



**STAFF REPORT
MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA**

Maury O'Neill, CAO-Clerk

Prepared By: Maury O'Neill	Report No.: CAO 2024-12
Agenda Date: October 10, 2024	File No. C11

2025-2029 WAWA MUNICIPAL MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Staff Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report No. CAO 2024-12 and review and provide comment on the draft Wawa Municipal Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2029) to the CAO-Clerk by Wednesday, October 30, 2024;

THAT the draft Accessibility Plan be circulated to the public and those with accessibility concerns for comment and input for a minimum two-week period;

THAT Council endorse and approve a Municipality of Wawa 2025-2029 Accessibility Plan at its regular meeting on November 19, 2024;

Purpose/Summary

The Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) requires designated public sector organizations, such as the Municipality of Wawa, to have a multi-year accessibility plan in place which documents the organization's strategy to prevent and remove accessibility barriers.

Organizations must establish, review and update these plans in consultation with persons with disabilities. Plans must be updated at least once every five years and a status report must be completed on an annual basis. The plan and status report must be posted on the organization's website and be available in an accessible format upon request.

The Municipality of Wawa adopted a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the period 2019 to 2024. The Plan contains the planned measures to be taken by the Municipality of Wawa to improve accessibility and implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

An updated or new five-year Municipal Accessibility Plan must be completed and adopted by Council by December 31, 2024, for the period 2025 – 2029.

Municipal staff will continue to work under the legislative frameworks of the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990, and other associated pieces of legislation to ensure that compliance with accessibility standards are achieved.

Background

The Municipality is committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. The past 2019-2024 Municipal Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and demonstrate the Municipality's efforts to become a barrier-free community.

The new 2025-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) will include various strategies and initiatives that aim to enhance accessibility within the Municipality. Consultations with individuals with disabilities, community stakeholders and Council will be sought over a two-week period on the draft Plan to ensure it reflects a comprehensive and effective approach to addressing accessibility barriers and fostering an inclusive environment.

The MYAP shall be adopted by Council by December 31, 2024, and posted on the municipal website.

Discussion

Within the Wawa MYAP, the following is the statement of commitment by Council;

The Municipality of Wawa is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Council and staff believes in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The following are the proposed goals and objectives of the 2025-2029 MYAP Plan.

Accessibility Training:

The Municipality is committed to training staff and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. The Municipality has and will continue to train employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Further, the Municipality is committed to implementing a process to ensure that all employees, volunteers, all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Municipality and persons participating in the development and approval of policies are provided with appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and are provided with such training as soon as practicable. The Municipality will document and maintain a record of the training provided, including the dates that the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided. Training will also be provided whenever changes to Accessibility Policies and laws are made.

Procurement:

The Municipality has and will continue to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-serve kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request. The Municipality has implemented clauses in RFP and other procurement documents to ensure that all services are procured equitably and inclusively, and that construction and other capital purchases have a requirement to meet AODA codes.

Self-Service Kiosks:

The Municipality will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Information and Communication:

The Municipality will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports. It will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment:

The Municipality will continue to notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.

The Municipality will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. We have put in place a process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees. Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.

Design of Public Spaces:

The Municipality will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible on and off-street public parking
- Service-related elements like service counters and waiting areas
- Municipal buildings

The MYAP also includes a summary of what accomplishments were made over the past five years and what is planned for the next five to meet Accessibility legislation.

Financial Impact - Budget

The MYAP will require allocation of resources for its effective implementation, annually over the next five-years. Funding will be sourced from the existing budget, and any additional costs will be identified and included in future budget and business planning process. It is critical that other provincial and federal funding be accessed to make necessary improvements within municipal facilities and buildings, such as the Town Hall and Public Works Center, to ensure they are completed.

Conclusion

The Municipality of Wawa is committed to being barrier-free and accommodating to all persons who live, work and visit the Municipality. To ensure that the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is current, staff will review and report annually to Council on the achievements and actions that get all of us to this goal of being barrier-free.

Council and the community's input is critical to ensuring this Plan is comprehensive and reflective of identified barriers. Public input will be strongly encouraged prior to Council's adoption of this Plan.

Report Submitted to Council By:



Maury O'Neill
CAO-Clerk

Attached: Draft 2025-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2025 – 2029

This Document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Please contact:

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1. Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was enacted to develop, implement, and enforce Accessibility Standards to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises and transportation throughout Ontario by the year 2025.

Accessibility Standards include the Accessible Customer Service Standard (O. Reg. 429/07), the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) – including the Information & Communication, Transportation, Employment and the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the the Municipality of Wawa (Municipality) is required to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan. This plan outlines the Municipality’s strategy to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, and meet its requirements under the IASR.

In accordance with the requirements set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, the Municipality will:

- ❖ Post the accessibility plan on its website (www.wawa.cc);
- ❖ Provide the plan in an accessible format upon request;
- ❖ Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years;
- ❖ Establish, review and update the accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities;
- ❖ Prepare an annual status report and post it on the Municipality’s website.

Through the AODA, Ontario is working to make the province fully accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. Under the Act, standards have been developed that must be followed to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard requires the Municipality of Wawa to develop a multi-year plan every five years that includes complying with the following accessibility standards:

- ✚ Customer Service
- ✚ Information and Communication
- ✚ Employment
- ✚ Transportation
- ✚ The Built Environment

This plan describes the measures that the Municipality of Wawa may undertake to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises are accessible to persons with disabilities.

2. Statement of Commitment:

The Municipality of Wawa is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Council and staffs believe in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

3. Plan Goals and Objectives

The Wawa Accessibility Plan includes a summary of the accessibility initiatives completed in the past and planned for the future over the next five years, from 2025 to 2029.

The following are the goals and objectives of the Wawa Plan 2025-2029.

Accessibility Training:

The Municipality is committed to training staff and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. The Municipality has and will continue to train employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Further, the Municipality is committed to implementing a process to ensure that all employees, volunteers, all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Municipality and persons participating in the development and approval of policies are provided with appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and are provided with such training as soon as practicable. The Municipality will document and maintain a record of the training provided, including the dates that the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided. Training will also be provided whenever changes to Accessibility Policies and laws are made.

Procurement:

The Municipality has and will continue to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-serve kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request. The Municipality has implemented clauses in RFP and other procurement documents to ensure that all services are procured equitably and inclusively, and that construction and other capital purchases have a requirement to meet AODA codes.

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Information and Communication:

The Municipality will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports. It will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment:

The Municipality will continue to notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.

The Municipality will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. It has put in place a process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees. Where needed, it will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.

Design of Public Spaces:

The Municipality will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes

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- Accessible on and off-street public parking
- Service-related elements like service counters and waiting areas
- Municipal buildings

Past Accomplishments and Achievements to Meet Accessibility

See Schedule "A" Past Achievements

Future Planned Actions

See Schedule "B" Future Planned Actions

Review and Monitoring

The Municipality is committed to following through with this Plan. This Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years, allowing Council, staff and the public to assess its effectiveness and reflect changing community requirements. An annual status report on the progress on implementing this Plan will be available on the Municipal website as well as at the Municipal Office.

The Municipality will prepare an accessibility report for submission to the Ontario Government every two years. The report will include how we have met the goals, commitments and the legislative requirements for those periods, as laid out in the plan.

Staff will also monitor and evaluate any feedback we have received throughout the year related to accessibility. Staff will do this with tracking included within the Municipal Complaint Policy. This information may be integrated into our accessibility reports. Any comments on our accomplishments and plans are welcome and will be considered in our ongoing accessibility planning.

APPENDIX A

PAST ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE ACHIEVEMENTS

Past accessibility achievements to remove and prevent barriers and improve accessibility in Wawa include the following;

- a) An accessible chair lift was replaced at the Community Centre.
- b) Wording continued to be added to municipal job advertisements to include accessibility and accommodation options.
- c) An Accessibility Tab was added to our Contact Us page on www.wawa.cc for feedback on accessibility.
- d) Accessible employment practices are included in recruitment, assessment and selection processes. Candidates are advised of the availability of accommodations for interviews and when making offers of employment to potential new employees.
- e) Employees have been informed of new accessibility policies to support employees with disabilities, individualized accommodations and accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, individualized emergency plans for employees with disabilities and the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- f) Training in the requirements of the IASR is provided to all staff during orientation and volunteers and is reviewed with staff annually.
- g) A Return to Work policy was developed and shared with all staff, which includes provisions for individual accommodation plans.
- h) Accessibility training is included in new employee on-boarding.
- i) Accessible customer service was provided and is continued to be provided.
- j) When asked, the Municipality provides publicly available emergency information like evacuation plans or brochures, in an accessible format.
- k) An audio-visual system was installed in Council Chambers to ensure all may participate and hear meetings.
- l) Additional handicap parking spaces in the Downtown Wawa area were installed.
- m) Implemented Voyent Emergency Alert system so all residents may receive alerts in alternate formats.
- n) Purchased new accessible van for public transit.

APPENDIX B

Future Goals and Planned Actions

- a) Remove barriers from existing facilities and infrastructure including washroom renovations, ramps and automatic door openers at the following municipal buildings;
- Wawa Airport Terminal
 - Wawa Tourist Information Centre
 - Council Chambers at 40 Broadway Avenue
 - Wawa Public Library
 - Public Works Facility
- b) Continue to remove barriers from municipal services and programs that are identified by users. Continuation of sidewalks and curbs to be accessible.
- c) Ensure all existing sidewalks that are rehabilitated, replaced and reconstructed are completed to current engineering standards to provide a safe uniform walking surface which incorporates barrier free ramps at each intersection.
- d) Purchase accessible picnic tables and benches for parks, sidewalks, public spaces and beaches when replaced. Ensure one is available in each park.
- e) Continue to make new or redeveloped public spaces accessible
- 🚶 recreational trails and beach access routes
 - 🚶 outdoor public use eating areas
 - 🚶 outdoor play spaces
 - 🚶 on and off-street parking areas
 - 🚶 service counters
 - 🚶 fixed waiting lines
 - 🚶 waiting areas with fixed seating
- f) Update the Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Accessibility Policy and review all municipal accessibility policies and provide annual status updates.
- g) The Municipality will complete a plan to make the Municipal Building Hall at 40 Broadway Accessible as much as possible during redevelopment and installation of a lift and other accessibility features recommended by professionals knowledgeable with best practices to achieve accessibility.
- h) Add railing at the entrance to MMCC approach.
- i) Meet with seniors and ensure accessibility needs are met and as identified in Wawa Age-Friendly Plan.