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## **Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2022 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATES**

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has worked diligently to achieve the goals defined within the approved plan. Recognized achievements include:

### **Accessibility Plans:**

The County of Huron has created an “Annual Multi-Year Accessibility Plan” and a “2022 Accessibility Update” under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, with annual updates on successes. The County of Huron has completed both requirements with the documents approved by County Council at the December 2022 County Council meeting.

### **Site Plan Reviews:**

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has been actively engaged with Municipal and County staff as well as private businesses and organizations in conducting Site Plan Reviews in a timely fashion. The Committee believes public awareness will continue to stimulate community participation and the subcommittee's time and commitment. The Committee reaches out to each local municipality to review municipal facilities and projects. Recommendations were made for each review. The Reviews have been taking place virtually via ZOOM to follow social distancing requirements during the Covid-19 Pandemic and by site visit later in 2022. Examples of completed and/or current site plan reviews in process for the year of 2022:

- Huron East – Seaforth Splash Pad and recreational area
- North Huron – Wingham Fire Hall Washroom Plan review
- Huron County Economic Development Office review
- Huron East - Brussels Morris Grey Community Centre renovation review

- Huron East - Seaforth Agricultural Society site visit/accessibility review.
- North Huron - Belgrave Community Centre site visit/accessibility review.

### **Government Directives and Regulations:**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee provided updates and advice about new government directives and regulations to County Council and the Municipal Working Group. The Working Group is made up of one volunteer/staff member from each lower tier. Each member of the group reports back to and shares newly developed resources and material approved by County Council to their Mayor/Councillors.

### **2022 Accessibility Awards of Merit for Barrier-Free Design**

This Award promotes public awareness of the importance of barrier-free design and recognizes excellence in accessibility design. Awards are presented to the owner of a building or facility that has been designed or renovated with special regard to accessibility for persons with a disability. There are 2 award categories – Business and Public Sector.

The following is a listing of the 2022 Award Recipients:

#### **Business Category Award**

Sweets N' Treats, Blyth

McDonald's, Wingham

Deams Holdings Inc / Blyth Library

#### **Public Sector Category Award**

Huron County Library & Museum

### **Sandra Thompson Memorial Accessibility Champion Award**

The Accessibility Champion Award was established in 2022 to honor the memory of Sandra Thompson and to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Sandra Thompson was dedicated to promoting accessibility in Huron County, was a leader in inspiring others to improve accessibility in our community and worked as the Accessibility Coordinator for the County of Huron until 2016. She was from the Bluevale area.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities falls on December 3 each year. This day is endorsed by the United Nations and is important because we need to realize just how many

people there really are who are impacted by disability.... World-wide there are currently one billion people! That's essentially saying that one in every seven people in the world are facing challenges and barriers due to some specific type of disability. In Ontario, the data tells us that 24.1% of the population (age 15 and older) identify as having a disability.

The Accessibility Champion Award recognizes and honours an individual in Huron County who:

- Has shown dedication and commitment to promoting accessibility in our community
- has demonstrated exemplary commitment & leadership towards advancing accessibility
- is working to build a more inclusive community
- is making a difference in the lives of people living with a disability

Nominations included: a detailed description of the nominee's work and initiatives; A signed testimonial(s) that speak to the contributions and impact of the individual to accessibility in the County of Huron.

▪ **Continued use of Resources:**

- Continued connectivity with County Council, Lower Tiers, and Businesses. Due to the continued Covid-19 impacts on curtailing events and activities, contact in 2022 with municipalities and the community has been via phone/virtual ZOOM meetings, email, and minimal face-to-face contact.
- The Municipal Accessibility Working Group continues to meet via ZOOM two times per year. Topics related to accessibility were discussed including municipal accessibility projects, review of Accessibility Plans for the 2022 municipal elections, and ideas for providing training on accessibility to their new Councils.
- An Accessibility Tour of Blyth was held with the Huron County Building Officials and Municipal Planners to show and discuss various accessibility features of recreational facilities, parking, sidewalks, playgrounds, entrances, and businesses.
- The Committee continues to encourage local businesses to get involved in creating barrier free communities.
- HCAAC presented a "Accessibility and your Business" webinar May 25 via ZOOM. This webinar was organized by the Huron Economic Development Department and was held

to celebrate National Accessibility Week (May 29-June 4, 2022) This webinar was part of the Department's Small Business Webinar Series.

- The HCAAC continued in 2022 to participate in the Back Alley Artist Extravaganza in Clinton. Our 4'x4' art board was created to promote the HCAAC, accessibility and that 'everyone is welcome' in Huron County. The art board has been donated to the Clinton Public Library for display at their facility after the Art Show finished in the fall.



- A Portable Accessible Washroom has been a focus of discussion for HCAAC and a special Sub-Committee formed. A funding application was made to the Inclusive Community Grants Program of the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. On October 31, 2022, the Committee was informed that the application was not successful. We are seeking feedback on our application from the Regional Development Advisor.
- County staff and IT Department: Website accessibility is an important focus. Accessibility training is required by all County employees.
  - o Background: New public websites and significantly refreshed websites were required to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014. Furthermore, by January 1, 2021, all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012, must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
  - o WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted standard for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Following the WCAG 2.0

guidelines makes content accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, including:

- Blindness and low vision
  - Deafness and hearing loss
  - Learning disabilities
  - Cognitive impairments
  - Mobility impairments
  - Speech impairments
- The HCAAC continues to promote the development of accessibility training to employees/staff through continuous learnings on training requirements defined in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. These learning opportunities are customized into six modules:
    1. Customer Service
    2. General Requirements
    3. Human Rights
    4. Employment
    5. Information & Communication
    6. Design of Public Spaces
- All new County staff received required training within an appropriate time frame. All staff are required to receive training on accessibility standards for customer service and use of assistive devices.
  - Upon request, provide information in accessible formats and with communication supports at the same cost charged to others. Publicized the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on website and documents.
  - Continue to work with IT and Human Resources departments to train staff on Accessibility Standards.
  - ZOOM Webinar “Showcasing the Accessibility features of the Goderich Waterfront” The purpose of the webinar was to show & discuss accessibility features of the Goderich Main Beach area, recreational facilities / parking areas, washrooms, change rooms,

playground, and signage. Invitations were extended to Municipal Staff, including those involved with parking, public works, parks and recreations, Councillors, Planners.

- Provide Information on accessibility to Community Groups, including the G2G Rail Trail Association. Items for them to consider from Section 2.2 Recreational Trails from the Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces, include:
  - o Rest areas
  - o Amenities along the trail
  - o Trail slope
  - o Need for and location of ramps to access the trail from parking areas
  - o Edge protection
  - o Signage – larger lettering in Helvetica or Verdana, high tonal contrasting letters (white) on dark background (black)
  - o Clear paths with no obstructions
  - o Hard surfacing of trail
  
- The “Huron County Universal Design and Accessibility Guidelines” is being reviewed and updated with the assistance of the Planning and Development Department. This review started 2022 and will be completed in 2023. An updated version will be provided to local Municipalities in 2023. This document assists in their review of site plans under section 41, Site Plan Control Area, of the Planning Act.