



MUNICIPALITY OF
SHUNIAH

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2024 - 2028



If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact our office.

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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) received Royal Assent on June 13, 2005. AODA is an Ontario law mandating that organizations must follow standards to become more accessible to people with disabilities. The purpose of the AODA is to create accessibility standards that organizations must follow and to make an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The AODA mandates the provincial government; the broader public sector (e.g. municipal governments, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities and public transportation providers) to develop accessibility policies and make them public. Accessibility policies are intended to help organizations to set goals to make themselves more accessible.

Members of the Municipality can work together to identify barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing municipal facilities and goods and services and to determine how to address existing barriers and to prevent new barriers from being established.

The AODA is made up of five standards, as well as some general requirements, and they include:

- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of public spaces
- Customer service

The AODA standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR includes, in addition to requirements specific to each standard, the following general requirements:

- Provide training to staff and volunteers
- Develop an accessibility policy
- Create a multi-year accessibility plan and update it every five years
- Consider accessibility in procurement and when designing or purchasing self-service kiosks



Implementation

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 in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end, the AODA mandates that each Municipality establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan.

This is the 2024 to 2028 plan prepared by the Municipality of Shuniah. The report describes the measures the Municipality will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff and members of the community at large. It further looks at yearly reviews and planning to ensure and continuous progress for improvement of access to all municipal facilities. The Municipality will consult with the public and persons with disabilities when addressing removal and prevention of barriers.

The most significant findings resulting from the site audits from 2003/04 onwards was that the Municipality's Administrative Office is not fully wheelchair accessible. It was recommended that over the next several years, the Municipality focus on those barriers, which can deny access to the municipal office on a day-to-day basis. The Municipality had budgeted for upgrades to the municipal office to be completed by 2006/2007. The Municipal Office completed the planned upgrades and is now fully accessibly.

Description of the Municipality of Shuniah

The Municipality of Shuniah is located in Northwestern Ontario in the District of Thunder Bay. The Municipality of Shuniah consists of the geographic townships of MacGregor and McTavish, which covers 540 square kilometers and has a considerable cottage population.

The boundaries extend from Copenhagen Road at Highway 11/17, to a quarter of a mile west of Ouimet Canyon. The northern boundary is eight-mile hill on Highway 527 and the southern boundary being 40 kilometers of shoreline from Bare Point to Bays End and the shoreline on Black Bay.

Unique to Shuniah are the association areas stretching from just east of North Star Road to Wild Goose Park. In the association beach areas, the lands are owned by the association, in which the cottagers are the shareholders and, in some cases, lease the lands.

Being in such close proximity to the City of Thunder Bay, the Municipality of Shuniah serves mainly as a bedroom community with very little commercial development within its boundaries. There are limited services in the Municipality.



Goals and Objectives

This report describes measures that the Municipality of Shuniah has taken since the plans inception in 2003 and what measures the Municipality will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff.

Council’s Commitment

The Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Shuniah is committed to:

- ▶ The continual improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities;
- ▶ Ensure new construction and significant renovations are reviewed in consultation with disabled persons and agencies regarding identifying, removal and prevention of barriers
- ▶ Strengthen pedestrian linkages and seek opportunities to support the development of local and regional transportation systems.
- ▶ Ensure staff receive ongoing and refresher training for employees and volunteers on delivering accessible customer service; and
- ▶ Enhance accessibility in outdoor spaces and improve access to nature, in partnership with economic development and tourism.



PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY

The Council has authorized the preparation of an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

Addressing Barriers

In 2005/2006 staff were requested to complete an informal site audit of the municipally owned buildings and in particular to assess any barriers that may exist and with that any solutions to removing those barriers in order to comply with the current legislation under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

There have been a limited number of barriers identified in some of the buildings. Washroom facilities to be constructed to Ontario Building Code (OBC) criteria for accessibility. Access signage on buildings for disabled persons - OBC states that there is to be Accessibility Signs installed where necessary to indicate location of ingress and egress.

The Municipality, in the year 2003/2004, has completed renovations to its MacGregor Recreation Centre located at 800 Lakeshore Drive. The renovations included a new 640 sq. ft. addition located at the rear of the building, which was constructed to house the main hall barrier free accessible entrance and wheelchair accessible washroom facilities located on both floors of the building.

In the year 2014/2015 the Municipality completed renovations to the Municipal Office located at 420 Leslie Avenue, Thunder Bay. The renovations included a new 600 sq. ft. addition onto the building, which was constructed to house a barrier free council chambers and an accessible washroom.

The Municipality of Shuniah Website reviewed and made compliant with the Web Content Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.

The Municipality has completed construction of a permanent, barrier free washroom facility at Wildgoose Park. In 2020 the Municipality completed construction of a new accessible playground at Wildgoose Park.

Tax Bills are designed so that a sight impaired person would not be able to read them. The legislative requirements set by the Province on the wording etc., for the tax bills, limits the Municipality in changing same, therefore the Province will have to look at the requirements in order to be in compliance with the Act.

The Shuniah Newsletter, and notices to the public, which are in print form, are available in other formats upon request.

This plan will be reviewed regularly, allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Municipality is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

Staff will conduct an informal site audit of the municipally owned buildings and public spaces to ensure continued identification, removal and prevention of barriers.



Communication

This plan will be posted at the Municipal Office, on the Municipal website and the Municipality will make every effort to make it available to those with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy be required in another format, for example, larger print or Braille, be requested, Council will do their best to accommodate.

Public awareness of this plan will be made through the Municipality Website.