

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2025

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1. Background: Accessibility and the Province of Ontario

There are currently two active pieces of legislation in Ontario that specifically address accessibility: The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA).

The purpose of the ODA is to improve the quality of life and experiences of persons with disabilities by identifying, preventing, and removing any barriers that may limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in society.

The AODA advances the goals of the ODA by requiring public, private and non-profit organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in order to make the Province of Ontario fully accessible for all persons with disabilities by 2025. Through the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11), the Government of Ontario has identified key areas for the development of common accessibility standards that are intended to ensure all sectors and organizations can provide fully accessible services and environments for Ontarians. The goal of these standards is to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities in society.

Key areas identified under the AODA are Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces.

The Township of Black River-Matheson shall review this plan every four years within sixty (60) days of an incoming Council.

2. Commitment to Accessibility

Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products, and facilities. Employees need to be able to function effectively and customers need to receive timely, high-quality services in a way that works for them. Building a dynamic and accessible organization will help us reach these goals.

The Township of Black River-Matheson is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to Town facilities and services for people with disabilities
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its multiyear accessibility plan
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities
- Meeting the accessibility requirements under the AODA

3. Accessibility Plan

Since 2004 all municipalities in the province have had a legal obligation under the ODA to prepare annual accessibility plans. Under the AODA, accessibility planning requirements

shift from annual to multi-year plans which must outline an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR).

This Plan describes:

- The measures that the Township has taken over previous years to remove barriers to people with disabilities.
- The process by which the Township is identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to people with disabilities.
- The continuing and new actions the Township will take during the coming year to remove barriers to people with disabilities.
- The communication of this accessibility plan.

4. Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Township's Accessibility Advisory Committee was established in 2023. The Committee's role in helping foster a community approach to accessibility and inclusion involves the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 exempts municipalities with a population less than 10,000 residents from the requirement of establishing an Accessibility Advisory Committee, however, the Township of Black River-Matheson is dedicated to ensuring that every resident of our community has equal access to the services which we provide.

5. Regulatory Requirements and Proposed and Completed Actions

The Township committed to developing and implementing accessibility initiatives under the ODA and meeting compliance dates for accessibility requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and the AODA.

(A) Customer Service

The Township of Black River -Matheson is committed to ensuring that all staff and customers work in an accommodating environment and receive accessible goods and services in a timely manner.

The Township will achieve this by:

 Reviewing and updating policies regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.

- Embedding accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials
- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action

Steps taken to achieve accessibility:

- Provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff and volunteers.
- Major renovations to the municipal building, drastically improving the level of accessibility.

(B) General

General requirements under the IASR are those regulatory requirements that apply across all three standards in this regulation – Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Developing a multi-year accessibility plan outlining strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and reviewing the plan, including any recommendations from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, within twelve (12) months of each municipal election.
- Continue to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities.
- Continue to train employees, volunteers, all those who participate in developing the Township's policies, and all others who provide goods or services on behalf of the Township, about the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, as well as the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Steps taken to achieve accessibility:

- Established a Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee absent of a legislative requirement to do so.
- Moved to online and telephone voting for municipal elections and included a program to ensure that any barriers to accessibility are addressed through the establishment of various help centres.
- Improved the layout of accessible parking spaces in the downtown area ensuring that their placement is conducive to pedestrian movement.
- Improvements to waterfront area to include accessible seating and parking.
- Installed an elevator at the Vern Miller Arena providing barrier free access to the upper level.
- Moved regular Council meetings to the Vern Miller arena, making them fully accessible in-person, in addition to being available online.

(C) Information and Communications

Information and communications are a large part of the Township's daily business. We recognize the importance of ensuring that information and communications are created in a way that is accessible to all.

The Township will follow best practices when developing, implementing, and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, intranet sites, print communication materials as well as face-to-face interactions.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that emergency information, procedures, plans and public safety information that is available to the public is available in alternate formats, when requested.
- Developing guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- Notifying the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level 2.0 AA Compliance.
- Working towards ensuring web content published on the Township's website is inan accessible format whenever possible.

Steps taken to achieve accessibility:

- We make content available to any requestor in an alternate accessible format (such as large print or braille), by working with the individual to meet their needs.
- Moved website to *govstack* format, improving our ability to ensure that all content is provided and displayed in an accessible format.

(D) Employment

The Township of Black River-Matheson is committed to ensuring that the process of finding, getting, and keeping a job is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce. The Township of Black River Matheson will be an employer of choice that enables and encourages persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of the organization.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Reviewing on an ongoing basis, Human Resources policies, practices, and procedures to ensure
 accessibility to persons with disabilities throughout the employment process, including
 recruitment, retention, career development and return-to-work.
- Informing new and existing employees of the Township's policies for supporting employees with disabilities, including providing employment related accommodations for disabilities.
- Consulting with employees who have disabilities to provide them with the accessible formats and communications supports they require to do their jobs effectively and to be informed of information that is available to all employees in that workplace.
- Have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities.
- Consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance management process.
- When providing career development and advancement opportunity the Township will consider the accessibility needs of their employees who have disabilities.
- Redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when
 moving them to other positions, so that employees can continue to have their accommodation
 needs met.

Steps taken to achieve accessibility:

- Implemented an Integrated Accessible Standard Policy
- Ensure barrier free access to postings and interviews

(E) Transportation

The Township of Black River-Matheson does not have specific requirements under the Transportation section as we do not offer conventional, specialized or public transportation services.

6. Design of Public Spaces

The Township of Black River-Matheson will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces (Ontario Regulation 191/11), as applicable, when building new or making major modifications to public spaces.

Public Spaces include:

- Recreational Trails
- Boat Launch
- Outdoor Play Spaces; (playgrounds)
- Outdoor Paths of Travel; (sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals)
- Accessible Off-Street Parking
- Service-related elements (service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas)

(A) Recreational Trails

Trails throughout the Township of Black River-Matheson are considered wilderness/backcountry trails and are therefore not regulated under the standard.

At any time should a trail in Black River-Matheson be designated as a recreational trail, the Township of Black River-Matheson will consult with the public, persons with disabilities and with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee before construction or redevelopment, especially regarding the following features:

- Slope of the trail;
- Need for and location of ramps on the trail;
- Need for, location and design of rest areas, passing areas, viewing areas, amenities on the trail and any other pertinent features.

Where technical specifications are indicated in Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Township of Black River-Matheson will make every effort to ensure compliance with the technical requirements set out in the Regulation, to the extent that it is practicable and does not contravene other legislation.

(B) Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

The Township of Black River-Matheson will meet the Accessibility Standards for newly constructed and redeveloped outdoor public use eating areas (Ontario Regulation 191/11), as applicable, when building new public use eating areas. Currently we do not have or maintain such eating areas.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Adhering to general requirements
- Consulting with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

(C) Outdoor Play Spaces

This part applies to newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces that the Township intends to maintain and includes play equipment or features where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Consulting the Township's Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Incorporating accessibility features into the design of outdoor play spaces.
- Ensuring that outdoor play spaces have consideration to a ground surface that is firm, stable
 and has impact attenuating properties for injury prevention and sufficient clearance to
 provide children with various disabilities the ability to move through, in and around the
 outdoor play space.

(D) Exterior Paths of Travel

This part applies to newly constructed and redeveloped exterior paths of travel that the Township maintains which are outdoor sidewalks or walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel, except wilderness/backcountry trails.

The Township will achieve this by:

- Adhering to certain technical requirements, such as:
 - o if the path of travel is equipped with a ramp
 - o if the stairs connect to exterior paths of travel
 - o where a depressed curb is provided on an exterior path of travel
- Consulting with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee on the design and placement of rest areas along exterior paths of travel

(E) Accessible Parking_

Off-Street Parking

Meeting certain requirements when constructing new or redeveloping on and off-street parking, as stated in the Regulation, that the Township intends to maintain. The following table outlines locations and numbers of parking spaces:

Location	Accessible Parking Spaces
Fifth Avenue	2
Town Hall	1
Library	1

The Township will achieve this by:

- Providing sufficient space for access in accordance with the regulations established for accessible parking spaces outlined in the Ontario Highway Traffic Act and Regulations.
- Providing a sufficient number and type of accessible parking spaces.
- Ensuring that parking spaces for the use of persons with disabilities are distinctly indicated by erecting an accessible permit parking sign in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act of Ontario and Regulations.

On-Street Parking

When constructing or redeveloping existing on-street parking spaces, the Township shall consult on the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces by requesting input from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Consultation topics may include:

- Expected accessibility benefits
- Any relevant concerns
- Local traffic patterns

(F) Obtaining Services

The Township of Black River-Matheson strives to provide welcoming environments for all members of the public to visit and/or conduct business with the municipality. To ensure the service areas used by the public are accessible, the Township will ensure all new or redeveloped service counters, fixed queuing guides (where people line up for service) and waiting areas accommodate mobility aids.

Where technical specifications are indicated in Ontario Regulation 191/11, The Township of Black River-Matheson will make every effort to ensure compliance with the technical requirements set out in

the Regulation.

(G) Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

When disruptions occur that will impact the accessibility of goods, services or facilities provided by the Township, notice will be given to the public indicating:

- a) Description of the service disruption
- b) Reason for the disruption
- c) Anticipated duration of the disruption
- d) Alternate accommodations, if any, that are available
- e) Contact information

Notice will be given by posting the information at public entry points, the Township's website or by such other method as is reasonable.

7. Progress to Date and Ongoing Initiatives

See Schedule "A" Progress to Date and Ongoing Initiatives.

8. Proposed Accessibility Initiatives 2024-2025

See Schedule "B" Proposed Accessibility Initiatives for 2024-2025.

9. Consultation of the Plan

In the preparation and/or the maintenance of this plan the Township of Black River-Matheson conducted the following consultation activities:

- Consultation with the Township of Black River-Matheson Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Consultation with Township Staff
- Other similarly sized communities

10. Contact Information

The Township of Black River-Matheson is committed to ensuring accessibility is a reality throughout all facilities and business operations. There is still so much to accomplish, and as we progress, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact us with your questions, ideas or comments.

Phone 705-273-2313 EXT 318

Mail James Lefebvre, CBO

Township of Black River-Matheson

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Email jlefebvre@twpbrm.ca



TOWNSHIP OF BLACK-RIVER MATHESON Multi-Year Accessibility Plan SCHEDULE A

ARCHITECTURAL AND PHYSICAL BARRIERS			
Location	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Status
Township Administration Office	Building is not accessible on any level	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Township Administration Office moved to a new, single floor, more accessible building.
	No wheelchair accessibility into and around main office, as well as downstairs and council chambers	Install an accessible elevator that allows access to upstairs and downstairs.	
	Countertop in main office is too high to conduct business with someone in a wheelchair	Install a countertop at appropriate height for people in a wheelchair to conduct business	
	Main office entrance and guest area is not large enough to allow for people with a disability and others	Change layout of entrance main office to allow for traffic flow	
	Doorways are not deemed accessible in hallways	Install doorways which will allow room for the wheelchair to turn and pass through it	
	Current washrooms are completely inaccessible	Recommend that a universal accessible washroom is installed replacing the existing inaccessible units	
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible		
	Alterna	ative Idea-Constrcut a whole new office	

	Building is not accessible on any level	Install an automatic door for easy access into the building. Install an accessible elevator that allows access to upstairs and downstairs		
	Current washrooms are completely inaccessible	Recommend that a universal accessible washroom is installed replacing the existing inaccessible units.	Closed	
Thelma Miles Museum	Accessible parking spots and signs don't exist	Install accessible parking spots and with appropriate signs		
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible			
	Alternative Idea- Construct a new museum that is attached to the municipal office			
	Front door to hall is not wide enough to be deemed accessible	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Not Complete	
	_	·	Not Complete Not Complete	
Knights of Columbus Pioneer Hall	deemed accessible Side doors to hall are heavy and do not	building. Install an automatic door for easy access into	·	
1	deemed accessible Side doors to hall are heavy and do not stay open Cannot access the building on the side	building. Install an automatic door for easy access into building. Install a ramp leading into entrance on side of	Not Complete	

Knights of Columbus Pioneer	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
Hall cont'd	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible		
Ramore Public Library	Building is not accessible on any level	Install an automatic door for easy access into the building. Install a ramp for front building entrance as doors access is not on ground level	Building is not municipally owned. Working with owners to improve accessibility for the library
	Unaware if washrooms are accessible	If not accessible, recommend that a universal washroom is installed replacing the existing inaccessible unit	
	Accessible parking spots and signs do not exist	Install accessible parking spots and with appropriate signs	Complete
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible		
	Wheelchair ramp to side door which is not automatic	Install an automatic door for easy access into the building. Install a ramp for front building entrance as doors access is not on ground level	Not Complete
Matheson Public Library	Lower level of library is not accessible	Install an accessible elevator that allows access to upstairs and downstairs.	Not Complete
	Accessible parking spots and signs do not exist	Install accessible parking spots and with appropriate signs	Complete
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible		
Vern Miller Memorial Arena	Countertop in concession is too high to conduct business with someone in a wheelchair	Install a countertop at appropriate heigh for people in a wheelchair to conduct business	Closed

Vern Miller Memorial Arena cont'd	No designated area for people with a disability to watch in the arena	Designate an area for people with a disability to watch	Upstairs – new accessible elevator installed
	Note: Universal accessible washroom is being installed in the near future.		
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign	on building to advertise we are accessible	
	Building is not accessible on any level	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Not Complete
Shillington Community Hall	Unaware if washrooms are accessible	If not accessible, recommend that a universal washroom is installed replacing the existing inaccessible unit	Not Complete
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible		
	Building is not accessible	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Not Complete
Val Gagne Community Hall	Washrooms are not accessible	Recommend that a universal washroom is installed replacing the existing inaccessible unit	Not Complete
	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign	on building to advertise we are accessible	
Val Gagne Ice Rink	Building is not accessible	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Closed

Val Gagne Ice Rink cont'd	STEP TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE			
var dagne ice niin come a	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible			
	Building is not accessible	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Closed	
Holtyre Ice Rink	STEPS TO TA	KE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE		
	Install sign	on building to advertise we are accessible		
	Building is not accessible	Install an automatic door for easy access into building.	Closed	
Ramore Ice Rink	STEPS TO TAKE AFTER BUILDING IS DEEMED ACCESSIBLE			
	Install sign on building to advertise we are accessible			
Ramore Playground	Not an accessible playground	Install new accessible features for children with a disability	Not Complete – Playgrounds to be assessed and improved over time and as budget allows	
Holtyre Playground	Not an accessible playground	Install new accessible features for children with a disability	Not Complete – Playgrounds to be assessed and improved over time and as budget allows	
Matheson Playground x2	Not an accessible playground	Install new accessible features for children with a disability	Not Complete – Playgrounds to be assessed and improved over time and as budget allows	

	No ramp to access lower-level tier to sit on benches in front of river	Install a ramp to lower-level tier	Not Complete
Matheson Waterfront	No tables for accessible persons using mobility aids	Install tables for persons with accessibilities using mobility aids	Complete
	No pathway to access tables	Install a pathway to the tables	Not Complete
	Buildings Not Require	ed to be Accessible	
Public Works Garage	The Public Works Garage will not be deemed accessible at this time. The garage is for Township employees only. It is not available to the public.		While these buildings are not
Matheson Fire Hall	The fire hall will not be deemed accessible at this time. Only volunteer fireman have authorized accessed.		accessible, the Township of Black River-Matheson ensures that any individual who
Val Gagne Fire Hall	The fire hall will not be deemed accessible at this time. The future of this hall has yet to be determined.		may reasonably need to access the building is accommodated on an as-needed
Ramore Fire Hall	The fire hall will not be deemed accessible at this time. The future of this hall has yet to be determined.		basis
Holtyre Fire Hall	THE FIRE HALL WILL NOT BE CONS	IDERED FOR ACCESSIBILITY AS IT HAS BEEN PERMANENT	LY CLOSED

	ORGANIZATION	AL BARRIERS	
Taxi Cabs	Every municipality shall consult with its municipal accessibility advisory committee, where one has been established in accordance with subsection 29 (1) OR (2) of the Act, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.	Targeted our most popular age group-seniors- with a questionnaire. Results were strong in the sense that a regular taxi cab serves there purpose for mobility, however, the seniors would support a full fledge accessible taxi cab as defined in the Revised Regulations of Ontario 629, if one was offered in the community. Moving forward we will target other age brackets.	The Township currently has no Taxi company operating within the municipality but has plans to encourage, at the least, an accessible taxi
Training	The intent of this requirement is that all organizations train employees, volunteers, all those who participate in developing the organization's policies, and all others who provide goods or services on behalf of the organization, about the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.	According to our IASR checklist, training must commence in 2015 and be readily available to report in 2017. Therefore, in the next year this requirement will be fulfilled. Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.	Complete – and all staff that require training are currently up to date.
Policies and Procedures	Every obligated organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation.	Policies have been drafted to reflect how we plan to maintain accessibility in our work environment and a drafted Statement of Commitment has been achieved. Next step is to have council adopt both of them.	Complete – to be reviewed no later than 2026

	Technology	y Barriers	
Website	Designated public sector organizations and large organizations shall make their internet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA, and shall do so in accordance with the schedule set out in the IASR standard	Attending a course in Temiskaming October 25, 2013 for "Creating Accessible Websites" to better understand what is required. Also, will touch base with our consultants, McSweeny and Associates, to make sure they have provided us with the newest software to comply with this regulation.	Complete
Emergency Procedures Plans	The intent of this requirement is that publicly available emergency and public safety information is provided in an accessible format of with appropriate communication supports, on request.	Will convert the current Emergency Plan into an accessible document. Also, took the initiative to add emergency checklists provided by the Emergency Management of Ontario for people with and without a disability to our website.	Complete
General Information	The information and communication standard requires people and organizations to provide accessible information and communications about the goods, services or facilities offered to customers, clients and others.	If an individual requests a public document in an accessible format, the township employee will convert the document in a timely manner at no extra cost into an accessible document. If the employee is unable to convert the requested document, this would need to be communicated to the individual, documented, and the Township would strive to find means to provide the information to the best of our ability (as well as determine whether there is a way to be able to provide information in the requested format for future inquiries).	Complete



TOWNSHIP OF BLACK-RIVER MATHESON Multi-Year Accessibility Plan SCHEDULE B

Proposed Accessibility Initiatives 2024-2025

- Perform a full audit of the accessibility of municipally owned buildings guided by the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee and provide a full report to Council with recommendations as well as a suggested prioritization.
- Draft a budget and timeline, based on the report presented to Council, to ensure that the Township of Black River-Matheson is achieving more than just the minimum level of accessibility required by legislation.
- Perform a feasibility study on the possibility of procuring a municipally owned system of transportation (example: a bus or accessible van).
- Obtain a quotation to install a chairlift to access the lower level of the municipal library in order to ensure that the area is accessible for future expansion.
- Perform an audit of the downtown area with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure that the design and layout (parking, curb cuts, sidewalks, etc.) continue to be suited to the needs of every member of our community.