

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE VILLAGE OF OIL SPRINGS**

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2023-2028**

Updated October 2023

CONTENTS OF THE PLAN

- Introduction
- Purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Objectives of the Plan
- Aim
- Description of the Village of Oil Springs
- Village of Oil Springs Commitment to Accessibility Planning
- Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives
- Barrier Identification Methodologies
- Identified Barriers in the Village of Oil Springs
- Barriers that have or will be addressed
- Review and Monitoring Process
- Communication of the Plan
- Summary

Appendixes

- Appendix “A” – About Disabilities
- Appendix “B” – Where to Look for Barriers
- Appendix “C” – Types of Disabilities & Functional Limitations
- Appendix “D” – Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

➤ Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario Government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The 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.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service, transportation, information and communications, employment, and the built environment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and came into force January 1, 2008. The Village adopted the Accessible Customer Service Policy on August 28, 2009. The Village has also been preparing annual Accessibility Plans since 2009.

The integrated accessibility standards came into force on July 1, 2011. Ontario Regulation 191/11 sets out the timing for designated public sector organizations to comply with the integrated accessibility standards. Ontario Regulation 191/11 required small designated public organizations to prepare and implement an integrated accessibility policy and a multi-year accessibility plan by January 1, 2014. Council reviewed and updated the Accessibility Plan on November 7, 2023, for the years of 2023 – 2028.

PURPOSE OF THE ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005 (AODA)

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Village. To this end, the AODA mandates that each Municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan.

The purpose of the accessibility plan is to describe the measures that the organization has taken in previous years, and the measures the organization will take during the upcoming years, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

The AODA specifies requirements for the content of all annual accessibility plans:

1. Report on the measures the organization has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities;
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the organizations access its Acts /by-laws, regulations, policies, programs, practices, and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the policies, programs, practices, and services that the organization will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the organization intends to take in the coming five years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities; and
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

This plan:

1. Describes the process by which the Village of Oil Springs identifies, removes, and prevents barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews the progress the Village of Oil Springs has made in removing and preventing barriers that have been identified in its facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services.
3. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services that the Village will review in upcoming years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Reviews the measures the Village will take in the upcoming years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities (e.g., by-laws, policies, services etc.)
5. Reports on how the Village will make this accessibility plan available to the public.
6. Will begin to lay the foundation for the development of accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, more particularly the customer service regulations, information and communications, employment, and the built environment.

AIM

This plan summarizes the measures that the Corporation of the Village of Oil Springs has taken since 2010 to the present, and identifies the initiatives planned for the upcoming years that are designed to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in accessing the municipality's facilities and services including its employees.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF OIL SPRINGS

The population of the Village of Oil Springs is approximately 377 residential properties.

The Village's Administration Office, Public Works Garage and Fire Hall are located in Oil Springs. The Village has one County run library, a community centre, and 3- recreation grounds.

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

The Council of the Village of Oil Springs is committed to accessibility by:

- The continual improvement of access to municipal facilities and services for the public, its ratepayers, and staff with disabilities.
- Encouraging persons with disabilities to participate in the development and review of its Accessibility Plan.
- Providing quality services to the public, all ratepayers, and members of the community with disabilities.
- Making available to staff training related to accessibility awareness.
- Enhancing awareness about accessibility issues in the workplace.
- Applying for grant monies to continually improve and upgrade municipal facilities.
- Reviewing accessibility standards every five years.

BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES

The following initiatives were conducted to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities:

1. Youth Centre
An automatic Door Opener installed as well as an indoor ramp making the facility accessible for people attending functions.
2. Accessibility Training
Municipal staff, contract employees and select volunteers were trained, in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Ongoing training is provided to all new employees and volunteers as appropriate.
3. Barrier Free Access to Municipal Office
An Access barrier to the municipal building has been removed with the installation of an automatic door opener.
4. Accessible Website
In 2022 The Village completed the design and implementation of a website that incorporated web content accessibility guidelines 2.0.
7. The Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan was presented and adopted by Council. The Plan is required to address the new requirements of S.12.2 of the Municipal Elections Act, whereby the Clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.
8. Accessible Counter at Front Reception
In **2021**, an accessible front counter was installed in the main office reception area.
9. Accessible Washrooms in Fire Hall
Accessible Washrooms in the firehall will need to be addressed when grant funding or capital money becomes available for this project.
10. Accessible Picnic tables – Various Parks
Accessible tables are needed for the various municipal parks. When donations are accepted, they will be required to be accessible tables. New tables are dependent on donations and grants when available.
11. Accessible Sidewalks
2021, 2022, and 2023 municipal sidewalks along Oil Springs Line have been replaced at a width of 5 ft. making them more accessible.
12. Accessible Council Meetings
Council amended their Procedural By-law to allow for electronic participate (outside a declared emergency) for Members, staff, Public, Media and delegations to participate.

BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES

Barrier identification was considered as follows:

Council Council continuously identifies and discusses any barriers or concerns in a timely and efficient manner.

BARRIERS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED

Barrier	Strategy for its removal	Status
Municipal Office Washroom	Consider funding in 2023-2028 period.	Subject to feasibility report and budget approval.
Firehall Washrooms	Consider funding in 2023-2028 period.	Subject to feasibility report and budget approval.
Firehall automatic door	Consider funding in 2023-2028 Period	Subject to feasibility report and budget approval
Picnic tables- accessible	Consider donations or funding	Donations or funding approval

BARRIERS PROPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED BETWEEN 2023-2028

Based on the requirements of the integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario regulation 11/11) and Council input, the following initiatives will be considered during the 2023-2028 period to help ensure barriers to municipal facilities and services continue to be eliminated:

1. Examine feasibility of undertaking renovations to the washrooms at the Fire Hall and Municipal office to widen doors and to provide barrier free access and to modify the sink/counter height for persons with accessibility limitations.
2. Examine the feasibility of making improvements to the Fire Hall door to facilitate access for people with accessibility limitations.
3. To examine the feasibility of purchasing or receiving donations of accessible picnic tables for the various parks in the Village to provide barrier free access and use by persons with accessibility limitations.

4. Commitment to ongoing accessibility improvement initiatives including implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards as well as continued implementation of the customer service standards.

REVIEW AND MONITORING PROCESS

Council will annually review the Accessibility Plan. Any barriers brought to Council's attention will be discussed in a timely manner at regular Council meetings and during the Accessibility Plan Review every five years.

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

- 1) Consideration of accessibility projects by Council during annual budget deliberations, consideration at a regular Council meeting and acknowledgement in the published minutes of the meeting that will be posted on the Village's website; and
- 2) Copies of the Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipal Office located in Oil Springs and posted on the Village's website. On request, the Accessibility Plan will be made available in alternative formats.

SUMMARY

The multi-year Accessibility Plan is a progressive tool that will be reviewed and updated at least every five years. It focuses on the targets set and work completed. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the Integrated Accessibility Standards specify the need to work towards the elimination of barriers to persons with disabilities and to ensure consistency across all sectors.

APPENDIX A: ABOUT DISABILITIES

There is no universally accepted meaning for the word “disability.” Most definitions, however, can be placed on a continuum. At one end of the spectrum, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions. At the opposite end, disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs.

The World Health Organization’s definition for disability, is “any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.” Medical model definitions promote the idea that a disability is a deviation from the norm.

All barriers are human made. If design problems cause barriers, then disabilities can be eliminated or minimized by modifying how we live, the tools we use, and our intuitions about the proper way to do things. If systemic barriers cause disabilities, the disabilities can be eliminated by modifications to policies, plans and processes. If attitudes cause barriers, then disability awareness, respect, and an understanding of positive interaction with people with disabilities will remove barriers.

Specialized medical knowledge may be needed to treat diseases and symptoms, but not to address barriers. Barriers, not medical conditions, prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in life.

APPENDIX B: ABOUT BARRIERS

Where to look for barriers to people with disabilities:

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Exterior to a building, workstations, interior of a building, washrooms, parking areas, lunchrooms, hallways, floors, carpets, lobbies, closets, reception areas, storage areas, offices, lighting.

PHYSICAL

Furniture, windows, workstations, planters, chairs, bathroom hardware, doors, locks, doorknobs, security systems.

INFORMATION

Books, forms, printed information, manuals, web-based resources, fax transmissions, signage, bulletin boards, computer screens

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Procurement & purchasing, promotion, job postings, by-laws, hiring, regulations, interviewing, rules, testing, protocols, meetings, safety, and evacuation.

TECHNOLOGICAL

Computers, operating systems, fax machines, telephones, websites, photocopiers, keyboards, appliances, printers, switches

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Playgrounds, picnic areas, arenas (outdoor),

COMMUNICATION

Training, public announcements, receptionists

TOOLS

Hand tools, (manual / electrical), machinery

SERVICE DELIVERY

In person, email, telephone, mail

TRANSPORTATION

Trains, automobiles

APPENDIX C: TYPES OF DISABILITIES & FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively hard to perform everyday tasks such as operating a keyboard, reading a sign, differentiating colours, distinguishing sounds, climbing stairs, grasping small items, remembering words, or doing arithmetic.

1) PHYSICAL

Physical disabilities include minor difficulties moving or coordinating a part of the body, muscle weakness, tremors and in extreme cases, paralysis in one or more parts of the body. Physical disabilities can be congenital or acquired.

2) HEARING

Hearing loss includes problems distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words, ringing in the ears and total deafness.

3) SPEECH

People with a speech disability may use manual or electronic communication devices.

4) VISION

Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness.

5) DEAF-BLIND

Deaf blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. It results in significant difficulties accessing information and performing activities of daily living. Deaf-blind disabilities interfere with communication, learning, orientation, and mobility.

6) SMELL

A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odors, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes, and spoiled food.

7) TOUCH

Touch disability alters the ability to sense surfaces and their texture or quality, including temperature, vibration, and pressure. A person with a touch disability may be unable to detect or be sensitive to heat, cold, or changing temperatures.

8) INTELLECTUAL

An intellectual disability results in some type of limitation to the individual's intellectual or cognitive abilities. The disability may be caused by genetic factors, exposure to environmental toxins, brain trauma, and psychiatric conditions.

9) MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health and mental illness exist along a continuum and when one's personal balance is disturbed either repeatedly or for long periods, that person may find themselves moving closer along the continuum towards mental illness. A mental illness occurs when symptoms cause interference with daily activities and the degree of impairment may vary from mild to severe. Common workplace accommodations for people with a mental illness include flexible scheduling, changes in supervision, changes in training, modification of job duties and workplaces.

10) LEARNING

Learning disabilities are disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information: acquisition, retention, understanding, processing, organization, and use.

11) OTHER

Disabilities may result from other conditions, accidents, illnesses, and diseases including asthma, diabetes, cancer, joint replacement etc.

APPENDIX D:

MUNICIPAL ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Task	Barrier-Free Access
Post election information to the Village's website as it becomes available in clear, simple language.	<i>Candidates and electors will be permitted to access information anywhere internet access is available. Information is also available through the Municipal Office upon request.</i>
Provide resource material to candidates and/or link on the Village website re: Accessible Elections – Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections (produced by the Association of Municipal Manager's, Clerk's and Treasurers of Ontario and the Province of Ontario)	<i>Candidates will be provided the guide when Nomination Papers are filed and/or link to the guide on the Village website.</i>
Establish a separate website page to be dedicated to the current municipal election.	<i>Customer Feedback Form - available at the Village Office, to receive feedback on accessibility initiatives. Website to assist in educating electors of the voting method and assistance available.</i>
Provide information relating to Accessible Customer Service.	<i>Village Accessible Customer Service Policy, Village Accessibility Policy and Alternate Formats and Communications Support Procedures, Municipal Election Accessibility Plan available upon request.</i>
Provide alternate format documents and forms that take into account a person's disability (i.e., large print) to assist visually impaired.	<i>Documents and forms are made available to candidates and electors in alternate formats upon request and in a manner that is mutually agreed upon.</i>
Provide resource material to candidates and/or link on the Village's website Re: candidate campaign expenses, changes to the Municipal Elections Act for the same and Procedures for Alternative Voting Method. The Municipal Elections Guide (produced by the Province of Ontario) and links to additional resources.	<i>Candidates will be provided with documents when filing nomination papers. Candidates and the electors will have access to information anywhere internet access is available.</i>
Provide ability to confirm that elector's name is on the voters list.	<i>Electors able to confirm by telephone, email, attending the Municipal Office or Election Ontario's Voter Lookup.</i>
Provide copies of the voters list to candidates, upon written request.	<i>Copy of the voters list are provided to a candidate, upon written request, in paper copy or in electronic copy.</i>
Vote-By-Mail was used in the 2022 election.	<i>The Village used the alternate voting method of Vote-By-Mail for the 2022 election. The Village recognized the benefits of vote by mail as it allowed electors and non-resident electors to vote more easily; it is more convenient and accessible for electors to vote from the convenience of their own</i>

	<i>home and it eliminates the need for voting proxies, advance poll voting and voting places, and it provides electors with an extended period of time to vote. A Voter Kit is provided to every person who qualifies as an elector.</i>
Provide accessible Ballot Drop-off Centre, Revision Centre.	<i>Ballot Drop-off Centre and Revision Centre are located at the Municipal Office, which is accessible. The accessible entrance at the Municipal Office has an automatic door opener with accessible washrooms. Lighting is provided on the outside of the building, foyer and in the parking lot for attendance in the evening. Reception seating is available for people to rest, if needed. Adequate lighting is provided inside the building.</i>
Supplies to assist visually impaired at the voting places.	<i>Magnifier sheets and staff assistance are available to assist a person with low vision.</i>
Provide ability for a support person, a friend, or the Deputy Returning Officer to assist an elector with disabilities at the Ballot Drop Off Centre and Revision Centre.	<i>The process for an elector assisted by a support person, a friend or a Deputy Returning Officer is available at the voting place. The support person or friend would take an Oral Oath of Secrecy. All Deputy Returning Officers are sworn to an Oath of Secrecy.</i>
Appropriate signage to be located at the entry to voting place and within the voting place.	<i>Election signage will be posted on the digital, outdoor sign and at the entrance of the voting place on voting day. Directions/signage will be posted to clearly identify the ballot drop box. Advertising through local media and newsletters will educate the public on voting location and other relevant information.</i>
Allow for use of service animals and support persons at the voting places.	<i>Service animals and support persons are allowed pursuant to Village Accessible Customer Service Policy.</i>
Provide Accessible Customer Service training to election staff and Municipal Staff.	<i>Municipal Staff have received Accessible Customer Service training.</i>

Conclusion:

The principles of policies, practices and procedures must respect the dignity and independence of the electors and the election process should ensure that the policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity and privacy. Ensuring that electors and candidates with disabilities are able to participate in the election process is essential. Regard for accessible voting systems and site access requirements are necessary. The Vote-By-Mail process has significantly improved the voting process for persons with disabilities. Staff is more than willing to assist voters and candidates, as required.

Being able to fill out one's ballot in the convenience of their own home has significantly reduced both physical and communication barriers as it eliminates the need to physically attend a voting place, allowing voters the convenience to access information and complete forms from home, which also offers opportunity to take any additional time needed or use assistive devices, if required.

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