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The Municipality of Clarington Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 to 2023

Executive Summary

The Municipality of Clarington Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2023 outlines the initiatives the Municipality has taken to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). Additionally, the plan outlines how the Municipality will continue to meet its legislated obligations under AODA and address the needs of our growing and diverse community as we work toward a fully accessible and inclusive community.

The Municipality of Clarington is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, play, visit and invest in our communities.

We promote a caring, inclusive and respectful community where Municipal programs, services and facilities are available to everyone, including people with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for the public we serve and our employees.

About Clarington

The Municipality of Clarington is a beautiful community that forms the eastern boundary of the Greater Toronto Area.

Clarington is one of eight municipalities located in Durham Region. With a population of over 92,000 people and growing, Clarington offers residents a blend of city living and rural charm.

Current statistics tell us that about 15% of the population has a disability, which means there are approximately 14,000 people in Clarington living with a disability. As the population ages we can expect the percentage of people with disabilities to increase to 20% or about 18,500 Clarington residents.

Clarington is a large Municipality, covering an area of about 612 square kilometers. We have four major urban centres and 13 hamlets.

Legislation

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

In 2001, the Government of Ontario created the ODA. The ODA required public sector organizations (the provincial government, municipalities, hospitals, educational institutions and public transportation service providers) to undertake activities aimed at reducing and eliminating barriers for people with disabilities. It also required municipalities with populations over 10,000 to appoint an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), develop annual accessibility plans and seek the advice of AACs on certain matters.

On December 1, 2015 the Government of Ontario rescinded the sections of the ODA that applied to Municipalities. This was done to streamline accessibility requirements across different accessibility laws and remove duplicated requirements. As a result of these changes, the Municipality of Clarington no longer has obligations under the ODA.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The AODA sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Public Spaces

The Customer Service Standard became law (Ontario Regulation 429/07) on January 1, 2008. The Municipality of Clarington has complied with this Standard since January 1, 2010.

On July 1, 2016, the Government of Ontario made several changes to the Customer Service Standard, which required the Municipality to update its Accessible Customer Service Policy. One important change that occurred during this update was that the Customer Service Standard was moved into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). As a result of this change, all five standards now reside under one regulation.

The IASR also includes standards for: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard focus 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 (OBC)

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.

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.

Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee

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 Clarington.

The CAAC's term coincides with Council. Following the 2014 Municipal Elections, a new CAAC was formed and is working within its mandate until 2018. Each member of the CAAC is a volunteer, with the exception of the Council representative. The CAAC is supported by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Clerk's Department.

The current CAAC members bring a wide range of personal and professional experiences and perspectives related to the challenges faced by people with disabilities. They provide invaluable advice and support as we continue to work toward a barrier-free Clarington.

Accessibility Partnerships

Clarington works collaboratively with each of the eight other Municipalities in the Region of Durham to achieve greater accessibility across Durham. Clarington's Accessibility Coordinator regularly liaises with other Accessibility Coordinators within Durham and across Ontario.

The Accessibility Coordinator is a member of the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) and attends their semi-annual meetings. ONAP is comprised of accessibility professionals within the broader public sector across Ontario and its purpose is to share best practices and resources in accessibility.

Clarington's Plan

Customer Service

The Accessible Customer Service Standard came into effect on January 1, 2008. The Municipality of Clarington developed its Accessible Customer Service Policy and was in compliance with all of the Standards requirements by January 1, 2010.

The Municipality of Clarington continues to:

- Train staff and volunteers on providing accessible customer service
- Ensure that anyone who provides service on behalf of the municipality has been trained on providing accessible customer service
- Monitor its customer service to ensure we are maintaining and improving upon the level of accessibility we provide in programs, services and facilities
- Explore new technologies that support accessible customer service

In 2016, the Municipality purchased an iPad in 2016 to facilitate accessible customer service at the Municipal Administrative Centre.

The iPad is available upon request and can facilitate communication for deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing visitors and non-English speaking visitors. It can also magnify information for people with low-vision and is capable of accessing an on-demand sign language interpreter.

The Accessible Customer Service Policy was updated in 2017 to incorporate legislated changes.

2018-2023 Accessible Customer Service Goals

- Monitor the success of the iPad for customer service and explore introducing additional iPads at other facilities.
- Explore assistive technologies that will make municipal programs and services more accessible to people with a variety of disabilities. This will include, but is not limited to:
 - Assistive listening devices
 - Assistive devices
 - Charging stations for mobility devices
 - CART Captioning

General Requirements

The Municipality of Clarington has met all of the General Requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

The Municipality of Clarington continues to:

- Monitor and update its accessibility policies, as necessary
- Monitor and update its accessibility plan, as required
- Incorporate accessible design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities, unless it is not practicable to do so
- Incorporate accessible features when acquiring self-service kiosks
- Train new employees and volunteers on the requirements of the IASR and Human Rights Code, as it relates to people with disabilities
- Ensure persons who provide goods, services or facilities on our behalf are trained on the requirements of the IASR and the Human Rights Code, as it relates to people with disabilities
- File an accessibility compliance report every two years

2018-2023 General Requirement Goals

- The Municipality of Clarington will develop online accessibility training courses for staff, volunteers and third party contractors. Courses will include but are not limited to:
 - Accessible customer service
 - IASR - Overview
 - Creating Accessible Word Documents
 - Creating Accessible PDFs
 - Purchasing and Procuring Accessible Goods, Services and Facilities
- Develop and implement a training cycle to ensure staff remain up-to-date on accessibility legislation, corporate policies and best practices for interacting with people with disabilities
- Monitor the accessible purchasing requirements through random audits of files and provide additional support where necessary.

Information and Communication

The Municipality of Clarington has met all of the current requirements of the Information and Communications Standard.

The Municipality of Clarington continues to:

- Maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and provide accessible formats, upon request
- Provide emergency information in alternative formats, upon request
- Maintain an accessible website and web content
- Review documents and templates to ensure they are accessible
- Monitor its website for compliance with accessibility standards

2018-2023 Information and Communication Goals

- All municipal websites will meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021
- Develop the Municipality's Intranet to meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards
- Provide pre-recorded videos of Council meetings with closed captions
- Ensure that print-documents are accessible
- Support and educate staff on creating accessible documents
- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats

Employment

The Municipality of Clarington has met all of the current requirements of the Employment Standard.

The Municipality of Clarington continues to:

- Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process
- Advise successful applicants about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities
- Make policies on accommodating and supporting employees with disabilities available to all employees
- Provide accessible formats and/or communication supports to employees with disabilities who require it
- Develop individual emergency evacuation plans to employees who require it
- Document individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities
- Offer a return to work process for employees with disabilities

2018-2023 Employment Goals

- The Municipality will continue to regularly review its employment policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports they need
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure employees with disabilities are aware of the availability of accommodations and individual emergency response plans
- Explore partnerships with community organizations that support people with disabilities with the goal of providing volunteer and/or paid employment to people with disabilities

Transportation

Most of the requirements of the Transportation Standard relate to the operation of public transportation systems. The Municipality of Clarington does license taxicabs within the municipality but does not own or operate any transportation system. Public transportation is provided by the Regional Municipality of Durham.

The Municipality of Clarington, in partnership with the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee, continues to monitor the need for accessible on-demand taxicabs in the municipality.

2018-2023 Transportation Goals

- In the next term of Council, the Municipality of Clarington will consult with the public to determine if there is a need for accessible on-demand taxicabs and, if applicable, what proportion of taxicab licenses should be designated for accessible vehicles.
- Monitor compliance with the accessibility requirements of the Taxicab By-Law

Design of Public Spaces

The Municipality of Clarington is in compliance with all of the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPS).

Since January 1, 2016 all new and redeveloped public spaces owned and/or operated by the Municipality of Clarington have met the requirements of DOPS.

The Municipality of Clarington will continue to:

- Consult the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and people with disabilities prior to redeveloping or constructing new public spaces under this Standard
- Incorporate public consultations into existing processes wherever possible
- Meet or exceed the technical requirements of DOPS

2018-2023 Public Spaces Goals

- Explore the inclusion of mobility device charging stations in new and redeveloped public spaces
- Continue to enhance the accessibility of new and redeveloped playgrounds

Maintenance of Public Spaces Policy

The Municipality of Clarington will provide preventative maintenance of accessible elements through routine maintenance and inspections. Inspections will focus on accessible elements covered by the Design of Public Spaces Standard and the *Ontario Building Code*.

The Municipality of Clarington will notify members of the public of any temporary disruptions to accessible elements via our website, social media, on-site notice, and any other reasonable means. In the event of a temporary disruption, whether emergency or preventative, the Municipality will provide alternative accommodations until the disruption has ended. Accommodations during a disruption will vary depending on the nature of the disruption. The Municipality will ensure that accessible elements are fixed as soon as possible.

Accessibility Moving Forward

In 2017, the Municipality of Clarington asked for public feedback on this multi-year accessibility plan. An online survey asked people to identify issues and barriers to accessibility. The majority of feedback received highlighted issues not covered by the AODA.

Knowing that the AODA is a starting point for making our community more accessible, the Municipality has carefully reviewed the survey feedback received. Where possible, suggestions for improvement have already been incorporated into this Plan. Some feedback will be used to inform future projects.

The Municipality of Clarington is committed to becoming a barrier-free community. Although the AODA does not require the Municipality to renovate its buildings, we understand that physical accessibility is an important part of being a barrier-free community. Therefore, we have begun the task of conducting accessibility audits on all of the buildings we own and operate. The results of the accessibility audits will be used to develop a comprehensive plan of how to remove the barriers identified.

Contact information

We always welcome feedback about the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities.

In Writing:

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