



## **MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**Revised March 2023**

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# MUNICIPALITY OF POWASSAN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## 1.0 Introduction

The Corporation of the Municipality of Powassan government structure includes a mayor and four Councilors. Each member of the Council also sits on various standing Committees.

The Municipality of Powassan's Mission Statement is "Through efficient and effective leadership, Powassan supports a high quality of life for all its citizens. Its citizens have a strong sense of pride and ownership in the community."

It is important that the Accessibility Plan ensures *all* citizens feel included in that statement, therefore the Municipality strives to meet the needs of its employees, residents, visitors, and other stakeholders with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

This Accessibility Plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians and will be reviewed annually and updated at least once every five (5) years.

## 2.0 Municipal Highlights

Powassan is located along the Highway 11 corridor, approximately 30 kilometres south of the City of North Bay. The Municipality was amalgamated on January 1, 2001, to include the Town of Powassan, Town of Trout Creek, and the Township of South Hibmworth to become the Corporation of the Municipality of Powassan.

The Municipal Office is located at 250 Clark Street and the Public Works buildings are located at 750 Main Street, in Powassan. The Municipality also has two arenas, two fire halls, a pool, a library, parks and trails, a municipal beach and boat launch, two seniors' halls, rental halls and the Municipal building runs as an event hub for the community.

The Powassan Town Square building is home to the Powassan and Area Family Health Team which is made up of family physicians, a nurse practitioner, a registered family

nurse, a social worker and administrative staff. Down the street residents will find dental, physiotherapy and chiropractic clinics. There are seniors' residences, both assisted and independent living, and many local businesses throughout the community.

The Municipality of Powassan is an active community with a Recreation Committee and an Events Coordinator, providing a variety of programs and events throughout the year such as swimming, hockey, line dancing, cycling tours, craft classes and many more. A privately owned golf course is at the edge of town with many equestrian facilities throughout the municipality.

Several local families date back numerous generations. The Municipality is now seeing a growth in population and diversity as people prioritize lifestyle and remote work is available. Visitors come to enjoy the cycling tours, the snowmobile trails and many locals take part in the accessible events at 250 Clark. There really is something here for everyone.

### **3.0 Key Contact**

Municipal Clerk or Designate: [office@powassan.net](mailto:office@powassan.net)  
705-724-2813

The Municipality of Powassan  
250 Clark Street  
Powassan, ON P0H 1Z0

The public is encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions, by phone, email, or mail, on how the Municipality can improve facilities and services for those with disabilities.

### **4.0 Background**

Preparation of an annual Municipal Accessibility Plan is a requirement of local governments in Ontario under the provisions of the Ontario with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. Legislation requires that municipalities with populations of over 10,000 establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Municipality of Powassan, under Council's Motion No. 2002-243 established an Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2002. Under current regulations, the Municipality of Powassan is not required to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee as outlined in Part VII of the AODA.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be officially disbanded in 2023 and now, following provincial guidelines, Municipal staff are provided with training on the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations. Staff are responsible for being aware of accessibility related issues, requirements, and reporting to their supervisors. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with all municipal policies, including identifying barriers.

Council approval is required for all changes and/or updates to the Plan as well as budget approval for annual initiatives.

## **5.0 Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers**

The Municipality has implemented the following projects and programs since the last plan update, to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to meet requirements of the AODA.

The following barriers were identified in the 2016 Accessibility Plan update and have since been rectified.

### Customer Service

The Municipality of Powassan is committed to meeting the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Ontario (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11) Accessible Customer Service Standards, with respect to the use and benefit of Municipal services, programs, and facilities with means that respects their dignity, independence, integration and equals what is provided to others.

This commitment includes residents, employees, visitors, and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities. Our goal is to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standards, including the development, implementation, and maintenance of Accessible Customer Service Policies.

In 2018 the Municipal offices moved from 466 Main Street to 250 Clark Street. The original building layout and renovations completed for the move eliminated some of the 2016 Accessibility concerns such as:

- Municipal office front door – no automatic door for access to interior door to access elevator
- Municipal office interior door – no automatic door access to the elevator

- Municipal office in lower board room at the back of the building - repairs were needed for the wooden walkway to meet the level of the automatic door.

The current building now has accessible doors, a chair lift to go up the few stairs, accessible washrooms, and an accessible counter at the Customer Service Desk.

### Information and Communications

Since the last Plan, systems and employee education have been updated and written and other forms of communication are now accessible, upon request. A note to the public has been added to the Municipal website on the Accessibility page.

If an accessible format that is needed is not on hand, Municipal staff will make every effort reasonable to provide that format in a timely manner.

Emergency and public safety information is provided to the public on the Municipal website and staff are available to go over the information or provide it in a different format if needed.

Exceptions to providing information in an accessible format are:

- When it is not technically possible to convert a document to an accessible format (i.e. the original format is too old to convert). In this case an explanation will be provided, and a summary of the information will be provided).
- When the information is not owned by the Municipality or comes from another organization. Contact information for the origin of the information will be provided, if possible.
- When the information is on a product or product label (the supplier of the product should be contacted to provide the information).

Information shared with the Municipality is acceptable via phone, email, or mail and if needed other formats will be considered.

### Employment

Moving to the new building has also allowed the Municipality to provide more accessibility to potential employees. With various offices and rooms, accommodation for workspace and/or meeting space is readily available and any specific technology needed can be procured.

Employee feedback is welcome in various formats and accessible formats will be provided when needed.

All job postings now include that people with disabilities are welcome to apply and illustrates how they should go about requesting any accommodation needed.

### Procurement

When renovating the new building, accessibility was addressed with widened doors and hallways. The printer and storage areas are accessible and could be made more so if requested. The hallways are always kept clear.

In the Municipal building is a room that is rented out for conferences, education classes, and events that is accessible with nearby accessible washrooms. A ramp was added to the west side doors for easier access to that room.

### Training

Training is provided to all employees, volunteers, and committee members, with accessibility information available digitally and in print format. Other formats could be available if requested.

### Design of Public Spaces

Between 2008 and 2022 the following barriers were addressed:

- Sidewalks in the Trout Creek area of the municipality were cleaned of sand and overgrown grass.
- Paving stones were used to raise the roadway and curbs were ground down at the intersections of Clark Street/Main Street and Memorial Park Drive/Main Street for easier access on and off the sidewalks.
- Public Works added gravel and smoothed out the shoulders of Big Bend Avenue where there are no sidewalks to make it easier for scooters.
- Curbs in Powassan were all eased to ramp form for ease of use with wheelchairs and scooters.
- More accessible parking within the Municipality.
- The Municipality purchased the Powassan Legion building and repaired the ramp to meet the side door entrance and included a new pathway from the back

parking lot to the ramp; the curb was made accessible, and an automatic door was installed for easy entrance.

- An elevator was installed at the Powassan Sportsplex.
- An elevator was installed at the former Municipal office building (now privately owned).
- A ramp was installed at the Powassan Sportsplex.
- A ramp was installed at the Trout Creek Community Centre.
- Sidewalks in Powassan were ground down to make using a wheelchair or scooter smoother and easier for those using a walker or cane.
- Floor tiles fixed at Municipal office building.
- Better lighting has been installed in gymnasium at the Municipal building.

### Transportation

There are currently no Municipal transportation services.

## **6.0 Strategies and Actions**

These are the projects and programs the Municipality of Powassan plans to accomplish to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to remove and prevent barriers to those with disabilities.

### Customer Service

The Municipality is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services, and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others, including:

- Larger print on billings; digital format available.
- Updated Customer Service policies and procedures based on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations.
- Ensure customer service information is available on the website.
- Update the website with information for customers to access should they need accommodation the Municipality cannot provide (i.e. sign language).

### Information and Communications

The Municipality of Powassan is committed to making municipal information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.



- The website will be updated and made to meet AODA standards.
- More/updated information added to the website.
- Alternate formats available.
- Establish a process and procedure for receiving feedback from the public, which will include various accessible formats.
- Ensure the public is aware of the feedback process and the availability of accessible formats.
- Ensure Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information is kept up to date and available in various accessible formats.
- Ensure all municipal departments are aware of any new accessible formats and the various ways some information may need to be communicated.
- The Municipality will continue to consider accessibility needs when planning meetings and/or events.

### Employment

The Municipality of Powassan is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

- The Municipality will continue to review or create new policies and procedures that take accessibility into consideration for employee recruitment, return to work and accommodations for all employees.
- All online recruitment will continue to be accessible, and accommodation made when necessary.

### Procurement

The Municipality of Powassan is committed to fair and accessible employment practices and will continue to look for accessibility criteria in our processes when purchasing goods, services, and facilities. Accessible design and features will be included whenever possible.

### Self-Service Kiosks

The Municipality of Powassan is committed to incorporating accessibility features/considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

- The Municipality will ensure accessibility when creating any new or improving upon any afterhours self-service kiosks, drop-boxes, or payment options.

## Training

The Municipality is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

- By the end of 2023 any further necessary or updated training will be provided to:
  - All employees
  - All volunteers
  - Any new employees
  - Anyone who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Municipality.
  - All council members
  - Any employee who starts a new position and will need more in-depth training.
- Ensure all records of training are kept, including:
  - Name of person being trained.
  - Date of completion
  - Topics included in training.

## Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality of Powassan will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

Upcoming potential projects include:

- Railing added to stairs at Trout Creek Community Centre
- Floor fixed at Trout Creek Community Centre (arena waiting area)
- Accessible playground equipment added to the Trout Creek Community Centre outside play area.

The Municipality of Powassan has procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces. The procedures are outlined in Schedule B.

## **7.0 Decision-Making Review**

The updated Accessibility Plan will be presented to Council for review. Council will then direct staff to any concerns which it deems necessary to address. Requests from the public will also be forwarded through the Clerk, or designate, to Council for review and inclusion in this plan.

## **8.0 Monitoring Progress**

The Accessibility Plan includes target dates to complete the identified projects. Municipal staff will actively monitor projects to help ensure that targets are achieved. However, the target dates are a guiding estimate only and projects may be delayed due to budgetary constraints or other unforeseen challenges.

Appropriate departments will be followed up with and asked to report on the status of targeted projects. The community will also be monitored to ensure that concerns regarding accessibility are brought to attention and that any necessary action is taken.

## **9.0 Annual Accessibility Reviews**

Reviews will focus on the targets achieved and work completed and will provide an update on the plans for the following year, with an opportunity for public input.

## SCHEDULE A

### Definitions

The following definitions are from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and are the same definitions used in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

#### Disability:

- (a) A disability may be visible or not visible.
- (b) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (c) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (d) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (e) a mental disorder, or
- (f) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

#### Barrier

“Barrier” is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including but not limited to a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

## **SCHEDULE B**

### **Procedures for Preventative and Emergency Management Of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces**

A regular inspection schedule will be implemented for accessible elements including ramps, lifts, paths, playgrounds and any other elements for signs of wear and tear, damage or defects. Issues that are identified will be forwarded to the proper department for maintenance or replacement.

If it is found that an element is unsafe or an emergency repair is required, it will be taken out of service and listed as a priority. A temporary solution will be done if possible. Where needed, the public will be notified appropriately at the site (for example with signage or barricades).

Where possible the public will be notified ahead of time of the disruption. For all disruptions, notice will be given on the Municipal website, social media pages and at the front desk with the reason for disruption, length of disruption and alternative accessible options where possible. The same notification format(s) will be used when the element is back in service.