland Transit System (MTS)

The Town of Midland offers both a conventional and specialized transportation system.

The Town's conventional transportation service is comprised of four (4) buses that are fully accessible and meet the requirements of the IASR. The conventional transportation service operates an hourly north and south route within the Town. Effective February 2016, the Town of Midland, in partnership with the Town of Penetanguishene, established a new bus route linking the communities.

The Town's specialized transportation service implemented in December 2005 consists of three accessible vans. Each van has the capacity to hold two wheelchairs or one scooter. The service is operated by Community Reach via a dedicated line for accessible transit at (705) 526-4321. Council granted permission to extend the accessible transit beyond the Municipality's boundaries, and this service came into use in early June of 2007.

Through this plan, the Town is committed to identifying barriers, and establishing strategies to address local accessibility transportation issues and regulatory requirements by 2017. Consistent with requirements under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11* (IASR), annual public consultation will be conducted to discuss and assess progress towards full system accessibility.

2022-2026 Transit Accessibility Work Plan

The Town will ensure that its transit service complies with all IASR requirements by the stated compliance dates. The following provides a summary of the actions planned in the upcoming year that will make MTS more accessible:

- Continue the development of accessible public transit services.
- Identify barriers and establish strategies to address accessibility issues and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure that policies, procedures, protocols, and standards are developed and updated to improve the accessibility of transit services.
- Ensure that our services are delivered in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, and independence of all customers.
- Consult with the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee and people with disabilities in the community on our accessibility plan and related policies.
- Continued infrastructure improvements at bus stops and other related transit infrastructure.
- Continued updating of bus stop accessibility guidelines.



- Reviewing of bus stop sign design and implementation of bus shelter standardization, where possible.
- Review and update the Transportation procedure as part of the Town's policy review process to ensure any accessibility issues are addressed.

Methodology for Plan Review and Update

Consistent with the requirements established under the IASR 191/11, this plan will provide an update on accessibility initiatives that reflect IASR 191/11 compliance as well as forecast initiatives that support the continuous removal of accessibility barriers. Progress will be reported annually and will be used to measure progress and develop subsequent annual work plans.

There are three (3) key inputs to the annual accessibility plan, including:

- Legislative and regulatory requirements and associated compliance timelines
- Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee consultation
- Annual public consultation
- Department Head/staff feedback

Process for Managing, Evaluating and Acting on Customer Feedback

Customer feedback is important as it assists in the identification of barriers to those with disabilities. Identifying obstacles enables improvements to be made to the day-to-day operation of the MTS which in turn aids in the creation of a long-term and successful service. Feedback is usually generated directly by Town staff or by customers.

Town staff gather feedback by:

- Consulting regularly with Midland Transit Bus Drivers
- Consulting with the Accessibility and Seniors Advisory Committee
- Through public consultations
- Through annual status reports; and
- Customer Feedback Form.

Town staff also meet with MTS drivers bi-annually to receive their feedback on the MTS. All data collected is used by staff to determine potential improvements and/or remedial action required to break down barriers to its transit service.



Feedback is also generated directly from customers who serve as key inputs to MTS delivery and annual service plans, including those elements dealing specifically with accessibility.

Customer feedback with respect to service operations is directed to transit drivers and municipal staff. Planning and administrative related comments are forwarded to municipal staff for review and response. Comments are received from customers and members of the public via telephone, in person, mail, and e-mail.

Procedures to Address Equipment Failures

There are several steps taken daily to mitigate in-service break downs, including the following:

- Each day, prior to a departure for service, the Operator completes a “circle check,” ensuring that the vehicle is functioning properly. Should any features be found to not be in working order, the Operator will attempt to have it repaired prior to going into service. If the bus cannot be repaired in time, an alternate bus is assigned to the Operator.
- Every evening when buses are serviced (refueled, fare box emptied, etc.), employees also check that features of the bus appear to be in working order. If an issue is discovered, the bus is either repaired that evening, or removed from service the following day until it can be repaired.
- Every three months a “Wheelchair Lift Inspection Worksheet” is completed.

While the steps should mitigate in-service breakdowns, they do not eliminate them. When a bus defect disables the bus while in service, the following steps are taken:

- The transit driver contacts the Operations Depot and relays the defect information.
- Operations Manager determines the extent of the defect and whether the bus can be repaired in service.
- If the bus defect can be repaired in service, the Operations Manager contacts the mobile mechanic and co-ordinates a timely repair.
- If the defect cannot be repaired in service, the Operations Manager contacts maintenance who arranges for a replacement bus.
- If the bus cannot remain in service, the bus is taken out of service and a replacement bus is dispatched.



Questions or Comments

Any questions or comments regarding this Multi-Year Accessibility and Transit Plan may be directed to:

Sarah Cathcart, Committee Coordinator/Deputy Clerk:
Town of Midland
575 Dominion Avenue
Midland ON L4R 1R2
(705)526-4275 ext. 2208
scathcart@midland.ca.

Accessibility Plan adopted by Midland Council on May 3, 2023 – By-law 2023-25.



Schedule “A” Accessibility Achievements/Progress

General

- Ongoing training provided as part of new employee orientation on the Accessibility Standards
- (2022) Elections Accessibility Plan
- (2022) Accessible Document Creation Training
- (2022) Launch of new Transit app
- (2021) New sidewalk snowplow; improved the accessibility of the sidewalks, which has greatly improved mobility, another new sidewalk plow to arrive fall of 2023.
- (2021) Park Playground Replacement Project - to ensure these playgrounds are inclusive for people of all abilities, and offer physical and sensory play, including visual, tactile, and auditory elements. The 2022 project applied the same requirements.
- (2021) Work towards accessible Website and Web Content Compliance. The Town will continue to work to ensure that all its websites, web platforms and website content meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA. New Website launch November 2022.
- (2020) King Street reconstruction project at it relates to the accessible layout of King Street, handicap parking, and road design. There will be no curbs in front of banks, and trip hazards will be eliminated in this design. Also, the pedestrian crosswalk is audible, with a verbal que prompt.
- (2016) Automatic door installed in the hallway leading to the dressing rooms at the NSSRC.
- (2016) Forms displayed on the Town’s website are in the process of being converted to a fillable format that allows for completion of the form electronically.
- (2016) A refurbished fully accessible bus was put into service in April 2016. Another added in 2022 making the entire fleet of four (4) buses fully accessible.
- The Town partnered with the Town of Penetanguishene to establish a new bus route linking the communities.
- (2014/2015) A Scent Sensitivity Policy was established.
- (2015) The Midland Accessibility Advisory Committee hosted two information sessions in May 2015 for the public. The sessions were conducted by Independent Living Services and targeted businesses and seniors (although they were open to everyone) Topics were “My Business Welcomes Everyone” and “Make Your House A Home for A Lifetime.”
- (2015) Two MAAC members attended the Simcoe Muskoka Accessibility Network in September 2015.
- (2014) Municipal Elections – Audio-vote systems were used during the 2014 municipal election to accommodate those with visual and mobility impairments.



King Street Revitalization Project

- The street has been designed with a flexible cross section to allow for changes in the use of certain areas and allow for a more accessible pedestrian walkway. This cross section results in using a mountable curb and gutter system which means there is very little traditional barrier curb throughout the street. What this means is essentially the entire street is accessible, however there are a select few locations where traditional barrier curbs were still used.
- The new pedestrian crossings are now all 4.0m in width as well as construction out of contrasting unit pavers and concrete to help delineate the crossing from the roadway.
- All intersections on King St are receiving state of the art pedestrian crossing push buttons, signals, and audible signals. These ped buttons are fully customizable to meet and exceed current AODA standards. They will include locator tones, standard audible crossing signals (chirp chirp and cuckoo sounds). These APS tones are currently programmed to activate after the button is held for 3 seconds, which is typical across municipalities.
- The volume control of the audible tones is constantly monitoring the ambient noise and the volume is adjusted to ensure that it can be heard through traffic, and it will adjust to not be as loud during the nighttime when the streets are quiet.
- All crossings have very large curb depressions with very large tactile plates.

Parks and Recreation (including the NSSRC)

- New fully accessible playground installed at MacAllen Park.
- Customer Service Counter at the NSSRC lowered to an accessible height.
- Soap Dispensers in some washrooms at the NSSRC were moved for greater accessibility.
- New signage was added at the entrance to the Boys and Girls Club to better identify the automated door.
- Signage installed on the accessible restroom stalls located by the Midland Minor Hockey Association office.
- Additional automatic door openers being installed in NSSRC through 2023.
- The lip at the emergency exit in the gymnasium was removed.
- New handles on the bathroom stalls in the north hallway washrooms were installed that allow for better gripping.
- The Rotary Waterfront Trail connection to Penetanguishene was completed.
- Automatic door openers are being installed at all remaining park restrooms in 2023.



Town Office – 575 Dominion Avenue

- The outside stairs were marked for greater visibility.
- Reserved disabled parking spaces were adjusted to meet new accessibility standards - ongoing.
- Based on customer feedback, the automated phone message was modified to reduce the confusion experienced by callers in locating the appropriate department by which to address their queries. This is ongoing.
- A new copier was purchased that enables documents to be scanned into a format that allows for conversion of “text to speech.”

Operations/Public Works

- Snow accumulation at bus stops was removed in a timely fashion – ongoing.
- As the steps onto the transit bus are challenging for people with disabilities and elderly, the Transit Driver provides hands-on assistance as required – ongoing.
- Hugel and Eighth Street – A concrete apron was installed to provide easier access to the button.
- Audible Signal – Eighth and Yonge – Based on feedback from the MAAC, the signal was adjusted to allow pedestrians additional time to cross the intersection.
- Additional crosswalk added on Yonge Street at Sixth. 2023 will also see another new addition, location to be determined.
- New sidewalk being installed on Dominion between Penetanguishene Rd and Woodland Dr.
- New ramps being installed in summer of 2023 in LLP from road down to waterfront area and will include accessible pathway to beach front.

Library

- Text to Speech Technology was installed in March 2015 improving the accessibility of the website for persons with visual impairments (Browsealoud).
- Partnered with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to ensure patrons of all abilities have access to library materials, even if not housed within the library’s own collection.
- Browsealoud was added to the library’s website to enable on-line content to be read aloud.

See By-law 2012-57 for details on accessibility achievements accomplished prior to 2014.