



2006 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
*ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT*

December 12, 2005

## Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* received Royal assent on June 13, 2005. The requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* are to be followed, however, until such time as the regulations for the new act have been published.

Clarington's 2006 Accessibility Plan provides an update of past activities and initiatives identified for 2006, in accordance with the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

## The Accessibility Advisory Committee

In accordance with the Act, an Accessibility Advisory Committee was established in 2002. The membership of the Committee is in place for the term of Council (November 30, 2006) or until their successors are appointed. Meetings are held the first Thursday evening of each month in the Municipal Administrative Centre and are open to the public.

In 2005, the Committee continued its work on the initiatives outlined in the inaugural plan, ie:

- Review various by-laws and policies, ie, purchasing, taxi licensing, parking, traffic/transportation
- Undertake a public building analysis
- Investigate Community Services programs
- Review site plans for new development and buildings, structures and premises being purchased, constructed, significantly renovated or leased by the Municipality
- Provide a forum for persons with disabilities to raise issues and concerns
- Coordinate the dissemination of information regarding issues faced by persons with all types of disabilities and regarding the work undertaken by the Committee
- Develop a Business Awards of Excellence to recognize businesses that have eliminated barriers
- Prepare a Directory of Services

## Business Awards of Excellence

In an attempt to raise awareness of accessibility issues in the Clarington business community, The Amazing Challenge was held on March 4, 2005. Members of Council, the business community, and the local media were invited to complete a series of simple tasks around downtown Bowmanville using an assistive device, ie, wheel chair, walker, or glasses to simulate vision impairment and cane. The participants were asked to retrieve a deposit envelope from an Automatic Teller Machine, purchase a soft drink or chocolate bar at a convenience store and then return to the Municipal Administrative Centre to share their experiences. Certificates of appreciation have been presented to the businesses that took part in the Challenge.

In conjunction with the Challenge, a checklist was published on the Municipality's web site outlining measures business owners could take to make their establishment more accessible to the public. This list included some simple tips such as placing a straight backed chair with no arms inside the store to allow customers to rest; keeping aisles clear of

clutter or displays; having as high a level of lighting as possible without glare; using simple, clean and large font for all signs or shelf tickets.

Participants in the Challenge found the experience to be very educational. Many indicated that they had not truly thought of the struggles much of the population faces on in doing business within the Municipality a day-to-day basis. Heightened awareness is paramount in creating a barrier-free society.

### Public Building Analysis

A public building analysis has been undertaken by the Operations Department. Over the course of the next year, the Committee will be working in conjunction with the Operations Department to eliminate any barriers highlighted in the analysis.

### Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion

Once again this year, the Committee organized and hosted the Clarington Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion Campaign. The event was held on June 12 at Darlington Provincial Park. Through the work of many volunteers and participants, approximately \$14,000 was raised, an increase of \$6,000 over 2004. It is anticipated that a grant in the amount of approximately \$7,000 will be awarded to Clarington to be used to either provide an accessible service/program for the Municipality or to purchase accessible equipment.

### Site Plan Review

The Committee continued to review site plans of commercial establishments and municipal facilities. Through these reviews, comments are passed along to the Planning Services Department for discussion with the applicants. It has been very heartening to see that the suggestions of the Committee have been considered and implemented in various development plans.

## Dialogue

Through interaction with municipal staff, the Committee has been able to raise concerns of the residents related to accessibility issues and jointly formulate resolves.

A concern was raised related to the application fees applicable when attempting to retrofit a home to make it accessible for an individual with a disability. A report was presented to the Municipal Council and the fee structure was altered such that an application to the Committee of Adjustment for accessibility issues would be exempt from the fee schedule.

Ongoing dialogue continues throughout the Regional Municipality of Durham through meetings held with the area municipality Accessibility Committee Chairs and staff. These meetings are a very valuable tool in exchanging information and ideas between municipalities.

In June of 2005 the Committee was given the opportunity to attend the Access Ontario conference held in Burlington, Ontario. The information brought back from this conference

has been invaluable. We are able to see that the same accessible issues we deal with in our community are not only municipal wide, but province wide. The issues of accessibility have no borders; they reach far past our nation and spread internationally. Aging population and more awareness of various disabilities are just a few of the reasons that we are noticing an increase in awareness of accessibility issues within our own local community and abroad.

The information from this conference touched on many areas that affect our own residents here in Clarington. Issues such as Accessible Transportation, Employment, Housing, Education, Sports and Recreation, and Preparing for the Future for your disabled family member were discussed. These are issues that affect our neighbours who face physical challenges every day. Site Plan Review procedures were discussed in detail. In addition, the function and operation of the Committee and how it's most important objective was to promote accessibility in all areas of the municipality we reside in was discussed.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has and will continue to benefit greatly from the wealth of information and contacts that were provided from being a part of this conference. In addition, the information will be used to help the Committee better understand the issues that our residents face, and will allow us the chance to work towards promoting a more accessible Clarington. Many accessibility committees from all over Ontario were present at this conference. It is reassuring to know that many other Municipalities are working towards the same goals. By knowing the issues we face, and working together with other communities, we can achieve accessibility here in Clarington, across the province, the country and throughout the world.

Municipal Governments have a crucial role in providing inclusion and access to all of its residents. The Accessibility Advisory Committee has a crucial role in assisting with this goal.

## Community Awareness

The Committee will be assembling accessibility information to be distributed at various community functions and activities in order to raise awareness of accessibility issues and the effect these issues have on our residents. Through education and awareness, the Municipality of Clarington can become a municipality where all residents can take part in every aspect of community life.

## 2006 Initiatives

During 2006, the Committee will continue the work that has been ongoing toward the completion of the various initiatives highlighted earlier in this document. As well, the Committee is planning sensitivity training sessions; will be involved in assisting the Newcastle Branch Library project planning team; will review the public building analysis; and review the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The Committee will also continue to provide a forum for issues and concerns to be raised and will provide information regarding accessibility issues to the residents of the

Municipality of Clarington. An information booth will be an essential tool in educating the public about issues and resources relevant to the Municipality.

### Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available on the Municipality's web site as well as at the Municipal Administrative Centre. We will make every attempt to make it available to those with disabilities. A Braille copy will be provided, upon request.

Questions related to this plan should be directed to:

Patti L. Barrie, A.M.C.T.  
Municipal Clerk  
Municipality of Clarington  
40 Temperance Street  
Bowmanville, Ontario L1C 3A6  
Telephone: (905) 623-3379  
E-Mail: [pbarrie@clarington.net](mailto:pbarrie@clarington.net)