



**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
Corporation of the Town of Hearst
2019-2023**



**Prepared in collaboration with the
Town of Hearst Accessibility Committee**

January 2019

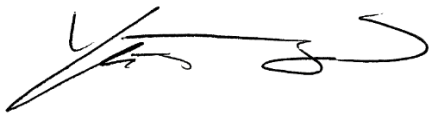
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Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

I am proud and pleased to introduce this new Accessibility Plan. Aware of the accessibility challenges in terms of infrastructure and new information and communication technology, the Town of Hearst is making every effort to adapt and ensure that all people have access to the services it provides.

The Town will continue to monitor customer experience by continually measuring the level of accessibility of its services and programs by working closely with the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yves Morrissette', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yves Morrissette, CAO

Commitment Statement

The Corporation of the Town of Hearst is committed to ensuring equal opportunities. We are committed to treating persons with disabilities in accordance with the principles of dignity, autonomy and integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner by eliminating and preventing obstacles to accessibility while respecting the requirements, as outlined in the Ontario accessibility legislation and the Human Rights Code.

Definitions

HAAC: Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Disability¹:

- a) 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 impediments, 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;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.”

AODA: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Barriers: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)²

PREAMBLE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005 by the Province to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to their full participation in Ontario society. These standards address a broad range of matters, including customer service, goods, communications, facilities, housing, employment, buildings, structures, outdoor public spaces and transportation, with the goal of achieving accessibility and equality throughout Ontario by 2025.

¹ *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11

² *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11

This multi-year Accessibility Plan describes the Corporation of the Town of Hearst's commitment to ensure that both residents of this community and visitors alike have equal and full access to all municipal services available to the public.

In 2010, the Province announced that the legislative standards on employment, information and communications, and transportation would be integrated into a single regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. The latter succeeded the *ODA* and was enacted to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards that the Province intended to bring into effect over coming years.

APPLICATION

This document represents the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the Town of Hearst, which has been prepared and approved pursuant to O. Reg. 191/11. It affirms the Municipality's ongoing commitment to making the community and its services and public spaces, inclusive and accessible to all. It also encompasses the actions required by the Town's wholly owned and affiliated corporations that municipal policies and activities are set up to achieve compliance with accessibility regulations will also apply and have effect on these corporate bodies:

- a) Hearst Power Distribution Company Limited
- b) Hearst Power Sales and Services Company Limited
- c) Town of Hearst Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- d) Foyer Hearst-Mattice Soins de Santé
- e) Hearst Public Library
- f) Hearst Connect Corporation

ABOUT THE TOWN OF HEARST

The Town of Hearst is located in the District of Cochrane in Northeastern Ontario. It is one of the most northerly communities on TransCanada Highway 11 route and as such is isolated from major urban centers by relatively long distances.

As per the Census data of 2016, Hearst has a predominantly French-speaking population of 5,070³, of that amount, 2667 are seniors aged of 60 years old and over, representing 52% of the Hearst population. We know that the likelihood of having a disability increases with age. Given the rapid aging of the local population, by year 2020, some studies suggest that 30%⁴ of the citizens in Hearst will be elderly and likely to have some form of disability.

Furthermore, it is estimated that 1 in 7 person in Ontario have some form of disability⁵. According to this statistic, about 724 citizens are currently living with some form of disability in our community. Thus, the Municipality must remain vigilant in its efforts to make its public spaces and services accessible. Clearly, a significant portion of our local population is and will continue to encounter barriers or obstacles, which are defined as “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.”

The Corporation of the Town of Hearst is represented by a municipal council consisting of a mayor and six councillors elected at large. It provides a broad range of services for residents, with over 150 employees working for the Town on a permanent basis (including affiliated corporations). This number increases annually by a summer's work force of approximately 10 students. The administrative services of the Town are located at the Hearst Town Hall, located at 925 Alexandra Street. Other municipal facilities in the community include: a child care centre, a large recreation centre with 2 ice surfaces, indoor swimming pool, and meeting rooms; a public works maintenance and storage garage, with engineering offices; a fire hall; 11 municipal parks, including a lake with beach and tenting facilities, an outdoor splash pad; an airport; 2 interpretative heritage buildings, a tourism centre, and a public library in leased premises. The Town also owns facilities occupied by its affiliated corporations, including a nursing home and the Hearst Connect offices.

The Municipality also has a long history of indirect involvement in the delivery of other specialized services, through its non-profit corporations that provide social housing and long-term care for the community, in addition to being the lead in contracting specialized transit services to meet the needs of residents and visitors experiencing mobility problems. The Town also supports regional groups that provide services, including group homes for the developmentally challenged.

³ 2016 Census data, Statistics Canada (Website), Dec 2018, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca>

⁴ Population and Housing Projections: Town of Hearst, Township of Mattice-Val Côté and Unorganized Townships, Lapointe Consulting Inc., July 2003.4

⁵ ACCESS ONTARIO Website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-customer-service-accessible>

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Hearst remains committed to:

- The continuous improvement of access to all municipally-owned facilities, premises and services for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility; and
- The provision of quality services in an equitable manner to all members of the community, and in particular those with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Under the *AODA*, the Town of Hearst is classified as “a large designated public sector organization” having 50 or more employees. In accordance with the legislation, Hearst Council is thus further committed to:

- Posting of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on its website (www.hearst.ca).
- Providing this Plan in an accessible format upon request.
- Reviewing and updating this Plan (as may be necessary) at least once every 5 years.
- Continuing consultations with persons with disabilities through the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Preparing an annual status report and posting such report on the Town's website.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS PLAN

The overall objective of the Municipality is to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner by preventing and eliminating barriers to accessibility, and to meet the requirements of the *AODA*. The objective of this plan over the next five years is to ensure that municipal facilities and services continue to be maintained, improved and reinforced, in order to be fully inclusive for every member of this community.

Therefore, the objectives of the Town of Hearst are the following:

- 1) to continue working efficiently to remove barriers throughout the Town of Hearst whenever practicable;

- 2) to continue working towards meeting the requirements of O. Reg. 191/11 to ensure compliance with the information and communication, transportation and employment standards, where applicable;
- 3) to continue training new staff, summer student employees, Council Members and municipal volunteers on their responsibilities to provide accessible customer services pursuant to the customer service standard;
- 4) to continue providing services in a format or by a method that meets the client's needs as much as possible;
- 5) to continue working with the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee on removing barriers and improving our community's accessibility in our facilities, services, policies and practices;
- 6) to identify specific activities and time frames that ensure full compliance with legislation and regulations.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY

Prior to the ODA of 2001, the Municipality was active in the removal and prevention of physical barriers on municipal properties within the community, as well as the delivery of specialized services to disabled residents within the catchment area.

Past achievements in terms of accessibility for the period from 1980 to 2013 can be found in [Appendix A](#), while the most recent initiatives (2014-2018) are listed below. All projects and initiatives in terms of accessibility undertaken by the Town of Hearst are carried out with the support of the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee (HAAC).

- 2014 - The HAAC evaluates the accessibility of the following municipal buildings: Gilles Gagnon Welcome Centre and René Fontaine Municipal Airport. School activities are organized in collaboration with the HAAC to promote the International Disability Day and to educate youth on accessibility needs.
- 2015 - The HAAC evaluates the accessibility of the following municipal public spaces: Johnson's Lake Beach and J.D. Levesque Park. There are twenty-one (21) designated accessible parking spaces in the municipality and the first two parking spaces designated for quad carriers or scooters in the community are available at the medical Clinic at 1403 Front Street.

- 2015 – The HAAC meeting minutes and public meetings minutes are available in both official languages on the municipal website www.hearst.ca.
- 2015 – The HAAC President, Anne-Marie Portelance, receives the ODA's 10th Anniversary Champion Award.
- 2016 - The HAAC evaluates the accessibility of sidewalks on George Street, between 8th and 10th St and those on 9th Street near the post office, and the Arthur Bernard Park.
- 2016 - A lift for the Stéphane Lecours Municipal Swimming Pool is installed.
- 2016 – The HAAC has a logo and a vision: that the Town of Hearst's services, programs, infrastructure and buildings be accessible to all. A team from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) makes a presentation on their services and products during a public meeting organized by the HAAC.
- 2016 – The Public Library Board of Directors submits a grant application to Canada 150 to make its premises more accessible. The Town of Hearst in partnership with the HAAC submits a grant application to the "Accessibility Fund" program for the installation of automatic door mechanisms for the Claude Larose Recreation Centre.
- 2017 - The HAAC evaluates the accessibility of the following municipal public spaces: Al Kinsey Park and Marcel Léger Park. In addition, the HAAC was invited to complete an accessibility evaluation at the "Maison Renaissance" Rehabilitation Center.
- 2017 – The HAAC participates in the 2017 Springfest event. The Chair of the HAAC participates in the community Forum on accessibility held in Thunder Bay entitled: "A tribute to the past, presentation of the present and inspiration for future generations".
- 2017-The HAAC celebrates its 10th anniversary by organizing an event and presentation at the Companion Restaurant.
- 2017 - Appointment of the HAAC Chairperson, amongst 140 Accessibility Committees in Ontario, to participate in a reference group for the Accessibility Committees Advisory Committees of Ontario for a 5-month period.

- 2018 - The HAAC evaluates the accessibility of the following buildings: Fire Hall and the Hearst Public Library. In addition, Prestige Jewelry obtains the assistance of the HAAC to evaluate accessibility of its private building.
- 2018 – The HAAC develops a promotional banner, pamphlets and logo labels to improve its visibility as a "leader" in accessibility and to inform the public about accessibility improvement projects in which HAAC was involved, at the private and municipal level. The HAAC participates in the seniors' Fair.
- 2018 - 41 employees and volunteers were trained or retrained on accessibility standards and obtaining close to 300 "LIKES" on the HAAC's Facebook page.
- 2018 – Installation of benches in the lobby of the Claude Larose Recreation Centre to allow people to enjoy the game in a sitting position.

ONTARIO REGULATION COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Ongoing tasks to undertake during this plan's 5-year cycle (2019-2023)

Many of the current practices and processes implemented by the Municipality pursuant to its Accessibility Plan are intended to be carried out on an ongoing basis as outlined in the Plan's summary under Appendix B.

These include practices that are already in place in regard to general tasks, and also those addressing accessibility standards: information and communications, employment, customer service, design of public spaces and transportation.

Consequently, the Town of Hearst's objectives are the following:

1. Reviewing the Town's policies and standard operating procedures to identify opportunities to integrate *AODA* requirements.
2. Inspecting, monitoring and annual and seasonal maintenance of municipal infrastructure, including buildings, structures, leased premises, sidewalks, trails, outdoor spaces, intersections, curbs, etc..
3. Reviewing and evaluating municipal policies and procedures prior to their implementation to ensure compliance with the information and communication, transportation and employment standards of O. Reg. 191/11, where applicable.
4. Training of new staff, summer student employees, Council Members and municipal volunteers, on their responsibilities to provide accessible customer services pursuant to the customer service standard, on a seasonal basis and as needed.
5. Documenting and maintaining records of all training provided, dates that training occurred, and the numbers of individuals to whom it was provided.
6. Continue to provide accessible services, including forms and publications, in an appropriate format or method that meets the client's needs, upon request.

7. Providing accessible material and equipment for public use.
8. Responding to comments regarding accessible communication and information services of the Town.
9. Consulting the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee on a regular basis to eliminate barriers to facilitate access to our facilities, services, policies and practices.
10. Posting the HAAC's meeting minutes on the municipal web site.
11. Identifying and implementing accessibility measures to ensure new facilities, infrastructure, services, programs and communications are inclusive.
12. Informing staff of changes to accessibility policies and practices.
13. Monitoring and reviewing the specialized transport service provided by the private sector to ensure the service is maintained and provided with reasonable fares and hours of operation.
14. Completing and submitting annual compliance reports to the Province, as required.

ONGOING CONSULTATION

The success of this plan relies on the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee and the teamwork within the various departments of the Town of Hearst. Regular assessment of public infrastructure and spaces, as well as proposed municipal by-laws, policies and services to meet accessibility standards, will ensure that the Municipality remains inclusive for all. Through these processes, accessibility barriers will be identified by the consultation protocol and recommendations will be brought to Municipal Council, who will select priorities based on the budget.

[Appendix C](#) is a summary of recommendations resulting from the HAAC observations during the Municipal Infrastructures Accessibility Assessments. These assessments are important in guiding the actions the Municipality should undertake for accessibility projects for the well-being of our citizens.

MONITORING THE PLAN

The progress of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be monitored for satisfactory completion of the various elements of the strategy, as well as the need to modify or delay courses of action. A status report on the previous year's activities and various accomplishments will be shared with the Committee and Municipal Council.

MAKING THE PLAN PUBLIC

Hard copies of this Plan are available at the Hearst Town Hall and the Hearst Public Library. The Plan will also be available on the municipal website, which is in a format accessible by persons using a reading software for computers. The Plan is available in alternate formats, upon request.

A notice on the availability of this Plan will be posted on the Community Television Channel (channel 6).

APPENDIX A: Overview of Past Accessibility Achievements from 1980 to 2013

- 1979/80 - installation of hydraulic elevator in recreation centre (Claude Larose Recreation Centre) to enable physically handicapped staff and members of the public to access second floor meeting rooms, youth center and barrier-free washroom facilities.
- 1980 - The Municipality becomes the sole shareholder of the Hearst Non-Profit Housing Corporation, which was created to provide shelter for low-income or special needs tenants and families. The Corporation's portfolio includes 4 accessible rental units renovated or designed for complete barrier-free access, as well as two multi-residential buildings offering semi-autonomous and independent accommodation for intellectually impaired, and a 16-room detox center that is also entirely barrier-free.
- 1983 – Resolution No. 333-83 adopted by Council to identify standards for subdivision development, including engineering design and specifications pursuant to Provincial standards, with all subdivision and new municipal sidewalks to incorporate dropped curbs at intersections.
- 1985/86 – Program launch for the Hearst Downtown urban renewal with interlocking sidewalks and dropped curbs for wheelchair and scooter access.
- 1986 – Building Department administers and enforces requirements of barrier-free access in Building Code (O. Reg. 416/86).
- 1988 – By-law No. 59-88 passed by Council to designate first handicapped parking spaces in Hearst Downtown (municipal parking lot, George Street, post office, bank), to establish special parking permits and to institute fines for the misuse of such parking spaces by unauthorized drivers.
- 1993 – Hearst Town Hall erected building addition with a hydraulic lift device (elevator) and barrier-free access washroom to ensure municipal offices and meeting rooms are fully accessible and open to the public.

- 1995 – Municipality purchased a 61-bed nursing home from Extendicare Canada.
- 1998 – Municipal By-law No. 30-98 is passed to designate additional handicapped parking spaces in municipal parking lot in downtown area.
- 1998 – Following closure of Place Providence and the termination of service delivery by the Cochrane District Homes for the Aged Board of Management, the Municipality forms partnership with Rotary Club, Knights of Columbus, as well as nursing home and hospital to provide continued funding for the specialized community transit service for frail elderly and physically disabled.
- 1998 – The Municipality introduced the Lifeline service to ensure distribution and maintenance of units to frail elderly and disabled residents within the region.
- 2000/01 – Additional parking spaces in downtown municipal parking lot and on Prince Street are designated for handicapped use.
- 2001 – Town of Hearst website launched in accessible format for persons using a screen-reading software.
- 2003 – Municipal Council adopted the “Removing Barriers: 2003 Accessibility Plan for the Town of Hearst” (Resolution No. 452-03).
- 2002-2004 – Construction of new Foyer des Pionniers/Hearst Nursing Home.
- 2005 - The Town of Hearst acquires the new constructed nursing home of 67 beds "Foyer des Pionniers Nursing Home" from the Notre Dame Hospital and the Municipality of Mattice-Val-Côté, to become the sole owner of the long-term care facility. A major expansion to this long-term care facility was carried out in 2013, allowing the nursing home to be completely self-sufficient for the residents' laundry and meal services.

- 2006 – The Town prepares “Specialized Public Transit in the Town of Hearst: A Plan for Enhancing Service Delivery and Ridership Growth 2006-2011” and develops the community transportation service.
- 2007 – Hearst Council establishes the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee comprised of Council members, municipal staff and community representatives, with first meeting of Committee being held on December 18, 2007.
- 2007 – Facebook Group and Page created for and by the HAAC.
- 2008 – HAAC starts auditing municipal buildings to identify deficiencies in accessibility and to make recommendations. The first building to be evaluated for accessibility is the Hearst Public Library (leased premises).
- 2009 – The Municipality begins following through with recommendations of the HAAC to improve and enhance accessibility of public spaces.
- 2009 – Hearst Council adopts a policy on Accessible Customer Service and a “Training Guide: Understanding and Providing Accessible Customer Service” is prepared.
- 2009 – The HAAC evaluates accessibility at the Child Care Centre.
- 2010 – Training on accessible customer service is delivered to all employees, including summer students, volunteer fire fighters and staff of affiliated municipal corporations. Public Library staff also receive additional specialized training online through Access ON.
- 2010 – The HAAC evaluates accessibility at the Hearst Town Hall.
- 2010 – The Hearst Public Library gets accessible equipment (Braille keyboard) and books in many formats (large print, audio, Daisy readers and books, CNIB materials on loan, Province-wide inter-library loans) to meet needs of customers with disabilities.

- 2011 – The HAAC performs accessibility audits for many municipal facilities: Claude Larose Recreation Center, Stéphane Lecours Swimming Pool and the Double-Rink Tournament Hall. An Accessibility Audit also takes place at the Fushimi Provincial Park.
- 2012 – Emergency procedures and routes are posted in every municipal building in a visible and universal format and a memo on workplace emergency response is sent.
- 2012 – More than 180 full-time and part-time staff and volunteers are trained to date in accessible customer service.
- 2012 -- The HAAC assesses accessibility at the Heritage Sawmill Market Place, which is a municipal building. The HAAC is increasingly known and also conducts accessibility assessments for the private sector, such as: the Medical Centre, the Partners for Employment Centre and the Novena Pharmacy.
- 2013 – The HAAC assesses accessibility at the Inovo Centre, Gilles Gagnon Welcome Centre.
- 2013 – Alterations completed for improving the accessibility of the Public Library leased premises' main entrance by adding an automatic door opener and entrance ramp.

Appendix B – Removing Barriers – A Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Town of Hearst 2019-2023

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
<p>Current practices for the Multi-Year Plan 2019-2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and evaluate all policies and procedures to identify opportunities to integrate <i>AODA</i> prior to implementation; • Continue to offer accessible customer service training; • Document all training and professional development in terms of accessibility; • Develop terms of reference for the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee; • Develop a training and orientation session for the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee (HAAC); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services upon request to meet customer’s needs as much as possible; • Continue posting the Hearst Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes on Town’s web site; • Always communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes into account their disability; • Make information on the accessibility feedback process readily available to the public; • Inform the public that the Town’s accessible customer service policies are available upon request; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to continuously facilitate navigation through electronic documents on the network; • Develop a job posting template containing a statement that employment opportunities are equitable in terms of accessibility; • Adapt the orientation document for new employees by adding the accommodation measures offered to employees with disabilities; • Download the toolkit for recruiting people with disabilities through the website; https://hirefortalen.t.ca/. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always treat customers with respect and dignity by asking, “How can I help you?”; • Update and review policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities; • Continue reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are compatible with the fundamental principles of autonomy, dignity, integration and equal opportunity; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue using the Building Code regulations when issuing building permits for new constructions; • Continue inspections, monitoring and annual maintenance of municipal infrastructure; • Monitor and review operations and transportation services to ensure quality transportation services are offered with reasonable availability and rates; • Draw up an annual list of priority projects related to infrastructure and space development in order to improve accessibility, and the Hearst Town Council will approve, or not, the budget for carrying out said projects;

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult HAAC to ensure new procedures are inclusive; • Identify and implement inclusive accessibility measures; • Inform staff of all changes to policies & procedures; • Complete and submit annual compliance reports to the Province; • Develop a reflex to always consider accessibility when decisions and actions are taken; • Continue to consider the appearance, usability, functionality and content (text, images, forms and sounds) of municipal websites; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information in a format that takes into account the person's disability when you submit a document required under the customer service standard; • Inform staff about accessible web content requirements; • Post a statement informing the public that accessible formats are available; • Develop protocol for creating accessible forms, templates and documents; • Continue verifying the www.hearst.ca website with the AChecker service; • Continue working with web developers; 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to communicate with a disabled person in a way that takes into account their disability; • Allow people with disabilities to bring their service animal to open public places, unless the animal is excluded from the site by another law. When service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the disabled person; 	

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Evaluation of the HAAC by members. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while they have access to goods or services in public places or third parties; Give advance notice of the price payable for entry fees for the support person of a disabled person; Keep giving notice in the event of a temporary disruption affecting the premises or services on which people with disabilities are usually using to access goods and services; 	

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to train new staff members, volunteers, decision makers, entrepreneurs and others who interact with the public or participate in the development of policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services; • Promote the process for people to provide feedback on how goods and services for people with disabilities are provided and what will be done about any complaints. 	

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2019	2019				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan approved by Municipal Council; • Translate the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan; • Revise procedures and procurement policy for accessibility compliance; • Submit an accessibility compliance report in December 2019; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the revised Accessibility Plan on www.hearst.ca; • Make necessary changes to the Town's website according to AChecker's recommendations; • Web Accessibility Training for all Content Developers to be compliant with WCGA 2.0 Level A Guidelines; • Guideline 1.1 Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policy on inclusive employment standards for people with disabilities; 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the public spaces evaluation check list used by the CCAH members during AODA site evaluations; • Analyze previous inspection reports and target priorities in order to make recommendations to the Town's Council in improving public spaces; • Replace the flashing lights in the pedestrian corridors near the school zones (9th, Edward, Prince, 15th and 583 North); • Install pedestrian horns at downtown intersections;

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2019		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline 1.2 Provide alternatives for time-based media (audio or video, captions and subtitles); • Guideline 1.3 Create a Web adaptable content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure; • Guideline 1.4 Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background; • Guideline 2.1 Make all functionality available from a keyboard. • Guideline 2.2 Provide users enough time to read and use content; 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the feasibility and costs to facilitate travel around the parking spaces designated for people with reduced mobility in the presence of a concrete curb on the sidewalk near the designated parking lot; • Check the possibility of adding painted lines to the pedestrian crossing on George Street, between 8th and 9th, as well as road signs to improve the visibility of the crossing, especially in winter;

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2019		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline 2.3 Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures, avoiding flashes every second; • Guideline 2.4 Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are; • Guideline 3.1 Make text content readable and understandable; • Guideline 3.2 Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways; • Guideline 3.3 Help users avoid and correct typing errors; • Guideline 4.1 Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies. 			

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2020	2020				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make necessary changes as per the audit reports from the AChecker website; • Develop a policy about information and communication standards; • Provide training on WCGA 2.0 AA compliance for web content developers; • Guideline 1.4: Make it easier for users to see (colors, contrast, resizing text, images of text) and hearing content (sound control, background noise); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet employees' accessibility needs on an individual basis; • Review standard job posting formats and content for compliance, and include a statement that accommodations will be available upon request; • Inform those selected for an interview that accommodations will be available upon request; • Develop a written protocol for the establishment of individual accommodations plan for employees and recruits; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the needs of suitable equipment to improve customer service with a detailed budget (e.i. ATS, ect). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the report on specialized transit to ensure regulatory compliance.

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2020		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline 2.4 Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are on the web page (page titles, focus, link purpose, headings and labels, sections); • Guideline 3.1 Make text content readable and understandable (language, unusual words, abbreviations, reading levels, pronunciation); • Guideline 3.2 Predictable: Make Web pages appear and operate in a predictable way (focus, identification, navigation); • Guideline 3.3 Help users avoid and correct typing errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employees with appropriate information and communication supports; • Ensure that individual emergency and adaptation plans are prepared and updated regularly. 		

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2021	2021				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an accessibility compliance report in December 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning January 1st, 2021, all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (live captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions); • Guideline 4 of WCAG 2.0 being to maintain a content sufficiently robust to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents including assisted technologies; • Make necessary changes as per the audit reports from the AChecker website; 			

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing document templates to include accessibility requirements for posting on website. 			
2022	2022				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a list of the progress made since 2019 for the development of the next multi-year accessibility plan; Revise and develop a multi-year accessibility plan for the next 5 years; Propose improvement ideas regarding section 7.10 of the Strategic Asset Management Policy to be revised in June 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guideline 4 of WCAG 2.0 being to maintain a content sufficiently robust to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents including assisted technologies; Continuously use AChecker to verify compliance with accessibility of publications on the web. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For municipal elections, the premises must be evaluated by the HAAC in order to meet all accessibility requirements; Ensure that the voting booths are well lighted; Ensure that the election volunteers obtain accessibility customer service training; If electronic voting takes place in 2022, ensure that the process follows the WCAG 2.0 AA Standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure new and redeveloped outdoor public spaces comply with AODA Standards for Public Spaces; Identify and locate spaces for Type A and B parking spaces for aisles off-street parking areas and install appropriate signage.

Year	General	Information & Communications	Employment	Customer Service	Design of Public Spaces and Transportation
2023	2023				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for upcoming cycle 2024-2028 for compliance with legislation and regulations in effect; • Submit an accessibility compliance report in December 2023; • Translate the documents related to the new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline 4 of WCAG 2.0 being to maintain a content sufficiently robust to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents including assisted technologies; • Continuously use AChecker to verify compliance with accessibility of publications; • Update Town's web portal to conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA; • Post the Multi-Year Plan on Town's web portal by December 31, 2023. 			

Appendix C – List of Recommendations from the HAAC’s Site Assessments

Observations	Recommandations
Public Library (oct. 2018 & nov. 2008)	
No accessible parking at the main entrance on George Street.	Provide an accessible parking space near the main entrance on George Street.
No fire alarms with flashing lights, which would warn a deaf client in case of fire.	Install AODA fire alarms with alerting lights.
The layout of the desk makes it difficult for larger wheelchairs to access the main counter.	Review the desk layout during renovations.
Communication	Install a telephone to help people with hearing loss or that may be deaf.
Shelving height may cause a problem for wheelchair users.	Ideally, shelving should not be higher than 60 inches.
In the accessible washroom, handrail is absent.	Install handrail in the accessible washroom.
The employees’ washroom, lunch room and study room are not accessible.	A sign advising where the accessible washroom is located could be installed.
The employees’ lunch room and the study room are not accessible.	Reduce the size of the table in the lunch room. Evaluate the layout to make it more accessible.

Observations	Recommendations
Fire Hall (August 2018)	
The Emergency door on the South Side does not have an automatic push button in case of emergencies. There are three (3) steps to exit the building.	A ramp and an automatic door would provide an accessible exit in case of an emergency in the back of the building.
Signage at the main entrance not easy to read.	Add missing letters
No accessible parking space.	Add a designated parking space.
No automatic door at the main entrance.	Install an automatic push button door opener or a doorbell to ask for assistance.
Uneven ground near the small park in front of the building.	Reposition interlock bricks that are not level.
Entrance carpet makes it hard to move forward in a wheelchair and it hinders people with stability and visibility issues.	A firmer surface mat such as the one in front on the Fire Chief's office is recommended.
Congestion at the main entrance.	Ensure no object hinders entrance and movability.
Meeting room/Kitchen –Paper dispenser is not at an ideal location.	Change location of the paper dispenser to make it accessible to persons in a wheelchair.
Entrance to Fire Chief Office is not accessible to wheelchairs.	A ramp could be installed.

Observations	Recommendations
Arthur Bernard Park (Sept. 2016)	
Washrooms	The mirror should be inclined.
Fire alarm on second floor.	Install an OADA fire alarm system with audio and visual signals
No accessible parking space	Designate at least one parking space for accessible parking, as close to the playground as possible
No bike rack, creating hazards to visually impaired persons when bicycles are on the ground.	A bike rack should be installed to help visually impaired persons.
No accessible play structures.	Create paved pathways or of other material on which people using wheelchairs, walkers and canes can easily circulate. Purchase accessible playground equipment.
Portable toilet is not accessible with the cement underneath.	Install an AOAD accessible and unisex toilet.
Not enough trees to provide shade during warmer days and no resting space.	Plant trees and install benches near playground structures.
Both the bench and the swing are not accessible and are in need of repair.	Repair the bench and swing or replace with accessible swing (with platforms).
Only one picnic table available and it is not accessible.	Install accessible picnic tables at various locations in the park.

Observations	Recommendations
J.D. Levesque Park (Sept. 2015)	
No accessible parking.	Designate at least one accessible parking space close to the play structures and the baseball field.
The parking lot is far from the playground and the baseball field to the south east.	Create a paved pathway from the parking lot to allow wheelchairs or people with reduced mobility to circulate easily.
Two portable toilets not accessible for wheelchairs.	Verify if the current storage building could be used for washrooms as was previously the case.
There are no pathways to circulate between play structures; it is impossible for handicapped children to use most of the play structures.	An accessible swing could be installed and certain play structures could be modified. A small accessible excavator could also be installed. A pathway could be built to provide access to play structures.
No picnic tables available at this park.	Add two (2) to four (4) accessible picnic tables.
No pathway from the parking lot to the bleachers.	Build a sidewalk or an accessible pathway.
The memorial monument is far from the road, not on a levelled ground which is making access for wheelchairs more difficult.	Create an accessible pathway or a sidewalk to get to the monument.
We would like to see more activities for our elders.	Check this out on YouTube, activities for the older persons: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tzilhuTB1M .

Observations	Recommendations
Johnson’s Lake Beach Park (Sept. 2015)	
No accessible parking space.	Designate 1 or 2 accessible parking spaces as close to the beach as possible.
The parking lot is far from the beach and the picnic area.	Create an accessible pathway between the parking lot and the gazebo to facilitate access to the picnic area.
The gravel on the pathway leading to the lake makes autonomous wheelchair traffic very difficult, if not impossible. There is also a hole (about 65 feet from the gate) creating a safety hazard.	Pave the pathway or refinish with finer gravel and level adequately.
The washrooms door step is not accessible for people in a wheelchair.	Make the washrooms door accessible.
The men’s washroom is further from the pathway and the uneven ground makes it difficult to access.	Resurface the pathway going to the washroom.
The assistance bar in the women’s washroom accessible stall has been torn off.	Install an assistance bar in the women’s washroom accessible cabin.
Lighting in the washrooms is obscure.	Improve lighting by installing brighter light bulbs.
Persons in a wheelchair are unable to access the picnic tables on their own due to the sand surrounding the area.	<p>A wood or cement platform (with ramps) could be installed to facilitate access to the tables under the gazebo.</p> <p>Signage bearing the disabled person symbol could be installed at the tables’ extremities, as these areas are the only ones accessible to persons in a wheelchair. The table ends should also be lengthened.</p>
Children in a wheelchair are unable to access the playground due to the sand surrounding the area.	<p>Install AODA swing.</p> <p>Facilitate access to the playground area or install play structures for children with reduced mobility.</p>

<p>The ‘bear wise” trash can is not accessible (too high from the ground, too heavy, awkward hand positioning to open it).</p>	<p>Install a “bear wise” trash can that is easier to open.</p>
<p>Lake access is difficult for those with accessibility needs.</p>	<p>Buy a Mobi mat (to create a temporary pathway) an Aruba or Mobi Chair, a Sea Ramp.</p>
<p>The trail leading to the bridge and the bridge itself are not accessible with a wheelchair.</p>	<p>Create a fine gravel or asphalt pathway and install a ramp to access the bridge.</p>
<p>Clutter because of lack of storage for beach equipment (life buoys, life jackets, cones).</p>	<p>Provide shed on site to prevent clutter for persons with visual disability.</p>

Observations	Recommendations
René Fontaine Municipal Airport (Sept. 2014)	
No accessible parking space.	Designate at least one accessible parking space and locate it as close to the entrance door as possible.
Doors are not accessible. The bottom part of the door is broken making it hard for wheelchairs to circulate. Two heavy doors need to be opened before getting to the waiting area. The telephones (entry hall) are too high.	Fix the bottom part of the door. Install automatic door openers or a doorbell so people can request assistance to access the building. Relocate telephones lower on the wall.
Floor tiles are very slippery in the waiting area.	Install a carpet in high traffic areas.
The counter's height is way too high for a customer in a wheelchair.	Install a door bell at an adequate height.
The lighting in the entrance area could be improved, but adequate in other rooms.	Improve lighting in the entrance for better visibility.
The font size on the exterior sign is too small. The font size of the information posted in the waiting area's bulletin board is too small.	The name of the airport could be on the building instead of a sign. Ensure that information posted on bulletin boards is easy to read (bigger size font, better contrast and simple font type).
The entrance doors are 36 inches wide, the ones in the office area and washrooms are 32 inches wide, not enough clearance for wheelchair circulation.	Modify doors to accommodate wheelchairs.
Washroom access on the women side is difficult for a wheelchair if the door is closed. The paper dispenser is located too high and the mirror is not at an angle. The toilet in the cabin for disabled people is too low.	Keep the women's washroom door open at all times. Change the paper dispenser location closer to the ground. Install an angle mirror and change the toilet height.
Regular Fire Alarm that is not AODA.	Evaluate the possibility to replace the existing fire alarm for an AODA (with visual features).

Observations	Recommendations
Gilles Gagnon Welcome Centre (April 2014) & Inovo (May 2013)	
No automatic doors at main entrances.	Add an automatic push button for door opening at main entrance.
No doorbells at main entrances to request assistance.	Install doorbell at main entrances.
The location of some brochures on the wall is too high for a person in a wheelchair.	Place brochures lower and move furniture around to provide more space for clients in a wheelchair.
The height of the reception desk is very high.	Add a lower counter section or an accessible doorbell at the end of the counter.
Store: the middle display makes it hard for a wheelchair to move around.	Move the display at another location to improve accessibility of the store.
Washrooms: Access to the sink is blocked and the sink is too high.	Make the washrooms more accessible.
Washrooms in the newer section are accessible but have some stairs to access them, unless the south east entrance is used.	Add a ramp where stairs
Door is hard to open for accessible washrooms.	Install automatic door openers for the washrooms.
Multimedia room: The location of the door in a corner makes it hard to access for a wheelchair.	Replace the existing door with a sliding door or a bigger one.

Observations	Recommendations
Heritage Sawmill Marketplace(Oct. 2012)	
The height of the sawmill makes it hard for someone in a wheelchair to see.	Install a removable ramp to get someone in a wheelchair closer to the display items.
Accessible parking spaces not properly indicated.	A sign should be installed on a post where the reserved accessible parking is located so it can be seen through the snow accumulation.
Some bricks on the terrace need repairs.	Regular maintenance of bricks recommended.

Observations	Recommendations
Stéphane Lecours Swimming Pool (Oct. 2011)	
Showers: no handle bar or chair.	Add a handle bar and provide a chair to be used in the showers.
Second floor not accessible for office staff and spectators.	A lift would probably be an option for getting up the 10 stairs to the spectator bleachers.
Accessible Parking.	Add a second accessible parking space for reduced mobility clients.
The second door to the women’s change room is hard to open.	Add two automatic push buttons for automatic doors in each changing room.
Mirrors in the washrooms should be inclined for clients in wheelchairs.	Tilt mirrors or buy longer ones.
Water fountain in changing rooms is outdated and not accessible for persons in wheelchairs.	Analyze ways to improve the water fountain.
The equipment around the pool may represent a danger for kids and persons with diminishing autonomy.	Provide storage space for pool equipment to reduce clutter and make it easier to move around the pool.

Observations	Recommendations
Double Rink Tournament Hall (Oct. 2011)	
The height of the mirrors in the washrooms are too high for persons in wheelchairs.	Tilt mirrors or buy longer ones.
The location of the fire extinguisher makes it hard to see.	Relocate fire extinguisher in the right corner of the same wall.
The towels are located too high, which makes it difficult to access for people in a wheelchair.	Reduce the height of the towels.
The emergency exit to get from the double rink hall to the arena is not accessible (one-step).	Replace the step with a ramp if possible.

Observations	Recommendations
Claude Larose Recreation Centre (Feb 2011)	
Emergency defibrillator; the height and location could cause a problem for visually impaired persons.	Relocate the defibrillator box since a visually impaired person might have a hard time seeing it and could hit his/her head on it.
Third floor is not accessible; there are 9 steps to climb between the elevator level and the stands, but the elevator to the Limite Hall is accessible.	A chair lift to be installed from the 2nd floor to the 3rd floor.
Washrooms: doors are hard to open	Remove the hallway doors to access the washrooms or add automatic push buttons.
Snack Bar sign lacking visibility for menu items	Improve the contrast and the visual quality of the Snack Bar menu bulletin board.

Observations	Recommendations
Town Hall (August 2010)	
Reception counter is too high for wheelchairs.	Redesign reception counter for accessibility.
Communication - no TTY system available on the phone.	Buy a TTY system or other communication device for better communication.
Regular fire alarm that is not AODA.	Replace existing fire alarms with AODAs (with visual features).
The elevator doorbell is hard to locate in the main entrance.	Adding a motion detection doorbell could help the visually impaired clients.
Background noises at the reception could make verbal communication difficult for the hearing impaired.	Reduce the background noise at the reception.

Observations	Recommendations
Éducatôt Hub (Child Care Centre) (Dec. 2009)	
The washroom near the director's office is accessible, however, there are no grab bars installed next to the toilet and the lavatory sink is difficult to access for a person in a wheelchair.	Add grab bars and modify the height of the lavatory sink to make it accessible for staff.
The fire alarm system on original floor area has no visual feature for the hearing impaired.	Install a visual AODA fire alarm system.
Parking: no indication for the 3 parking spaces dedicated to persons with reduced mobility.	Add a sign or paint lines to identify accessible parking.
The main door is kept locked at all times since the installation of the security system in 2010. Staff can admit parents and visitors when they ring the doorbell.	Check the possibility of adding automatic door buttons at the main entrance that would work with the security system.
Upper storage shelves in toy library too high and not accessible from a wheelchair.	Adjust the height of the toys location.

Observations	Recommendations
Downtown streets and sidewalks (July 2016)	
Plastic pipe in front of Hearst Corner Store.	Check the valves and bricks on a regular basis and make necessary improvements as needed.
The sidewalk path is uneven at the corner of 8th Street – northeast side.	Make the necessary improvements to ensure the sidewalk is level.
A section of the water valve pipe is elevated, near the Public Library at 801 George Street.	Check the valves and bricks on a regular basis and make necessary improvements as needed.
Raised bricks at the corner of 10th & George Streets.	Yearly maintenance of sidewalks to check for moving bricks after the winter.
Trash cans with opening facing the street are harder to use.	Place the trash cans with opening in the same direction as the sidewalk.
Tree branches in the park at 901 Prince Street are too low.	Low branches can create security issues for a visually impaired person, check with property owners for regular maintenance of the tree branches (Caisse Populaire).
A water valve cover in front of Wendy’s Beauty Loft located at 17, 9th Street is creating a tripping hazard.	Check the valves and bricks on a regular basis and make necessary improvements as needed.
A water valve is creating a tripping hazard at the corner of Prince and 9th Street.	Check the valves and bricks on a regular basis and make necessary improvements as needed.

Other Observations	Recommendations
Solution Ideas arising from the Accessibility Committee meetings	
Cement edge present for some accessible parking spaces.	Remove the cement edge whenever possible for the accessible parking spaces.
Traffic lights without sound signals for the visually impaired.	Buy AODA traffic lights compliant for pedestrian crossings with the sound signals.