



## Clerk's Report

If this information is required in an alternate accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 905-623-3379 ext. 2131.

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**Report To:** General Government Committee

**Date of Meeting:** January 21, 2019

**Report Number:** CLD-003-19      **Resolution:**

**File Number:**      **By-law Number:**

**Report Subject:** 2018 Accessibility Annual Status Update

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### **Recommendations:**

1. That Report CLD-003-19 be received; and
2. That Report CLD-003-19 be placed on the municipal website.

## Report Overview

This Report is the Municipality of Clarington's annual update on the measures taken during 2018 to improve accessibility in our community and to report on the progress made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

## 1. Background

### Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 The Municipality of Clarington is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities when they live, work, play, visit and invest in our community.
- 1.2 We promote an inclusive, caring and respectful community where programs, services and facilities are available to everyone. Our goal is to make Clarington a barrier-free community and each year we come closer to achieving that goal.

## 2. Accessibility Legislation in Ontario

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

- 2.1 The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) has been created as part of the Act to provide rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers. In addition to the General Requirements, The IASR contains mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas:
  - Information and Communications
  - Employment
  - Transportation
  - Design of Public Spaces
  - Customer Service
- 2.2 The Design of Public Spaces Standard focuses on removing barriers in areas not covered by the Ontario Building Code such as playgrounds, on- and off-street parking, recreational trails and service counters. It applies to new construction or re-construction of existing spaces. It does not require organizations to retrofit in order to be compliant.

### **Ontario Building Code**

- 2.3 The OBC regulates the minimum building standards for the construction of all new buildings and buildings that undergo a significant renovation. The Code includes requirements for minimum accessibility within buildings.
- 2.4 The OBC was amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, most new construction and extensive renovations will be subject to updated accessibility requirements. Existing buildings, where no work is planned, are not affected by these new requirements.

## **3. Accessibility Annual Status Update**

### **Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee**

- 3.1 The Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) is a citizen committee that acts as an advisory body for Council. Its mandate is to advise on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.
- 3.2 Each member of the CAAC is a volunteer, with the exception of the Council representative. The majority of CAAC membership is held by persons with disabilities. The CAAC is supported by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Clerk's Department.
- 3.3 The CAAC's term coincides with Council's term. Following the 2014 Municipal Elections, a new CAAC was formed and worked within its mandate until 2018. The 2014-2018 CAAC members brought a wide range of personal and professional experiences and perspectives related to the challenges faced by people with disabilities. They provided invaluable advice and support as we continue to work toward a barrier-free Clarington.
- 3.4 Under the AODA, the Municipality is required to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) when new developments and municipal projects are being planned. In 2018, the CAAC reviewed 40 site plan applications and three municipal projects for barriers to accessibility. This is a role the Committee takes seriously. They take pride knowing they have helped contribute to a more accessible Clarington by advising applicants to exceed minimum accessibility standards. In 2018, the CAAC continued to advocate for accessible housing when reviewing residential site plans and accessible places of employment when reviewing commercial/industrial site plans.

3.5 In 2018, the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee also:

- Participated in a round table discussion on affordable housing during an official visit from Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Elizabeth Dowdeswell.
- Participated in a survey to support the Strategic Counsel's consultation of municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees (on behalf of Accessibility Directorate of Ontario).
- Participated in Lakeridge Health's Master Planning consultation, and advocated for improvements for people with disabilities when accessing hospital services.
- Made a delegation to Council regarding National Access Awareness Week in June.
- Raised the Access Clarington Flag for National Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Attended Applefest to raise awareness of the CAAC and handed out CAAC brochures and promotional materials. Materials were also distributed by Clarington Tourism at Maplefest.
- Attended Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings and Joint Accessibility Advisory Committees Forum and Awards event.
- Participated, with the other AACs within the Region of Durham, in a special meeting held by Durham Region Transit to address concerns brought forward by the AACs.
- Attended the Joint Durham Region Transit – Metrolinx public consultation meeting.
- Hosted an event to recognize organizations the Committee nominated for a Durham Regional Accessibility Award for Clarington.
- Attended Metrolinx-Durham Region Transit annual consultation in November.
- Provided feedback on the accessibility of the following municipal projects: King Street Streetscape Project in Bowmanville, Seasonal Sidewalk Patio Project, and Edward Street and Guildwood Park Playground Redevelopment Project.
- Participated in Clarington Public Library's consultation process regarding renovations to the Main Branch.

### **Accessibility Governance**

- 3.6 The Accessibility Coordinator acts as a resource for all municipal service areas and facilitates compliance with the AODA. To ensure Clarington continues to meet or exceed the requirements of the AODA, the Coordinator continued to stay informed about legislation and participated in accessibility networks such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) and other Accessibility Coordinators in Durham Region through attendance at quarterly coordinators meeting.
- 3.7 The Coordinator provided legislated, mandatory training for all employees and volunteers on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities, as required under AODA. Additionally, training and support

continued to be provided to staff in the area of creating accessible documents. With the introduction of TTY (teletype) in 2018, training and support was provided on using SimpliciTTY software to communicate with customers who use a home TTY device.

- 3.8 The Accessibility Coordinator continued as the staff liaison to the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee and facilitator of site plan and municipal project reviews by the Site Plan Review Sub-Committee. The Coordinator maintained participation on the Durham Region Transit’s Specialized Services Appeals Panel (hearing eligibility appeals for Specialized Service).
- 3.9 The Coordinator contributed to the accessibility of the 2018 Municipal Elections by auditing potential voting locations, ensuring forms and signage were accessible, and developing accessible customer service training for election officials. These activities supported the implementation of the Elections Accessibility Plan, which outlined the initiatives the Clerk’s Department would undertake to ensure people with disabilities had an opportunity to fully participate in the Municipal Elections with dignity and in a consistent manner with all Clarington electors.
- 3.10 In an effort to support accessibility retrofit projects in older municipal facilities, the Coordinator prepared accessibility grant applications and managed the implementation of grant projects in collaboration with various departments.
- 3.11 The Coordinator, in partnership with Planning Services, coordinated an education event on Accessibility and Clarington’s CIP Grants for local Business Improvement Area (BIA) members. The event featured a guest speaker from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Activity	Number of Occurrences
Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings	9
AODA group training sessions	16 as of Dec 1
Number of staff and volunteers trained	178
Accessible documents training: number of staff trained	31 as of Dec 1
SimpliciTTY training: number of staff trained	82
Site plans reviewed	40
Municipal projects reviewed	6
Specialized Transit Appeals	13
Public inquiries	17

Activity	Number of Occurrences
Staff inquiries (total)	42
Staff requests for accessible document assistance	26
Articles regarding accessibility contributed to Clarington Board of Trade e-bulletin (January – December)	11
Articles regarding accessibility contributed to Bowmanville, Orono, and Newcastle BIAs (June – December)	7
Requests for information in an alternate accessible format	1
Browse Aloud speech requests (screen reader) on Clarington’s website	1040
Enabling Accessibility Fund grants received	2

**Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation - General Requirements**

- 3.12 The Municipality of Clarington continues to monitor and update its accessibility policies as necessary.
- 3.13 The Municipality of Clarington’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022 outlines the initiatives the Municipality has taken to ensure compliance with AODA. Additionally, the Plan outlines how the Municipality will continue to meet its legislated obligations under AODA and address the needs of our growing community as we work towards a fully accessible and inclusive community. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is posted on the Clarington website.
- 3.14 The Purchasing Department continues to include accessible design, features and criteria when purchasing goods, services or facilities. If the Municipality was not able to purchase accessible goods, services or facilities, the Municipality gave an explanation as to why, upon request.
- 3.15 We continue to ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to all municipal employees, volunteers, persons who participate in developing policies and person who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Municipality.

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**Information and Communications - Website**

- 3.16 The Municipality of Clarington website complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, an achievement the Municipality met well before the January 1, 2021 deadline prescribed by the AODA.
- 3.17 Staff across all departments continue to work hard to ensure everything on the website is in an accessible format. In some situations we have not been able to post content that is in an accessible format. Where something is not accessible to a person, we encouraged them to contact us and we worked with them to find a suitable accessible format.
- 3.18 Our website continues to feature BrowseAloud. The BrowseAloud feature has a number of helpful tools that make our website even more accessible such as: highlighting, reading out loud, and language translation. For the period from December 2018 to November 2019, there were 199 toolbar downloads and 1040 speech requests. While the number of toolbar downloads is lower than in the previous year, speech requests (i.e. screen reader) increased by 35 percent.

**Accessible Documents**

- 3.19 In support of accessible documents for our website, we continued to provide training to municipal staff on how to create accessible Word 2013 documents throughout 2018. We updated the associated training resources. The Accessibility Coordinator continued to train and support staff who need help creating accessible documents.
- 3.20 The Municipality remained dedicated to making both internal and external documents accessible and continued to make great strides in providing documents in an accessible format. We encouraged individuals who find a document inaccessible to contact us via phone or email to request it in an alternative format.

**Employment**

- 3.21 The Municipality of Clarington remained committed to accessible and equitable hiring practices and continued to meet its Employment Standard obligations under the AODA. All job postings included a statement about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process.
- 3.22 Successful candidates are informed, through their offer of employment, that accommodations are available for people with disabilities. All employees are informed of policies regarding job accommodations. The Municipality continued to provide workplace and emergency response information in accessible formats to employees who required it.

- 3.23 In 2018, the second floor of the Municipal Administration Centre was renovated. Wayfinding signage and office signage were redesigned to follow both Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) clear print guidelines and guidelines for interior signage. The new signs include tactile features (raised symbols, raised room numbers and braille room numbers) and have been placed at a height for employees of all abilities to access from a standing or seated position.



Figure 1 – Accessible wayfinding sign and accessible office sign

- 3.24 Participation House Project (Durham Region) has been contracted by the Municipality to operate concession stands at Garnet B. Rickard Recreation Complex, South Courtice Arena, and Darlington Sports Centre. Participation House Project is a community-based organization that provides assistance to youth and adults with physical and developmental disabilities, including employment opportunities. Employing people with disabilities is essential for inclusion. This partnership provides the opportunity for people with disabilities to fulfil their personal goals and contribute to their community.
- 3.25 In 2018, the Municipality received a grant, through Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund: Workplace Accessibility Stream, to partially fund upgrades to the flooring and washrooms at Sarah Jane Williams Heritage Centre (Bowmanville Museum). The upgrades will be completed in early 2019. The carpet on the main floor will be replaced with carpet tiles that meet current accessibility guidelines. This upgrade ensures the flooring is accessible for employees and volunteers with disabilities, particularly individuals with physical disabilities and those who use mobility aids or devices. A universal washroom will also be installed and will particularly benefit individuals who use mobility devices, have caregivers, or require the use of an adult change table. These improvements will allow all users (employees, volunteers and visitors) to safely navigate the museum's exhibits and access barrier-free washroom facilities.

### Transportation

- 3.26 The Region of Durham is responsible for transportation within Clarington. Metrolinx (Go Transit) also provides transportation service through Clarington.
- 3.27 All feedback regarding transportation is shared with Durham Region Transit and/or Metrolinx. The Accessibility Coordinator frequently liaised with Durham Region Transit on issues relating to accessible public transportation in Clarington. The Accessibility



Coordinator also continued to serve as an Appeals Panel member for Durham Region Transit's Specialized Service appeals.

- 3.28 Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee continued to participate in public meetings held by Durham Region Transit and Metrolinx and advocate for improvements to public transit services for people with disabilities.

### **Design of Public Spaces**

- 3.29 The Municipality of Clarington continued to ensure that all new and redeveloped public spaces complied with the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This means that new and redeveloped parks, trails, parking lots, service counters and pathways of travel were designed to make things easier for everyone – people with disabilities, seniors and families – to use and enjoy public spaces.
- 3.30 Although the Municipality is not required to retrofit public spaces under this Standard, we continued to proactively make accessibility improvements. We will work towards creating a barrier-free Clarington by removing barriers and exceeding our legal requirements whenever possible.
- 3.31 In 2018, the Municipality added a paved pathway at Clarington Fields which leads from the baseball fields to a new seasonal accessible washroom facility. The new path will remove barriers and ensure that people with disabilities can access the amenities and will be able to enjoy recreational sports activities. This project, which benefits Clarington residents and visitors, was partially funded through Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund: Community Accessibility Stream.



Figure 2 – Clarington Fields showing view of the paved pathway from the baseball fields (left) and the view from the seasonal accessible washroom trailer (right).

3.32 The development of Enniskillen Park was also completed in 2018. Some of the accessible features of the playground areas are: concrete access ramps, wood fiber surfaces, and an accessible swing seat. Several accessible play components are at ground level and others can be accessed from the transfer station. The park is relatively flat and all of the walkways are paved. Rest areas include extended bench pads to allow space for a wheelchair, mobility device or stroller adjacent to the bench.



Figure 3 – Enniskillen Park showing ramp access to the playground prior to the addition of wood fibre surface (top left), rest areas (top right), paved pathway (bottom left) and accessible swing seat (bottom right).

- 3.33 In addition, consultations were held with Clarington’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and members of the public to acquire feedback on the redevelopment plans for two older playgrounds: Edward Street Park and Guildwood Park. The new playground installations, which will include several accessible elements, will be completed in 2019.
- 3.34 An accessible podium was ordered for the Municipality of Clarington Council Chambers and will be installed in early 2019. This feature will make it easier for delegates of all abilities to make presentations to, or address, Council. The podium can be raised and lowered to the desired height and offers appropriate knee and toe space for any person using the podium from a seated position.

3.35 In 2018, the Municipality introduced an accessibility grant under the Community Improvement Program (CIP). The grant provides financial incentives designed to stimulate building and property improvements that remove barriers for people with disabilities when accessing businesses within the CIP areas. A total of five applications were submitted in 2018, four of which were for the installation of a power door operator. Three of the projects were completed in 2018. The CIP accessibility grant reinforces the Municipality's commitment to creating a barrier-free community.

### **Customer Service**

3.36 The Municipality of Clarington continued to be in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. When accessing goods, services and facilities provided by Municipality, individuals may use their assistive devices. Guide dogs and service animals may be used in all areas/premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. People with disabilities can access their support person/worker when accessing Municipal goods, services and facilities.

3.37 We continue to train all new employees and volunteers on Accessible Customer Service, including how to communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their abilities. We will work with the person with a disability to determine what methods of communication works best for them.

3.37 In preparation for the 2018 Municipal elections, all election officials received accessible customer service training and were instructed on how to use the audio-tactile assistive voting device available during advance voting. Election officials were also informed on the various tools and supports that were available at all voting locations and voting days (e.g. sheet magnifiers, large print ballot image, raised tables and wide grip pens).

3.38 As part of the 2018 renovations to the second floor of the Municipal Administration Centre, the customer service areas within the Mayor and Councillors Office/Chief Administrator's Office and the Clerk's Department and were upgraded to include power-assisted door operators at each entrance and accessible service counters.

3.39 In 2018, the Municipality took several measures to improve customer service by removing barriers for people that are deaf or hard of hearing.

- A specialized portable audio system was user-tested, evaluated and introduced to the 55+ Active Adults program. The system is designed to clearly amplify the speech of the program facilitator (who utilizes a headset and a body-worn transmitter) during fitness classes, thereby improving communication with program participants.
- A second specialized portable audio system was purchased to improve communication during public consultation meetings which take place at various locations throughout the Municipality.
- TTY (Teletype) calling was launched enabling customers who use a home TTY device to independently make a TTY call to any department within the

Municipality. Several staff in each department were trained to communicate using TTY software.

- Several types of assistive listening devices were user-tested and evaluated. We will continue to test different devices in 2019 before we purchase to ensure we acquire devices that remove barriers for our customers.
- The audio system within the Municipality's Council Chambers was updated to improve sound quality.

## 4. Next Steps

4.1 Throughout 2019, the Municipality of Clarington will continue to work towards meeting, maintaining and exceeding its obligations under AODA and its Integrated Accessibility Standards. In keeping with our goal of becoming a barrier-free community we will:

- Respond to requests for information in an alternative format.
- Continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents.
- Continue conducting accessibility audits on Municipal buildings and facilities.
- Continue to review and update accessibility policies and perform a gap analysis of missing policies.
- Provide current staff and volunteers with updated information on changes to our accessibility policies and continue providing accessibility training to all new staff and volunteers.
- Continue to review by-laws to ensure they are consistent with the principles of the AODA and that they meet or exceed the minimum Standards required under the AODA.
- Respond to public inquiries related to accessibility.
- Continue to collaborate with the Clarington Board of Trade and BIAs and contribute monthly articles regarding accessibility.
- Monitor accessibility trends, themes and actions at the grassroots, provincial and federal levels.
- Continue advocating for greater accessibility within the community.
- Continue to seek out funding opportunities that support accessibility and inclusion.
- Explore assistive technology and devices to improve access to Municipal facilities, programs and services.

## 5. Concurrence

5.1 The 2018 Accessibility Annual Status Update will be provided to the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee once members have been appointed for the 2018-2022 term.

## 6. Conclusion


- 6.1 In early 2018, staff provided Council with an Accessibility Status Update as of December 2017 and detailed the goals for 2018. All of those goals have been met or exceeded. It is respectfully recommended that the 2018 Accessibility Annual Status Update report be received for information and be placed on the municipal website.

## 7. Strategic Plan Application

Not applicable.



Submitted by:  
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Municipal Clerk



Reviewed by:  
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CAO

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There are no interested parties to be notified of Council's decision.