



Office of the CAO

Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: CAO-16-2024

Meeting Date: December 2, 2024

1. Title

Town of Fort Erie 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2. Recommendations

That: Council approves the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, attached as Appendix “1”, and further

That: Council directs staff to prepare a By-law to adopt the Town of Fort Erie 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and repeal By-law No. 157-2019.

3. Relation to Council’s Corporate Strategic Plan

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requires the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the legislation.

4. List of Stakeholders

- Town of Fort Erie residents and businesses
- Visitors to the municipality
- Town of Fort Erie Members of Council, staff and volunteers, Boards and Committees
- The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility

5. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Town of Fort Erie’s third Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) for approval and subsequent adoption by By-law. The 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is attached as Appendix “1” to the report.

6. Analysis

Legislative Requirement

On December 14, 2001 the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* was passed to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities, by identifying and removing barriers to full participation. Under the ODA, a municipality had to develop an annual accessibility plan, consult with people with disabilities to develop a plan, make the plan available to the public and establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Town of Fort Erie had developed seven previous annual Accessibility Plan documents in accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* based on consultation with the Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and audits of municipal facilities conducted by AAC members.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives (customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation and the design of public spaces). The aim of the AODA legislation is to make the Province fully accessible by 2025. The standards developed are mandatory for both public and private sectors.

Section 4 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the *AODA, 2005* requires:

- the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the legislation;
- the posting of the plan on the website and making the plan available in accessible format, upon request;
- review and update of the plan at least once every five years;
- the plan must be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and
- an annual status report must be prepared on the progress of the measures taken to implement the strategy outlined in the multi-year plan and be posted on the website and made available in accessible format, upon request.

In order to ensure implementation of the requirements developed under the *AODA*, the Province requires that municipalities prepare a comprehensive multi-year plan, similar to other master plans that the municipality is required to complete (Water Master Plan, Roads Master Plan, etc.), so that proper planning, both legislatively and financially, can be put in place to address the compliance requirements.

Legislative Requirement, continued

The first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was adopted by By-law No. 40-13. The second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was adopted by By-law No. 157-2019. Annual status Reports were provided to Council each subsequent year, as required under the legislation. The 2024 Annual Report was received by Council at the October 7, 2024 Council-in-Committee meeting.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Attached as Appendix “1” to the Report is the final 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Plan is broken down into ten sections, as follows:

Section 1.0 – Introduction

Section 2.0 – Statement of Organizational Commitment

Section 3.0 – Background of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Section 4.0 – Legislative Authority

Section 6.0 – Compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

Section 6.0 – Public Consultation on Improving Access in the Community

Section 7.0 – Audits of Town Facilities, Parks and Playgrounds

Section 8.0 – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Recommendations

Section 9.0 – Feedback and Contacts

Section 10.0 – Ongoing Review and Monitoring of the Plan

Public Consultation

As noted in the Plan, the Town has met all of the AODA compliance requirements required to date and so the AAC felt that it was important to reach out to the community to ask what they would like to see undertaken over the next five years, with the goal of making our community more accessible.

A public consultation campaign began with the AAC Chair and staff resource presenting at Council during National AccessAbility Awareness Week and encouraging participation in an on-line survey that was undertaken from June 7, 2024 through to July 20, 2024. Hard copies of the survey were also available at the Town Hall and the computer in the Town Hall atrium was set up for those that wanted to complete the survey on-line but did not have access to a computer.

The AAC Chair and staff resource attended the June 19, 2024 Seniors Stepping Out Event, hosted by the Ridgeway Legion, to raise awareness of accessibility in the community and encourage participation in the survey.

AAC members participated in the annual Ridgefest event to garner additional feedback on the MYAP’s development and shared space with Planning Staff that were obtaining feedback on the Official Plan and Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Public Consultation, continued

The Fort Erie Observer also highlighted the AAC's participation.

Similar to previous years, participants were asked three questions:

- 1) What barriers to **municipal services** do you feel are still occurring?
- 2) What other barriers in the **community** would you like to see addressed?
- 3) What does an accessible community look like to you?

The responses received and staff commentary related to response/action are included as Appendix "1" to the MYAP. Survey results helped form a number of the recommendations contained in the MYAP

Audits of Town Facilities, Parks and Playgrounds

Audits of Town facilities, parks and playgrounds took place during the month of June and July and detailed reports are attached as Appendix "2" to the MYAP.

AAC members inspected the following locations:

Facilities:

- ✓ Bay Beach
- ✓ Crystal Beach Waterfront Park Washrooms
- ✓ Crystal Ridge Arena
- ✓ Ridge Road Museum
- ✓ Town Hall – Municipal Centre
- ✓ Leisureplex
- ✓ Waverly Beach Washrooms
- ✓ Gibson Centre
- ✓ Fort Erie Tennis Club
- ✓ Stevensville Memorial Hall
- ✓ Ferndale Park Washrooms
- ✓ Oakes Park Washroom
- ✓ Sugar Bowl Washrooms

Playgrounds/Parks/Trails:

- ✓ Bay Beach
- ✓ Crystal Beach Waterfront Park
- ✓ Crystal Ridge Park
- ✓ Lions Field Park
- ✓ Shagbark Park – Nature Trail
- ✓ Battlefield Museum Park
- ✓ Ferndale Park
- ✓ Waverly Beach
- ✓ Albert Street Playground
- ✓ Oakes Park

Audits of Town Facilities, Parks and Playgrounds, continued

Playgrounds/Parks/Trails, continued:

- ✓ Sugar Bowl Spray Pad
- ✓ Bowen Road Park
- ✓ Stevensville Memorial Playground
- ✓ United Empire Loyalist Park – West Main
- ✓ Ott Road Park
- ✓ AC Douglas Park #1 – playground
- ✓ AC Douglas Park #2 – storm water management pond parkland

Some of the barriers identified during the audits had work orders created where staff could make the corrections immediately.

Based on the feedback received and the inspections that took place, the following recommendations are contained in the Plan:

- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie continues to meet its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie include long-term planning and budgeting for accessibility improvements in Town facilities identified during the AAC audits related to automatic doors and improvements to accessible washrooms;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie include long-term planning and budgeting for accessibility improvements at community parks, specifically for universal/accessible washrooms, benches, pathways, shade areas and rubberized surfaces;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie investigate improving access into the water;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie pro-actively inspect, maintain and clear sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure a smooth path of travel for all residents;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie, in consultation with the AAC, review on-street parking and municipal parking lots and create new accessible parking spaces closer to public buildings, where determined, as well as investigate the need for accessible bicycle paths;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to be consulted on all applicable Master Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and major projects to ensure no new barriers are created;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to work with businesses and organizations to improve access and create a more inclusive experience; and
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee lead an awareness campaign on the barriers that are created when sidewalks and accessible parking spaces are blocked; and
- THAT: the Town Council acknowledges the work being done to create a more inclusive community on an annual basis during National AccessAbility Week.

The AAC will continue to review the feedback comments received from the community and begin work at addressing the concerns that the AAC can influence or help implement.

7. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications

Council continues to support the Accessibility Advisory Committee with annual funding that allows for training, attendance at conferences and interpretive services.

Council also provides funding through the Facility Budget to address barriers identified and accessible features are included in all new playground designs.

Specifically in 2024, funding was provided to continue the StopGap Ramp Project.

8. Policies Affecting Proposal

By-law No. 157-2019 adopted the second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023. This By-law will be repealed once the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is adopted by Council.

9. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

The AAC is comprised of nine members of the public, Councillor Noyes as the Council representative, and staff representing Building and Facilities. The AAC staff coordinator is the Manager of Corporate and Community Initiatives. All Accessibility Advisory Committee members have provided input into the Plan and were instrumental in conducting the public consultation and audits/inspections of municipal assets. At the October 29, 2024, AAC meeting, the following recommendation was passed:

Recommendation No. 3

Moved by: Lindsay Davis

Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: the Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee approves the draft 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as amended, that will be presented at the Council-in-Committee meeting of December 2, 2024.

(CARRIED)

Comments from the community are included as Appendix “1” to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

10. Alternatives

No alternatives are recommended as Multi-Year Accessibility Plans are a provincially legislated requirement.

11. Communicating Results

The AODA requires that Multi-Year Accessibility Plans and Annual Status Reports are made publicly available. Plans, Reports, Minutes of meetings and other pertinent information are available on the Town’s Boards and Committees web page. The AAC also has their own web-page that provides resources and materials.

12. Conclusion

The Town of Fort Erie’s Accessibility Advisory Committee members are a hardworking group of volunteers that take pride in their achievements to make our community more accessible.

It has been almost 20 years since the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was first introduced and it seemed like we had ample time to work towards the goal of creating an Accessible Ontario by 2025. Municipalities have led the journey, identifying and removing barriers and meeting compliance requirements under the *AODA*, but the work is not yet done. Focusing on the future, it is important for the Town of Fort Erie to expand its reach out into the community to ensure that barriers are removed, no new barriers are created, that an inclusive community is created and sustained, and that we truly reach Council’s Vision of becoming “*A Community for Everyone*”.

13. Report Approval

Prepared by:
Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMMIII
Manager of Corporate and Community Initiatives

Approved by:
Chris McQueen, MBA
Chief Administrative Officer

14. Attachments

Appendix 1 – Town of Fort Erie 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



Town of Fort Erie 2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The prevention and removal of barriers to ensure our Community is accessible to all.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2024 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the Town of Fort Erie’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the *Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

The AODA requires the development of a multi-year plan, similar to other municipal master plans that the Town has in place, to ensure the long term planning for identification, prevention, and removal of barriers to accessibility. The Plan requires that consultation takes place with the Town’s Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and persons with disabilities within the community.

The Town of Fort Erie’s 2013-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, approved by By-law No. 40-2013, was the first long term planning document required under the AODA. Each year since the Plan’s adoption, staff has provided an Annual Accessibility Report to Council and the community. By-law No. 157-2019 adopted the Town of Fort Erie’s second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Prior to the requirement for a Multi-Year Plan, seven previous annual Accessibility Plan documents were approved by Council in accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, based on consultation with the AAC and audits conducted by AAC members of municipal facilities and parks.

As the municipality’s compliance requirements under the AODA have all been met, the consultation for the third Multi-Year Plan has dealt more with the community as a whole and how the Town can be a leader and work with our community partners to improve access for everyone.

The Annual Accessibility Report, received under separate cover, continues to highlight the achievements of the Town’s AAC throughout the previous year and demonstrates how the Town continues to identify and remove barriers. The AAC also has extended its reach out into the community and has worked with several businesses and organizations to improve access.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2.0 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Town of Fort Erie is a progressive, caring community and is committed to being responsive to the needs of its citizens. We pride ourselves on our sense of community, our many charitable organizations, and high standard of public service. We are cognizant of the diverse needs of our residents and strive to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all.

Our vision of the Town of Fort Erie is that of a well-designed community that is safe, convenient and comfortable for all persons.

The Town of Fort Erie, as an employer and provider of services, is committed to barrier free access and will:

- 1) continue to take a leadership role in achieving and setting an example as a barrier free community to the business, institutional and volunteer sectors of our community;
- 2) continue to identify barriers and gaps in existing services and facilities and continuously improve the level of accessibility of existing municipal services and facilities; and
- 3) actively encourage input from all segments of the community in the design, development and operation of new and renovated municipal services and facilities.

The Town of Fort Erie is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that takes into account the following key principles:

Dignity: Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence: Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Equity/Equality of Outcome: Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

Integrated: Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

Sensitive: Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs.

Responsive: Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required.

Inclusive: We are committed to an inclusive environment as one where people experience both the feeling and reality of belonging and where, as a result, they are able to fulfill their potential.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

3.0 BACKGROUND OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On December 14, 2001 the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* was passed to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities, making Ontario a more accessible province.

Municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more were also required under the ODA to set up Accessibility Advisory Committees (AAC) by September 30, 2002. By-law No. 171-2002 established the Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). In 2006, a review of boards and committees decreased the composition of the committee from the original 15 members to 8 members. In 2023, the committee was increased to 9 members. The majority of AAC members must be persons with disabilities. In addition, there is one Council member representative on the Committee.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* repealed the section related to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees and replaced it with Part VII.

Based on the requirements of the AODA, the Committee:

- advises Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice;
- review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act* that the committee selects;
- evaluates the Town's progress annually and the plan is updated to identify further barriers to people with disabilities and ways to remove and prevent them; and
- gives advice to the Council on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises that the Council purchases, builds or renovates, or generally, makes available as a municipal building.

While the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* sets out new requirements for multi-year planning for accessibility, the AAC still plays a major role in commenting and helping shape the content of the Plan and will continue to evaluate the measures that the Town puts in place to remove barriers and comply with the AODA Standards.

The AAC meets on a monthly basis (with the exception of July, August and December) and the minutes of each meeting are provided to Council for their review and approval. The AAC Minutes are posted on the Town's web-site under Boards and Committees.

Members of the Committee are enthusiastic and committed to making Fort Erie a more fully accessible community. Their advice and suggestions will be appreciated by all of the citizens, visitors, and businesses of Fort Erie for many years to come.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

4.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

On December 14, 2001 the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was passed to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities, by identifying and removing barriers to full participation. Under the ODA a municipality had to develop an annual accessibility plan, consult with people with disabilities to develop a plan, make the plan available to the public and establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) laid out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives. The aim of the AODA legislation is to make the Province fully accessible by 2025. The following standards are mandatory for both the public and private sector:

1. **Customer Service** (introduced as Ontario Regulation 429/07 and integrated into the IASR 191/11 as Section IV.2) – governs how we provide accessible customer service.
2. **Information and Communication** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – aims to identify and consider the nature of barriers experienced by people with a wide range of disabilities in the area of information and communication.
3. **Employment** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – governs how we recruit, hire and accommodate individuals in the workplace.
4. **Transportation** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – aims to remove barriers to public transportation, so people with disabilities can travel more easily in Ontario.
5. **Design of Public Spaces** - (introduced as O. Reg. 413/12 and integrated into the IASR 191/11 as Section IV.1) – aims to make outdoor public spaces in Ontario accessible for all new construction and extensive renovations.

Section 4 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the *AODA, 2005* requires:

- the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the legislation;
- the posting of the plan on the website and making the plan available in accessible format, upon request;
- review and update of the plan at least once every five years;
- the plan must be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and
- an annual status report must be prepared on the progress of the measures taken to implement the strategy outlined in the multi-year plan and be posted on the website and made available in accessible format, upon request.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

5.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024

Regulation: Customer Service Standard (429/07 and integrated into O. Reg. 191/11 – Part IV.2)

Requirement: Customer Service √ **Completed**

Action:

The Town of Fort Erie is committed to offering excellent accessible customer service. Ongoing compliance with the customer service standard includes the training of new hires as part of their orientation and volunteers who interact with the public on the Town's behalf.

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11)

PART I - GENERAL

Requirement: Accessibility Policies √ **Completed**

Action:

By-law No. 128-2012 adopted the Town of Fort Erie's Accessibility Policy. The Accessibility Policy guides efforts to achieve compliance with AODA requirements and establishes the Town's core accessibility principles. The Policy's statement of commitment affirms the Town's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of all people. The Policy was updated in 2016 (By-law No. 73-2016) to include revisions related to service animals and support persons that were effective July 1, 2016.

Requirement: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan √ **Completed**

Action:

By-law No. 40-2013 adopted the Town of Fort Erie's first Multi Year Accessibility Plan. By-law No. 157-2019 adopted the second Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023. The Plan outlines the Town's accessibility planning strategy to remove barriers and meet the compliance requirements of the AODA. Annual status reports are provided to Council.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART I – GENERAL, continued

Requirement: Accessible Purchases √ **Completed**

Action:

Accessibility requirements are included in all Request for Proposals, tenders and contracts, where applicable.

Requirement: Incorporate accessibility features into self-service kiosks √ **Completed**

Action:

The Accessibility Policy includes this requirement. The new admissions kiosk at Bay Beach is accessible; however, the Parking Pay and Display machines are still inaccessible. Persons with an accessible parking permit do not pay for parking.

Requirement: Training on Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) and the Ontario Human Rights Code √ **Completed**

Action:

All employees, including new hires, members of Council, volunteer fire fighters, boards and committee members have been trained on the IASR Standard and on the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it relates to persons with disabilities. An e-module and pamphlet were also created and is available on the Accessibility web page.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART II – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Requirement: Accessible Information ✓ **Completed**

Action:

Accessible formats and communication supports are provided upon request, including emergency and public safety information made available to the public. Town administrative staff have participated in accessible document creation training and developed accessible templates for the most frequently used documents. Compliance requirements are also included in the Accessibility Policy. Additional training for new hires and a refresher for staff will be taking place in early 2025.

Requirement: Making Feedback Processes Accessible ✓ **Completed**

Action:

The Accessibility Policy outlines the feedback process. Staff are also trained to respond to feedback in a way that takes into account the individual's needs.

Requirement: Make all new internet websites and new web content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0, Level A

✓ **Completed**

Action:

AODA compliance requirements were to be met by December, 2021, which includes conformance with Website WCAG Level AA. The Town entered into a compliance agreement with the Province as they did not meet the compliance requirements by the December 2021 date. The new website was unveiled in July 2023 and meets WCAG Level AA compliance requirements. The Accessibility staff resource was part of the review team for the new website.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART III – EMPLOYMENT

Requirement: Individualized Work-place Emergency Response Information for Employees ✓ **Completed**

Action:

Safe Work Standard for Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan was developed and distributed to all staff and included in all Fire Safety Plans. The Standard is reviewed with new staff during accessibility training.

Requirement: Make employment practices accessible, including recruitment, employee accommodation, return to work, performance management, career deployment and redeployment

✓ **Completed**

Action:

Administrative Police Directive ERC-006 “Accommodation in Employment” describes the accommodation procedures available to employees and applicants with disabilities to enable their full participation in employment activities. The Directive is reviewed with new staff during accessibility training.

PART IV – TRANSPORTATION

No longer applicable as the Town is no longer the service provider for conventional or specialized transit service.

Regulation: Design of Public Spaces (O. Reg. 413/12 and integrated into O. Reg. 191/11 – Part IV.1)

PART IV.1 – DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

Requirement: The Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard became effective as of January 1, 2016. The Standard covers any new construction or redevelopment of public spaces.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

PART IV.1 – DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES, continued

Requirement: The Standard provides compliance requirements related to:

- Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes
- Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas and Play Spaces
- Exterior Paths of Travel
- Accessible Parking
- Obtaining Service including service counters, fixed queuing guides, and waiting areas

√ **Completed**

Action:

The Town's Accessibility Policy (By-law No. 73-2016) confirms that the Town is committed to designing new construction or redevelopment of public spaces in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (Ontario Regulation 413/12) under the AODA.

The Bay Beach redevelopment includes accessible beach access routes, accessible eating areas and play spaces, accessible washrooms and changerooms. An adult-size change table is also available.

Planning staff continue to consult with the AAC on playground features to ensure compliance with the legislation. The AAC has also been consulted on the Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Accessible Parking, which was updated in 2012, addresses accessibility requirements. The DOPS requirements are reviewed with any new construction or remediation.

AODA Implementation continues

AODA compliance requirements continue and AAC members review and provide comment on the five-year reviews conducted by the Province's Standards Advisory Committees.

Town of Fort Erie 2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

As the Town has met compliance requirements under the AODA, the development of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Plan once again looked outside of municipally provided services and facilities and asked the Community what they would like to see undertaken over the next five years, with the goal to making our community more accessible.



A public consultation campaign began with the AAC Chair and staff resource presenting at Council and encouraging participation in an on-line survey that was undertaken from June 7, 2024 through to July 20, 2024 to help in the development of the third Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Hard copies of the survey were also available at Town Hall and the computer in the Town Hall atrium was set up for those that wanted to complete the survey on-line.

Participants were asked three questions:

- 1) What barriers to **municipal services** do you feel are still occurring?
- 2) What other barriers in the **community** would you like to see addressed?
- 3) What does an accessible community look like to you?

The AAC Chair and staff resource also attended the Seniors Stepping Out Event held on June 19, 2024 to raise awareness of accessibility in the community and encourage participation in the survey.



AAC members participated in the annual Ridgefest event to garner additional feedback on the MYAP's development. Banners were created and thank-you gifts were given out to those that completed the survey. The AAC shared space with the Town's Planning staff that were obtaining feedback on the Official Plan and Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The Fort Erie Observer highlighted the AAC's participation.



The responses received during the Seniors Stepping Out Event, Ridgefest, from the on-line survey and from Town Hall are attached as Appendix "1". A response/action is also included in response to the comments received.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY, continued

Based on the comments received from survey participants, the following barriers were identified and will form part of the recommendations of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- 1) What barriers to **municipal services** do you feel are still occurring:
 - Need for accessible playgrounds, including more benches and shade areas
 - Need for accessible bike paths, especially in Crystal Beach
 - Need for accessible washrooms at community parks and for those with accessible washrooms, ensure that toilets are higher
 - Need for additional accessible parking spaces throughout Town
 - Doors to Council Chambers must be accessible
 - Sidewalk snow removal needs to be improved to provide access to all
 - Road improvements as potholes are dangerous to people with bad backs
 - Lengthen the time the beach mats are out
 - When reconstructing any Town facilities, ensure that the turning radius of accessible washrooms meet the new standards
 - More access for persons with disabilities to get into the water

- 2) What **barriers in the community** would you like to see addressed:
 - Need to make more businesses accessible and educate them on what they need to do
 - Need more StopGaps for wheelchair users and strollers
 - Ensure accessible parking is available at any festivals or events
 - Would like to see some type of accessibility app that can show green if accessible, yellow if there are some barriers, and red if totally not accessible
 - Ensure that Douglas Memorial Hospital remains open post 2028
 - Transit concerns for persons with disabilities accessing services and those utilizing OnDemand accessing social services, such as foodbanks
 - Need to help make fishing available to persons with disabilities

- 3) What does an accessible community look like?

The majority of comments received speak to a community that is welcoming, inclusive, where everyone has access to live, work, play and travel. Similar to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan Vision ... *A Community for Everyone*.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

7.0 AUDITS OF TOWN FACILITIES, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Audits of Town Facilities, Parks and Playgrounds took place during the months of June and July and detailed reports are attached as Appendix “2” to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

AAC members inspected the following locations:

Facilities:

- ✓ Bay Beach
- ✓ Crystal Beach Waterfront Park Washrooms
- ✓ Crystal Ridge Arena
- ✓ Ridge Road Museum
- ✓ Town Hall – Municipal Centre
- ✓ Leisureplex
- ✓ Waverly Beach Washrooms
- ✓ Gibson Centre
- ✓ Fort Erie Tennis Club
- ✓ Stevensville Memorial Hall
- ✓ Ferndale Park Washrooms
- ✓ Oakes Park Washroom
- ✓ Sugar Bowl Washrooms

Playgrounds/Parks/Trails:

- ✓ Bay Beach
- ✓ Crystal Beach Waterfront Park
- ✓ Crystal Ridge Park
- ✓ Lions Field Park
- ✓ Shagbark Park – Nature Trail
- ✓ Battlefield Museum Park
- ✓ Ferndale Park
- ✓ Waverly Beach
- ✓ Albert Street Playground
- ✓ Oakes Park
- ✓ Sugar Bowl Spray Pad
- ✓ Bowen Road Park
- ✓ Stevensville Memorial Playground
- ✓ United Empire Loyalist Park – West Main
- ✓ Ott Road Park
- ✓ AC Douglas Park #1 – playground
- ✓ AC Douglas Park #2 – storm water management pond parkland

Some of the barriers identified during the audits had work orders created where staff could make the corrections immediately.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

7.0 AUDITS OF TOWN FACILITIES, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS, continued

The following barriers were identified and will form part of the recommendations of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Where there are depressed curbs, ensure tactile warning surface indicators are included.
- Wayfinding signage at all parks should meet accessibility requirements. Current font is too small and cannot be viewed easily from a distance.
- Accessible/universal washrooms should be included in any new community park design and long-term planning for playground/park upgrades at community parks should include a universal washroom.
- Where accessible washrooms are in Town facilities there should be a long-term plan put in place to meet the current requirements for higher toilets and larger turning radius. Some of the washrooms located in parks do not have automatic doors (i.e. Waverly Park). Some of the washrooms had a lip at the entrance, even though they have accessible signage (Ott Road Park, Oakes Park).
- Automatic doors at Gibson Centre need to be turned on and the table in the entrance replaced with a smaller table.
- Ensure that the entrance path of travel to playgrounds have no barriers.
- Playgrounds should have rubberized surfaces as the engineered wood fibre is not accessible and very difficult to maneuver. Long term planning and budgeting should include rubberized surfaces.
- Extend the length of time the beach mats are placed at Bay Beach (late spring to late fall).
- Ensure playgrounds have accessible features.
- Some parks require accessible parking or improvements to spaces already in place.
- Accessible viewing areas at both arenas should be improved.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

8.0 MULTI-YEAR PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted, the Town of Fort Erie has met all AODA compliance requirements. Focusing on the future, and the target date of 2025 to create an Accessible Ontario, it is important for the Town of Fort Erie to expand its reach out into the community to ensure that barriers are removed, no new barriers are created, and that an inclusive community is created and sustained.

The following recommendations, if enacted, will lead us closer to that end goal of an Accessible Fort Erie.

Recommendations:

- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie continues to meet its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie include long-term planning and budgeting for accessibility improvements in Town facilities identified during the AAC audits related to automatic doors and improvements to accessible washrooms;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie include long-term planning and budgeting for accessibility improvements at community parks, specifically for universal/accessible washrooms, benches, pathways, shade areas and rubberized surfaces;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie investigate improving access into the water;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie pro-actively inspect, maintain and clear sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure a smooth path of travel for all residents;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie, in consultation with the AAC, review on-street parking and municipal parking lots and create new accessible parking spaces closer to public buildings, where determined, as well as investigate the need for accessible bicycle paths;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to be consulted on all applicable Master Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and major projects to ensure no new barriers are created;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to work with businesses and organizations to improve access and create a more inclusive experience;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee lead an awareness campaign on the barriers that are created when sidewalks and accessible parking spaces are blocked;
- THAT: the Town Council acknowledges the work being done to create a more inclusive community on an annual basis during National AccessAbility Week.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

9.0 FEEDBACK AND CONTACTS

The Town of Fort Erie welcomes feedback on the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and on the accessibility of our programs, services and facilities.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or to:

Town of Fort Erie – Accessibility Coordinator
1 Municipal Centre Drive
Fort Erie, ON L2A 2S6
Telephone: (905) 871-1600 ext. 2201
FAX: (905) 871-4022
E-mail: bbradnam@forterie.ca

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve the way we do business. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

10.0 COMPLIANCE, ONGOING REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*.

Annual status reports on the implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2029 will be provided to Council each year, as required, and made available on the Town's web-site and in alternative format, upon request.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Creating an Accessible Fort Erie

Our vision of the Town of Fort Erie is that of a well-designed community that is safe, convenient and comfortable for all persons, with or without disabilities. By implementing the requirements of the AODA, we are all working towards creating an accessible Town and Province.

“It’s time we take our focus off disabilities, and place it on capabilities, so we can see the person first”.

~ Robert M. Hensel



Town of Fort Erie 2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The prevention and removal of barriers to ensure our Community is accessible to all.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2024 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the Town of Fort Erie’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the *Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

The AODA requires the development of a multi-year plan, similar to other municipal master plans that the Town has in place, to ensure the long term planning for identification, prevention, and removal of barriers to accessibility. The Plan requires that consultation takes place with the Town’s Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and persons with disabilities within the community.

The Town of Fort Erie’s 2013-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, approved by By-law No. 40-2013, was the first long term planning document required under the AODA. Each year since the Plan’s adoption, staff has provided an Annual Accessibility Report to Council and the community. By-law No. 157-2019 adopted the Town of Fort Erie’s second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Prior to the requirement for a Multi-Year Plan, seven previous annual Accessibility Plan documents were approved by Council in accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, based on consultation with the AAC and audits conducted by AAC members of municipal facilities and parks.

As the municipality’s compliance requirements under the AODA have all been met, the consultation for the third Multi-Year Plan has dealt more with the community as a whole and how the Town can be a leader and work with our community partners to improve access for everyone.

The Annual Accessibility Report, received under separate cover, continues to highlight the achievements of the Town’s AAC throughout the previous year and demonstrates how the Town continues to identify and remove barriers. The AAC also has extended its reach out into the community and has worked with several businesses and organizations to improve access.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2.0 STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Town of Fort Erie is a progressive, caring community and is committed to being responsive to the needs of its citizens. We pride ourselves on our sense of community, our many charitable organizations, and high standard of public service. We are cognizant of the diverse needs of our residents and strive to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all.

Our vision of the Town of Fort Erie is that of a well-designed community that is safe, convenient and comfortable for all persons.

The Town of Fort Erie, as an employer and provider of services, is committed to barrier free access and will:

- 1) continue to take a leadership role in achieving and setting an example as a barrier free community to the business, institutional and volunteer sectors of our community;
- 2) continue to identify barriers and gaps in existing services and facilities and continuously improve the level of accessibility of existing municipal services and facilities; and
- 3) actively encourage input from all segments of the community in the design, development and operation of new and renovated municipal services and facilities.

The Town of Fort Erie is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that takes into account the following key principles:

Dignity: Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence: Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Equity/Equality of Outcome: Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

Integrated: Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

Sensitive: Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs.

Responsive: Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required.

Inclusive: We are committed to an inclusive environment as one where people experience both the feeling and reality of belonging and where, as a result, they are able to fulfill their potential.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

3.0 BACKGROUND OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On December 14, 2001 the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* was passed to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities, making Ontario a more accessible province.

Municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more were also required under the ODA to set up Accessibility Advisory Committees (AAC) by September 30, 2002. By-law No. 171-2002 established the Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). In 2006, a review of boards and committees decreased the composition of the committee from the original 15 members to 8 members. In 2023, the committee was increased to 9 members. The majority of AAC members must be persons with disabilities. In addition, there is one Council member representative on the Committee.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* repealed the section related to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees and replaced it with Part VII.

Based on the requirements of the AODA, the Committee:

- advises Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice;
- review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act* that the committee selects;
- evaluates the Town's progress annually and the plan is updated to identify further barriers to people with disabilities and ways to remove and prevent them; and
- gives advice to the Council on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises that the Council purchases, builds or renovates, or generally, makes available as a municipal building.

While the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* sets out new requirements for multi-year planning for accessibility, the AAC still plays a major role in commenting and helping shape the content of the Plan and will continue to evaluate the measures that the Town puts in place to remove barriers and comply with the AODA Standards.

The AAC meets on a monthly basis (with the exception of July, August and December) and the minutes of each meeting are provided to Council for their review and approval. The AAC Minutes are posted on the Town's web-site under Boards and Committees.

Members of the Committee are enthusiastic and committed to making Fort Erie a more fully accessible community. Their advice and suggestions will be appreciated by all of the citizens, visitors, and businesses of Fort Erie for many years to come.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

4.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

On December 14, 2001 the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was passed to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities, by identifying and removing barriers to full participation. Under the ODA a municipality had to develop an annual accessibility plan, consult with people with disabilities to develop a plan, make the plan available to the public and establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) laid out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives. The aim of the AODA legislation is to make the Province fully accessible by 2025. The following standards are mandatory for both the public and private sector:

1. **Customer Service** (introduced as Ontario Regulation 429/07 and integrated into the IASR 191/11 as Section IV.2) – governs how we provide accessible customer service.
2. **Information and Communication** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – aims to identify and consider the nature of barriers experienced by people with a wide range of disabilities in the area of information and communication.
3. **Employment** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – governs how we recruit, hire and accommodate individuals in the workplace.
4. **Transportation** (Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11) – aims to remove barriers to public transportation, so people with disabilities can travel more easily in Ontario.
5. **Design of Public Spaces** - (introduced as O. Reg. 413/12 and integrated into the IASR 191/11 as Section IV.1) – aims to make outdoor public spaces in Ontario accessible for all new construction and extensive renovations.

Section 4 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the *AODA, 2005* requires:

- the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the legislation;
- the posting of the plan on the website and making the plan available in accessible format, upon request;
- review and update of the plan at least once every five years;
- the plan must be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and
- an annual status report must be prepared on the progress of the measures taken to implement the strategy outlined in the multi-year plan and be posted on the website and made available in accessible format, upon request.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

5.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024

Regulation: Customer Service Standard (429/07 and integrated into O. Reg. 191/11 – Part IV.2)

Requirement: Customer Service √ **Completed**

Action:

The Town of Fort Erie is committed to offering excellent accessible customer service. Ongoing compliance with the customer service standard includes the training of new hires as part of their orientation and volunteers who interact with the public on the Town's behalf.

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11)

PART I - GENERAL

Requirement: Accessibility Policies √ **Completed**

Action:

By-law No. 128-2012 adopted the Town of Fort Erie's Accessibility Policy. The Accessibility Policy guides efforts to achieve compliance with AODA requirements and establishes the Town's core accessibility principles. The Policy's statement of commitment affirms the Town's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of all people. The Policy was updated in 2016 (By-law No. 73-2016) to include revisions related to service animals and support persons that were effective July 1, 2016.

Requirement: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan √ **Completed**

Action:

By-law No. 40-2013 adopted the Town of Fort Erie's first Multi Year Accessibility Plan. By-law No. 157-2019 adopted the second Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023. The Plan outlines the Town's accessibility planning strategy to remove barriers and meet the compliance requirements of the AODA. Annual status reports are provided to Council.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART I – GENERAL, continued

Requirement: Accessible Purchases √ **Completed**

Action:

Accessibility requirements are included in all Request for Proposals, tenders and contracts, where applicable.

Requirement: Incorporate accessibility features into self-service kiosks √ **Completed**

Action:

The Accessibility Policy includes this requirement. The new admissions kiosk at Bay Beach is accessible; however, the Parking Pay and Display machines are still inaccessible. Persons with an accessible parking permit do not pay for parking.

Requirement: Training on Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) and the Ontario Human Rights Code √ **Completed**

Action:

All employees, including new hires, members of Council, volunteer fire fighters, boards and committee members have been trained on the IASR Standard and on the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it relates to persons with disabilities. An e-module and pamphlet were also created and is available on the Accessibility web page.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART II – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Requirement: Accessible Information ✓ **Completed**

Action:

Accessible formats and communication supports are provided upon request, including emergency and public safety information made available to the public. Town administrative staff have participated in accessible document creation training and developed accessible templates for the most frequently used documents. Compliance requirements are also included in the Accessibility Policy. Additional training for new hires and a refresher for staff will be taking place in early 2025.

Requirement: Making Feedback Processes Accessible ✓ **Completed**

Action:

The Accessibility Policy outlines the feedback process. Staff are also trained to respond to feedback in a way that takes into account the individual's needs.

Requirement: Make all new internet websites and new web content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0, Level A

✓ **Completed**

Action:

AODA compliance requirements were to be met by December, 2021, which includes conformance with Website WCAG Level AA. The Town entered into a compliance agreement with the Province as they did not meet the compliance requirements by the December 2021 date. The new website was unveiled in July 2023 and meets WCAG Level AA compliance requirements. The Accessibility staff resource was part of the review team for the new website.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

Regulation: Integrated Accessibility Standard (191/11), continued

PART III – EMPLOYMENT

Requirement: Individualized Work-place Emergency Response Information for Employees ✓ **Completed**

Action:

Safe Work Standard for Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan was developed and distributed to all staff and included in all Fire Safety Plans. The Standard is reviewed with new staff during accessibility training.

Requirement: Make employment practices accessible, including recruitment, employee accommodation, return to work, performance management, career deployment and redeployment

✓ **Completed**

Action:

Administrative Police Directive ERC-006 “Accommodation in Employment” describes the accommodation procedures available to employees and applicants with disabilities to enable their full participation in employment activities. The Directive is reviewed with new staff during accessibility training.

PART IV – TRANSPORTATION

No longer applicable as the Town is no longer the service provider for conventional or specialized transit service.

Regulation: Design of Public Spaces (O. Reg. 413/12 and integrated into O. Reg. 191/11 – Part IV.1)

PART IV.1 – DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

Requirement: The Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard became effective as of January 1, 2016. The Standard covers any new construction or redevelopment of public spaces.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Compliance Actions: AODA Standards January 1, 2010 to October 31, 2024, continued

PART IV.1 – DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES, continued

Requirement: The Standard provides compliance requirements related to:

- Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes
- Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas and Play Spaces
- Exterior Paths of Travel
- Accessible Parking
- Obtaining Service including service counters, fixed queuing guides, and waiting areas

√ **Completed**

Action:

The Town's Accessibility Policy (By-law No. 73-2016) confirms that the Town is committed to designing new construction or redevelopment of public spaces in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (Ontario Regulation 413/12) under the AODA.

The Bay Beach redevelopment includes accessible beach access routes, accessible eating areas and play spaces, accessible washrooms and changerooms. An adult-size change table is also available.

Planning staff continue to consult with the AAC on playground features to ensure compliance with the legislation. The AAC has also been consulted on the Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Accessible Parking, which was updated in 2012, addresses accessibility requirements. The DOPS requirements are reviewed with any new construction or remediation.

AODA Implementation continues

AODA compliance requirements continue and AAC members review and provide comment on the five-year reviews conducted by the Province's Standards Advisory Committees.

Town of Fort Erie 2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY

As the Town has met compliance requirements under the AODA, the development of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Plan once again looked outside of municipally provided services and facilities and asked the Community what they would like to see undertaken over the next five years, with the goal to making our community more accessible.



A public consultation campaign began with the AAC Chair and staff resource presenting at Council and encouraging participation in an on-line survey that was undertaken from June 7, 2024 through to July 20, 2024 to help in the development of the third Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Hard copies of the survey were also available at Town Hall and the computer in the Town Hall atrium was set up for those that wanted to complete the survey on-line.

Participants were asked three questions:

- 1) What barriers to **municipal services** do you feel are still occurring?
- 2) What other barriers in the **community** would you like to see addressed?
- 3) What does an accessible community look like to you?

The AAC Chair and staff resource also attended the Seniors Stepping Out Event held on June 19, 2024 to raise awareness of accessibility in the community and encourage participation in the survey.



AAC members participated in the annual Ridgefest event to garner additional feedback on the MYAP's development. Banners were created and thank-you gifts were given out to those that completed the survey. The AAC shared space with the Town's Planning staff that were obtaining feedback on the Official Plan and Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The Fort Erie Observer highlighted the AAC's participation.



The responses received during the Seniors Stepping Out Event, Ridgefest, from the on-line survey and from Town Hall are attached as Appendix "1". A response/action is also included in response to the comments received.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY, continued

Based on the comments received from survey participants, the following barriers were identified and will form part of the recommendations of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- 1) What barriers to **municipal services** do you feel are still occurring:
 - Need for accessible playgrounds, including more benches and shade areas
 - Need for accessible bike paths, especially in Crystal Beach
 - Need for accessible washrooms at community parks and for those with accessible washrooms, ensure that toilets are higher
 - Need for additional accessible parking spaces throughout Town
 - Doors to Council Chambers must be accessible
 - Sidewalk snow removal needs to be improved to provide access to all
 - Road improvements as potholes are dangerous to people with bad backs
 - Lengthen the time the beach mats are out
 - When reconstructing any Town facilities, ensure that the turning radius of accessible washrooms meet the new standards
 - More access for persons with disabilities to get into the water

- 2) What **barriers in the community** would you like to see addressed:
 - Need to make more businesses accessible and educate them on what they need to do
 - Need more StopGaps for wheelchair users and strollers
 - Ensure accessible parking is available at any festivals or events
 - Would like to see some type of accessibility app that can show green if accessible, yellow if there are some barriers, and red if totally not accessible
 - Ensure that Douglas Memorial Hospital remains open post 2028
 - Transit concerns for persons with disabilities accessing services and those utilizing OnDemand accessing social services, such as foodbanks
 - Need to help make fishing available to persons with disabilities

- 3) What does an accessible community look like?

The majority of comments received speak to a community that is welcoming, inclusive, where everyone has access to live, work, play and travel. Similar to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan Vision ... *A Community for Everyone*.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

7.0 AUDITS OF TOWN FACILITIES, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Audits of Town Facilities, Parks and Playgrounds took place during the months of June and July and detailed reports are attached as Appendix “2” to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

AAC members inspected the following locations:

Facilities:

- ✓ Bay Beach
- ✓ Crystal Beach Waterfront Park Washrooms
- ✓ Crystal Ridge Arena
- ✓ Ridge Road Museum
- ✓ Town Hall – Municipal Centre
- ✓ Leisureplex
- ✓ Waverly Beach Washrooms
- ✓ Gibson Centre
- ✓ Fort Erie Tennis Club
- ✓ Stevensville Memorial Hall
- ✓ Ferndale Park Washrooms
- ✓ Oakes Park Washroom
- ✓ Sugar Bowl Washrooms

Playgrounds/Parks/Trails:

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Some of the barriers identified during the audits had work orders created where staff could make the corrections immediately.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

7.0 AUDITS OF TOWN FACILITIES, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS, continued

The following barriers were identified and will form part of the recommendations of the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Where there are depressed curbs, ensure tactile warning surface indicators are included.
- Wayfinding signage at all parks should meet accessibility requirements. Current font is too small and cannot be viewed easily from a distance.
- Accessible/universal washrooms should be included in any new community park design and long-term planning for playground/park upgrades at community parks should include a universal washroom.
- Where accessible washrooms are in Town facilities there should be a long-term plan put in place to meet the current requirements for higher toilets and larger turning radius. Some of the washrooms located in parks do not have automatic doors (i.e. Waverly Park). Some of the washrooms had a lip at the entrance, even though they have accessible signage (Ott Road Park, Oakes Park).
- Automatic doors at Gibson Centre need to be turned on and the table in the entrance replaced with a smaller table.
- Ensure that the entrance path of travel to playgrounds have no barriers.
- Playgrounds should have rubberized surfaces as the engineered wood fibre is not accessible and very difficult to maneuver. Long term planning and budgeting should include rubberized surfaces.
- Extend the length of time the beach mats are placed at Bay Beach (late spring to late fall).
- Ensure playgrounds have accessible features.
- Some parks require accessible parking or improvements to spaces already in place.
- Accessible viewing areas at both arenas should be improved.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

8.0 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted, the Town of Fort Erie has met all AODA compliance requirements. Focusing on the future, and the target date of 2025 to create an Accessible Ontario, it is important for the Town of Fort Erie to expand its reach out into the community to ensure that barriers are removed, no new barriers are created, and that an inclusive community is created and sustained.

The following recommendations, if enacted, will lead us closer to that end goal of an Accessible Fort Erie.

Recommendations:

- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie continues to meet its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
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- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie investigate improving access into the water;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie pro-actively inspect, maintain and clear sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure a smooth path of travel for all residents;
- THAT: the Town of Fort Erie, in consultation with the AAC, review on-street parking and municipal parking lots and create new accessible parking spaces closer to public buildings, where determined, as well as investigate the need for accessible bicycle paths;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to be consulted on all applicable Master Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and major projects to ensure no new barriers are created;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to work with businesses and organizations to improve access and create a more inclusive experience;
- THAT: the Accessibility Advisory Committee lead an awareness campaign on the barriers that are created when sidewalks and accessible parking spaces are blocked;
- THAT: the Town Council acknowledges the work being done to create a more inclusive community on an annual basis during National AccessAbility Week.

Town of Fort Erie

2024 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

9.0 FEEDBACK AND CONTACTS

The Town of Fort Erie welcomes feedback on the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and on the accessibility of our programs, services and facilities.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or to:

Town of Fort Erie – Accessibility Coordinator
1 Municipal Centre Drive
Fort Erie, ON L2A 2S6
Telephone: (905) 871-1600 ext. 2201
FAX: (905) 871-4022
E-mail: bbradnam@forterie.ca

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve the way we do business. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

10.0 COMPLIANCE, ONGOING REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*.

Annual status reports on the implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2029 will be provided to Council each year, as required, and made available on the Town's web-site and in alternative format, upon request.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Creating an Accessible Fort Erie

Our vision of the Town of Fort Erie is that of a well-designed community that is safe, convenient and comfortable for all persons, with or without disabilities. By implementing the requirements of the AODA, we are all working towards creating an accessible Town and Province.

“It’s time we take our focus off disabilities, and place it on capabilities, so we can see the person first”.

~ Robert M. Hensel

Appendix “1” - MYAP 2024-2029 Survey

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?			
No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
1	Online	1) A lot of the playgrounds have no accessible washrooms – especially those with splash pads – there should be washrooms available. 2) We also should consider rubberized surfaces for all future playground builds/reconstruction	1) Agree – will be one of the recommendations of the long term plan 2) Agree – will be one of the recommendations of the long term plan
2	Online	Some doors are very heavy to open. They are also set for right handed. I use a cane in my right hand so not always easy to open a door when the left hand side of double doors is locked. Added in from Question #2: Washrooms. It's great to have handicapped washrooms but ... please raise the seats or have a higher toilet. Seniors have a hard time getting up and down. In some washrooms there is only a bar on one side. That helps but if that is the side of human weakness, it might still be hard to use the toilet.	Agree – Town buildings have automatic doors in majority of buildings – will review audit/inspections to see where improvements can be made.
3	Online	Uneven sidewalks in downtown Ridgeway and potholes down centre of the street. I have balance issues and osteoporosis so falling is very dangerous for me.	Comments will be passed on to the Roads Department
4	Online	E-mail being a normal way to contact services as an alternative to phone calls. Fonts and font sizes being used. The TOFE website for concerns about future development or other activities are intuitive and difficult to navigate. It isn't accessible.	Contact us allows requests for service online. New website is AODA compliant and individuals can increase size of fonts on their browsers. Re future developments – will follow-up with Communications re Let's Talk and accessible features.
5	Online	More waiting area chairs	To be considered with inspections of Facilities.
6	Online	Very few accessible store front and need more transit times. Moved from Question #2: Longer mats out to water and accessible playgrounds.	Comments moved to barriers in the community. Re Longer mats: Mats are currently placed in relation to the water and wave action. Playgrounds have been inspected by AAC members and will form part of the MYAP.
7	Online	No response to phone calls or emails	Requires more details re department that is being unresponsive. Customer Service times exceed service levels.
8	Online	Unknown	

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
9	Online	1) Not enough handicapped parking 2) Not enough enforcement of those illegally parking	Parking was reviewed during audits/inspections of facilities. Downtown cores have increased parking in Bridgeburg and Ridgeway from previous MYAP. The MYAP will recommend continuing to work with the Traffic Coordinating Committee to review accessible spaces.
10	Online	Municipal services are pretty good. Some access in parks (older) is limited	Thank you for your comments. Older parks have been reviewed for accessibility improvements and recommendations will be included in the MYAP.
11	Online	I feel that the wheelchair parking at many stores needs to be made safer, people with disabilities should not have to back out of parking lots.	Comments moved to barriers in the community
12	Town Hall	Accessibility to beaches	The Town has made accessibility improvements at the largest public beach – Bay Beach and are looking at recommendations for additional mats at other waterfront road allowances. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan will also include accessibility improvement suggestions and comments will be passed on to the Parks Planner.
13	Town Hall	Customer service for infrastructure	Comment will be passed on to the Director
14	Town Hall	Parking in front of cottages	Moved to Question #2 – barriers in the community
15	Town Hall	blank	
16	Town Hall	Not enough ramps – recognition of the silent disabilities (hearing-vision)	The ramp comment will be moved to Question #2 as all Town facilities are barrier-free. The Town’s training of all staff includes hearing and vision loss and the Town installed a hearing loop at the Customer Service desk to assist those with low hearing or hearing aids.
17	Town Hall	Ramps for wheelchairs, walkers – anyone with mobility issues	The ramp comment will be moved to Question #2 as all Town facilities are barrier-free.
18	Town Hall	Too few ramps for wheelchairs. Building permitting is too unwieldy and overly expensive. Moved from Question #2: Washrooms at beach should be open all year.	The ramp comment will be moved to Question #2 as all Town facilities are barrier-free. Building permit fees are set annually by Council and there is a public consultation that takes place related to the fee structure. With respect to the washrooms, they are only open when staff is on-site and the beach staff are seasonal.

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
19	Town Hall	Need better accessible parking which adheres to Provincial Standards. Moved from Question #2 – Doors to Town Council Chambers must be accessible – I cannot get in with my wheelchair when doors are closed.	The Town's accessible parking spaces are based on Provincial Standards and the Zoning By-law. This may relate to non-municipal parking. With respect to the Council Chamber doors – this was also noted during the recent inspection at Town Hall by the AAC and will be included in the inspection notes that form part of the MYAP.
20	Town Hall	Lack of accessible parking, ramps, benches	The Town's accessible parking spaces are based on Provincial Standards and the Zoning By-law. This may relate to non-municipal parking. With respect to lack of ramps, the Town facilities are all barrier free and benches have been placed according to need and most are in downtown cores and parks/playgrounds. A need for a bench at the front of Stevensville Memorial Hall was noted during the recent inspection by the AAC and has been noted in the inspection report that forms part of the MYAP
21	Town Hall	Ramps, more benches for elderly. Moved from Question #2 – washrooms year round at beach	See above. With respect to the washrooms, they are only open when staff is on-site and the beach staff are seasonal.
22	Town Hall	Accessible bike paths to Friendship Trail from Crystal Beach – there are no bike paths in Crystal Beach.	Noted and passed on to Parks Planner for Parks and Open Space Master Plan review.
23	Town Hall	Going the extra step – not just doing the absolute minimum AODA requirements. This would send the message the Town was serious about accessibility and not just paying lip service to AODA (as per usual).	The Town and the Accessibility Advisory Committee work hard to make our community more accessible. In fact the AAC goes above and beyond their mandate, working with businesses and organizations to improve access. Each year an annual report is provided to Council that includes Council's commitment through funding, review and implementing of AODA legislation, review of site plans, secondary plans and park development, removal of barriers, representation and interaction with other organizations and other accomplishments such as working with commercial businesses to improve access.

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
24	Town Hall	Sidewalks and streets are deplorable - sidewalk cut-ins are shameful, snow removal unforgiveable	Comments passed on to Infrastructure services.
25	Seniors Stepping Out (SSO)	Lions Park on Elm Street needs to be more accessible and have a streetlight added (discussed with individual the older youth that hang out after dark and with no lightening it does not feel safe in that part of the neighbourhood)	This park was inspected by the AAC and comments were made about the inaccessibility. The streetlight comment will be included in the inspection report as part of the MYAP.
26	SSO	blank	
27	SSO	Accessible washrooms but toilets are way too low! Seniors have trouble with their knees; good sidewalks – accessible; ramps are helpful	This was also noted during the inspections of Town facilities and have been included in the reports as part of the MYAP.
28	SSO	New washroom at Ridgeway Village Square – needs a ramp and signage – is it accessible? Love the ramp project!!	Following the event, the staff resource visited the Village Square and the washroom was still being worked on and there is a ramp; however, there is no automatic door and there is a foot pedal to flush, so not accessible.
29	SSO	All good!	
30	SSO	Need a sidewalk on Prospect Point Road	Will pass on comment to Engineering staff.
31	SSO	Sidewalks very uneven throughout Town; Moved from Question #2 – easier access to beaches	Will pass on comment to Engineering staff who conduct annual sidewalk inspections. Re Beaches: the AAC conducted an inspection at Bay Beach but did not visit other waterfront road allowances. Some of the accessibility concerns will also be captured in the new Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
32	SSO	blank	
33	SSO	We need higher seats in our public handicapped bathrooms	This was also noted during the inspections of Town facilities and has been included in the reports as part of the MYAP.
34	SSO	blank	
35	SSO	More handicapped parking. Road improvements – potholes are dangerous to people with bad backs	When downtown cores are reconstructed, the AAC provides commentary on accessible parking spaces and fought for additional spaces in Ridgeway. The additional space in Crystal Beach has not yet been done. The comment related to Roads will be passed on to staff.
36	SSO	blank	

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
37	Ridgefest	I think that Beattie services are still putting up barriers for people with disabilities. Everyone deserves to feel as amazing as they are	With respect to the comment related to Beatties, this will be moved to Question #2.
38	Ridgefest	Local hospital Fort Erie Hospital – longer urgent care hours	Move to Question #2
39	Ridgefest	Access to buildings, parks – more accessible swings, etc. Moved from Question #2 – sidewalks, parks	The Town’s facilities are all barrier free and the AAC has inspected parks/playgrounds and have noted deficiencies that will be included in the MYAP. Not all community playgrounds have swings; however, the AAC comments on all new playground developments and will encourage accessible swings where possible.
40	Ridgefest	Make a park that is entirely accessible	What a great idea! The Town strives to put in accessible features in all their parks and have an accessibility checklist that accompanies requests for proposals. To have a park that is entirely accessible would be costly but amazing!
41	Ridgefest	blank	
42	Ridgefest	You are doing a helpful job – nice people – care	Thank you!
43	Ridgefest	Curbs from road to sidewalks; accessible washroom in Ridgeway has no ramp and no automatic door. Moved from Question #2 – Nature areas – making more accessible.	The Design of Public Spaces requires curb cuts that meet AODA standards. Where locations are provided, they can be improved. The washroom at Ridgeway Village Square does have a ramp now but no automatic door and a floor pedal for flushing – so not accessible. We understand that this is a temporary washroom so would hope any permanent structure meets accessible needs. With respect to nature areas, legislation does limit what can be done if it impacts the natural environment; however the AAC did inspect the Shagbark Park Trail and provided suggestions for improvement. Once the Waverly Park trail is reconstructed, accessible features will be included.

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
44	Ridgefest	Parks (Stevensville area) are lacking accessibility. My son has CP and cannot use parks like other children his age. Rubberized mats and pads would help a lot.	Comments will be passed on to the Parks Planner. Inspections were done of multiple parks in Stevensville and Douglstown and are included in the inspection reports that are part of the MYAP.
45	Ridgefest	Need for accessible resources (not just on line, available access), more services to support (not just onsite at the Town)	The Town has a webpage that provides details on services provided in the community and has a pamphlet that contains the same information that the Region has created and has delivered throughout the Town. The Town Hall also has the pamphlet available.
46	Ridgefest	Bigger entrances – more accessible for the blind – more walker/wheelchair accessible	The AAC has conducted inspections of the Town’s facilities and parks and comments have been made related to barriers into playgrounds. With respect to more access for the blind, the AAC has talked about different apps that are available to people who are blind or with low vision that assist with accessing services and travel within the community.
47	Ridgefest	To have a happy community. Move from Question #2 – to see sidewalks on every road	Thank you! The sidewalk commentary will be passed on to Engineering but it is noted that when roads are reconstructed they look at sidewalk needs, with having a minimum of one side of the road having a sidewalk, where the road is wide enough.
48	Ridgefest	Lack of services to people who do not have internet; lack of supportive housing and home care (also included under Question #2)	Alternative formats for services should always be made available. Council is working on housing options as part of their Strategic Plan and recognize that there is a lack of affordable and attainable housing in the community. Home care services are also provided by third party and it has been noted by many that the availability of home care has declined over the past several years.
49	Ridgefest	blank	
50	Ridgefest	Use of computers; sight and sound; sidewalks – repairs, clearing in winter. Moved from Question #2: Again – sidewalks cleared – shops – homes; crosswalks better maintained and lighted	A recommendation related to sidewalks will be included in the MYAP recommendations. The Town’s website is AODA compliant and our policies also accommodate requests for alternate formats.
51	Ridgefest	blank	

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
52	Ridgefest	I would like to see the beach walkway at Bay Beach put up earlier and left later in the season. Last year we went to Bay Beach in September and no walkway. My wife has a walker and we could not access the beach.	This has been noted and Beach staff have been asked to consider leaving the mats out longer and put out earlier so that everyone can enjoy an extended season.
53	Ridgefest	New bathroom at Ridgeway Village Square is accessible inside – if you can get in with the exception of the floor pedal flusher – no auto door or auto lock.	This has been passed on to Facilities staff. It was note that the washroom is temporary so if a permanent washroom is put in it will have to meet all of the standards.
54	Ridgefest	Stairs and steps	The Town’s facilities are barrier free and where there are stairs, there are also ramps or elevators to access public space.
55	Ridgefest	Bathroom accessible	During the recent inspections it was noted that a number of Town facilities have accessible washrooms that do not meet the current turning radius and have noted this in the notes that will form part of the MYAP.
56	Ridgefest	You’re doing a great job!	Thank you!
57	Ridgefest	Curbs and Stairs	The Town’s facilities are barrier free and where there are stairs, there are also ramps or elevators to access public space.
58	Ridgefest	Parking. From response to Question #2 – more beach mats.	Parking was reviewed during audits/inspections of facilities. Downtown cores have increased parking in Bridgeburg and Ridgeway from previous MYAP. AAC have heard that more beach mats would assist at other waterfront locations. It is hoped that this suggestion will also be included in the updated Parks & Open Space Master Plan.
59	Ridgefest	StopGap for storefronts	Moved to Question #2
60	Ridgefest	Everything is good!	Thank you.
61	Ridgefest	More access for handicap residents to get into the water at Crystal Beach. Moved from Question #2: Better pocket parking (free) especially at beach – shuttle – open air shuttle to transport people around the beach – check out Port Dover.	Different options are being looked at by the AAC to improve access into the water. The beach mats work well for everyone to access different areas of the beach but getting into the water will require the purchase of a water wheelchair, staff to monitor use, etc.

Question No. 1: What barriers to municipal services do you feel are still occurring?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
62	Ridgefest	blank	
63	Ridgefest	I just want to make a full action during calamities when trees are falling down and especially the electricity to fully fixed it right away and the road must be fixed right away.	Emergencies vary from event to event and the Town does have an Emergency Operations Centre that is activated during these times and works with our partners, such as Canadian Niagara Power, to restore power and remove trees.

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
1	Online	Working with community partners, need to make more businesses accessible and educate them on what they need to do.	AAC has been working with BIAs and businesses to improve access into buildings through the StopGap Ramp project. It is frustrating for AAC members as well that businesses are not aware of their compliance requirements under the AODA. The Province needs to enforce requirements and better communicate AODA requirements.
2	Online	Washrooms. It's great to have handicapped washrooms but ... please raise the seats or have a higher toilet. Seniors have a hard time getting up and down. In some washrooms there is only a bar on one side. That helps but if that is the side of human weakness, it might still be hard to use the toilet.	Comments moved to barriers in the municipality as well.
3	Online	Stores that display products on the sidewalk making it narrow and difficult to pass.	No stores should block access on sidewalks. They should still leave space to pass through.
4	Online	More stop gaps for wheelchair users and strollers.	The AAC just distributed an additional 10 ramps and have left the application open with a waiting list for an additional round.
5	Online	Live in Ridgeway and cannot attend festivals as no handicapped parking. In fact last year they were quite rude when I asked people at barricades. And when festival is on it means I cannot get to the market. I live alone so would like to join our festivities instead of going to other cities where they have and I spend \$ there.	This was also identified by AAC members during Ridgefest this year as we had a booth and no where to park when pancake breakfast was taking place. EDTS staff have confirmed that accessible parking designation will be a requirement for next year's Ridgefest and should be for all similar festivals/ events.
6	Online	Longer mats out to water and accessible playgrounds	Moved to Question #1 - Municipal barriers identified.
7	Online	So many business in Ridgeway remain inaccessible	AAC has been working with BIAs and businesses to improve access into buildings through the StopGap Ramp project. Older buildings that have more than one step are not eligible for the ramps and unfortunately, until the Provincial government creates a Built Environment Standard that requires retrofits/reconstruction, they will remain inaccessible.

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
8	Online	Automatic doors	The AAC does contact businesses that they have found to have heavy doors and write letters or visit businesses to encourage automatic doors be installed – examples recently are Stevensville Garden Gallery and Wendy’s. Unfortunately, due to the age of some buildings they do not HAVE to make improvements but they are also then missing out on additional revenue from persons with disabilities and in some cases, like restaurants, from their family and friends as well.
9	Online	Doors are very heavy and difficult to hold open	See above
10	Online	When places, especially restaurants, apply for changes at street access the town must specify ramp access	Improvements to buildings are regulated by the Building Code; however, we do try and work with businesses that are making improvements to encourage them to provide a barrier free entrance.
11	Online	I think that the disability parking spots at many stores in our town should be put through so they don’t have to look behind to pull out. Added from Question 3: No Frills in Fort Erie should have a cart collector in the parking lot at the front, a lot of elderly people have a cane, this makes it so much easier for them to be able to park and get a cart so they can also go in the store. I feel a lot would not go to this store because they have to walk so far to get a cart. Most park very close to the cart caddies.	Parking spaces are regulated by our Zoning By-law – this suggestion will be shared with our Planning staff. With respect to No Frills – this suggestion will be discussed at a future AAC meeting for follow-up with No Frills.
12	Town Hall	Accessibility to beaches	The Town has ensured that Bay Beach is accessible with washrooms, playgrounds and beach mats. Additional waterfront access will be discussed as part of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
13	Town Hall	blank	
14	Town Hall	Parking in front of cottages. Garbage should be picked up every week in the summer.	A Parking Study was completed for Crystal Beach. The Town has applications for entrance permit and parking passes on the website. With respect to garbage, the Region of Niagara provides garbage pick-up and is attempting to be environmentally sensitive with the move to bi-weekly pickup.

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
15	Town Hall	Full access to beach and water including rental beach chairs. Ramps should be required!	The AAC is looking into accessible amenities at the beach. Beach goers are encouraged to bring their own beach chairs. The Town does not have the resources to rent out beach chairs or umbrellas and it is hoped that a commercial enterprise may take this on. The AAC will be recommending the addition of a beach wheel chair and will be looking at fundraising opportunities as well as where the chair will be made available and sign-out provisions, etc. The AAC has been successful in working with 19 businesses and organizations in providing a ramp into a building with one step between 2” and 9”. There are many older buildings in Town with multiple steps and unfortunately the AAC does not have the ability to require ramps be constructed, unless a major renovation is taking place. Grant funding is shared with businesses when they become available and have in the past provided letters of support for grant applications for creating barrier free access.
16	Town Hall	Curb cuts need to be highlighted – 70% differentiation between sidewalk and road bed. From Question #1: Not enough ramps.	The Design of Public Spaces Standard provides provisions for curb cuts: new or redeveloped pedestrian crossings with curb ramps or depressed curbs must have tactile walking surface indicators with “raised tactile profiles” that have a high tonal contrast to the adjacent surface. For all other curb cuts, the AAC has had success in the past with businesses, such as the Clarion (now known as the Willows) to paint their curb cut yellow for easier detection.
17	Town Hall	Curbs should be highlighted. Also, from Question #1: Ramps for wheelchairs, walkers- anyone with mobility issues.	See response to #15 related to ramps and response to #16 related to curb cuts.
18	Town Hall	Washrooms at beach should be open all year. Moved from Question #1 – Too few ramps for wheelchairs.	Washrooms at beach comment moved to Question #1 as this is a municipal facility. With respect to ramp comment, see response #15 above.
19	Town Hall	Doors to Town Council Chambers must be accessible. I cannot get in with my wheelchair when doors are closed.	Moved to Question #1

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
20	Town Hall	Accessible washrooms year round	Uncertain if this refers to washrooms at the beach as noted above? If so, it was noted that the washrooms at the beach are only open when staff is on-site and the beach staff are seasonal.
21	Town Hall	Paint curb cuts for visually impaired in wheelchairs, accessible washrooms, washrooms year round at beach.	Re curbs see response to #16 above. The Town facilities have accessible washrooms; however during the recent inspection it was noted that the turning radius does not match current requirements and have been noted in the inspection report. Re beach - Moved to Question #1 as this is a municipal facility.
22	Town Hall	Curb cuts need to be trimmed and repaired and highlighted – pedestrian walks need repair	Noted and passed on to Roads for inspection of roads and sidewalk.
23	Town Hall	Speed limits lowered on Erie Road, speed barriers, curb cuts highlighted	Comments will be passed on to Engineering and the Traffic Coordinating Committee.
24	Town Hall	All new main arteries correctly streetscaped.	Part of the engineering design plan for reconstruction includes streetscaping (i.e. Jarvis Street redevelopment)
25	Seniors Stepping Out (SSO)	blank	
26	SSO	Non-Profit Housing Fort Erie – accessible picnic tables would help residents (Nancy Street and 43 King Street)	This request was passed on to Councillor Noyes who sits on the Board of the NFP and hopefully they will be able to secure accessible picnic tables for the residents.
27	SSO	blank	
28	SSO	blank	
29	SSO	Excellent specialized transit out of town but need to educate that it is out there and make sure patients are released from hospital during transit hours!	Comment will be passed on to Niagara Regional Transit.
30	SSO	Four Storey Building	Comment related to proposal off of Prospect Point (in their back yard); public consultation was provided
31	SSO	Easier access to beaches	Moved to Question #1.

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
32	Seniors Stepping Out (SSO)	Educate more what is out there that's out there – i.e. what is available	<p>The staff resource is a member of the Fort Erie Service Providers Network and most recently prepared the “Fort Erie Service Providers Handbook” and also have community resources posted on the Town’s website at: https://www.forterrie.ca/en/living-in-fort-erie/community-programs-and-services.aspx</p> <p>The AAC Chair has been corresponding with the Region on several regional services that require doctor’s sign off to encourage them to have information in one spot for persons with disabilities so that they are not obtaining signatures only to realize that they need additional sign offs.</p>
33	SSO	Entrances to restaurants and offices to have ramps and let us avoid those awkward steps	<p>AAC has been working with BIAs and businesses to improve access into buildings through the StopGap Ramp project. Older buildings that have more than one step are not eligible for the ramps and unfortunately, until the Provincial government creates a Built Environment Standard that requires retrofits/reconstruction, they will remain inaccessible. When funding becomes available through the provincial or federal governments it is shared and letters of support are often provided by the AAC for funding applications.</p>
34	SSO	Barrel restaurant plaza needs another ramp to access businesses	<p>The AAC is working with the Barrel to encourage them to replace the heavy wooden doors. The curb cuts will be reviewed and that discussion can be added.</p>
35	SSO	blank	
36	SSO	Ultramar Gas – accessible door not turned on – won’t go there. Especially with public – low toilets – raise them. Pioneer might too. App to green-red-yellow.	<p>Recommended that the community participates in assessing businesses green – if accessible, yellow if not totally accessible, red if not accessible at all. Years ago Linda Crabtree had a website that would rate different tourism attractions in Niagara Falls. The AAC staff resource visited the Gas Station and requested that they keep the accessible door turned on. The operator advised that it had been locked due to heavy winds but would turn it back on.</p>

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
37	Ridgefest	The stigma with people with physical disabilities are still very seen in our town. From Question #1 - I think that Beattie services are still putting up barriers for people with disabilities.	Hopefully through making our community more accessible this stigma will no longer have a place. With respect to Beatties, the AAC is looking into the accessible door remaining locked.
38	Ridgefest	Blank – but moved from Question #1: Local hospital - Fort Erie Hospital – longer urgent care hours	Douglas Memorial is run by Niagara Health and the Mayor and Council are fighting to keep the UCC open and most recently passed a resolution that was forwarded to the Minister of Health for a commitment to continue the operation of the UCC following the opening of the South Niagara Hospital as the primary care safety net until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place in the community.
39	Ridgefest	Sidewalk, parks	Move to Question #1 as they are both municipal assets
40	Ridgefest	blank	
41	Ridgefest	OnDemand bus not waiting at COPE – it takes ten minutes to get food but then they have to wait at a minimum another 30 minutes for a bus to come back – when asked to wait two minutes they are rude and say no. Difficult especially in the heat when you have to wait with heavy boxes or bags.	Comment will be passed on to NRT with a suggestion that exceptions are made when individuals are visiting food banks.
42	Ridgefest	Doors are heavy to open – sliders would be helpful. Ridgeway stores ramps – accessibility for everyone, make sure our hospital stays open.	The AAC tries to work with business owners on accessible entries and have recently worked to have ramps constructed for those with one step in. Douglas Memorial is run by Niagara Health and the Mayor and Council are fighting to keep the UCC open and most recently passed a resolution that was forwarded to the Minister of Health for a commitment to continue the operation of the UCC following the opening of the South Niagara Hospital as the primary care safety net until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place in the community
43	Ridgefest	Nature areas – making more accessible	Moved to Question #1 as natural areas are a municipal asset in most cases.
44	Ridgefest	blank	

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
45	Ridgefest	More open events for differently-abled	Even Ridgefest this year did not have accessible parking available. The AAC has requested that accessible parking be part of the checklist for event planning. Much more could be done as well at events to ensure access.
46	Ridgefest	Bigger entrances – more accessible for the blind – more walker/wheelchair accessible	The AAC tries and works with businesses and organizations when barriers have been identified.
47	Ridgefest	To see sidewalks on every road	Moved to Question #1
48	Ridgefest	Power door. Transportation. Free transit. More OnDemand Transit for disabled for activities, appointments, etc. Moved from response to Question #1 – lack of services to people who do not have internet, lack of supportive housing and home care	The AAC works with businesses and organizations when barriers have been identified. The Transit comments will be forwarded to the NRT. Alternative formats for services should always be made available. Council is working on housing options as part of their Strategic Plan and recognize that there is a lack of affordable and attainable housing in the community. Home care services are also provided by third party and it has been noted by many that the availability of home care has declined over the past several years.
49	Ridgefest	Anything to help people with disabilities fish!	Great comment!
50	Ridgefest	Again – sidewalks cleared – shops, homes, crosswalks better maintained and lighted	Moved to Question #1
51	Ridgefest	More activities – central database for community activities – network would be good to connect with	The Town does provide a database of service providers in Fort Erie and the staff resource participates in the Fort Erie Service Providers Network that has created a knowledge base of service providers.
52	Ridgefest	blank	
53	Ridgefest	blank	
54	Ridgefest	Parking	A recommendation related to parking will be included in the MYAP
55	Ridgefest	Ramps for businesses	The AAC works with businesses and organizations when barriers have been identified.
56	Ridgefest	You're doing a great job!	Thank you!
57	Ridgefest	Curbs and Stairs	The AAC works with businesses and organizations when barriers have been identified.
58	Ridgefest	Beach mats	Move to Question #1

Question No. 2: What other barriers in the community would you like to see addressed?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
59	Ridgefest	Tonal signals for stop/walk signals (school crossing guard). Moved from Question #1 – StopGap for storefronts	Audible signals are placed at major signalled intersections and this is done by the Region of Niagara. In the past, the AAC has requested additional audible signals. StopGap applications are still being accepted and we now have 19 in town!
60	Ridgefest	Hospital – make sure it stays!	Douglas Memorial is run by Niagara Health and the Mayor and Council are fighting to keep the UCC open and most recently passed a resolution that was forwarded to the Minister of Health for a commitment to continue the operation of the UCC following the opening of the South Niagara Hospital as the primary care safety net until a viable and sustainable alternative is in place in the community.
61	Ridgefest	Better pocket parking (free) especially at beach – shuttle – open air shuttle to transport people around the beach – check out Port Dover. Moved from response to Question # 3: We need more affordable apartment buildings – not geared to income – one price fits all – Regional Councillor should be working towards this goal – Fort Erie needs this – everything is going to Welland and Port Colborne	Moved to Question #1 With respect to affordable apartment buildings – Town Council has included Comprehensive Housing Options as a key pillar in their Strategic Plan. The Region and local area municipalities are working on affordable housing initiatives.
62	Ridgefest	Restaurant bathrooms – all doors be accessible for everyone – every one who chooses should be able to go, do, etc.	The AAC tries to work with businesses and restaurants that have been identified as having barriers; however, many of the older buildings are not required to make improvements, but we do try and encourage them.
63	Ridgefest	blank	

Question No. 3: What does an accessible community look like to you?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
1	Online	Making sure everyone has access to live, work, play and travel	Received
2	Online	A community where you feel comfortable visiting	Received
3	Online	Feeling safe	Received
4	Online	One that is accessible for every ability beyond just a visible physical disability. More activities and services for children and youth and their families in the community as this helps youth at risk.	Received
5	Online	Accessible to all areas	Received
6	Online	All inclusive community	Received
7	Online	No steps to enter any and all businesses. No curbs to venture over with difficulties when in a wheelchair or scooter	Received
8	Online	All abilities addressed, wheelchair and walker access, sight and hearing impairment, and assisted services for online access.	Received
9	Online	Where everyone can get access to buildings and supports necessary. The ODSP is way below poverty line and needs to be evaluated.	Received
10	Online	Access for Everyone.	Received
11	Online	Making it safe for everyone. Pull through wheelchair spots. Also No Frills in Fort Erie should have a cart collector in the parking lot at the front, a lot of elderly people have a cane, this makes it so much easier for them to be able to park and get a cart so they can also go in the store. I feel a lot would not go to this store because they have to walk so far to get a cart. Most park very close to the cart caddies.	A portion of these comments will be moved under “barriers in the community”
12	Town Hall	Accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.	Received
13	Town Hall	blank	
14	Town Hall	Community working together with the Town Hall.	Received
15	Town Hall	All public/retail/business spaces fully accessible with ramps and toilet facilities. Full access should be required for all business renovations.	Received
16	Town Hall	Pedestrians before vehicles – lots of benches - seating	Received
17	Town Hall	Anyone and everyone should be able to access services, shops, restaurants, etc.	Received
18	Town Hall	Lots of pedestrian-only squares, bike stands, frequent festivals, entertainment (How about pop-up karaoke?)	Received
19	Town Hall	One in which there is no need for an Accessibility Advisory Committee	Received
20	Town Hall	Freedom	Received
21	Town Hall	One where we can all go where we need to go and participate	Received

Question No. 3: What does an accessible community look like to you?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
22	Town Hall	Walkable for all levels of mobility; speed limits to be reduced on Erie Road; Traffic calming posts instead of speed bumps	Comments related to speed limits and traffic calming have been passed on to Engineering.
23	Town Hall	Pedestrians before vehicles, bicycle paths, more greenery, more benches	Received
24	Town Hall	Where people with wheelchairs and strollers and crutches can safely walk our streets.	Received
25	Seniors Stepping Out (SSO)	blank	
26	SSO	blank	
27	SSO	blank	
28	SSO	blank	
29	SSO	blank	
30	SSO	blank	
31	SSO	Barrier Free	Received
32	SSO	blank	
33	SSO	To be free to be able to enjoy educational and social opportunities with my friends in all communities.	Received
34	SSO	blank	
35	SSO	Lots of handicapped parking, more help for Seniors.	Received
36	SSO	blank	
37	Ridgefest	Every single person is given the same right as everyone else even if that means helping them get through a door!	Received
38	Ridgefest	Access for all	Received
39	Ridgefest	Equal for all	Received
40	Ridgefest	blank	
41	Ridgefest	blank	
42	Ridgefest	Where every handicap and disabled person can be part of the community – we need each other.	Received
43	Ridgefest	Universal Designs for the community across the board. Not just thinking about person in the wheelchairs or scooters but those pushing the wheelchair as not everyone in a chair is able to manage – things like automatic doors.	Received

Question No. 3: What does an accessible community look like to you?

No.	Mode	Remarks	Response/Action
44	Ridgefest	Accessible play areas	Received
45	Ridgefest	Inclusive, diverse, supportive	Received
46	Ridgefest	Runs smoothly where people are more helpful and not running away, rather help others.	Received
47	Ridgefest	For everyone to be able to access the community	Received
48	Ridgefest	No sidewalk curbs. Power doors on all new businesses.	Received
49	Ridgefest	blank	
50	Ridgefest	24/7 – 12 months freedom to move freely in the community	Received
51	Ridgefest	blank	
52	Ridgefest	blank	
53	Ridgefest	blank	
54	Ridgefest	Access for all	Received
55	Ridgefest	Need more services for seniors!	Received
56	Ridgefest	Accessibility for Everyone!	Received
57	Ridgefest	Easy to navigate	Received
58	Ridgefest	Flat sidewalks, StopGaps	Received
59	Ridgefest	blank	
60	Ridgefest	blank	
61	Ridgefest	We need more affordable apartment buildings – not geared to income – one price fits all – Regional Councillor should be working towards this goal – Fort Erie needs this – everything is going to Welland and Port Colborne	Move to Question #2
62	Ridgefest	blank	
63	Ridgefest	blank	

AAC Inspections of Parks and Facilities for 2024-2029 MYAP

June 3, 2024

Location: Bay Beach – 4159 Erie Road

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Joe Kissman and Ethan, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Good

Entrance Path of Travel: The whole depressed curb should have TWSIS

Way finding and Signage: ReDiscover Fort Erie sign should have a QR code that can be scanned for alternative access to information. Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms/Changerooms: Change table – placement of remote control needs to be moved for easier access; Sean to have remote relocated to the left side, attached to the table; other family washroom, with an accessible icon on the signage, does not have an automatic door – accessible icon to be removed.

Playground: Has an accessible swing and transition steps to slide but could not currently access if in a wheelchair as mulch is low; Sean advised more of the compacted engineered wood fibre will be added. Long term – request rubberized surface – identified as a best practice.

Phones: No public phones available but staff have phones in case of emergency.

Beach mats: Staff do their best to ensure edges of mats are secured where mats are installed over another mat, and excess sand on the mats is removed for a clear path of travel.

June 3, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Crystal Beach Waterfront Park – Crystal Beach Drive

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Not enough room beside the accessible space at the playground for Lori to get out – Sean to consider moving the parking spaces down 1 metre; Keegan to check site plan for Palmwood re accessible space.

Entrance Path of Travel: Ramp to playground had pulled away from pathway – Keegan and Sean moved it into place.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: No automatic door – button could be placed to the left so that it is wide enough for entry. There were no grab bars in the women’s washroom but anchor holes were visible. Men’s washroom had grab bars. Sean to have women’s grab bars reinstalled.

Playground: has an accessible swing and parent-child swing. Long term – request rubberized surface – identified as a best practice.

Location: Crystal Ridge Park– 109 Ridge Road South

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Parking lot was just repaved and no lines yet painted. Sean advised that the old angled parking in front of the park will now be parallel. There will be two accessible parking spaces with a ramp and hatch marks

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: There are no public washrooms at the playground but there is a port-a-potty. Suggested that if that is the only offering, the port-a-potty should at least be accessible (cost and availability concerns). Recommend future universal permanent washroom at this location.

Playground: Has an accessible swing and transition steps to slide in the junior playground but could not currently access if in a wheelchair as mulch is low; Sean advised more of the compacted engineered wood fibre will be added. Long term – request rubberized surface – identified as a best practice. Shade area suggested for senior playground when funding is available. Splash pad is a nice, accessible feature.

June 3, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Crystal Ridge Arena 109 Ridge Road South

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Parking lot was just repaved and no lines yet painted. Sean advised that there are two accessible parking spaces near the covered main entrance and another space around the side by the banquet hall and one at the library building.

Entrance Path of Travel: Lip near entrance – mark with yellow paint (outside of the accessible parking space).

Doors: Side entrance does not have automatic opener but is wide enough to enter.

Washrooms: Sean advised that the accessible washroom is being renovated and will have an automatic door and lock system. The sink will be lowered and the mirror tilted. Lori suggested moving the door to the left a little for easier access.

Ice Surface: Sean described the skate in-skate out benches that some municipalities that have fully accessible rinks have; door to the ice is wide and easily accessible for sledge hockey.

Viewing Area: There is an accessible ramped area outside of the seating area for accessible viewing. Lori noted that it is unfortunate that someone in a wheelchair would have to be separated from friends and family. Sean advised that the heated area where the ramp viewing area is located is the most popular for viewing. Consideration be given to accessible viewing area inside at the spectator seating if renovations are done on bleachers.

Location: Lions Field – 3786 Elm Street

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: This is more of a neighbourhood park and there is no designated parking.

Entrance Path of Travel: There is no real pathway from the road to the playground.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: No washrooms on site.

Playground: The playground is older and there is no access to the playground for someone with a mobility device – no curb ramp; engineered wood fibre needs to be added as well. Sean advised that this park should be due for an upgrade soon.

Lighting: Survey and contact us submissions have noted that this park should have lighting as people tend to hang out in the area after dark and it is a safety concern for the neighbourhood.

June 3, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Ridge Road Museum – 402 Ridge Road North

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: There is currently no designated accessible space but there was prior to repaving – Sean to look into getting new sign and paint space.

Entrance Path of Travel: Ramp was pretty scary – not wide enough for someone in a manual wheelchair. Nicole advised that they are planning on redoing the railing soon and Keegan and Sean suggested moving the railings to the outside to provide more space. Lori had concerns about where the ramp comes out – right at the top of the stairs – suggest moving ramp over a bit more towards the building and away from the stairs.

Way finding and Signage: Lots of signage inside the museum – suggested that a QR code/audio link or B.E.T.T.E.R. formats for persons that are deaf or hard of hearing – look into alternate formats if funding is available.

Washrooms: No public washrooms on site.

Additional Note: Large historical wood door has been improved since last audit – not as heavy.

Location: Shagbark Park/Trail – Nature Trail

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Lindsay Davis, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: There is gravel parking but no designated spaces.

Entrance Path of Travel: The pathway was accessible; however, other AAC members had noted that during inclement weather it can be impassable.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance. Descriptive signage by community group (Bert Miller Nature Club) was placed throughout the walkway into the bush.

Washrooms: No washrooms on site.

Additional Note: There was some dog poop along the pathway. Sean advised that a pilot project is taking place at this location to “pack-in and pack-out” for garbage but they will need to have something available for dog waste. Bev noted that a Stewardship Plan is being developed for this trail and additional lands that were purchased adjacent to the current site.

June 3, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Battlefield Museum Park – 3408 Garrison Road

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Keegan Gennings, Sean Hutton, Bev Bradnam

Parking: There is gravel parking and designated spaces.

Entrance Path of Travel: The pathway has recently been redone and leads right up to the pavilion. There are big rocks blocking people from driving onto the pathway. Sean advised that pavilions are no longer booked for family parties/reunions and they are on a first come-first served basis. Bev had received complaints that the Bertie Historical Society members cannot drive down to the pavilion and drop things off anymore so they are going elsewhere for their summer picnic.

Way finding and Signage: Descriptive signage by the Museum near the parking lot. Future addition of a QR Code would be beneficial.

Washrooms: There are no public washrooms but there is a port-a-potty. Suggested that if that is the only offering, the port-a-potty should at least be accessible (cost and availability concerns).

AAC Inspections of Parks and Facilities for 2024-2029 MYAP

June 10, 2024

Location: Town Hall, 1 Municipal Centre Drive

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Good

Entrance Path of Travel: Good

Way finding and Signage: Signage at Skatepark has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms/Changerooms: No automatic door at public washrooms in the atrium; if reconstruction is considered, make accessible stall larger to meet current requirements; place toilet in the middle of the stall so that individuals can transfer from either side; height of toilet 19” is best for everyone.

Water fountain: Easy for Lori to use.

Location: Leisureplex, 3 Municipal Centre Drive

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Great – new spaces are awesome!

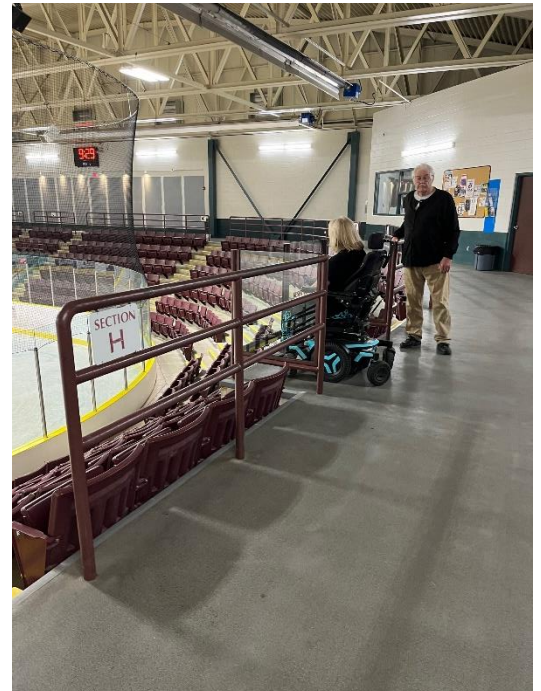
Entrance Path of Travel: Good; benches near front entrance should add a chair(s) with arms

Washrooms/Changerooms: Large public washroom was only one open at time of inspection; good automatic doors; soap dispenser can't access – too high (Councillor Noyes noted what she saw in Biloxi – automatic buttons all along front and side of sink – water, soap and air dryer).

Water fountain: Easy for Lori to use.

Public Eating Area: Addition of a few chairs with full arms would be helpful.

Large Arena: The “wheelchair” section should be made longer and move row of five seats up so that persons with mobility devices could sit with family members – see pic. No hand rails - except for one spot by Zamboni room –



June 10, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

where wider stairs, consider hand rails, especially with the aging population.

Small Arena – bump out with bench should have better contrasted colours to make the step up more visible – see pic.



Location: Ferndale Park – Crescent Park

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Three spaces - good

Entrance Path of Travel: Bev put in a CRM for low hanging branches (maintenance issue)

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: Automatic door – no signage on door – looks like there was but it has been peeled off; same comment about other accessible washrooms – when placing toilet in future make sure someone can transfer from either side.

Playground: Older playground – will be replaced in 2024; recommend re-using some of the play equipment that is still in good shape.

June 10, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Waverly Beach

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Parking lot was just repaved and no lines yet painted. Follow-up with Sean re accessible parking space designation.

Entrance Path of Travel: Path from waterfront to the washroom needs to be cleaned up – overgrowth narrowing walkway. In between men and women’s washroom it looks like the cement has been dug up for the hydro – tripping hazard as cement is not flush – see pic.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance. Historical signage could include QR codes that tell the story/read the content.

Washrooms: Doors are awkward and heavy and should be replaced with automatic doors – same footprint as Crystal Beach Waterfront Park washroom; soap dispenser too far away; door knobs should be replaced with lever style handles for easier access.



Location: Albert Street Playground

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Two accessible spaces with hatch marks in between.

Entrance Path of Travel: Pathway is great – right around entire playground.

Washrooms: No washrooms at this park – consider one universal washroom if funding permits or accessible port-a-potty. Realize it is a neighbourhood park but with ample parking it is used by many from outside the neighborhood.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Playground: The playground is brand new – one broken sensory piece of equipment – Bev put in a CRM.

June 10, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Energy Park – Baron Road

Inspectors: Lori Brant, Gary Kooistra, Councillor Noyes, Bev Bradnam

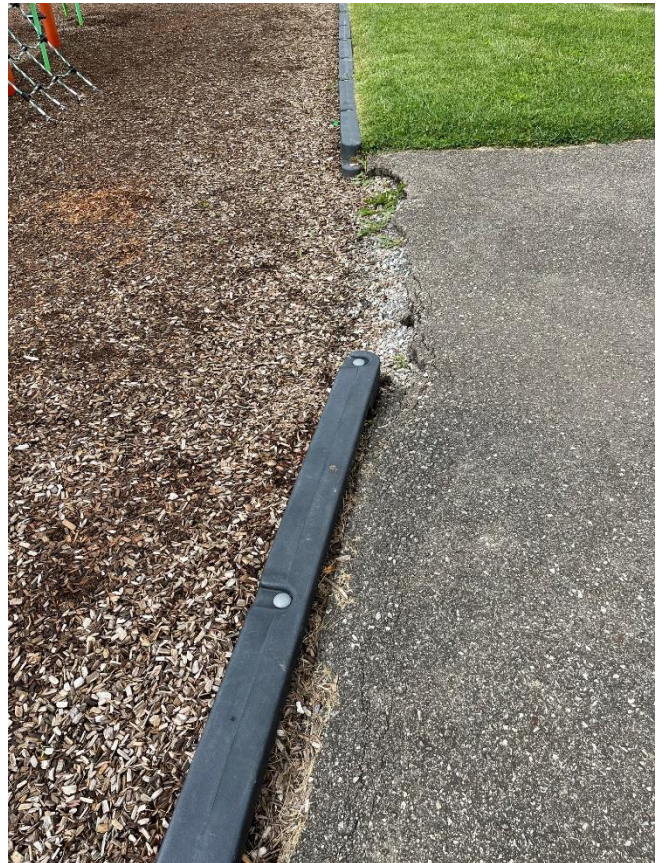
Parking: No parking – this is more of a neighbourhood park.

Entrance Path of Travel: There is no entry off of road way – suggest curb cut and access to sidewalk/pathway.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: No washrooms on site.

Playground: Accessible swing. Entry into playground – accessible on southern end. Northern end is all broken up – see picture. Bev will put in a CRM as there is a risk of injury.



AAC Inspections of Parks and Facilities for 2024-2029 MYAP

June 20, 2024

Location: Gibson Centre, 1818 Pettit Road

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Good – accessible space (no hatch marks though)

Entrance Path of Travel: Big lip at entrance – needs to be ground down – see pics below:



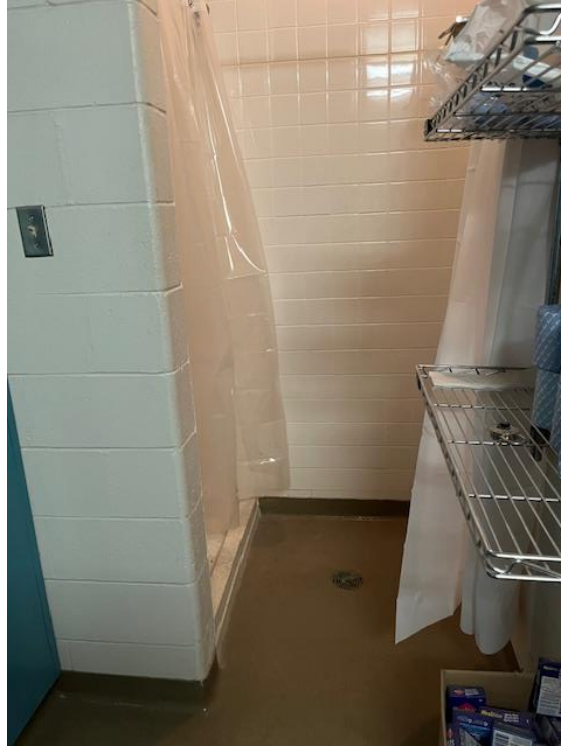
Door: Entrance has automatic doors but they are not turned on. They keep the front entrance locked – access through first door then have to press a buzzer to talk to clerk. Outer accessible door should be activated. There is a table blocking the buzzer so someone with a mobility device would not be able to reach it – see picture. Spoke to Chris Pisaric who advised that the table is used for meter pick-up. Recommended a narrower table to allow access to the buzzer.



Counter: High counter in office but there is a lower desk behind the door if someone needed to fill out forms.

June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Washrooms/Changerooms: Accessible stall in washroom. Shower has a 2-3 inch lip to get in – but drain is on outside of the shower as well – recommend enlarging the shower to encompass both spaces or have a hand held sprayer in between both. See pic below:



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Fort Erie Tennis Club

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

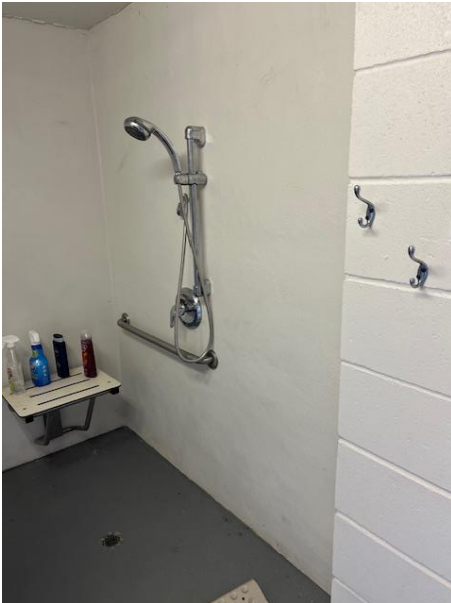
Parking: No accessible parking

Entrance Pathway: Big lip at entrance gate. See picture:



Entrance Path of Travel: Crack in sidewalk to accessible washroom. Picture above.

Washrooms/Changerooms: Large accessible washroom/changeroom with shower (see picture below) – built because you cannot access the main washroom/changerooms as there are several steps to access.



Mike from Facilities advised that only front four courts are accessible as back two courts are clay and raised.

June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Oakes Park

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Accessible parking space – no hatch marks – could possibly fit two vehicles if expanded a bit and hatch mark in between.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washroom: Big lip at entrance to the one universal washroom. See picture:



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Sugarbowl Spray Pad

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: No accessible parking – one should be put in and curb cut.

Entrance Path of Travel: Great!

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: Automatic doors not working – could be because washrooms are new – still had covering on change table and bench (check with Sean).

Spray Pad: Lots of children and parents enjoying the new pad.

Amenities: Three accessible picnic tables!! See pic:



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Bowen Road Park

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: No parking – more of a neighbourhood park.

Entrance Path of Travel: All overgrown – needs some maintenance. See pics.



Playground: Needs weeds removed – more engineered wood fibre. See pic above.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Amenities: Good amenities – shaded seating but accessible picnic table had accessible spot against the tree – see picture. Needs to be moved out.



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Stevensville Memorial Hall and Playground

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: Two accessible spaces and one accessible space at the playground (recommendation from last plan)

Entrance Path of Travel: Good from parking lot – recommend a bench or seat near front door if anyone has to wait to enter.

Entrance Door: Automatic doors on outside but interior doors are not automatic.

Washrooms: One universal accessible washroom. Heavy scent in air – spoke to Facilities' staff apple-spice pucks used – recommended non-scented in future for those with sensitivity to perfumes.

Water Fountain: Old style knob that needs to be turned – recommend push button or levered handle.

Hall: Really bad echo – when hosting meetings hard to hear (not sure what remedy is).

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Playground: The playground is fairly new and in good shape but the engineered wood fibre is really low and no entrance if someone had a mobility device because of the depth in – there is no curbed ramp entrance. See pic:



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: United Empire Loyalist Park – West Main

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: No parking – this is more of a neighbourhood park.

Entrance Path of Travel: Great

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: No washrooms on site.

Playground: Needs more engineering wood fibre

Shade: Pavilion provides shade but is quite a distance from playground. We had a mother at the Stevensville Memorial Park ask if shade can be provided closer to the playground – that's why she was at Stevensville Memorial Park because it was too hot for her to go to the UEL without shade. See pic:



June 20, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

Location: Ott Road Park

Inspectors: Gary Kooistra, Lindsay Davis, Bev Bradnam

Parking: One accessible space

Entrance Path of Travel: Okay – narrow sidewalk

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance.

Washrooms: Both have accessible stalls but they seem very small – 5 ft. by 5 ft. but turning radius less than 3 ft. Lip to both bathrooms – so not accessible.

Playground: Needs more engineering wood fibre but two entrances in.

AAC Inspections of Parks and Facilities for 2024-2029 MYAP

July 11, 2024

Location: AC Douglas Park #1 – Black Creek/Douglastown

Inspectors: Councillor Noyes and Bev Bradnam

Parking: No Parking – neighbourhood park – pulled up along side road

Entrance Path of Travel: No pathway to playground and had to jump over a swale that was quite wet.

Recommend: Addition of pathway in from the road to the playground and multi-use court.

Way finding and Signage: Green signage describing park has very small font – AAC should have been asked for input – design guidelines for outside signage requires viewing from quite a distance. Red play safe sign is also very faded.

Washrooms/Changerooms: Single port-a-potty that is not accessible.

Playground: Playground equipment in great condition but needs a good cleaning – some of the pieces are faded but still in good working order. Picnic table that was broken was there as well as a picnic table placed behind the swings (Bev did a CRM to have the one removed and the other moved off of the playground). Playground is on pea gravel – hard to maneuver for anyone with a mobility device.

Recommend: Keeping current play equipment but cleaning it and adding accessible pieces and bigger climbers for older children. Also the park could use a spray pad/splash pad and hopefully that will be included in the updated Parks & Open Space Master Plan as a recommendation. The Park also has no shade structures and should be added.

Location: AC Douglas Park #2 – Black Creek/Douglastown

Inspectors: Councillor Noyes and Bev Bradnam

Parking: No Parking – storm water management pond parkland

Entrance Path of Travel: Excellent pathways with bollards to block vehicles but with enough space to allow mobility devices through. The pathway also includes entrance into the new subdivision.

Pavilion: Beautiful large pavilion but with no picnic tables. Recommend the addition of picnic tables to this great space. There are memorial benches placed all along the pathway. The sidewalk was extended along Rivertrail to access the SWM pond.

Some pictures – including the stone snake at the pavilion.

July 11, 2024 Inspections of Parks/Playgrounds and Facilities by AAC

AC DOUGLAS #1 – PLAYGROUND



AC DOUGLAS #2 – SWM POND

