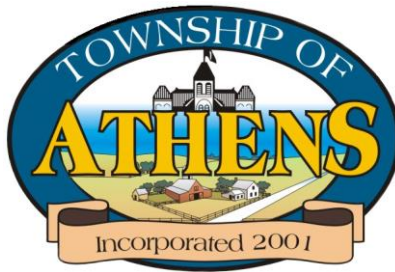


January 2020 to December 2024

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP
OF
ATHENS**



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

This publication can be made available in alternative formats

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement with the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end, the ODA mandates that each municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan.

The Accessibility Plan considers barriers to people with disabilities, and ways to remove and/or prevent them. These barriers can be included in the Township's bylaws and/or its policies, programs, practices and services. The plan will identify and describe the barriers or problem to be removed, overcome or alleviated plus the actions to be taken.

The Township of Athens is committed to enhancing accessibility for all people with disabilities so they can live independently, contribute to the community and to encourage them to full participation in the development and review of the Township's annual accessibility plan.

This is a five year plan (2020-2024). The report describes the measures the Township has taken over the past year and the measures the Township will take during the upcoming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Township, including Council, staff and members of the community at large.

Aim

The aim of this report is to identify all barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township and to prepare a forecast for the correction of such barriers.

Objective

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the Township of Athens will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Review last year's efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs and practices and services the Township will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the Township will take in the coming year to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities
5. Describe how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Description of the Township of Athens

The Township of Athens was formed in 2001 with the amalgamation of the former Township of Rear of Yonge and Escott and the Village of Athens. The Township has the village of Athens with a population of about 1000. The rest of the Township is mainly rural with some seasonal cottages on the shores of Charleston Lake as well as the small village of Charleston also on Charleston Lake. All development in the area is on the basis of private water supply as well as individual private septic tank/holding tank systems.

The Township of Athens has a volunteer Fire Department which responds to all 9-1-1 calls. The Fire Department has two rescue vehicles equipped with defibrillators and a water rescue boat and equipment. Ambulance service provided by the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville EMS. The Athens Family Health Team Medical Centre provides access to doctors for local residents.

The Township is home to Mapleview Lodge Long Term Care Facility and accommodates 60 residents. A Senior Citizens Apartment Complex with 20 units 2 of which are suited for persons with disabilities is located in the Township. Within the boundaries of the Township are Athens District High School and Pineview Public Elementary School.

The municipality itself owns the Municipal Building which houses municipal offices, public washroom, satellite O.P.P. office and the Joshua Bates Centre. The Township Library, public works garage, fire station and Centre '76 Arena are all municipally owned. The Municipality leases space for a Heritage Museum in an accessible space. We host a farmers market in the summer months and have 2 fully accessible parks/playgrounds.

The population of the Township is 3100

The Township employs approximately twenty (20) staff in the following locations:

- Athens Township Office
- Athens Public Library
- Athens Public Works Garage
- Athens Centre '76 Arena

Organizational Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Athens is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating all people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by continued improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities and by meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

Accessible Emergency Information

The Township of Athens is committed to providing people with disabilities with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request and on our website which has accessibility options such as increasing font size, full access mode for screen readers, high contrast for people with low vision and best legibility mode for people with visual impairment. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training

The Township of Athens is committed to training all persons who participate in developing Township policies, its employees, volunteers and all other persons who provide goods and services on behalf of the Township, in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities and ensures ongoing training with respect to any changes to its accessibility policies, standards and human rights code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits their specific roles and will be provided in a timely matter following new appointments within the Township.

Procurement

The Township of Athens will ensure steps are taken to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, if it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation on request.

Employment

The Township of Athens is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We will take necessary steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired. We will develop and have in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability. We will have steps in place to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account if using performance management, career development and redeployment processes.

Design of Public spaces

The Township of Athens will meet the accessibility standards for the design of public spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreation trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signal
- Accessible on and off street parking
- Service related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

We will have in place procedures to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces, in the event of a service disruption; we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

Past and Recent barrier removal initiatives

Web site:

The Township's website has been converted for ease of access by visually challenged individuals. The Township continues to investigate ways of updating the Township's website to ensure accessibility.

www.athenstownship.ca

Paper Documents:

The Township will provide all paper documents, such as bylaws, minutes, correspondence and reports, in a format which is user friendly by those with disabilities if requested.

Municipal Buildings/Properties:

An entrance ramp was installed with access to an elevator for access to the Municipal offices as well as the Joshua Bates Centre. A push button accessible door system has been installed as well as an intercom system direct to the main office. Wheelchair accessible washrooms were installed on the main floor as well as upstairs in the Joshua Bates Centre. Braille is available on the elevator control panel.

Public works improvements include curb cuts at corners and at various locations on Main Street.

The Township Library has a disabled washroom. Access to the library is at grade.

Centre '76 has two designated disabled parking spots, and an accessible entrance.

Disabled Parking spaces were designated at all Municipal buildings with proper signage. At the Library, Municipal Building, and the Fire Department.

Access to the Athens Volunteer Fire Department is at grade through the large garage doors.

The current Business License By-Law provides that Guide Dogs are permitted in restaurants.

Municipal Elections are held in the Municipal Building which has disabled access.

A play structure at Memorial Park and was made to be accessible to children with accessibility issues, a special type of mulch was used to allow for easier wheelchair access and the structure itself is more accessible.

Construction was completed at Centennial Park to provide accessible washrooms and canteen for users of the Soccer and Baseball fields.

Barriers Identified

Access to the Municipal Office is from the east entrance of the building where the ramp and elevator are located. The door to the elevator is locked at all times unless there is a request for it to be left open.

There is no disabled access to the upstairs community hall at Centre '76. The washrooms are not disabled accessible and do not have wing taps and the toilets are not equipped with handles, however accommodations are made for washroom access to dressing rooms for disabled patrons.

There is a small lip at the door to the entrance of the meeting area of the Athens Fire Department. The washrooms are not disabled accessible and do not have wing taps and the toilets are not equipped with handles.

The washroom at the Township Garage is on the second floor of the building and is not accessible, but is not open to the public.

Centre '76 Arena - looking at ways of making the building more accessible in the future with plans to improve washrooms as finances allow.

Review and monitoring of the process

The Chief Administrative Officer will be charged with the responsibility to monitor the progress of the identified barriers.

Communication of the Accessibility Plan

This plan will be available on the Township's website as well as at the Township office. The library will also be given a copy of the Accessibility Plan. Should a copy be requested in an alternate format such as braille or large print, Council will attempt to accommodate the requestor by having staff contact the necessary organization who would have the capability of producing the requested alternate format.

Feedback & Contact Information

The Township of Athens is committed to ensuring accessibility is a reality at all municipal facilities and municipal business operations. Any feedback is welcome and appreciated and arrangements can be made for receiving and responding to feedback in accessible formats and communications upon request.. We will ensure your concerns are directed to the proper department and dealt with in a timely manner.

There are a number of ways you can contact the municipality to express your accessibility related comments.

Contact Information:

Mail: Darlene Noonan, Chief Administrative Officer
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Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request