



# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-2026

## **Introduction**

People with disabilities make up a significant part of our community. It has been projected that by 2036 twenty percent of all Canadians will have some form of disability. In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) with the goal of making Ontario accessible for all people with disabilities, so they have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

To achieve this goal, the AODA was implemented, and includes requirements that all organizations must meet, with deadlines specific to an organization's type and size.

To help organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility the AODA contains accessibility standards in the five following areas:

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)

The multi-year plan sets out strategies to identify and remove barriers to accessibility as required by the AODA.

## **Town of Mattawa Commitment to Accessibility**

The Town of Mattawa is committed to eliminating barriers (where possible) and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities, in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. The Town recognizes the diverse needs of our residents and customers and will continue to make every effort to provide the same access and rights to municipal services as all other members of our community, for those persons with disabilities. For this reason, the town is committed to modifying service delivery, programming, and other workplace processes, policies, and procedures to ensure equal access for all our residents and customers.

## **Summary of the Town of Mattawa's progress in Accessibility**

### **Accessible Customer Service Regulation**

The Town of Mattawa is compliant with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation

### **Accessible Customer Service Policy**

The town developed and follows an accessible Customer Service Policy.

### **Service Animals and Support Persons**

The town permits service animals and support persons to accompany persons with disabilities.

## **Temporary Disruptions**

The town continues to provide the public with notice of planned service disruptions at town facilities and town services. These notices are posted on the town website, our mobile app and social media channels.

## **Training**

Training has been provided to staff, volunteers and third parties of the Town of Mattawa. Training will continue to be provided to all new employees, volunteers and third parties.

## **Feedback Process**

The town has a feedback process and provides feedback on issues regarding accessibility. The feedback form can be found on the Town of Mattawa website. Individuals are also able to contact the Town of Mattawa with any feedback through the website. If individuals are able to utilize online services, the Town of Mattawa also receives and responds to feedback by phone, in person, and by mail.

## **Documents**

The town provides requested documents in accessible formats, upon request. There is no charge for providing a document in an accessible format.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) & Information and Communication Standards**

The Town of Mattawa is compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:

## **Policy Development**

The town has developed and implemented an Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy.

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The town has developed a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be available on the website. Staff will continue to provide annual status reports and put a new five-year plan in 2027.

## **Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities**

The town has amended the policy on Procurement to include the required changes as per the regulation.

## **Training**

Training has been provided to necessary staff, volunteers and other third parties of the Town of Mattawa. This training will continue to be provided to all new employees, volunteers and third parties.

## **Self-Service Kiosks**

This section does not apply to the Town of Mattawa at this time. Any future self-service kiosks will be accessible, if installed.

## **Website**

The Town of Mattawa implemented a new website which met the WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standards, and continues to update the website as required, ensuring that all staff work on the website are cognizant of incorporating accessible features into all documents uploaded onto the website.

## **Accessible Formats & Communications Supports**

The Town of Mattawa will provide information upon request in an accessible format and at no additional cost.

## **Emergency Procedures, Plans, or Public Safety Information**

The Town's public emergency information can and will be provided in an accessible format upon request.

## **Employment Standards**

The Town of Mattawa is compliant with the Employment Standards Regulations and continues to strive to remain an accessible employer.

### **Recruitment**

The Town of Mattawa has notified all necessary staff of the recruitment process, which will accommodate applicants with disabilities. All job posting indicate the following statement "The Town of Mattawa will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation for a known disability for an applicant or employee if requested."

### **Selection**

The Town of Mattawa is committed to maintaining an accessible selection process. Applicants selected to proceed to the interview phase in the selection process will be notified of the availability of accommodations upon request.

### **Notice to Successful Applicants**

The Town of Mattawa has amended the standard offer letter for successful applicants to include a statement outlining the town's policies to accommodate employees with disabilities. The town also incorporates this notification requirement into the verbal job offer. All necessary staff has been notified of this change.

### **Informing Employees of Supports**

The Town of Mattawa has enacted a Return-to-Work Policy as well as an IASR Policy which outline the procedures to support and accommodate employees with disabilities. Staff has been notified of the policies and procedures that are in place to accommodate employees with disabilities.

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The Town of Mattawa is committed to providing employees with disabilities the necessary accessible formats or communication supports required to perform their job duties. Staff have been notified of the policies and procedures, including the IASR Policy and Accessible Customer

Service Policy that are in place to support employees with disabilities and provide job accommodation where required. Staff were trained on accessibility measures and accommodations offered to them, all new staff hired are provided the training electronically and must sign off that they have read and understood the information.

### **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Any employee who requires any emergency related assistance/other accommodation will be provided this upon request. The town ensures that all staff have completed a Workplace Emergency Response Information form, which is collected and reviewed by the Clerk. These forms are confidential, and should an employee require any assistance during an emergency, the Clerk will ensure that the accommodations are discussed and permissions received from employee to contact the needed personnel for assistance in providing the information, training or accommodations.

### **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Town of Mattawa is committed to documenting a process for developing individual accommodation plans, as well as providing these plans to employees as required. The town has created a procedure to compliment the IASR Policy, which outlines the steps that need to be taken to create/document an individual accommodation plan for employees.

### **Return to Work Process**

The Town of Mattawa is committed to ensuring a smooth return to work process for all employees and has created a procedure to compliment the IASR Policy, which outlines the steps that need to be taken to support employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require accommodations to return to work.

### **Performance Management**

The town's management is aware of the need to consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement.

### **Career and Advancement**

The town takes into consideration individual accommodation plans to employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement.

### **Redeployment**

The town will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans when considering redeployment and on an annual basis the employee/manager will ensure that any changes to the individual accessibility needs as well as changes to the individual accommodation plans in order to assist in advancing with their position.

### **Transportation Standards**

The Town of Mattawa does not currently provide conventional transportation services. Therefore, this section of the IASR does not apply to this municipality. However, the Town of

Mattawa licences Taxi-cabs and ensures that the owners and operators follow the legislation through the licensing program.

## **Design of Public Spaces**

The Province of Ontario has recently developed accessibility standards that aim to prevent barriers in the Built Environment. The IASR was amended on January 1, 2013 under the AODA, to include the Design of Public Spaces Standards. These standards include both public spaces and buildings.

The Design of Public Spaces Standards address accessibility planning in a range of public spaces, including trails/beach access routes; outdoor public eating areas; play spaces; accessible parking; exterior paths of travel including sidewalks; accessible pedestrian signals; service counters; fixed queuing lines; waiting areas and the emergency and preventative maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces. These standards only apply to new construction or redevelopment of public spaces and buildings. The following below outlines the Town of Mattawa's Commitment to be in compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards:

### **Recreation Trails and Beach Access Routes**

The town is committed to creating accessible trails and access routes on any new construction and major changes to existing features, as per the regulation. The town does not have any recreation trails at this time.

### **Outdoor Public Eating Areas**

The town is committed to creating accessible eating areas, whether they are new constructs or redevelopments of existing areas, as per the regulation. In addition, whenever there are outdoor events, accessible washrooms and picnic tables are provided.

### **Outdoor Play Spaces**

The town is committed to creating accessible outdoor play spaces, whether they are new constructs or redevelopments of existing spaces. The town installed a new splash pad in 2018 along with an accessible washroom facility and pathways. Any newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces, will take into consideration Accessibility Design of Public Spaces.

### **Exterior Paths of Travel**

The town is committed to creating accessible exterior paths of travel that are new or redeveloped, as per the regulation. The town demonstrated this in the Downtown Revitalization when it renovated the sidewalks. Curb ramps and bump outs were added at all cross walks reducing the distance pedestrians must cross for required travel.

### **Parking**

The town is committed to creating accessible parking lots that are new or redeveloped, as per regulation. The Town reached out through the AODA.ca website for assistance with accessible parking for their downtown core. AODA.ca is managed by Occupational Safety Group (OSG) and thus responded to this request. In August of 2021, OSG visited the Town of Mattawa to commence an accessible parking study. This request was a result of residents voicing their

concerns over the accessible parking downtown and the limitations imposed to the community and visitors that access the businesses and recreational spaces.

#### **Service Counters, Queuing Guides and Waiting Areas Accessible**

The town is committed to creating accessible service counters, queuing guides, and waiting areas that are new or redeveloped.

### **Moving Forward: The Town of Mattawa Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2026**

The town is working to create a more inclusive, Age-Friendly and accessible community through proactively identifying, preventing and/or removing barriers to accessibility. The community is growing and the town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aims to be responsive to this growth by supporting community development and intensification. The Multi-Year Plan will help break down barriers to participation for all community members.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), people with disabilities experience more significant barriers to participation: barriers that are physical – as in the design of public spaces, technological – as in absence of assistive devices, and attitudinal in the form of prejudice or negative attitudes towards disability.

Persons with disabilities frequently encounter barriers including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Attitudinal barriers** are the most basic and may contribute to other barriers. Attitudinal barriers are exhibited as personal attitudes, feelings and behaviours and negatively impact how we interact with persons with disabilities.
- **Communication barriers** are experienced by people who have disabilities that impact their hearing, seeing, speaking, reading, writing, and understanding. Lack of available communication supports is also considered a barrier.
- **Physical barriers** include the physical design of spaces and places, making it difficult or impossible for persons with disabilities to move or access spaces.
- **Organizational/Systematic barriers** include policies, procedures and programs that may discriminate, exclude, or prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating.
- **Social barriers** are related to social determinants of health that can contribute to decreased functioning among older adults and persons with disabilities, including but not limited to: social isolation, unemployment or under-employment, and living in poverty.
- **Technological barriers** include poor technologies or systems that prevent people with disabilities from accessing information.
- **Transportation barriers** are due to a lack of affordable accessible transportation options which interferes with a person's ability to become and remain independent within the community of their choice.

By removing barriers for persons with disabilities, we are removing barriers for everyone.

## **General Requirement Goals**

- Ensure accessibility requirements are met on all town forms.
- Review AODA legislation and ensure plans are in place to remain compliant.

## **Customer Service Standard Goals**

- Continue to update materials in accessible formats.
- Explore assistive technologies that will make municipal programs and services more accessible to people with a variety of disabilities.

## **Information and Communication Standard Goals**

- Town staff to be trained on how to convert and create documents in an accessible format in Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word.
- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats.
- Obtain software that scans the town website and content to ensure accessibility compliance.
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and provide accessible formats upon request.
- Provide emergency information in alternative formats upon request.
- Continue to webcast council meetings held in Council Chambers.
- Consider closed captioning for Council meetings.
- Continue training for town communications staff on accessible tools, guidelines, and AODA requirements.

## **Employment Standard Goals**

- The town will continue to review its employment policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports needed.

## **Accessible Transportation Standard Goals**

- The Town does not have public transportation

## **Design of Public Spaces Standard Goals**

- Redesign of 333 Main Street building to make entrances and building accessible
- Completion of the 30-unit Seniors Housing Unit
- Add more accessible parking spaces on Main Street.
- Adding beach access routes at Fragile Rock Beach and Mattawa Conservation Island beach.
- Continue to incorporate accessibility when building new public spaces.
- Continue to review buildings and properties to identify and improve accessibility.

The Town of Mattawa recognizes that further steps need to be taken to become a barrier free community. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects our commitment to engage in initiatives that will work towards creating a town free of physical, attitudinal, and social barriers by the year of 2026.

Accessibility Legislation continues to provide municipalities across the province with guidelines for improving access for persons with disabilities. The Town of Mattawa will continue to identify, address and remove barriers, ensuring access to those living in our community.