

Report



Report No. CS2019-08	To: Council	Prepared By: Karen Way, Clerk
Meeting Date: May 22, 2019	Subject: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Motion # _____
Roll #:		R.M.S. File #:

Recommendation(s):	Requires Action <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For Information Only <input type="checkbox"/>
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It is recommended:

1. That Report No. CS2019-08 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as presented by Karen Way, Clerk, be received and adopted; and
2. That the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2019-2023 be approved as presented.

Background:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires the Township to have a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that is reviewed at least once every five (5) years by the municipality's accessibility advisory committee, and subsequently approved by Council.

The Corporate Services Department administers the AODA legislative requirements; such as advise, record, report, monitor compliance, and training to ensure legislative compliance.

Analysis:

The current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was in place from 2014-2018. Since that Plan was enacted there has been a change in accessibility legislation with the repeal of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) in 2018. This has led to some minor changes in compliance regulations for the Township.

The implementation of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee with the current Term of Council has also changed how some of our documentation will be reviewed, and how our facility reviews will be conducted. The Committee will continue to review site plans and all accessible documentation such as plans or policies, as they had before.

The Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was presented to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee at their meeting of May 9, 2019. The Committee endorsed the majority of the Plan, but recommended the inclusion of the following elements:

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Training
- Procurement

The Joint AAC was confident staff could implement these elements within the Draft Plan, and present it to the Township of Oro-Medonte Council for their endorsement.

Financial / Legal Implications / Risk Management:

There are no immediate budget implications, however as functions, projects and operations are initiated or undertaken, the AODA must be complied with, and therefore costs may be incurred and reported at that time, or as part of the undertaking.

Policies/Legislation:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

Corporate Strategic Goals:

Enhanced Communications & Customer Service

Inclusive, Healthy Community

Employer of Choice

Consultations:

County of Simcoe Member Municipalities

Attachments:

Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023

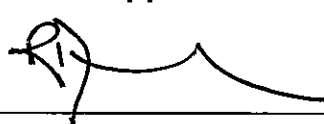
Conclusion:

It is recommended that Council endorse the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023. It is important to ensure ongoing compliance with all accessible legislation to meet the needs of employees and engage with residents of all abilities. Staff will continue to monitor accessible legislation and standards, to ensure the Township remains an inclusive community.

Respectfully submitted:



Karen Way
Clerk

SMT Approval / Comments:**C.A.O. Approval / Comments:**



**Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2019-2023**

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1.0 Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed by the Government of Ontario in 2005, and was legislated to augment the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) which was enacted in 2001 and subsequently repealed in 2018 following the implementation of all the AODA Standards.

The purpose of the AODA is to create dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all individuals within Ontario, and to break down barriers for those with disabilities. This Act stipulates various ways for all government offices, business, and organizations to achieve a barrier free province.

In addition to the AODA, the Province of Ontario has enacted the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) which aims to prevent discrimination on a multitude of protected grounds, including one's disability. The Code embodies similar principles to that of the AODA in which equal opportunity and respect are provided to all throughout the Province.

The Plan outlines the measures the Township has taken to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities, who use the facilities and services provided by the Township.

2.0 Profile of the Municipality

The Township is a diverse and beautiful community with a central location in Ontario. With a population of over 20,000 full-time residents, it covers a land area of 61,000 hectares, stretching from the westerly border with Barrie, the southerly border with Lake Simcoe, the easterly border with Orillia and Severn Township and the northerly border shared with Tay and Severn Townships. The Township's prime location provides residents and visitors alike with the riches of rural life and the convenience of a short drive to Barrie, Orillia and the Greater Toronto Area. Within the Township's very large land base, contains many small settlement areas that are home to affordable housing, safe neighbourhoods, and abundant recreational activities; all make Oro-Medonte an ideal community in which to live, work, and play.

3.0 Definitions

Accessible Formats: May include, but are not limited to, large print, plain language, recorded audio, or electronic, such as Word, PDF, Rich Text, or HTML, formats, Braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive Device: A technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, or a policy or practice.

Communication Supports: May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

Communications: The interaction between two (2) or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.

Disability: Includes any one of the following:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

As defined in Section 2 of the AODA.

Information: Data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital, or images, that convey meaning.

Medical Aid: An assistive device which may include, but is not limited to, respirators and portable oxygen supplies.

Mobility Aid: A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.

Mobility Assistive Aid: A cane, walker, or similar aid.

Service Animal: Any animal specially trained to provide support or perform tasks for a person with a disability to benefit the individual's daily life.

Support Person: Another person, identified by the service provider, who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services, or facilities.

4.0 Our Commitment

The Township of Oro-Medonte is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating 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 removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements.

5.0 Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AODA requires that municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 form an accessibility advisory committee, which may be joint with multiple municipalities. The Township has had an accessibility advisory committee enacted since 2003. In 2015 the County of Simcoe established a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee with member municipalities. The participating municipalities of the Joint AAC are:

- County of Simcoe
- Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
- Township of Oro-Medonte
- Township of Springwater
- Township of Tay

Section 29.3 of the AODA stipulates that "A majority of the members of the committee shall be persons with disabilities." The Joint AAC membership consists of five (5) publically appointed members; one (1) from each municipality. Additionally, each municipality has a member of Council and a staff liaison. When necessary, the Committee will meet in consultation with community members with disabilities to aid in providing a barrier-free Township.

In accordance with Section 29(4) of the AODA, the mandate of the Joint AAC shall be to:

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- Advise the Council of their respective municipalities the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice under their duties as outlined in the Act.
- Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act that the Committee selects.
- Perform all other functions that are specified within the regulations of the AODA.

The Joint AAC will endeavour to review projects stemming from recommendations made within the Plan, in conjunction with staff, applicable community hall boards, and outside agencies. Further, the Committee assists with public education programs, and in securing possible funding for accessibility related projects as applicable.

6.0 Council's Commitment to Accessibility

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. According to Statistics Canada, 1.85 million people in Ontario have disabilities which represent 15.5% of Ontario's population; disability tends to increase with age. In two decades it is estimated that 20% of the population will have disabilities. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on the future prosperity in Ontario.

Improving accessibility is a shared responsibility. The AODA requires that the provincial and municipal governments and key public sector organizations review their policies, programs and services through the development of a multi-year accessibility plan.

Municipal governments play a crucial role in the planning and development of our communities, such as in their streets, parks, public transit, libraries, social housing, paramedic services, public buildings, beaches, and elections. Responsibilities, which include enforcing the barrier-free access requirements of the Ontario Building Code and implementing key accessibility considerations under the AODA, are crucial to realizing a vision of local communities that improve accessibility and mobility for their residents.

The AODA builds on relationships and practices which currently exist among councillors, planners, builders, and community groups to make municipalities more accessible to people with disabilities.

The legislative requirements provide standards that all organizations in the private and public sector, including the Township, must follow to ensure that existing barriers for people with disabilities are removed over time and that no new barriers are created.

Council wishes to demonstrate leadership in working with people with disabilities to create innovative approaches and solutions for an accessible community that is welcoming to all.

7.0 Barrier Identification

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to prevent, identify, and remove barriers and obstacles that stand in the way of persons with disabilities from being able to access services, facilities, and information. A barrier is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. The traditional definition of a barrier used in the context of accessibility has been expanded to include obstacles beyond physical boundaries. There are several categories of barriers to consider.

Attitudinal Barrier

An attitudinal barrier is prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that all visually impaired persons can read Braille.

Communication Barrier

A communication barrier includes obstacles with processing, transmitting, or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read, or documents that are not available in alternative formats.

Environmental Barrier

An environmental barrier includes features, buildings, or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body mobility and strength.

Systemic Barrier

A systemic barrier is a barrier within an organization's policies, practices, and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, a practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.

Technological Barrier

A technological barrier occurs when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive device and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.

8.0 Standards under the AODA

The AODA makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to create comprehensive accessibility standards in all areas of daily life and calls on all, including the business community, public sector, not-for-profit sector, and people with disabilities or their

representatives to develop implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards through this Act; various working committees were established with the mandates of developing standards in specific areas that include:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Accessible Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Employment Accessibility
- Built Environment

9.0 Accessible Customer Service Standard

The Customer Service Standard ensures that people with disabilities receive goods and services in a manner that takes into account their disability. Accessible customer service means services being delivered with dignity and supports independence, integration, and equal opportunity for all.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 requires that the Township establish policies, procedures and practices on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities. The Joint AAC will continue to monitor this program.

Township staff shall continue to enhance Accessible Customer Service Standards through policies, procedures, training and orientation, awareness, programs, social media campaign initiatives, increased website accessibility formats, shared resources, and cultivate accessibility partnerships to increase accessibility and disability awareness.

Additionally, all staff, including volunteers, Council, and other third parties who work on behalf of the Township, must have mandatory customer service training regarding the provision of the Township's goods and/or services to persons with a disability. Every person who participates in the development of the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties, must also receive the customer service training.

The following is a summary of the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard, which apply to all providers that are covered by the standard:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

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- Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access goods and services and about any other measures the Township offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
- Use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account their disability.
- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
- Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
- Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
- Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
- Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.

10.0 Integrated Accessibility Standards

On July 1, 2011 the Integrated Accessibility Standards became law; the purpose of the integration was to align three (3) of the four (4) remaining standards that encompass transportation, information and communication, and employment.

Accessible Transportation

The transportation standard was developed to provide the public with accessible transportation including taxis and buses.

The Transportation Standard, at this time, does not apply to the Township of Oro-Medonte as the municipality does not have a public transportation system nor are taxi services licensed. The Committee will continue to follow this Standard so that, if Oro-Medonte develops a public transit system or licenses taxis in the future, the service will be accessible to all residents.

Information and Communication

The Information and Communication Standard was designed to achieve equitable access to communication and information, to cover the broadest range of how people send and receive information and facilitate communication.

This standard requires the municipality to provide information in an accessible format upon request taking into consideration the needs of the individual. The municipality is also required to ensure that all new materials are produced in an accessible format.

This standard requires that emergency procedures, plans or public safety information, if prepared, are also available in an accessible format as soon as possible upon request.

The Township's Accessibility Policy addresses this standard.

The Municipality is also required to make its website and content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The Township's Information Technology division in partnership with the County of Simcoe manage our website compliance.

The Information and Communication Standard has many implications for the Township. The municipality is required to develop policies, procedures and a statement of commitment towards providing accessible information and communications. The policy outlines:

- How Oro-Medonte will address requests for information in alternate formats.
- How Oro-Medonte will address requests for communication supports and services.

- How Oro-Medonte's procurement policies address accessibility.
- The criteria used to determine what information and communications will be made available in plain language.

Other features of this standards include training, emergency and public safety information, including evacuation procedures and incidents that threaten life, property, operations or the environment and related procedures, technical requirements including websites, and priority areas including health, education, libraries, legal, financial, elections and voting.

Employment Standard

The goal of the Employment Standard is to help employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Features of this standard include the requirement for accessible employment policies and training, recruitment, assessment, selection and hiring requirements, retention requirements, and indicators of progress, which are all currently practiced within the policy guidelines.

The employment standard focuses on policies, procedures and training requirements to identify and remove barriers in the workplace.

This standard requires employees to have processes in place to determine an employee's accommodation needs and also addresses all elements of the recruitment process, from selection through to retention.

In addition to the recruitment process, current employees who develop a disability may review an accommodation plan with Human Resources, along with providing information as required for a workplace emergency response plan.

The Township's Human Resources division ensures all policies and procedures are complaint with the AODA requirements.

11.0 Built Environment Standard

The Built Environment Standard, often referred to as the Design of Public Spaces standard focuses on removing barriers in public spaces and buildings that are newly constructed or developed. Technical requirements have been developed to have impacts on public spaces which include some of the following characteristics:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use seating areas

- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Service counters
- Maintenance

The Township consults with its Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee prior to the design and construction of new or redeveloped public spaces.

The Standard includes technical requirements such as surface and widths of public trails, slope of ramps, number of accessible parking spaces per lot, signage and number of accessible service booths. Exceptions were also noted in several categories including facilities of heritage, cultural, and natural significance.

There were changes made to the Ontario Building Code to accommodate barrier-free designs in buildings of new construction or with major renovations. The Township will ensure that municipal buildings having significant renovations or any new builds will meet these standards. Similarly, accommodation of barrier-free designs will be implemented on new construction or major renovations of recreational outdoor spaces; such as playgrounds. Additionally, plans shall be reviewed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Township understands the importance of an accessible built environment. Public spaces receive regular inspections and preventative maintenance to ensure that accessible elements are in proper working order. If an accessible element becomes damaged and is unusable a service disruption notice will be placed on the municipal website, through social media and notifications will be posted on the site as appropriate. Emergency maintenance will take place to ensure that the accessible element is restored to its proper working order as soon as possible.

12.0 Objectives of the Plan

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Review previous efforts to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- Describe the process that the Township will use to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in the future.
- Identify the measures that the Township will take in the coming years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

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- Identify the means in which the Township will make the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan available to the public.
- Identify solutions for an accessible community to all.
- Ensure that Our Commitment is followed when implementing procedures, policies, or by-laws that regulate the procurement process or when acquiring goods, services, or facilities.
- Identify accessibility training opportunities to ensure a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Identify and create solutions that embody the principle of Our Commitment as outlined in this Plan.

Following the approval of the Plan, staff will monitor the progress on the actions required, and will be reviewed as a reoccurring agenda item for the Joint AAC.

Minutes from the Joint AAC are forwarded to Council for receipt and consideration of recommendations.

Recommendations are integrated in annual budgets for Council's consideration.

The Plan will be updated no less than once every five (5) years, in consultation with the Joint AAC, and presented to Council for consideration.

13.0 Annual Status Reports

An annual status report will be prepared each year and be made publically available on the Township's website. This report will outline the progress and accomplishments with respect to implementation of the Plan. Additionally, the reports will be reviewed by the Joint AAC.

14.0 Feedback and Comments

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Township of Oro-Medonte's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general.

Obtaining feedback is an integral part of the evaluation process. The Township will continue to review and expand strategies to engage key stakeholders in providing accessibility related feedback, including persons with disabilities.

Please contact the Township to express your accessibility related comments through the contact information outlined in the Plan.

15.0 Communication of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Copies of this document are available at the following locations:

- Oro-Medonte Administration Centre
- Oro-Medonte Community Arena
- Corporate Web Site

Copies or requests for an alternate format may be obtained by contacting the following:

Township of Oro-Medonte
Karen Way, Clerk
148 Line 7 South
Oro-Medonte, ON L0L 2E0

Telephone: 705-487-2171 Extension 2132
Fax: 705-487-0133
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Accessible formats available upon request.