

The Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs

By-law Number 2023-073

Being a By-law to adopt the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and repeal by-law 2019-119.

Whereas Section 4 (1)(a) of *Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards*, enacted under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as amended, requires that municipalities shall establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers; and

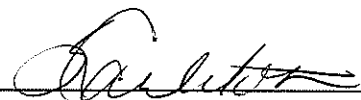
Whereas the Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to providing, to the greatest extent possible, municipal policies, services, programs and facilities that are accessible to residents, ratepayers, and visitors of all abilities;

Now Therefore the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs enacts as follows:

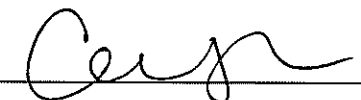
1. That the Township of Georgian Bluffs 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, forming part of this By-law and attached hereto as Schedule A, is hereby adopted.
2. That By-law 2019-119 is repealed.
3. That this By-law shall come into force and effect upon being passed by Council.

Read a first and second time this 8th day of November, 2023.

Read a third time and finally passed this 8th day of November, 2023.

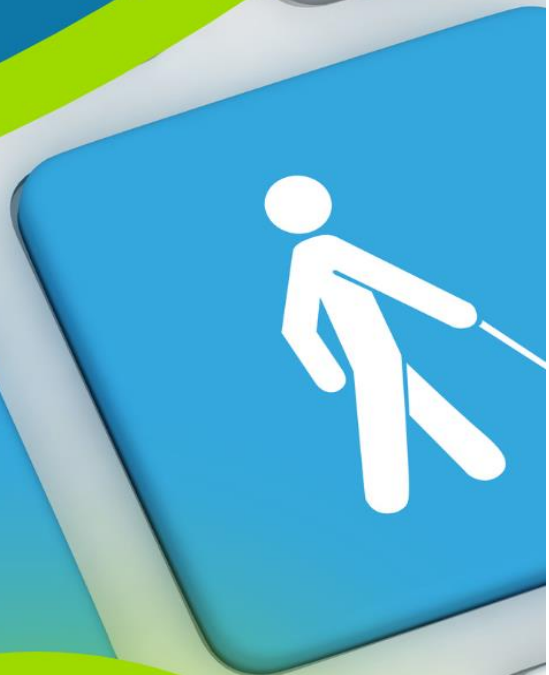


Mayor – Sue Carleton



Acting Clerk – Carly Craig

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2028



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Alternate versions of this document are available by request.

1.0 Introduction

The Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for persons with disabilities. We are committed to treating persons with disabilities with respect and providing access to resources and services in a way that allows them to maintain independence and dignity.

The Township is committed to providing support to its employees and will apply these principles when working with staff requiring accommodation.

The Township believes in integration and is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, through the implementation of its accessibility policies in accordance with the spirit and intent of all applicable legislation and associated regulations including the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The Township is committed to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility by meeting the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation and exceeding them where possible.

Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) requires that the Township, as a public sector organization with over fifty employees, create multi-year accessibility plans, update them once every five years and post on the Township's website.

2.0 Our Commitment to Accessibility

Through adoption of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Township of Georgian Bluffs renews its commitment to providing, to the greatest extent possible, municipal policies, services, programs, and facilities that are accessible to residents, ratepayers, and visitors of all abilities. The Township recognizes and confirms its commitment to the core principles of the Province of Ontario's accessibility legislation:

1. Dignity – Service is provided in a way that allows persons with disabilities to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.
2. Independence – All people shall have the opportunity do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
3. Integration – Service is provided in a way that all persons with disabilities can benefit from the same service, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as other customers, unless alternative measures are necessary to enable persons with disabilities to access services.
4. Equal Opportunity –Persons with disabilities have opportunities to access services, programs, and facilities equal to those opportunities given to others.

3.0 Highlights of Barriers Removed and Prevented: 2019-2023 Multi-Year Plan

Customer Service

A new Accessible Customer Service Policy was implemented in 2023. The new policy captures strategy 1 identified in the 2019-2023 Plan and includes specific reference to guide dogs and service animals.

Improvements for customer service were made in 2021, including the introduction of printed customer service information for cemetery services.

Employed Self-Service voting kiosks with accessibility enabled at all polling stations in the 2022 Municipal Election.

Information and Communications

Included within the revised Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy adopted in 2023, information and communication standards were strengthened and included specific communication channels for service disruption and customer feedback.

As part of an update to the Township's accessibility webpage, an updated Feedback Form was introduced.

In 2020, the Township began using a new meeting and agenda management system (eSCRIBE) with enabled accessibility features. New and accessible agenda formats (PDF, HTML) are available to the public.

Video streaming of Council and Committee meeting was implemented in 2020 (YouTube). Closed captioning is enabled in YouTube recordings and residents may watch from anywhere, making them more accessible to the public.

Accessible report, policy, and by-law templates implemented, and the accessible document statement is included at the top of all publicly available documents.

Employment

Policies adopted to account for accommodations during the recruitment process, individual accommodations for employees, performance management and return to work.

New Accessibly Policy implemented to speak to emergency protocol for persons with disabilities.

Procurement

A new Accessibility Policy was adopted to address accessibility in procurement practices (2023).

Training

A new Accessibility Policy was adopted to speak to training opportunities for staff, Council members, and volunteers (2023).

Design of Public Spaces

An accessible washroom renovation was completed at Sarawak Family Park in 2022.

The Recreation and Trails Master Plan as completed in 2021 and includes goals and objectives for improved accessibility in public spaces.

Information/communication boards were installed at playgrounds in the Township.

Kilsyth Community Park received a new playground, meeting accessibility standards.

Transportation

The Township does not operate a transit service and therefore strategies and actions related to the transportation standard are not captured in this plan.

Figure 1: New Kilsyth Community Park



4.0 Strategies and Actions: 2024-2028

Customer Service

Goal: To ensure people of all abilities have access to Township services and facilities

1. Post accessibility friendly posters at Administration Building to advertise that accommodations can be requested in our services.
2. Create business cards with accessible feedback form information to encourage accessible feedback and as another method of notice.

Information and Communications

Goal: To ensure all communications and information published by the Township are created and available in a manner that is accessible to people of all abilities

3. Accessibility of Documents
 - a. Procure Software to improve accessibility of PDF documents and documents that are less accessible (ie. Historic/Aged Documents, Complex PDFs, and Site Plans where possible)
4. Accessibility of the Township's Website
 - a. Procure Software to audit the accessibility of the Township's Website
 - b. Undertake update of Township's Website to improve accessibility informed by auditing software and feedback.
 - c. Enhance Accessibility and Facilities pages to highlight Accessible Parks/Trails/Facilities within the Township
 - d. Undertake an accessibility audit of outdoor recreation facilities and enhance signage to support greater accessibility.
 - e. Create a Guide to Accessible Activities in Georgian Bluffs in multiple formats including print and electronic.
5. Implement An On-line Cemetery Register with Interactive Maps
 - a. Enhance the availability and accessibility of cemetery information.
6. Improve Accessibility of Council and Committee Meetings through improvements to audio-visual systems in Council Chambers on an ongoing basis (including improved closed captioning, timestamping of agenda items for the convenience of viewers interested in a specific item)
 - a. Explore eSCRIBE livestreaming add-on.

- b. Improve visual aids in Council Chambers by replacing the projectors with TVs with higher resolution.
7. Next update of Emergency Management Plan:
 - a. Ensure the document has the accessible document statement.
 - b. Ensure persons with disabilities are accounted for in the Plan.
 - c. Incorporate persons with disabilities into regular emergency exercises.

Employment

Goal: To create an inclusive workplace that actively prevents barriers for employees of all abilities

1. Incorporate hands on accessible customer service training into employee onboarding program.
2. Complete a Facilities Review and Master Plan to inform a long-term program of works to increase accessibility to workplace facilities, to support workplace accessibility.
3. Update HR manual to include the Integrated Accessibility Policy and Accessible Customer Service Policy.
4. Monitor and update policies as required.

Training

Goal: To ensure all staff, volunteers, and members of Council are equipped with the tools and knowledge to provide accessible customer and public service

1. Develop accessibility training and deliver to staff interactive, in-person training opportunities on:
 - Providing Accessible Customer Service
 - Creating Accessible Content (Documents, Website content)

Design of Public Spaces

Goal: To ensure the Township's public spaces are accessible, and serve as a place where community members of all abilities can enjoy

1. Undertake an accessibility audit of the Georgian Bluffs Rail Trail and implement changes toward increasing accessibility.
2. Enhance paths of travel as Sarawak Family Park to and from parking, picnic areas, and to beach

3. Complete improvements to Kilsyth Park to include an accessible link trail to the Community Centre and landscaping to include seating.
4. Achieve greater accessibility of play by:
 - 4.1 Either: replace pea gravel surface with rubberized surface (tile or pour in place) in one play area at Shouldice Park (Shallow Lake).
 - 4.2 Or: replace the Sarawak Playground with an Accessible Playground with an accessible, rubberised surface.
5. Complete a Facilities Review and Master Plan to inform a long-term program of works to increase accessibility to community and workplace facilities, to support enhanced community accessibility and enhanced workplace accessibility.
6. Complete washroom improvements to support accessibility.
 - 6.1 Provide accessible seasonal washrooms at Cedar Hill and Centennial Parks.
 - 6.2 Upgrade washroom facilities at the Shallow Lake Ball Diamond (Shouldice Park).
7. Improve sidewalks in Shallow Lake to address accessibility barriers.
8. Improve accessibility of the entrance and customer service area at the Township Administrative Building.

Self-Service Kiosks

1. Obtain an accessibility enabled self-service kiosk at the Administration Building and Shallow Lake Arena (and other Township facilities as internet connectivity permits) for customer service so that staff can assist individuals complete online forms or find information, and individuals without access to the internet at home can access services offered by the Township online (ie. processes that require online submissions and public information available online)

5.0 Review and Monitoring

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed within one year of adoption by Council of the Township of Georgian Bluffs, and annually thereafter. As part of each annual review, progress reports regarding implementation will be presented to Council, and published on the Township website for public review, comment, and input.

Figure 2: Self-Service Kiosk



6.0 For More Information

This Plan was created by the Township of Georgian Bluffs staff in consultation with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and adopted by Georgian Bluffs Council on November 8, 2023. This Plan remains in effect until December 31, 2028.

Standard and accessible formats of this document are available on request for no cost. supports are also available upon request.

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact the Clerks Department at:

Email: clerks@georgianbluffs.ca

Telephone: (519)-376-2729

Or in person at:

Township of Georgian Bluffs Administration Building

177964 Grey Road 18

Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N5

Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at <https://www.georgianbluffs.ca/accessibility/>

