

# Town of Blind River

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2021 – 2026



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## Introduction

This accessibility plan outlines policies and actions to be implemented by the Town of Blind River for a five-year period, commencing in 2021, in order to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities.

This multi-year plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Reports of annual reviews will be posted in digital format on the website for the Town of Blind River. Reports of annual reviews will also be available in print format for review at the reception counter at the municipal office.

## Guiding Legislation

In accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, municipalities and public organizations incorporated accessibility planning into their day-to-day operations and design of facilities. Accessibility planning was initiated in order to comply with the stated purpose of the Act: "to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province." The implementation of accessibility planning was documented by annual plans.

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, was enacted to serve as a framework for the establishment of accessibility standards in five areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The Built Environment

Both public and private sector organizations are required to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Not only does the Act acknowledge "the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario," but its stated purpose is to "benefit all Ontarians" through the establishment of two primary objectives: developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2015; and providing for an involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards. 2005, c. 11, s. 1.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, ensures that people with disabilities will be included in all aspects of society.

## **Statement of Commitment**

The Town of Blind River regards all people with dignity and respect while acknowledging and maintaining the independence of each person. Dedicated to integration and equal opportunity, the Town of Blind River is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, to the removal and elimination of barriers to accessibility, and to compliance with accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The Town of Blind River supports the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Accordingly, the Town of Blind River will ensure compliance with accessibility requirements in four key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Accessibility Standards of the Built Environment

The Town of Blind River is committed to the provision of services in ways that respect the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities in the community.

The Town of Blind River strives to ensure that every employee and constituent receives equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination.

The Town of Blind River meets the accommodation needs of employees and constituents in a timely manner as required by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

## **Accessible Emergency Information**

The Town of Blind River is committed to the provision of emergency information, available to the public, in an accessible format upon request. The Town of Blind River will also provide individualized emergency response information to its employees with disabilities when necessary.

## **Training**

The Town of Blind River will train staff members, employees and volunteers to ensure that they are aware of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it applies to people with disabilities. Such training will be provided in a way that best suits the roles and duties of staff members, employees and volunteers.

## **Kiosks**

The Town of Blind River has purchased an iPad for Town Hall, this iPad will be available for resident to use to complete a variety of tasks with or without assistance from Municipal staff.

## **Procurement**

The Town of Blind River will apply accessibility criteria to its procedures for the purchase and acquisition of goods, services and facilities.

## **Information and Communications**

The Town of Blind River is committed to meeting the communication requirements of people with disabilities. The Town of Blind River will consult with people with disabilities in order to identify their information and communications requirements.

The Town of Blind River will continue to ensure that content on its municipal website conforms with accessibility standards.

The Town of Blind River will ensure that existing feedback processes are provided to people with disabilities in an accessible format upon request.

The Town of Blind River will continue to ensure that all information available to the public is also available to people with disabilities in an accessible format upon request.

## **Employment**

The Town of Blind River is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. During the hiring process, the Town of Blind River will make every effort possible to accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment stages.

The Town of Blind River will develop and implement a process for the creation of individualized accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability.

The Town of Blind River will take into account the accessibility requirements of employees with disabilities during the performance management, career development and redeployment processes.

## Design of Public Spaces

The Town of Blind River will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when it undertakes major modifications of its public spaces or when it builds new public spaces. Public spaces include the following:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas, such as rest stops and picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, such as children's playgrounds in municipal parks
- Outdoor paths of travel, such as sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible off-street parking
- Service-related elements, such as service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

The Town of Blind River will make every effort to prevent service disruptions to the accessible areas and features of its public spaces

In the event of a service disruption, the Town of Blind River will notify the public and advise them about available alternatives.

## Barrier Identification

It is the intent of the multi-year accessibility plan for the Town of Blind River to prevent, identify and remove barriers or obstacles that limit or prevent people with disabilities from engaging in day-to-day activities taken for granted by people without disabilities.

A barrier may be defined as anything that inhibits or prevents a person with a disability from full participation in all aspects of society due to his or her disability.

There are several types of barriers to be considered:

**Environmental Barriers:** features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access.

**Communication Barriers:** obstacles that restrict or impede the processing, transmission and interpretation of information

**Attitudinal Barriers:** prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against a person with a disability.

**Technological Barriers:** when technology cannot be or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software.

**Systemic Barriers:** policies, practices and procedures within an organization that do not take accessibility into consideration

## **Report of Recent Achievements**

The Town of Blind River has improved accessibility or removed barriers in a number of Categories, these results can be found in Appendix B.

### **Customer Service**

Accessible Customer Service Standard regulation implementation

- Accessible Customer Service Training
- Accessible Customer Service Policy created and posted in the staff policy manual
- Ongoing staff training in Accessible Customer Service
- Ongoing staff training in Sensitivity as it relates to Customer Service
- Filed mandatory compliance report with Province of Ontario

### **Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy**

Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation implementation

- Accessibility Statement of Commitment and Multi-Year Accessibility policy created
- Accessible Communications Policy Created
- Planning and preparation underway for upcoming standards in Employment, Information and Communication, and the Built Environment

### **Accessible Transportation Policy**

When licensing taxicabs and providing transportation services, the Municipality will adhere to the applicable requirements under the Transportation Standard.

For more information on this accessibility plan, or for a copy in an alternative format, please contact **Kathryn Scott, CAO/Clerk:**

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This Document is Available in Alternative Formats Upon Request

## Building Assessment 2011 and 2021

Building	2011			2021		
	Accessible*	Moderately Accessible*	Inaccessible*	Accessible*	Moderately Accessible*	Inaccessible*
Municipal Office			X			X
Senior's complex (12 Hudson)		X			SOLD	
Community Centre	X			X		
Marine Park	X			X		
Public Works	X			X		
Public Library		X			X	
Development Corp.			X		SOLD	
Medical Centre			X		SOLD	
Fire Department		X			X	
Information Centre		X			X	
Senior's Centre		X			X	



## Park Assessment 2021

2021	Accessible*	Moderately Accessible*	Inaccessible*
<b>Playground Equipment</b>			
Forrest Glen Park			X
Leboeuf Park			X
Pronto Park (Shirvon)			X
Rousseau Park			X
Skateboard Park		X	
Outdoor Rink		X	
Timber Village/Tourism		X	
Town Park Playground		X	
<b>Open Space</b>			
Berthelot Park			X
Gallagher Park		X	
Haines Park			X
Nash Park			X
Shamas Park			X
Thompson Park			X
Timmermans Park			X
<b>Baseball/Tennis/Basketball</b>			
Tennis Courts			X
Town Park/Baseball Field	X		
Town Park/Tennis Courts		X	

2021	Accessible*	Moderately Accessible*	Inaccessible*
Outdoor Rink Basketball Court		X	
<b>Beach</b>			
Boom Camp Beach			X
Sellers Park	X		
<b>Facility</b>			
Boom Camp Ski Club			X
Marine Park		X	
Joe Sidock Gazebo		X	
Farmers Market	X		
Provencher Pavilion		X	
Town Park Stage/Restrooms			X
Bike Trails (Great Lakes Waterfront Trail)		X	
<b>Boat Launches</b>			
Boom Camp		X	
Granary			X
Matinenda		X	

## Appendix A ~ Measures Planned for 2021 and Beyond

<b>Category</b>	<b>Planned Measure</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Accessible Customer Service	Create accessible reception counter at the municipal marina	Facilities	
	Complete engineering study to identify best locations for accessible picnic tables in municipal parks and to plan construction of pathways to accessible table sites	Facilities	
	Create accessible parking spots at municipal parks during the program to install new accessible picnic tables	Facilities	2021
	Creation of Accessible Gazebo at Sellers Park to improve access to the shoreline of Lake Huron for persons with disabilities	Facilities	2021
	Fully accessible webpage (all uploaded and created content)	Administration	Ongoing
	E-billing for property tax and water	Finance	2021-2022
	Online Facility Booking	Facilities	2022
	Rave Alert System, continue to promote resident signup	Administration	2022-2023
	Investigate eSolutions portal, creation of a 'my Blind River' app for webpage	Administration	2022-2023
	Webpage Upgrade, investigate options to enhance our webpage to	Administration	2023

<b>Category</b>	<b>Planned Measure</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
	maximize customer experience		
Information and Communications	Host a symposium for local private-sector businesses, with representatives from Accessibility Ontario, to promote and facilitate the continued development of Blind River as an accessible community	Administration	2023-2024
	Utilize the local community channel and municipal website to provide accessibility “tips” and to increase awareness about available resources for residents and visitors with disabilities	Administration	Ongoing
	Train staff on accessible document creation for distribution and webpage posting	Administration	2021-
	Accessible Municipal Election, Alternative Voting Methods	Administration	2021-2023
Transportation	Investigate options to operate the handi-lift bus to provide accessible transportation for seniors and people with disabilities	Administration	2021
Employment	Continue to ensure the recruitment process is barrier free	Administration	2021-2026
The Built Environment	Investigation of options for the municipal office to determine feasibility of renovations or new build to	Administration	2021-2026

<b>Category</b>	<b>Planned Measure</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
	eliminate barriers to accessibility		
	Assess Seniors Centre to determine feasibility of providing accessible access to deck at rear of the facility	Facilities	2022
	Assess Berthelot Park to determine feasibility of improving accessibility for residents and disabled veterans at the cenotaph during Remembrance Day service	Facilities	2022
	Creation of a new fully accessible trail loop	Facilities	2021
	Town Park Ball Field, upgrades to dugout, backstop, fencing, infield, outfield and spectator location	Facilities	2021

## Appendix B ~ Accomplishments

<b>Category</b>	<b>Completed Measure</b>	<b>Date</b>
Accessible Customer Service	Advise all constituents/customer alternative formats available for emergency plans/information	Ongoing
	Installation of one accessible picnic table per year in municipal parks	Ongoing
	Installation of additional audio induction loop system in the council chambers at the municipal office to assist ratepayers with reduced ranges of hearing	2019
	Implementation of eSCRIBE Meeting Management Software, this enables the entire Council/Committee agenda to be posted on the webpage in html and pdf format for residents to view	2020
	Installation of accessible counter at municipal office to eliminate barriers of accessibility for residents and employees with disabilities	2020
	Implementation of e-payments via etransfer (Re: Covid-19)	2020
	Purchase of wireless debit machine (Re: Covid-19)	2020
	Access e-11, Online Request for Service Software	2019
	Rave Alert System, installed software and trained staff on use of Rave Alert System	2020-2021
	Constructed wheelchair ramp at the Blind River Public Library	2019
	Designated accessible parking spaces in the downtown core and at municipal facilities	
	Designated additional accessible parking spaces at the Blind River Community Centre	2019
	Constructed curb cut-outs to improve wheelchair accessibility in the downtown core	2019

<b>Category</b>	<b>Completed Measure</b>	<b>Date</b>
	An iPad has been purchased for the front reception counter to allow for guided self serve for many municipal services (tax billing, water billing, etc.)	
Information and Communications	Implementation of eSCRIBE live streaming module for Council meetings to improve access to local government for people with disabilities	2021
	Creation of Accessible Document Creation Policy	2021
	Implementation of Abledocs, to remediate documents for posting on the municipal webpage	2021
	Incorporated accessibility features, including increased font size and vision-impaired audio adapter, when developing the new municipal website	2017
Transportation	Upgraded highway traffic lights to include audible signals for pedestrians with visual disabilities	2018
Employment	Equitable recruitment practices to ensure no barriers to applicants during the competition stage	Ongoing
	Implementation of HR Downloads for HR Training and Policy Creation	2021
	Implementation of 4s Health and Safety Training Software	2021
The Built Environment	Relocation of Timber Village Museum to the Marine Park Site	2019
	New wheelchair lift at Timber Village Museum	2020