



# Annual Accessibility Plan 2026

**Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC)**  
**County of Huron**  
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Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC)

[accessibility@huroncounty.ca](mailto:accessibility@huroncounty.ca)

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## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the County of Huron is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples and is connected to the Dish with One Spoon wampum, under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and its resources by the Great Lakes in peace. We also acknowledge the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regard to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 ½.

We recognize First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water and the historical and ongoing injustices they face in Canada. As a committee dedicated to fostering accessibility and inclusion, we acknowledge our responsibility to engage meaningfully with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, reinforce our efforts toward reconciliation and uphold and value the traditions, rights, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples.

## Chair's Address

People with disabilities often face barriers that limit their ability to work, shop, travel, and engage fully in their communities. One of the greatest strengths of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) is our dedicated members, who are passionate about informing, educating, and inspiring our community to make Huron County accessible to all. Our committee is committed to providing comprehensive accessibility training to community members across various sectors in alignment with the [O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#).

We focus on:

- Customer Service
- General Requirements
- Human Rights
- Employment
- Information & Communication
- Design of Public Spaces

Training is tailored to job responsibilities. Facilities staff focus on Human Rights, General Requirements, and Customer Service, while management completes all modules. All stakeholders receive training on accessibility standards and assistive devices. Through training opportunities and resources, we aim to increase awareness and engagement and foster a deeper understanding of government legislation among various entities, including businesses, organizations, institutions, services, and facilities.

Governance

Our committee has successfully operated virtually since 2021. We appreciate the dedication and passion of all our committee members, who contribute to creating an inclusive society.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

Leah Noël (she/her)  
HCAAC Chair

## Foreword

Accessibility is a cornerstone of an inclusive community, ensuring that every individual can participate fully in their community. Disability affects a growing number of Canadians. From 2017 to 2022, the disability rate increased across all provinces and most territories. There were most considerable increases in mental health-related disabilities (10.4% prevalence, +3.2 points), pain-related disabilities (16.7% prevalence, +2.2 points), and seeing disabilities (7.4% prevalence, +2.2 points; see [Infographic](#)). These trends emphasize the growing need for accessible environments and inclusive practices to accommodate the evolving needs of individuals with disabilities nationwide.

Huron County is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible community, ensuring everyone can engage fully in all facets of life. In line with this dedication, we introduce our 2026 Annual Accessibility Plan (AAP), detailing our strategic plan to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in our County. HCAAC sincerely appreciates the ongoing support and collaboration from the community. Together, we are advancing towards a more inclusive and accessible Huron County.

This plan reflects our dedication to meeting and exceeding the standards set by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#).

We encourage you to review this plan and join us in our commitment to championing accessibility. Please feel empowered to contact us with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

This report is available online ([click here](#)) and can be provided in various formats upon request. If your inquiry concerns our partner municipality, please contact them directly.

As we progress on this journey, we remain dedicated to accountability, transparency, active engagement, and ongoing improvement and invite all stakeholders to participate.

Together, we can make Huron County a place where everyone belongs.

## Contact Information

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## Executive Summary

The 2026 Annual Accessibility Plan (AAP) of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) reflects the County of Huron's ongoing commitment to building a more inclusive and accessible community. This plan outlines the achievements from 2025, highlights our strategic goals for 2026, and underscores our dedication to ensuring that Huron County continues to lead in accessibility and inclusivity.

In 2025, HCAAC advanced accessibility across Huron County through several key initiatives. Achievements included the launch of the AccessSLED program, accessibility reviews of more than 15 municipal sites and projects, and the delivery of an awareness session on inclusive volunteer practices during National AccessAbility Week. These efforts, along with the Committee's continued advisory role and community partnerships, strengthened accessibility outcomes and reinforced the County's commitment to inclusion.

In 2026, HCAAC will build on this progress by focusing on both new and standing goals. Priorities include renewing the AccessSLED program, continuing accessibility reviews with an emphasis on Huron County Library locations, recruiting new community members to the Committee, and developing practical accessibility resources such as quick-reference guides. Standing goals will remain central, including enhancing accessibility in public spaces, strengthening collaboration with stakeholders, and promoting accessibility awareness and education.

The 2026 Annual Accessibility Plan reaffirms the importance of accountability and transparency. HCAAC will continue to monitor progress, provide updates to County Council, and engage with the community to ensure accessibility initiatives are sustainable, responsive, and impactful.

## HCAAC at a Glance



Figure 1: Huron County Map

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) serves as the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for Huron County, mandated by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#). HCAAC is dedicated to advising Huron County Council on the implementation of accessibility standards across the County's nine partner municipalities (see [Appendix](#) for HCAAC's objectives and priorities). Comprising primarily of individuals with disabilities, the committee plays a vital role in creating an accessible community by providing input on accessibility plans, site developments, and public spaces. Through education, consultation, and advocacy, the HCAAC ensures that Huron County remains inclusive and accessible for everyone.

- [Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh](#)
- [Bluewater](#)
- [Central Huron](#)
- [Goderich](#)
- [Howick](#)
- [Huron East](#)
- [Morris-Turnberry](#)
- [North Huron](#)
- [South Huron](#)



## Strategic Alignment

HCAAC is dedicated to ensuring that the County's operations are accessible and inclusive for all individuals.



### **Integrated Approach to Inclusion and Accessibility**

In alignment with the County of Huron's commitment to inclusion and diversity, HCAAC takes an integrated approach where accessibility is seamlessly woven into the broader framework of inclusion. Rather than being a standalone aspect, accessibility is a fundamental component of our overall Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) strategy.

This approach ensures that all initiatives and programs reflect HCAAC's dedication to creating a community where everyone can fully participate and thrive. By integrating accessibility into the IDEA lens, HCAAC strives to foster an environment where accessibility is not just an add-on but a core element of the County's inclusive practices and policies.



## Intersectionality and Disability

Intersectionality highlights how various aspects of identity, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability, intersect and influence an individual's experiences. Disability is deeply intertwined with these factors, affecting how individuals experience barriers and discrimination. For example, a person's experience with disability can differ significantly based on their gender, race, or socioeconomic background.

By recognizing these intersecting identities, we can better understand and address the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. This perspective guides our approach to creating inclusive environments, ensuring that our accessibility initiatives consider and accommodate the diverse needs of all community members. This approach helps us move beyond a one-size-fits-all model and fosters a more equitable and supportive community for everyone.

## Reporting and Accountability

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in enhancing accessibility across the region. To achieve this, the Committee adheres to a robust framework for monitoring progress, evaluating effectiveness, and reporting outcomes.

- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** HCAAC reviews its initiatives and programs to assess their impact and effectiveness. This involves collecting feedback from stakeholders, analyzing data on accessibility improvements, and evaluating the progress of ongoing projects against established goals and standards.
- **Annual Reporting:** The HCAAC publishes an annual accessibility plan update to provide a comprehensive overview of its activities, achievements, and future goals. This report includes details on compliance with accessibility standards, progress on key projects, and any challenges encountered. It is made available to the public and

shared with the County Council and partner municipalities to ensure accountability, transparency, and trust.

- **Public Engagement:** HCAAC encourages input from the community through various channels, including public meetings and feedback mechanisms. This engagement helps ensure that the Committee's work is aligned with the priorities and perspectives of the community.
- **Accountability Framework:** HCAAC operates within a clear accountability framework, with defined roles and responsibilities for Committee members and subcommittees. Regular meetings are held to review progress, address issues, and adjust strategies and actions as needed.
- **Reporting to County Council:** HCAAC provides regular updates to the County Council, including detailed reports on accessibility initiatives and their outcomes. These updates help ensure that accessibility remains a priority within the County's broader strategic goals and facilitates informed decision-making.

## 2025 Achievements

### AccessSLED Program

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) launched the AccessSLED program in March 2025 to provide funding support for community-based accessibility improvements. In its first year, the program has awarded CAD 15,300 in grants to 16 organizations across the County. Funded projects support a variety of accessibility enhancements in public spaces and community facilities. The program demonstrates strong community engagement and has established a framework for sustainable, ongoing impact.

### National AccessAbility Week-Education Initiative

As part of National AccessAbility Week 2025, the HCAAC Education Subcommittee, in collaboration with the County's nine partner municipalities, organized a virtual awareness session on inclusive volunteer practices. Representatives from over 15 community organizations attended the session. The central message emphasized the importance of volunteers being trained in the AODA Customer Service Standard. Participants were provided with training resources and advised of the ongoing support available through their municipalities and HCAAC.

### Accessibility Reviews 2025

As of August 2025, the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) has reviewed over 15 municipal sites and projects to assess compliance with accessibility standards and provide recommendations for improvement. These ongoing reviews ensure accessibility considerations are embedded in infrastructure planning and project design across the County.

### Accessible Tourism Initiative Update

In alignment with the 2025 goal to promote accessible tourism, Huron County's Tourism team is dedicated to collaborating with the [AccessNow](#) app to improve accessibility information and assistance for visitors and residents, fostering a more inclusive and welcoming tourism environment.

The HCAAC Education Subcommittee has provided guidance and endorsed this approach, enabling the Tourism team to take the lead in implementing this initiative with continued advisory support from HCAAC.

## 2026 Goals

- **Renewal of AccessSLED Program:** Renew and administer the AccessSLED program to provide continued funding opportunities for community-based accessibility improvements.
- **Continuation of Site Reviews:** Undertake accessibility reviews of municipal sites and projects, with a particular emphasis on Huron County Library locations, to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and best practices.
- **Recruitment of Community Members:** Implement a recruitment process to engage new community members in HCAAC, strengthening representation and incorporating diverse lived experiences.
- **Development of Accessibility Resources:** Create concise accessibility resources, including quick-reference tools and tip sheets (e.g., *10 Considerations for an Accessible Washroom*), to assist municipalities and community partners in enhancing accessibility in facilities and services.

## Standing Goals

- **Enhance Accessibility in Public Spaces:** Encourage public entities to request accessibility audits, provide reviews as requested, and share resources to support ongoing improvements throughout the County.
- **Strengthen Collaboration with Community Stakeholders:** Work with community organizations, advocacy groups, and partners to advance accessibility initiatives through joint projects, resource sharing, and regular communication.
- **Promote Accessibility Awareness and Education:** Deliver educational programs and workshops for County and municipal staff, highlight accessibility successes through communication channels and provide training resources.

## Closing

As we reflect on the progress and goals set for the coming year, HCAAC remains unwavering in its commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible community. Guided by the principles of diversity, equity, intersectionality, inclusion, and belonging, we recognize that the achievements of 2025 have established a strong foundation. Our 2026 goals are

designed to build upon this progress, addressing emerging needs and advancing accessibility in impactful ways.

## Appendix

### Priorities for HCAAC Objectives Mandated by Legislation

#### Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Updates

In compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#), and the [O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#), the County of Huron is required to develop and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan outlines strategies for identifying, preventing, and removing barriers for people with disabilities over five years.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will annually review and update (if needed) the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Following County Council approval, the revised plan will be posted on the County's website.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will approve and submit the updated plan to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. The County Clerk will ensure the plan is shared with the CAO and Senior Management Team for implementation. Local Municipal Councils will also approve and implement the plan.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will present the plan to their Councils for approval and post it on their respective municipality websites.

**Timeline Targets:** The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed every five years, and updates shall be posted annually. The County Council shall approve the plan by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, and partner municipalities' Councils shall also approve it by the same date.

#### Annual Accessibility Plan

The County of Huron is required to create and publish an Annual Accessibility Plan under the [AODA](#). This plan will include the County's goals and achievements from the previous year.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will develop the Annual Accessibility Plan in consultation with the HCAAC and County staff, presenting it to the committee by December each year.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will approve and submit the plan to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will present the plan to their Councils for approval and post it on their respective municipality websites.

**Timeline Targets:** The Annual Accessibility Plan shall be approved by the County Council and partner municipalities' Councils by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

#### Alignment of Both Plans

The goals outlined in the Annual Accessibility Plan should align with those of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on the County's website following County Council approval.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Clerk will ensure the plan is implemented across all departments and shared with local municipalities.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** The Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on partner municipalities' websites once approved.

**Timeline Targets:** The plans will be aligned with the Annual Accessibility Plan and updated with the Multi-Year Plan.

### **Review of Building Plans for Renovation, Construction, Purchase, Lease, and Exterior Site Plans**

[AODA](#) requires timely reviews of building plans to ensure accessibility for renovations, new constructions, and exterior site plans.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Site and Plan Review Subcommittee will review sites and plans to provide feedback.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will ensure that partner municipalities understand their duty to request reviews before purchasing, constructing, or leasing properties.

**Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will inform their staff and share reviewed site plans with building officials.

**Timeline Targets:** Reviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis.

### **Provide Accessibility Information to the County and Partner Municipalities**

Provide updates and information on accessibility directives and regulations per [AODA](#).

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will gather feedback on the proposed regulations, work with the Directive and Regulation Review Subcommittee to identify concerns, and ensure compliance.
- **Council Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will regularly update the County Council on regulatory requirements and the County's preparedness.
- **Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will inform their respective staff and provide feedback on regulatory requirements.

**Timeline Targets:** Updates and feedback will remain ongoing.

## **Objectives Driven by HCAAC and Community**

### **Enhancing Community Engagement and Information Sharing**

Advance the Committee's vision of promoting accessibility across Huron County by building relationships with all stakeholders, including the County Council, partner municipalities,

entities, and community members. Develop and distribute information on new legislation and offer educational opportunities.

**Initiatives:**

- Host webinars and presentations on accessibility for local stakeholders.
- Provide regular updates to the County Council.
- Review and recommend improvements for municipal facilities.
- Execute annual National AccessAbility Week programming.

**Timeline Targets:** Ongoing

**HCAAC Awards**

Recognize entities and individuals who excel in creating barrier-free access and promoting accessibility in the community.

**Initiative:** Execute HCAAC awards programming annually.

**Community Participation**

Encourage local events to incorporate accessibility into their operations.

**Initiative:** Provide resources to facilitators to encourage adherence to accessibility standards and promote inclusive practices.

**Timeline Targets:** Coordinate with local events throughout the year

# Accessibility Initiatives in Partner Municipalities

## Municipality of Bluewater

### Accessibility Projects Completed in 2025

- The Municipality of Bluewater installed approximately 100 metres of AODA-compliant sidewalks on Richmond St. North, Hensall.
- The playground structure at the Zurich Lions Park was replaced with a new structure with accessible features to increase inclusivity and promote constructive play.

### Ongoing Accessibility Projects

- Bluewater will continue to develop resources, training and continuing education materials for staff to promote awareness and education regarding accessibility.
- Accessible documents—Staff continue to work to ensure that documents are compliant with AODA standards and have begun using Accessibility on Demand software to complete accessible checks and remediation of municipal by-laws, reports, etc.
- Ongoing sidewalk replacement projects to upgrade to meet AODA compliance include:
- Upgrading the sidewalk on the north side of Zurich Main Street between Frederick St. and John St. North.
- Extending the sidewalk around The Square from Bayfield Main Street to Louisa St. and replacing additional sections of sidewalk around the Square.
- An additional 400m of sidewalk is anticipated to be upgraded to AODA-compliant standards in Dashwood before the end of 2025.

### Proposed projects for 2026 and Beyond

- Rehabilitating several sections of sidewalk in Hensall to meet AODA compliance. These include sections on Lorne Ave., Wellington St., and King St. in Hensall.
- Accessible upgrades to spectator areas at Zurich and Hensall Arenas (pending grant funding).

## Town of Goderich

### Accessibility Projects Completed in 2025

- **Rebuilding Downtown Infrastructure Project** – Rebuilding of the downtown square has begun after discussions with residents and various groups and organizations, including the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Accessible features will be included in the rebuild.
- **Employment** – All employment advertisements inform applicants of our ability to make accommodations throughout the recruitment process, if required. All of the

requirements in the Employment Standard continue to be maintained by the Town, including those pertaining to the following: recruitment, assessment and selection.

- **Municipal Website** – The website has been updated to comply with all mandated features required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, specifically Ontario Regulation 191/11 standards to be met by large organizations. It conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA. The Town of Goderich has recently entered into a contract with ReciteMe which will provide an accessible toolbar and analytical tools to assist in maintaining the accessibility standards on the corporate website.
- **Goderich Tourism Website** - The website has been updated to comply with all mandated features required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, specifically Ontario Regulation 191/11 standards to be met by large organizations. It conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA. The website is monitored to ensure its functionality and content remain accessible and the Town continues to provide accessible formats upon request.
- **Customer Service** – All new hires receive training upon hire or return in AODA Customer Service Standards, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- **Information and Communications**
  - Council meetings are livestreamed and recorded. Closed captioning is available.
  - eScribe software is used in the creation of agenda packages. This software meets the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements to ensure compliance when producing Council Agendas and reports.
- **Design of Public Spaces**
  - As per standard operational practices, the following is conducted on a regular basis either through legislative or municipal requirements:
  - repair, maintenance, and removal of barriers on municipal trails, sidewalks, and public spaces.
  - Fire Code inspections of private, public, and municipal facilities
  - Building Code inspections of new or renovated facilities
  - Health and safety inspections of all municipal facilities
  - Emergency management measures to promote the safety of the community within times of emergency
- **On-line permitting for planning**– This on-line system is accessible to anyone with any device, browser, and operating system.

### Ongoing Accessible Projects

- Regularly reviewing and updating the various websites to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards

- Continue to develop resources, training and continuing education materials for staff, volunteers and contractors to promote awareness and education regarding accessibility
- Ongoing training for staff regarding the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements in preparation of reports and documents
- Continue to monitor accessibility issues, trends and legislative changes

## **Township of North Huron**

### **Accessibility Projects Completed in 2025**

- Development and adoption of a Removal of Barriers to Accessibility Strategy to assist in the identification of barriers, and to provide the means to remove these barriers to accessibility. The Strategy goes above and beyond the compliance requirements of the AODA and is intended to increase accessibility.
- As part of this Strategy, the HCACC reviewed the Wingham Fire Hall, the North Huron Westcast Community Complex, the Blyth & District Community Centre and the Belgrave Community Centre to identify barriers and propose solutions at these locations.
- Reconstruction of North Huron Municipal Office parking lot. As part of the reconstruction, the following was incorporated in regard to accessibility:
  - clearly marked accessible parking spaces with appropriate line painting and surface treatment.
  - Painted pathways to indicate the accessible path of travel from the new rear accessible parking spaces to the Town Hall elevator.
  - Regrading of the lot to create a more gradual slope for improved accessibility.
  - A dedicated access aisle adjacent to accessible spots.

### **Ongoing Accessibility Projects**

- Continual implementation of the Removal of Barriers to Accessibility Strategy
- Reviews will continue to be conducted across municipal spaces, adding each reviewed location to the Strategy.
- Continuous updates of the municipal website to ensure accessibility.
- The Township of North Huron continues to make accessible documents a priority. All documentation that is provided on the Township's website is in an accessible format and can be provided in another format, upon request.
- Ongoing training for staff continues regarding the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and providing accessible customer service.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026 and Beyond**

- Facility reviews of the Public Works shops and municipal trails

## **Municipality of Huron East**

### **Accessibility Projects Completed in 2025**

- Completed phase 1 wayfinding signage – community and municipal entrance signs were installed. Directional Signs and Park and Trail Signage will be installed next year.
- Also installed this year was the wheelchair accessible picnic table in downtown Seaforth. We also supported two accessible community improvement projects – two businesses installed automatic door openers.
- Two virtual tours made for Doors Open Seaforth locations that were not accessible: Cardno Hall and third level of Town Hall.
- Vanastra Playground was completed in summer of 2025 and the Vanastra Rec Centre is current undergoing dressing room upgrades

### **Ongoing Accessibility Projects**

- Website Accessibility
- Accessible documents
- Adding Huron East businesses to the Access Now App

### **Proposed projects for 2026 and Beyond**

- Continuing work with Access Now; continue to offer the Accessible Improvement Program to commercial property owners and encourage businesses to make their storefront more accessible; host Job and Volunteer Fair next year in an accessible space (previous years it was held in the upstairs auditorium at Seaforth District Community Centre, which is not accessible).
- Our accessible website is ongoing since we are moving to Govstack in December and fine tuning it in 2026.
- Lastly, if the EASE grant is approved in November then, Seaforth Lawn Bowling Club will receive accessibility upgrades. Upgrades include access ramp to club house and greens, a accessible washroom and a gender-neutral washroom.

## **Municipality of South Huron**

### **General Requirements**

#### **Procurement**

- The Municipal Procurement By-law incorporates accessibility criteria into the procurement of goods and services.

#### **Reporting**

- Reports are produced annually on the progress and implementation of the multi-year Accessibility Plan, and this information is posted on our website and available in alternate formats, upon request.

- The multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated once every five years.
- The Municipality, as legislated, will file Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. As a public sector organization, our last compliance reporting deadline was December 31, 2023, and our next reporting deadline is December 31, 2025.
- The Corporate Accessibility Policy has been updated to reflect changes to any of the standards.
- Records will continue to be maintained for training provided on accessibility, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals who attended.

### **Customer Service**

- All new and seasonal staff receive training upon hire or return, a refresher course will be provided every 5 years for full-time staff.
- Staff across the organization have been trained in the functions of the website to conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA.
- The website is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure its functionality and content remain accessible. The new Municipal website was launched in December 2024 to assist in user accessibility.
- The municipality continues to provide accessible formats and communication support upon request.
- South Huron is a member of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) and staff attend Accessibility working group meetings.

### **Feedback**

- The Municipality of South Huron welcomes input from the public to help identify ways in which we can improve accessibility in facilities, goods and services.
- Members of the public are encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Municipal Clerk or complete the Customer Service Feedback form on the municipal website.
- Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request to the Clerk.

### **Information and Communications**

- South Huron records and where possible live streams its Council meetings on the municipal website and municipal YouTube channel. Watching the meetings online or a recording of a meeting is an effective way that we are reaching our residents who are not able to attend our meetings in-person. YouTube provides options for closed captioning of any meetings posted.
- South Huron uses eScribe software in the creation of agenda packages. The

software meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA when producing Council Reports.

- South Huron Council chambers has an audio system, including microphones and speakers.
- Staff continue to attend external and internal training to continue the development of accessible forms and documents and continue to update templates for accessibility on the website.
- All webpages contain a caption within the footer of every page about alternative formats and accessing information.
- Bi-weekly HUB in newspaper, and electronic newsletter states that our information is accessible and to contact municipality about receiving information in alternative formats.

## **Employment**

- All employment advertisements inform applicants of our ability to make accommodations throughout the recruitment process, if required.
- All of the requirements in the Employment Standard continue to be maintained by the Municipality including those pertaining to the following:
  - Recruitment, assessment, and selection;
  - Accessible formats and communication support for employees;
  - Workplace emergency response information;
  - Documented individual accommodation plans;
  - Return to work process;
  - Performance management;
  - Career development and advancement; and
  - Redeployment.
- Human Resources continuously monitors the status of employee training.
- All employees regardless of their employment status (full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal and Council) take the following online training courses annually:
  - Accessibility Training for Employees (AODA). This training covers all 5 standards of the AODA with an emphasis on the Customer Service Standard.
- New employees who have access to editing the corporation's webpage are assigned the following online training course: IASR (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation): Information and Communications Standards and Employment Standards Training.
- When conducting interviews: On all recruitment postings the following is included in the posting: Accommodation is available upon request for all parts of the recruitment process.

## **Design of Public Spaces (and Built Environment)**

- As per standard operational practices, the following are conducted on a regular basis either through legislative or municipal policy requirements:
  - Repair, maintenance, and removal of barriers on municipal trails, sidewalks, and public spaces.
  - Fire Code inspections of private, public, and municipal facilities.
  - Building Code inspections of new or renovated facilities.
  - Health and safety inspections of all municipal facilities.
  - Emergency management measures to promote the safety of the community within times of emergency.

## **Overall Goals, Current and Proposed Projects, and Next Steps for Accessibility**

The following section outlines accessibility goals, completed and proposed projects and next steps for accessibility in South Huron.

### **Overall Goals for Accessibility**

- Ensure the Municipality of South Huron continues to comply with the AODA, its regulations and all other related pieces of legislation and continue with organizations commitment to accessibility.
- Review Municipality of South Huron's policies and practices to ensure accessibility compliance as part of normal policy review process.
- Strive to ensure that new facilities, programs, and services are designed and created with accessibility features incorporated.
- Continue to develop resources and training materials for staff, volunteers and contractors and promote awareness and education regarding accessibility requirements and obligations throughout the corporation.
- Work with corporate departments to explore new and innovative ways to remove and prevent barriers to access.
- Ongoing training for staff on the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy.
- Continue to work in partnership with Huron County Accessibility Committee on Huron County Accessibility Plan and updates.
- Continue to monitor accessibility issues, trends, and legislative changes.

### **Accessibility Projects Completed in 2024**

- South Huron Recreation Centre (SHRC) – in addition to the renovations completed in 2022 and 2023, the following improvements were made to the facility:
  - Additional signage improvements throughout the facility including blade and braille wall signs.
  - Removal of scrolling screen for dressing room assignment (now

- displayed as stationary)
  - Stephen Arena – in addition to the renovations completed in 2022 and 2023, the following improvements were made to the facility:
  - Additional signage improvements throughout the facility including blade and braille wall signs.
  - Removal of scrolling screen for dressing room assignment (now displayed as stationary)
- “Simplifying Accessibility” Community Accessibility Event – hosted on April 23, 2024, this event included a presentation and question/answer period from Julie Sawchuk B. Sc., B. Ed., RHFAC of Sawchuk Accessible Solutions, Accessibility Tours of the South Huron Recreation Centre and a take-home Accessibility Resource Guide for South Huron organizations and businesses to implement accessible solutions.
- New Accessible Council Report template – implemented in September 2024 to provide enhanced communication, this new report has templated accessibility features to ensure appropriate alternative text, contrast, font style and size, and spacing are achieved within staff reports through the templated settings.
- Municipal Office Entrance Sign – a new entrance sign was installed at the Municipal Office entrance which included large font and appropriate contrast. This sign replaces the existing vinyl on the glass insert of the door, which will be removed to ensure clear two-way visual into the building.

### **On-going 2024 Accessibility Projects**

- Upgrades to Kirkton-Woodham Pool House – through a successful Enabling Accessibility Program grant application, South Huron and Perth South undertook upgrades to the Kirkton-Woodham Pool House based on the results of an accessibility audit, which included retrofitting two washrooms, construction an exterior walkway and installation of an accessible customer service counter. This project is in progress and will be completed in 2025.
- Accessible seating at Municipal Office – two chair styles for seating (stationary chairs with and without arms) will be provided within the facility, prior to the end of 2024.
- Town Hall - Signage improvements to be installed prior to the end of 2024 throughout the facility including installation of blade and braille wall signs.
- Description of accessible features within municipal facilities – staff have begun identifying features within municipal facilities and identifying these on the municipal website. For example, the Arenas page on the municipal website has been updated with text to reflect the accessibility improvements made at both the South Huron Recreation Centre (SHRC) and Stephen

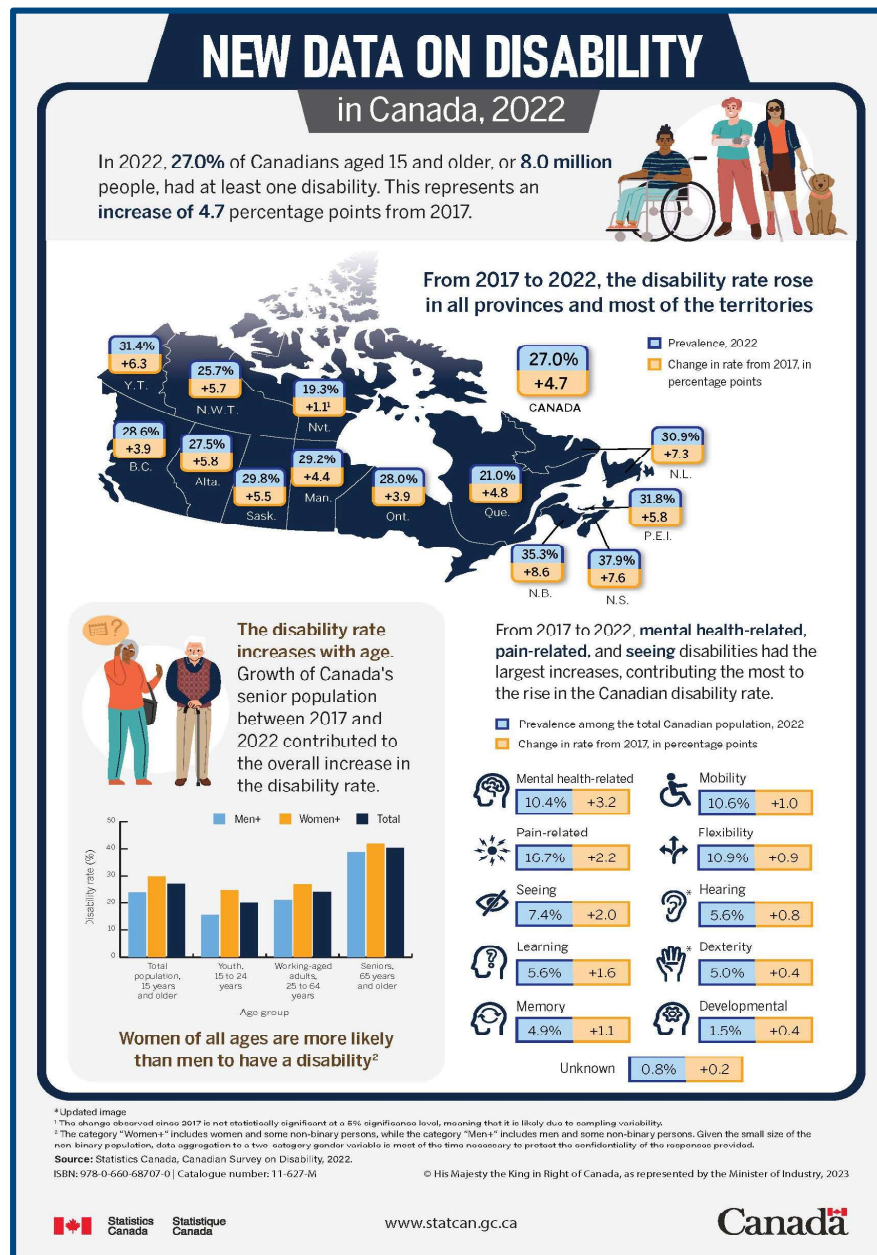
Arena. Accessibility features for all municipal facilities will be updated by staff, including descriptor text, photographs (with appropriate alternative text) to accompany the text. This is in progress and it is anticipated that this will be completed in early 2025, after the migrated municipal website has been launched.

- Customer service seating – exploration of seating options that meet the needs of the community within municipal facilities but ensuring that seating choices do not create further barriers.
- To date, recommendations for seating options for the SHRC Accessible Viewing Platform have been provided by the Site Review Committee (Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee).

### **Proposed 2025 Accessibility Projects**

- Council Chambers accessible podium and microphone system – replacement of existing podium with a height adjustable style podium.
- Community Accessibility Tour – an opportunity exists for South Huron to host a community accessibility tour, showcasing local businesses and organizations who have completed recent accessibility projects. An event in a tour format provides an opportunity for the community to see accessibility features first hand and ask questions they may have. The audience for this event encompasses various community organizations, businesses and their staff, municipal staff and Council, and interested community members.
- Accessible word document templates for municipal staff – creation of accessible word document templates (memos, letters, PowerPoint presentations) for municipal staff to use to ensure accessible font style, font size, spacing, heading styles, colour contrast is suitable for all word documents produced. A similar document will be created and distributed to South Huron Council to utilize.
- Review of replacement options for Dashwood Community Centre playground equipment – in conjunction with adjacent municipality, a comprehensive review of replacement options to ensure AODA, O. Reg 191/11, Canadian Standards Association (CAS) and South Huron Accessibility Policy are adhered to.
- Review of Not Accessible Document List – Review of fillable PDF forms hosted on municipal website deemed not accessible and explore options to build these into website functions.

# Infographic



Source: Canada. Statistics Canada. "A Demographic, Employment and Income Profile of Canadians with Disabilities Aged 15 Years and Over, 2017." ISBN: 978-0-660-68707-0. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.pdf?st=qvJ2u1Yn> Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.