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Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee's MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY UPDATE

2021 Accomplishments

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has worked diligently to achieve the goals defined within the approved plan. Recognized achievements include:

Accessibility Plans:

The County of Huron has created an Annual Accessibility Plan under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 and a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan update under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, with annual updates on successes. The County of Huron has completed both requirements with the documents approved by County Council at the December 2021 County Council meeting.

Site Plan Reviews:

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee has been actively engaged with Municipal and County staff as well as private businesses and organizations in conducting Site Plan Reviews in a timely fashion. The Committee believes public awareness will continue to stimulate community participation and the subcommittee's time and commitment. The Committee reaches out to each local municipalities to review facilities. Recommendations were made for each review. The Reviews have been taking place virtually via ZOOM in order to follow social distancing requirements during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Examples of completed and/or current site plan reviews in process for the year of 2021:

Bluewater: Participated in the review of the reconstruction of Main Street Bayfield (roadway, sidewalks, parking). The HCAAC members participated at the on-line public meetings, met virtually with engineering and Municipal staff, and provided written recommendations.

North Huron: Met with the architect and staff to discuss the outdoor performance stage for the Blyth Festival (adjacent to the Blyth Community Centre)

Central Huron: Met with Central Huron Staff to do a virtual tour of the Clinton Main Street businesses. Comments were provided to improve their accessibility (visually / physical).

South Huron: provided comments and feedback about concerns from a resident and accessibility issues at a main highway corner and the neighbouring plaza.

Government Directives and Regulations:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has provided updates and advice about new government directives and regulations to County Council and the Municipal Working Group. The Working Group is made up of one volunteer/staff member from each lower tier. Each member of the group reports back to and shares newly developed resources and material approved by County Council to their Mayor/Councillors.

2021 Accessibility Awards of Merit for Barrier-Free Design

This Award promotes public awareness of the importance of barrier-free design and recognizes excellence in accessibility design. Awards are presented to the owner of a building or facility that has been designed or renovated with special regard to accessibility for persons with a disability. There are 2 award categories – Business and Non-Business/Public Sector organizations.

The following is a listing of the 2021 Award Nominees/Recipients:

Business Category

Award Recipient: Cait’s Café, Goderich
Honourable mention: Arnold Morrison, Wingham building owner
BMO Goderich Branch

Non-Business Category

Award Recipient: Shoppability Project, Clinton, Central Huron
Honourable mention: Kingsbridge Centre, ACW
County Road 12 Reconstruction (Seaforth Main St), Huron East

Continued Relations with County Council, Lower Tiers and Businesses

Due to Covid-19 impacts on curtailing events and activities, contact in 2021 with municipalities and the community has been via phone/virtual ZOOM meetings, and email.

Continued use of Resources:

- A virtual ZOOM meeting was held with all the Huron County Building Officials to discuss accessibility.
- The Committee continues to promote and engage local businesses with the Huron County Stop Gap program, which encourages businesses to get involved in creating barrier free communities.
- HCAAC presented a “Accessibility Considerations for Business” webinar in June via ZOOM. This webinar was organized by the Huron Economic Development Department.
- Members of the Committee virtually participate in workshops and Conferences offered by the AODA on Accessibility.
- The HCAAC participated in the Back Alley Artist Extravaganza in Clinton during the reconstruction of the main Albert Street. A 4’x4’ art board was created to promote the HCAAC, accessibility and that ‘everyone is welcome’ in Huron County.
- A Portable Accessible Washroom has been a focus of discussion for HCAAC and a special Sub-Committee was formed. They have met and want to make this project happen in 2022.
- County staff and IT Department Website accessibility updates to meet January 1, 2021 AODA requirements. Content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. Beginning January 1, 2120: 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).
- Municipal Working Groups representatives working on their websites.
- The HCAAC continues to promote the development of accessibility training to employees/staff of all kinds through continuous learnings on training requirements defined in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. These learning opportunities were customized into six modules:
 1. Customer Service
 2. General Requirements
 3. Human Rights
 4. Employment
 5. Information & Communication

6. Design of Public Spaces

- All new County staff received all required training within an appropriate time frame. All staff are required to receive training on accessibility standards for customer service and use of assistive devices.
- Upon request, provide information in accessible formats and with communication supports at the same cost charged to others. Publicized the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on website and documents.
- Continue to work with IT and Human Resources departments to train staff on Accessibility Standards.