

Minutes

Grey County Joint Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

May 15, 2025

Call to Order

The Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee met electronically on the above date. The Chair, Catherine Sholtz, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with all members present with the exception of Andrew Edgcumbe, Christina Schnell and Claudia Strelocke

Committee Present: Catherine Sholtz, Councillor Greig, Pamela Matheson, Brooke Sillaby, Jacob Morris Wheeler, Ray Whitfield

Staff Present: Tara Warder, Clerk; Kathie Nunno, Accessibility & Contract Specialist; Olivia Yale, Digital Communications Specialist; and Brittany Rier, Deputy Clerk

Others Present: Pam Coulter, Kevin Green, Jackie Groves, Melissa Hilgendorff, Niall Loble, Holly Malynyk, Jennifer Patton, Margaret Potter and Lara Widdifield

Election of Vice Chair

The Committee elected Councillor Scott Greig as the Vice Chair of the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. Councillor Greig will be the Vice Chair for the remainder of 2025.

JAAC05-25

Moved by: Member Whitfield

Seconded by: Member Sillaby

That Councillor Scott Greig be nominated as Vice Chair of the Committee for the remainder of 2025.

Carried

On motion by Members Sholtz and Sillaby, nominations closed.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Delegations

Items For Direction or Discussion

Southgate REC2025-004 Dundalk Community Centre / Macintyre Building Accessibility Upgrades

Kevin Green shared that the Township of Southgate is currently undertaking an accessibility project at the community centre to update the arena seating in the lobby to be accessible. They will be purchasing platforms with a proper turning radius and ramp for wheel chair users to view the ice surface.

He also shared that the Township will be making updates to the MacIntyre Building including automated door openers with upgrades to washroom hardware, installing a vestibule and switching one of the washrooms to a universal washroom with fully automatic doors.

The Committee members had no comments.

JAAC06-25

Moved by: Member Sillaby

Seconded by: Member Whitfield

THAT Report REC2025-004 Dundalk Community Centre / Macintyre Building Accessibility Upgrades be presented to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comment.

Carried

Georgian Bluffs Washroom Renovations, Shallow Lake

Kevin Green left the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

Niall Loble, CAO of Georgian Bluffs, shared some work that the Township is planning to undertake at the Shallow Lake arena. He noted the missing accessibility elements at the arena due to it being built in 1980. There were some updates made in 2010 with an extension to the changing room area, but this project did not include accessibility updates for the rest of the building.

The ground floor washrooms had work completed that included a stall being built in both the men's and women's washrooms, grab bars and installation of new mirrors. In 2023, as part of the 2024 capital budget, staff brought forth a proposal to Council to complete renovations of the washrooms inside the community centre but it was not completed due to budget constraints. A presentation was made to Council by an active user of the community centre and shared their experiences of using the washroom facilities. Council recommended staff immediately act on advancements to the washrooms.

He reviewed the plans noting that the wall will be removed between the female and male bathrooms to create a small corridor with gender neutral stalls including one stall that will be fully accessible meeting accessibility needs.

He shared that the Township would like to continue the project into the former referee's changing room, assuming there is enough in the budget. This will include the installation of an adult changing table, removal of the existing shower to make a wet room space, the installation of a fully accessible toilet and a reconfiguration of the entire space. He noted that due to these changes, there will be a loss of some washrooms but it will still meet the needs for the facility and that the second floor washrooms will remain as is.

The Committee shared their excitement with the advancements that are planned for the arena.

Niall Lobley went on to discuss the upgrades being made to the outside washroom facilities at the former concession stand behind the parking lot. He shared that the washrooms are currently divided into male and female facilities including a small shower area which has been minimally used over the last few years. He shared that the current washroom area will be converted to a storage space and the former concession stand will be divided into two fully accessible areas with infant changing tables. The washrooms will have automatic doors and an automatic locking feature to lock the facilities at night. The interior will feature an epoxy floor for easy cleaning with minor enhancements to the outside of the building including a walkway for access from the parking lot to the washroom facility and enhanced lighting.

The Committee asked if the facility will be usable in the winter months. Niall noted that the water system would not be able to operate during the winter months. The facility relies on a septic system with relatively shallow water supply lines that wouldn't be able to survive the winter. He noted that the washrooms in the arena facility will be open for a large portion of the day which can be used as an alternative to the outside building.

JAAC07-25

Moved by: Member Sillaby

Seconded by: Councillor Greig

THAT the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee receive the report "Washroom Renovations, Shallow Lake" from the Township of Georgian Bluffs;

AND THAT the Committee review the proposed renovations and provide advice to the township in respect to accessibility of the washrooms.

Carried

Owen Sound Report OP-25-019 Intersection Improvement
Options 9th Avenue East at 6th Street East (Lara Widdifield)

Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering for The City of Owen Sound, shared upcoming intersection improvements that the city will be undertaking at 9th Avenue East at 6th Street East. Lara noted that the intersection can not be met with all of the AODA best practices due to the north west corner of the intersection not having enough land to complete this, however it will offer many improvements.

Lara shared a picture of the existing intersection. She noted the challenges including land constraints and fixed structures at the intersection. She shared a map of the proposed design which include sidewalk access at all of the crossing points. She noted that due to the land constraints in the north west corner, this crossing will not have the ramp; the sidewalk will gently slope down to the road.

Lara shared a question that has been raised by a member of their Council is whether it makes sense to have crossings to the "island" in the intersection at the south west portion. There is potential for issues with snow storage on the island which would make the island crosswalk area unusable during the winter months.

The Committee shared their thoughts of eliminating the crossings to the island as well as concerns with the slope of the sidewalk in the north west concern being a potential slipping hazard. The Committee also asked if the ramps would have a large enough turning radius for a not only a wheelchair, but a scooter as well.

Lara shared that the sidewalk slope is within the tolerances that are allowed under AODA and noted that they will review the turning radius for the scooter. The Committee asked for the potential for having the walk symbol turn on at the same time as the light where Lara said they will bring these comments back to their consultant for further review.

The Committee shared further concerns for safety and asked for the potential of having the sidewalk extend down 9th Avenue East to Superior Street.

The Committee noted the importance of keeping the buttons for visually impaired individuals.

Councillor Greig noted the positive impact of extending the sidewalk out to Superior street. He noted the merit to remove the crossing to the island for safety purposes. He noted this roadway is a priority for snow removal.

The Committee asked for a potential crosswalk installation at the exit of Lee Manor where Lara noted it wouldn't be able to be completed as part of this project, but their could be potential in the future after more information is gathered.

JAAC08-25

Moved by: Member Morris-Wheeler

Seconded by: Member Whitfield

**THAT the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
provide review and comment of Owen Sound staff report OP-25-019
respecting Intersection Improvement Options - 9th Ave E at 6th St E.**

Carried

Correspondence

Niall Loble left the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

Melissa Hilgendorff left the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services for The City of Owen Sound, noted that the accessibility component of site plan approvals are delegated to staff in Owen Sound. She shared that their commitment as part of the delegation bylaw is to do a summary of the items of accessibility.

JAAC09-25

Moved by: Member Sillaby

Seconded by: Member Morris-Wheeler

That the following correspondence items be received for information:

- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval ST2024-001 Heritage Grove**
- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval DA-25-005 Murphy Homes and Design**
- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval ST2024-003 Royal Rose Court Parking Lot 3rd Ave East**
- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval CS25-018 1000 5th Ave East**
- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval ST2024-008**
- **Owen Sound Site Plan Approval 1399 2nd Ave East**

Carried

Resources

Accessible Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Kathie Nunno, Accessibility and Contract Specialist, noted the design recommendations for accessible electric vehicle charging stations could be a potential local municipal interest for the Committee to review.

Other Business

AODA Desk Audits

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility conducts desk audits including various upper tier and lower tier municipalities to confirm they are in compliance with the AODA and its accessibility standards.

Grey County received a request to complete a desk audit on April 11, 2025, with a deadline to submit of May 2, 2025. Questions included accessibility compliance reporting, establishment of an accessibility advisory committee, providing records of Ontario Human Rights code and AODA training, accessible feedback, formats and communications supports, recreational trails improvements, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, sidewalks, rest areas and traffic lights (signals), off-street and on-street parking spaces, service counters, waiting areas, and maintenance of accessible elements. They asked one question following the submission and were happy with the response. They sent a letter on May 12th stating they have concluded their desk audit and will not be requesting any further information at this time.

Age-Friendly Communities Committee Update

The Grey County Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) Committee meets quarterly and acts as a resource sharing committee for those who work with and are interested in age-friendly initiatives throughout the County. The Committee also works to oversee and implement the Grey County Age-Friendly Action Plan. Membership is made up of staff from local municipalities and the County, the health unit, not-for profit organizations, and community members. Age-friendly projects often have elements that work well with accessibility. One of the projects is to create a program for local businesses to become recognized as an age-friendly business and to display their municipality's age-friendly logo in their window. Another area from the age-friendly action plan is creating a checklist for age-friendly events.

Ontario Network for Accessibility Professionals Spring Conference Update

Representatives attended from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility attended virtually to talk about AODA compliance. Rory Burke reported on the results of the 2024 WCAG survey. The main findings included: navigation, getting the required information, text not legible, text too complex or too much, not all organizations build accessible websites, lack of alternative formats and challenges in providing feedback to organizations. He said next steps are to inform future WCAG compliance strategies. In 2025, the Ministry will conduct on-site inspections. For larger organizations, they will focus on the health and safety of people with disabilities and inclusivity. For smaller businesses, they will establish a presence and awareness of key AODA requirements and launch awareness-building inspection initiative with selected business improvement associations (BIAs).

One takeaway for municipalities is for vendors of record for the Province, in order to get approved, the vendor must prove they are compliant with an accessibility checklist.

There were presentations on the risks and opportunities of using artificial intelligence. It talked about analyzing data and the importance of making sure to use valuable data. The presenter also warned about risks of privacy breaches and data sharing. Uses include checking colour contrast, simplifying language, translation, generating closed captions and auto generation of transcripts for audio and video content.

Ontario Building Code Update

The 2024 Ontario Building Code was updated and came into force in January of 2025. As of April 1, 2025, all permit applications must use the 2024 Ontario Building Code.

These changes apply to new construction, renovations, and changes in use and do not mean changes are necessary for existing buildings or parts that aren't being changed.

The Corporation of the City of Brampton presented Staff Report Legislative Services-2025-106 regarding 2024 Ontario Building Code Changes – Accessibility Updates at its February 25, 2025 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. Grey County staff has excerpted some information from that report to share with this Committee for its information.

The following are changes to the accessibility requirements:

1. Barrier Free Application

Clarity provided about areas which are exempt from barrier-free design requirements. Exceptions include: detached houses, semi-detached houses, houses with a secondary suite, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, row houses, and boarding or rooming houses with fewer than eight boarders or roomers.

2. Entrances

All pedestrian entrances into a barrier-free storey of a building must be barrier-free and connect to a barrier-free exterior path of travel.

3. Areas Requiring Barrier-Free Path of Travel

Clarity provided about floor areas that are required to have a barrier-free path of travel.

1. Barrier-Free Path of Travel to Building Entrances, Exterior Passenger Loading Zones, and Access to Parking Areas:

A direct barrier-free path of travel is required between a barrier-free building entrance to a designated barrier-free parking area, to an exterior passenger loading zone, and to a public thoroughfare.

5. Accessibility Signs:

Signs must be installed to indicate the location of barrier-free entrances, ramps, exterior passenger loading zones, barrier-free washrooms and showers, barrier-free elevators, barrier-free parking spaces, and to assistive listening systems or adaptive technologies. Signs must also include the international symbol of access or the international symbol of access for hearing loss and appropriate graphic or textural information, and tactile signs must have braille and tactile characters in accordance with CSA B651 standard "Accessible Design for the Built Environment".

6. Exterior Walkways:

Exterior walkways that are part of a barrier-free path of travel must have at least 1600 mm wide surface of a different texture to that surrounding it.

7. Doorways and Doors:

Every doorway located in a barrier-free path of travel must have a clear width of at least 850 mm. Every door that provides a barrier-free path of travel through a barrier-free entrance, including a vestibule, shall be equipped with an automated door opener, and doors equipped with a self-closing device shall be equipped with an automated door opener in locations where the doors are located in a barrier-free path of travel between the entrance of the building and the entrance doors to suites or rooms served by a public corridor or a corridor used by the public.

8. Ramps:

Ramps must have a minimum width of at least 1000 mm between handrails, and have a level area of at least 1700 mm by 1700 mm at the top and bottom of the ramps.

9. Passenger Elevating Devices:

Passenger elevating devices that are located in a barrier-free path of travel must have specific clear floor space and clear width entry doors and gates measurements. Clear floor space must be not less than 1500 mm long by 1000 mm wide. Door width must be not less than 850 mm in the open position if located on the short side of the passenger elevating device or be not less than 1000 mm in the open position if located at either end of the long side of the passenger elevating device.

10. Assistive Listening Systems:

At least one service counter is to be equipped with an assistive listening system.

11. Showers and Bathtubs:

At least one universal dressing and shower room is to be provided where showering facilities are provided.

12. Service Counters:

At least one section of the service counter is to be barrier-free and meet the following requirements: be not less than 800 mm long centered over a knee space conforming to Clause (c), have a surface not more than 865 mm above the floor, and when forward facing interaction with a person or a device is required, have a knee space underneath it that is not less than 800 mm wide by not less than 685 mm high by not less than 485 mm deep.

13. Water Bottle Filling Stations:

At least one water bottle filling station must be equipped with controls that activate automatically and should be located along the barrier-free path of travel.

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion of Committee members Ray Whitfield and Brooke Sillaby, the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee adjourned at 3:11 p.m. to the call of the Chair.