



# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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## **Statement of Commitment to creating an accessible community**

The Municipality of West Grey (hereinafter referred to as "the Municipality") values the contributions of all residents and visitors and believes that these contributions have enhanced our community spirit.

The Municipality is committed to building an inclusive society and providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to our programs and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The Municipality supports the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and will establish policies, practices, and procedures with are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the built environment, and that is consistent with the core principles as outlined in the AODA:

**Dignity**—Service is provided in a way that allows persons with disabilities to maintain self-respect and the respect of others

**Independence**—all people are allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others

**Integration**—Services is provided in a way that all persons with disabilities can benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable persons with disabilities to access goods or services

**Equal Opportunity**—Service is provided to persons with disabilities in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods and services equal to that given to others

The Municipality will continue to prevent barriers by designing inclusively and supporting positive approaches that address attitudes which undervalue and restrict the potential of persons with disabilities.

In working toward its goals under this statement, the Municipality is committed to meeting the requirements of existing legislation and to its own policies and goals

related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities and becoming a barrier-free community.

## **The Ontario Human Rights Code**

Section 10 (1) of the Ontario Human Rights Code defines “disability” to mean that the person has or has had, or is believed to have or have had,

- a. 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,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

## **The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

The *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is a law passed by the Ontario legislature that allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility and to enforce them. The standards are made into laws called regulations, and they provide the details to help meet the goal of the AODA. The AODA is the foundation on which the standards are built. The purpose of developing and implementing accessibility standards is to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The five standards are:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Built Environment

Under the AODA, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is the first standard developed to become law (Regulation 429/07) on January 1, 2008. Public sector

organizations were required to comply by January 1, 2010, while other providers of goods or services are required to comply by January 1, 2012. The next three standards,—Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation— have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), which is now law. Requirements will be phased in over a period of several years. The Built Environment Standard is still being developed.

**The standards set requirements in a number of key areas and will be reviewed at least every five (5) years. New requirements may be added. The goal of the Act is to make the Province of Ontario completely accessible by 2025.**

## **The Municipality of West Grey Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan lays out how the Municipality will make the community more accessible for both residents and visitors. This plan will be updated every five years, with progress reports being created annually.

This plan will be posted to the Municipality's website, and will be available in alternative formats, as requested.

### **General Provisions**

The AODA has identified many areas in which there are barriers to be removed.

### **Accessibility Policies and Procedures**

The Municipality has written policies and procedures in place regarding the standards set out by the AODA. The Customer Service Standard Policy was written in 2009, and all staff have since received training on this policy. The policies and procedures on the Integrated Accessibility Standard—Information and Communication, Employment, and Transportation—have been written and reviewed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. They are posted on the Municipality website and are available in accessible formats upon request.

### **Procurement**

When procuring goods, services, self-service kiosks or facilities, the Municipality will incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the Municipality will provide an explanation, upon request.

### **Training**

All Municipality employees, volunteers and third parties providing goods and services on the Municipality's behalf are required to undergo training on the requirements of the AODA accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place as soon as is practicable and upon completion, the Municipality will keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

## **Feedback**

Feedback on how services were delivered to people with disabilities shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback is invited via diskette, email, telephone or in person.

## **Customer Service**

The Municipality provides services to 11,000 residents and thousands of visitors each year. Accessible customer service is essential to meeting the needs of the community.

### **Our Vision**

The Municipality is committed to providing goods and services to all residents of our community. We strive to offer the same opportunity for members of the public to access municipal goods using all reasonable efforts, regardless of disability, in similar or alternative formats.

Municipal goods will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Municipal staff will take into account all goods or services their department provides to the public and integrate/accommodate, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from the good or service.

The Municipality shall ensure that all residents, including persons with disabilities, are given equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the good or service.

### **Our Commitment**

The Municipality is committed to ensuring that every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise, work in an accommodating environment and provide accessible goods and services in a courteous and timely manner.

### **Our Accomplishments**

The Municipality created its Accessible Customer Service Policy in 2009 and has since trained all staff, volunteers, co-op students and board members in Accessible Customer Service. The Customer Service Policy is located on the Municipal website, and is available in alternative formats upon request.

## **Accessibility Training**

The Municipality will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

The Municipality will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by January 1, 2015.

All new and returning employees and volunteers will receive accessibility training upon orientation. All participants shall complete documentation indicating that they have received such training, and hard copies of these shall be kept on file. The records shall also be documented in a password-protected database.

## **Information and Communication**

Communicating and providing information using methods that work for all residents and visitors is another cornerstone of building an accessible organization.

### **Our Vision**

The Municipality is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult people with disabilities to determine information and communication needs.

### **Our Commitment**

The Municipality will take the following steps to ensure all new websites and content on those sites conform with WCAG 2.0, Level A by January 1, 2014.

- Providing information pertaining to WCAG 2.0 to the Municipality's website designer, and all staff that post information to the website
- Training staff that post information on the website in methods to make the documents more readable for those accessing the documents
- Obtaining a software program to test the accessibility of documents that are posted on the website

The Municipality will take the following steps to make all websites and content conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.

- Train staff in the requirements of WCAG 2.0 Level AA

- Ensure that all new information posted on the website conforms with WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- Confirm with the website developer the requirements of WCAG 2.0 AA and ensure that our goals must be met.

The Municipality will take the following steps to ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request by January 2014.

- Posting a feedback form on the Municipal website
- Informing residents and visitors that feedback is welcomed and appreciated either by phone or email, in person, or in writing by including a clause on the municipal website as part of our customer service policy

The Municipality will take the following steps to ensure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by January 1, 2016.

- Post a clause on the Municipal website stating that all information is available in an accessible format upon request
- Post a notice in high-traffic areas such as the municipal libraries and the Municipal administration office stating that all information is available in an accessible format upon request.

## **Employment**

The process of finding, getting and keeping a job must be inclusive and accessible in order to build an effective staff team in the Municipality.

### **Our Vision**

The Municipality is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

### **Our Commitment**

We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, the Municipality will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes when people are hired.

Including the following statement in all job postings: "The Municipality is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodations are available for all parts of the recruitment process. Applicants need to make their needs known in advance."

The Municipality will take the following steps to develop and put in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return to work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability by January 1, 2014.

- Establish a written process for the development of individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities that includes:
  - the manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan
  - the means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis
  - the manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer's expense, to determine if and how accommodation can be achieved
  - the manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by a bargaining agent, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent, in the development of the accommodation plan
  - the steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information
  - the frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done
  - if an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee
  - the means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability
- Ensure that the current written return-to-work process for employees that have been absent due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations is reviewed, updated and maintained. The process will include the steps taken to facilitate the return to work of the employees and the use of individual documented accommodation plans.

We will take the following steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account if the Municipality is using performance management, career development and redeployment processes. By January 1, 2014

- Review employee's accommodation plans to determine if adjustments are needed to help the employee succeed, learn new skills or take on more responsibilities in their current job.

- Make performance management documents available in accessible formats.
- Provide feedback to employees in a way that is accessible to them.

## **Transportation**

Getting from place to place safely affordably in the Municipality means that residents and visitors can enjoy all that the community has to offer.

### **Our Vision**

To ensure that all residents and visitors of the Municipality are able to traverse the community safely and affordably. This includes persons with disabilities, older Ontarians, and families travelling with children in strollers.

### **Our Commitment**

The Municipality will:

Consult with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public, and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of accessible taxis required in the community, including steps to meet the need in its accessibility plan.

The Municipality will:

- Ensure taxicabs do not charge a higher fee or an additional fee to persons with disabilities
- Ensure taxicabs do not charge a higher fee for storage of assistive devices
- Ensure taxicabs have appropriate information displayed both on the rear bumper and available in accessible format to passengers

The Municipality's Accessibility Plan Annual Status Report will include progress made by the municipality to meet the accessible taxi needs of the community.

## **The Built Environment**

The Municipality is home to beautiful beaches, parks and trails. All residents and visitors are invited to enjoy the amenities of our area.

### **Our Vision**

Residents and visitors of all ages will be able to take advantage of the accessible features of our public spaces, and enjoy all of the indoor and outdoor features of our Municipality.

## **Our Commitment**

The Municipality is committed to enhanced accessibility of our public spaces.

Many buildings have already been updated and renovated to include accessible features, such as automatic door openers, accessible washrooms and elevators. Renovations of other facilities are in progress to ensure that all residents and visitors are able to enjoy all that the Municipality has to offer.

**As public spaces are constructed or redeveloped, we will include the following features:**

### **1. Recreational Trails/beach access routes**

Clear widths, firm and stable surfaces, clear signage, location of amenities, ramps

### **2. Outdoor Public Eating Spaces**

Portion of spaces accessible, level, firm and stable

### **3. Outdoor Play Spaces**

Firm and stable surfaces, incorporate accessibility features, consult with people with disabilities

### **4. Outdoor Paths of Travel**

Clear widths, ramps, tonal contrast and stairs have tonal contrast and tactile

### **5. Accessible Parking**

Will provide two types of parking

✓ **Type A** – wide parking spot 3400 mm with signage “van accessible”

✓ **Type B** – standard 2400 mm

### **6. Service Related Elements**

Service Counters, fixed queuing guides (width, turn around space, cane detectable) and waiting areas (accessible seating and mobility aid space)

### **7. Maintenance and Restoration**

Maintain and restore public spaces.

## **The Built Environment**

The Municipality offers many facilities for all to enjoy. Many buildings have already been updated and renovated to accommodate the accessibility needs of residents and visitors.

### **Our Vision**

Staff and visitors will be able to move freely in all Municipal spaces, both indoors and outdoors.

### **Our Commitment**

It is expected that the Built Environment Standard of the AODA will require accessibility features to be incorporated into newly constructed buildings and those that require significant renovations.

The Municipality is committed to enhanced accessibility into, out of and around our facilities.

Many buildings have already been updated and renovated to include accessible features, such as automatic door openers, accessible washrooms and elevators. Renovations of other facilities are in progress to ensure that all residents and visitors are able to enjoy all that the Municipality has to offer.

### **Our Vision**

We will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified.

- Obtain and review accessibility related information provided through incident reports, Joint Health & Safety inspection reports, and client feedback.
- Prepare an annual accessibility plan and/or report.
- Meet with the local Accessibility Coordinators Network to share ideas and information regarding accessibility standards and initiatives.
- Process all accessibility related items through the Joint Accessibility Planning Committee.

**We want to hear from you!**

**Do you have any ideas or feedback on what the Municipality has accomplished thus far? How about ideas on how our plans and projects can be improved? Is there additional information that you require? Please contact us with your ideas and questions. We would like to hear from you.**

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