



# THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANITOUWADGE

## 2022 Annual Accessibility Status Report

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February 25, 2023

### Objectives and Purpose

This is the fourth Annual Accessibility Status Report update for the Township of Manitouwadge's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2016, the Township released its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The plan outlined the Township's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which included how phased-in requirements under the AODA will be met.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plans are required to be updated every five (5) years, per the AODA. On March 9, 2022, Council approved the new 2022 – 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Township of Manitouwadge.

This status report is to make the public aware of the Township's progress with regards to the 2022-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the AODA.

## **Compliance Reporting**

To date, the Township of Manitowadge has filed three Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario under the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, as required under the AODA. The next Accessibility Compliance Report is due December 31, 2023.

## **Township of Manitowadge’s Commitment Statement**

The Township’s Accessible Customer Service, Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy, and policy statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the Township to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The Township’s policy is publicly available on the Township’s website.

Along with the new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Council directed staff to update all other Township accessibility policies to ensure they are in compliance under the AODA. These will be presented to Council in 2023.

The Township of Manitowadge is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The Township of Manitowadge recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

The Township of Manitowadge is committed to being responsive to the needs of all residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the Township will:

- Ensure policies address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- All people with disabilities to use their own personal devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Township.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the Township’s goods, services, programs and facilities.

- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

The Township will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, the Township will establish, implement and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Plan will outline the Township's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

### **Continuous Achievements in Accessibility**

- The Township focuses on removing barriers which may exist in our buildings and facilities, while ensuring that new building, leases and renovations do not create any new barriers.
  - The Township adopted an Accessible Customer Service Policy which outlines what the Township will do to comply with the regulations and what our customers and employees can expect.
- The Township continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives.
- The Township continues to comply with the requirements of Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation including continuing to train staff and volunteers who interact on behalf of the Township on an ongoing basis.
- Notifying the public of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action.

### **Highlights of 2019 to 2022**

- At the end of 2019, received funding under the Community Transportation Grant Program through the Ministry of Transportation and entered into a Service Agreement with Santé Manitouswage Health for the Community Transportation Program – myRide, that provides accessible transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities.

- The Township received notice from the Ministry of Transportation in 2021, that the grant has been extended to the year 2025.
- The myRide program continues to provide accessible transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities. 2022 saw an increased ridership with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Submitted Accessibility Compliance Report to Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The next Accessibility Compliance Report is due December 31, 2023.
- Ongoing training for new employees on accessibility, including:
  - Accessible Customer Service Policy
  - Accessibility training, including Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Continue to notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.
- Accessible website launched in 2018. Website and web content are continuously being maintained and updated to meet WCAG 2.0 compliance. WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted standard for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international team of experts. The latest website update for accessibility was in 2021.
- A new accessible website was launched at the end of 2022; there have been a few technical issues but improvements are continuing to be made.
- Entered into an agreement with Paymentus, an online payment platform for implementing paperless electronic billing and online payment options to provide more accessible opportunities in ways which all residents, seniors and persons with disabilities may pay bills; official launch occurred in early 2021.
- The Boreal Newsletter was launched in December 2021 and is available online and in printed format. Some of the ads received for the newsletter are in a smaller, non-accessible font, however persons may contact Township staff to receive the ad in a more accessible format. Township staff will review ways to make the Boreal Newsletter more accessible.

- Identified barriers at the Manitouwadge Community Recreation Centre. There have been three applications submitted to obtain grant funding, but unfortunately the applications were not successful. We will actively seek other funding opportunities as they become available.
- The Township was successful in obtaining grant funding to install electronic accessible doors for the Manitouwadge Public Library. Installation is scheduled for 2023.
- In 2022, the Township approved the new 2022-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The 2022 Municipal Election was conducted by Online and Telephone Voting to ensure access to voting for all electors. The Voter Help Centre was held in the Township Office, Council Chambers which is an accessible building and Voter booths were arranged with magnifiers to assist voters in seeing their Personal Identification Number (PIN) for logging into the voting platform, and every device was enabled with the largest font available for that system.

### **Goals and Next Steps for Accessibility**

- Ensure the Township of Manitouwadge continues to meet compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg. 191/11).
- Continue with the organization's commitment to accessibility.
- Update all accessibility policies for compliance under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA); including the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and Customer Service Policy. (2023)
- Continue to monitor website and web content compliance.
- Continue to ensure existing documents are accessible or available upon request.
- Continue to develop accessible templates and create accessible documents to improve access to information.

- Continue to notify the public that accommodations will be provided upon request.
- Continue to welcome accommodations throughout recruitment process and employment life cycle.
- Continue with commitment and intent of the AODA and Transportation Standard for the Service Agreement with Santé Manitouwadge Health for the myRide program.
- Strive to ensure new facilities and reconstructions are designed with accessibility features incorporated.
- Continue to develop resources and training material for staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Continue to monitor and apply for accessibility funding opportunities.
- Continue to keep abreast of accessibility issues, innovations and trends.

### **Availability of the Plan and Status Report**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Report can be accessed through the Township's website.

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**Accessible formats and communication supports available upon request.**