



Policy Development Committee Report

To: The Chair and Members of the Policy Development Committee
From: Brian Grice, Community Safety and Well-Being Supervisor
Date: November 5, 2024
Report #: RPT-0458-24
Subject: Updated Accessible Design Standards
Purpose: For Approval

Recommendation

That RPT-0458-24 be received as information.
And that the 2024 Accessible Design Standards be approved.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 4 - Reliable Infrastructure
Strategic Priority 5 - Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

The Accessible Design Standards provide for enhanced accessibility and inclusion, promotion of equity and fairness, increased community engagement and sustainable community development.

Economic Impacts

There are several positive economic impacts of the Accessible Design Standards, including increased tourism and visitor spending, enhanced workforce participation, and cost savings through efficient infrastructure.

Environmental Impacts

Increased walkability and accessible green spaces, increased energy efficiency (e.g. touchless faucets reduce water waste), and minimizing retrofitting are examples of the positive environmental impacts of Accessible Design Standards.

Report

Background

The Accessible Design Standards:

- is a comprehensive planning document that provides the County of Brant with clear technical guidelines for the built environment.

- applies to all new construction, redevelopment, and renovation of spaces owned or operated by the County, ensuring accessibility is a priority from the earliest planning stages.
- integrates the Ontario Building Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and Ontario Provincial Standards.

The current Accessible Design Standards were adopted in 2013. To ensure the County's ongoing compliance with evolving accessibility legislation, consideration of advances in accessibility technology and adapting to an ever-changing demographic, Accessibility and Inclusion staff undertook a review and update of the Accessible Design Standards.

The Accessible Design Standards are important to the County of Brant's commitment to maintaining a fully accessible and inclusive environment. Regularly reviewing the Accessible Design Standards allows us to align our practices with evolving industry best practices and legislative requirements. This document serves as a single, clear reference point for all staff, ensuring consistency across departments. Our proactive approach ensures that we remain in compliance with accessibility standards, and we continue to foster an environment that anticipates future needs and challenges in accessibility

All Director-level staff, as well as the Senior Management Team were circulated on the draft Accessible Design Standards. Comments, feedback and changes were incorporated in the updated Accessible Design Standards accordingly.

Analysis

The Accessible Design Standards aligns with and meets or exceeds the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and Ontario Provincial Standards.

There are instances in the Accessible Design Standards where it is proposed that the County exceed the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This provides for more inclusive spaces, that better meet the diverse needs of residents with disabilities, thereby improving overall accessibility. This proactive approach enhances public engagement and promotes a positive community image, attracting residents, visitors, and businesses alike.

Examples of where the Accessible Design Standards are proposed to exceed the requirements within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act include:

- Type A only Accessible Parking Spots (Type A 3400mm with 1500mm access aisle vs. Type B which are only 2400mm)
- Mandatory Accessible Parking Spots Ground Markings Painting
- Wider sidewalks for newly built subdivisions of 1.8m
- Wider trails 2m
- Requirements for rest areas along trails and paths of travel
- 36" Minimum Door Width
- Mandatory accessible door openers on all external facing doors

All instances where it is proposed that the County exceeds the requirements within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act have been highlighted in the Accessible Design Standards (Attachment 1).

The Accessible Design Standards represents a proactive approach, anticipating future needs and challenges. It applies to all new developments and renovations, ensuring accessibility is considered from the start.

By collaborating with the entire organization, Accessibility and Inclusion staff have updated the Accessible Design Standards to ensure a built environment that, at minimum meets, and where possible, exceeds accessibility legislation and best practices.

Summary and Recommendations

The County of Brant's Accessible Design Standards reaffirm the County's commitment to creating an inclusive environment for all. By exceeding Ontario Building Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and Ontario Provincial Standards requirements, the Accessible Design Standards is a comprehensive guide for ensuring accessibility in the built environment. Grounded in universal design, the Accessible Design Standards anticipates future challenges and positions the County as a leader in accessibility. Its dynamic nature allows for regular updates, across departments, ensuring the County stays at the forefront of accessibility advancements.

By adopting the updated Accessible Design Standards, the County strengthens its commitment to accessibility and to ensure its built environment is prepared for the future.

Accordingly, staff are recommending that RPT-0458-24 be received as information, and that the 2024 Accessible Design Standards be approved.

Attachments

1. 2024 Accessible Design Standards

Reviewed By

1. Melissa Connor, General Manager of Strategic Initiatives
2. Lesley Jackson, Director of Community Partnerships
3. Sheena Yarek Snyder, Accessibility and Inclusion Supervisor

Copied To

1. SMT

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No