



Municipality of Brockton Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025



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Table of Contents

Municipality of Brockton Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025	1
Executive Summary.....	3
Statement of Commitment.....	3
2025 Strategic Action Plan:.....	3
Annual Budget:.....	4
Guiding Planning Documents:.....	4
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview.....	4
Accomplishments:.....	5
Initiatives and Next Steps:	7
Monitoring and Communications	9
Conclusion.....	10
Contact Information.....	10

Executive Summary

The Municipality of Brockton Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025 outlines the initiatives the Municipality will undertake to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). Additionally, the plan outlines how the Municipality will continue to remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. It builds upon the accomplishments of the previous accessibility plans and continues to implement Provincial requirements to create an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of Brockton is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, play, visit and invest in our community. We promote a caring, inclusive and respectful community where municipal programs, services and facilities are available to everyone, including people with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for the public we serve, and our employees.

The Municipality of Brockton continues to take a progressive approach to addressing barriers to accessibility, with a commitment to improving the quality of life for residents of Brockton while continuing to build an inclusive community that meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities. The Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is an integral part of our ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusiveness.

2025 Strategic Action Plan:

In 2021, the Council of the Municipality of Brockton adopted a new Strategic Action Plan, translating broad community goals and strategies from the 2013 Plan into specific initiatives for implementation over the next five (5) years. The plan considers changes that our community is experiencing, including new opportunities and the continuation of delivering quality services to residents and businesses. The vision outlined in the strategic plan supports continuation of the efforts to reduce barriers in our community.

There are specific goals that support the ongoing work to reduce barriers for all those with disabilities in the community as shown below:

- Scanning and digitizing historical archives and artifacts for public viewing.
- Implement a community “Walkability” plan, incorporating findings from the Master Recreation Plan, including:
 - The standard of maintenance of sidewalks, trails, and accessibility features for all ages, including identifying specific trails as year-round for maintenance purposes.
 - Upgrades to the trails.
 - Encouraging new developments in Walkerton to provide pedestrian connections to the downtown and interconnection with existing parks and trails.
- Initiate planning for a new recreation centre.
- Develop more activity programming for all ages.
- Increase the availability and renewal of playground equipment throughout Brockton.

- Continue to engage with and assist local organizations, the County, local employers, the Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (S.M.A.R.T), Grey Transit Network and/or other levels of government enhance public transportation.
- Update Brockton's online development portal for ease of access to information.
- Look at communication alternatives to ensure engagement is effective – develop a Brockton App, website improvements, customer service delivery improvements.
- Review and expand our policy on working remotely.

Each term, Council also sets a list of priorities when determining the annual budget, using the strategic plan as a guideline to ensure continued alignment of goals.

Annual Budget:

The Municipality's annual budget aligns with the community's vision and Council's priorities to achieve required results. The basis for the development of the Municipality's annual budget is the Strategic Action Plan.

Most projects that are designed to reduce barriers within Municipal facilities are identified in the annual budget; either as capital projects or operational projects. The budget, along with related by-laws and policies, provides Council-directed authority to staff to undertake these projects or provide ongoing services.

Guiding Planning Documents:

The Official Plan contains Council's objectives and policies to guide the short-term and long-term physical development of all lands within the boundary of the Municipality. The Official Plan seeks to balance the goals of economic prosperity, community vitality, environmental responsibility, enriched cultural identity and infrastructure sustainability.

The Municipality will update the Official Plan to include a larger Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to encourage affordable housing and accessibility enrichments. Staff will also encourage additional multi-unit dwellings such that applicable legislation would require and promote more accessible units.

The Municipality will also update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to incentivize businesses to enhance accessibility with initiatives such as storefront improvements (ramps, etc.), investigate accessibility grants to rehabilitate existing apartments, and research other accessibility enhancements that can be explored in Walkerton and further expanded throughout Brockton.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview

The 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan describes the measures that the Municipality of Brockton has previously taken, and the measures that will be taken in the five (5) years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities who use the facilities and the services of the Municipality. The 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes actions and processes by which Brockton has identified, removed, or prevented barriers, the monitoring process for the Plan, and how these initiatives will be communicated to the public.

Accomplishments:

The Municipality's previous Multi-Year Accessibility Plan introduced our commitment to sustainable implementation of the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation ("IASR"). A large number of AODA and IASR provisions were put into practice throughout 2014-2019, as improvements were made to provide programs, services, and facilities for people with disabilities.

Customer Service

The Municipal Office was renovated to include an accessible portion of the main counter to accommodate persons in wheelchairs.

Information and Communications

The Municipality's website was rebranded in 2018, incorporating a mobile-friendly interface to make the website more accessible on a smartphone, or tablet, and has the ability for residents to use screen readers to read-aloud page content, and increase the size of the screen to involve larger print. The website content was further updated and refreshed during the launch of the new site to ensure the content was relevant and accurate. The website is WCAG 2.0 complaint consistent with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The Municipality also began electronically broadcast Council Meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and continued throughout 2021, including using software to publish agendas for Council and Committee Meetings. This software enables a greater percentage of the population to access agendas and meeting information, as well as view livestreams and/or recordings of meetings, and provides an opportunity for individuals to participate in planning meetings remotely.

Employment

The Municipality has installed standing desks for employees who require accommodation. The remote work policy was also updated to further accommodate employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing employees to work from home.

The Municipality also has a process in place to provide staff with accessible items that are required to perform their work, such as headsets for hearing concerns.

The Municipal Emergency Response Plan was updated in 2019, and workplace emergency response information is continually updated to maintain accurate information for employees.

Procurement

The Municipality's Purchasing and Procurement Policy was updated in 2021, including the enhancement and expansion of accessibility information related to the procurement and acquisition of goods, services and facilities.

Training

Staff participate in training on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, including standards for Accessible Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communication, Employment, the Human Rights Code and the Design of Public Spaces. A tracking system is in place to monitor training requirements and completion.

Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality continues to apply the supporting design standards to address accessibility and inclusion for Municipal play spaces in community and neighbourhood parks.

The Walkerton Optimist Park was reconstructed from 2017-2020 as a fully inclusive park/play structure, including rubberized surfaces, and accessible structures. The Walkerton Optimist Club and Municipality continue to plan for additional phased upgrades to increase the accessibility of the park including swing sets, and lighting throughout 2021 and beyond.



The Design of Public Spaces technical standards for private property are implemented through the Municipality's site plan process.

The Municipality and Cargill and District Community Fund completed a fully accessible upgrade of the Cargill Community Centre from 2017-2019, including a new entryway, meeting room, kitchen, and coat room, accessible and adaptable seating, barrier-free washrooms, and increased energy efficiency.



Renovations have been completed at the Walkerton Community Centre, Walkerton Centennial Pool, and Lobies Park Gatehouse to repair lighting and replace equipment.

Accessible parking spaces are installed throughout Walkerton, including along the main street to assist residents in being able to shop at local businesses.

Sidewalk reconstruction was completed to include tactile plates on the corners for persons with disabilities to better access the sidewalk along Durham Street, and Archy Street in Walkerton.



Transit

All Municipally licensed taxi cabs are reminded of their *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requirements, and further display identification on their vehicles and make information available to all passengers in an accessible format.

The Municipality has also partnered with the County of Grey to offer a Grey Transit Route program for residents to travel from Durham to Walkerton by transit bus. The Municipality continues its partnership with Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (S.M.A.R.T.) to offer transportation to elderly residents, and advocates the importance of transit to the County and Provincial government.



Initiatives and Next Steps:

Customer Service

The Municipality of Brockton will conduct the 2022 Election via telephone and internet voting to accommodate residents' ability to vote, including assistance opportunities for anyone facing a challenge voting electronically.

The Municipality will update our Customer Service Policy once the Strategic Action Plan is finalized to review the current service standards, and identify opportunities to provide better quality service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff implemented electronically broadcasted Council Meetings, and further pursued the ability to continue broadcasting meetings with software that will display live closed captioning during meetings. This software will be operational in the fall of 2021/early 2022.

The Municipality is also pursuing several opportunities to modernize our service delivery, including the use of online fillable forms, e-permitting software, and e-commerce through the Municipal website.

Information and Communication

The Municipality will develop and implement an accessibility awareness training event for both staff and the business community to encourage continued communication on the importance of accessibility.

The Municipality will pursue the creation of an accessibility awards program, recognizing businesses that make accessibility improvements.

The Municipal website will continue to implement WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance.

The Municipality will update the signage at Municipal Landfill sites to ensure residents are aware of information on proper garbage and recycling disposal, and other related restrictions when attending the sites.

Employment

The Municipality will update the remote working policy and introduce a more permanent Work from Home Policy to accommodate and support employees for whom the traditional office environment poses barriers. This ability to work from home may assist an employee with a disability to be able to provide meaningful work while staying at home.

The Municipality is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Municipality of Brockton will provide accommodations throughout the recruitment, selection and/or assessment process to applicants with disabilities. The Municipality will continue to ensure there are no barriers when it comes to recruitment, selection and retention of employees and will strive to encourage people of all abilities to apply for career opportunities.

Procurement

The Municipality is publishing bidding opportunities through an online website, Bids & Tenders, which allows documentation to be posted in an accessible format in comparison to physical documentation, and further allows vendors to submit their bids electronically.

The Purchasing and Procurement Policy includes templates to assist staff in drafting bid documents which are also created in an accessible format. Bidders are further required to produce documentation in accessible formats.

Training

The Municipality is dedicated to improving the tracking system for training. By the digitalization of tracking of training it will allow staff and managers easier access to the information and ensuring all staff are adequately trained.

A recommendation from the Municipal Innovation Council is to implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training. The Municipality is committed to this initiative will continue to seek opportunities to provide Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training across all departments.

The Municipality will strive to ensure that future training opportunities are inclusive and allow for different types of learning styles including providing training that is self-paced with accessibility features designed into the training modules.

Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality has begun development of a community park, The Market Garden, located on the main street in Walkerton encouraging all community members to gather and support area businesses. The Market Garden will feature a number of seating locations, performance platform and ample space for outdoor events for vendors.

The Municipality will continue to upgrade sidewalks and road surfaces over the next five (5) years through several road construction capital projects.

The Municipality will construct an accessible washroom and facility building at the Bruce Power Regional Soccer Park providing access for players, coaches, and spectators during practices, games, and tournaments. This project supports healthy active living for a large number of residents and youth development throughout Brockton.

The Municipality will resurface Tennis Courts in Walkerton, and five (5) playgrounds in 2022 to meet accessibility standards.

The Elmwood Community Centre will be upgraded to include a number of improvements including the creation of two (2) fully accessible washrooms, the installation of permanent ramps and push-button entrance/exits and a lift from the main floor to the lower level, pending grant approval. These are major upgrades that will significantly improve accessibility to and throughout this facility that is frequently used by many different age groups of all abilities.

Transit

The Municipality will create a new Recreation Master Plan identifying trail linkage, accessible trails, and increase signage along trail systems.

The Municipality will continue to partner with the Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (S.M.A.R.T.) offering mobile transit services to residents throughout Bruce County. The Municipality will continue its partnership with the Grey County Grey Transit Route bus system expanding over several towns in Bruce and Grey County making travel more accessible to residents of all ages.

The Municipality will complete an inventory of all sidewalks in our urban community and identify gaps for future planning considerations. The sidewalk inventory will also extend to our community centres, and assist in identifying servicing required, such as ensuring that ramps at community centre entrances and exits are an appropriate width.

Other

The Municipality will create an Accessibility Advisory Committee as our community continues to grow, which will enable Brockton to obtain a diverse perspective on accessibility, and encourage increased awareness and advocacy for persons with disabilities.

The Municipality will prepare and submit annual Accessibility Compliance Reports.

Monitoring and Communications

The Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff provide ongoing monitoring of the Municipal Accessibility Plan initiatives and will provide an annual status update.

Communication of the 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan updates include:

- Circulation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee minutes regarding the Municipal Accessibility Plan to Committee of Council and Council for approval, once the Committee has been appointed.
- Publication of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on the Municipality's website www.Brockton.ca, and hardcopies will be available at the Municipal Office (100 Scott Street, Walkerton), and Walkerton Library (249 Durham Street East, Walkerton) and Cargill Library (1012 Greenock-Brant Townline, Cargill).
- Additional hardcopies will be available through Clerk's Department and available in alternate format copies (e.g. Braille, Large Print) upon request.

Conclusion

The Municipality of Brockton recognizes that further steps need to be taken to become a barrier-free community. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects our commitment to engage in initiatives that will work towards creating a community free of physical, attitudinal and social barriers by the year 2025.

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