

**Township of Augusta**

# **Accessibility Plan**

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**2014-2019**

**DRAFT**

## ***Introduction***

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), as passed by the Provincial Government, is to achieve accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 1, 2025. The AODA consists of the following accessibility standards: Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Built Environment, and Transportation. All standards apply to the Corporation of the Township of Augusta (the Township). The Built standard has been drafted but has not yet been enacted with the exception of Public Spaces.

A summary of the regulated standards is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

The AODA was developed to assist organizations in both the public and private sector in identifying barriers to accessibility.

Even though the AODA received Royal Assent on June 13, 2005 and is now the law, the planning requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) remain in force until the Act is repealed.

Under the ODA, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare multi-year accessibility plans. The ODA specifies that municipalities must consult with people with disabilities when preparing their accessibility plans. Municipal Council's must seek advice on the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan each year.

This document represents the 5-year accessibility plan as prepared by the Township staff in consultation with people with disabilities. Consultation with the public was addressed through notices of the availability of the draft plan for review and comment placed on the Township's website and electronic sign as well as, circulation to an area accessibility advisory committee to receive comments and suggestions from those with disabilities and the public at large.

The Accessibility Plan describes the measures the Township has taken in the past, and the measures that the Township will take in the future to identify, remove and prevent barriers to the people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Township.

The Township of Augusta is committed to the identification and removal of barriers, as well as the prevention of new barriers, for persons with disabilities in the year ahead. With the continued input from persons with disabilities, the public and Township staff, the Township can improve equal access to the Township's goods and services for people with disabilities.

The Accessibility Plan examines all aspects of the Township's operations, including Township by-laws, practices, facilities, programs and services.

## Township of Augusta 2014-2019 Accessibility Plan

The 2014-2019 Accessibility Plan identifies steps suggested to be taken, over time, to remove identified barriers and to prevent new ones. The plan also reviews accessibility accomplishments the Township has benefited from.

Accessibility planning encourages municipalities to think strategically about removing and preventing barriers. Accessibility planning is a great way to tap new markets, attract and retain effective employees, improve service delivery, enhance customer service and increase efficiency.

Accessibility planning will help ensure that the Township services, policies, procedures and practices meet the needs of everyone with a disability, including Township residents, visitors, tourists and staff.

### ***Council Commitment***

The Township of Augusta is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Township believes in integration and equal opportunity. The Township is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Augusta is committed to:

- ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in the identification and review of barriers;
- considering recommendations from people with disabilities and the public with respect to accessibility of municipal buildings, facilities, operations and services; and
- meeting the standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* thereby removing barriers creating a municipality where every person who lives or visits can participate fully.

Township Council and staff continue to show their commitment to creating a barrier free community for residents, businesses, and tourists by developing and implementing policies, procedures and practices to provide service to persons with disabilities.

### ***The Township's Commitment to Accessibility Planning***

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 ODA and the AODA require that the province, municipal governments and key public sector organizations review their policies, programs and services through the development of multi-year accessibility plans.

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

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

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

### ***Objectives of the Accessibility Plan***

The objectives of the Accessibility Plan are to:

1. Review previous efforts to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Describe the process that the Township will use to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in the future.
3. List the facilities, policies, procedures, practices, and services that the Township will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Identify the measures that the Township will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities (listed in priority).
5. Identify the means in which the Township will make the accessibility plan available to the public.

## Barriers

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his/her disability, including a physical barrier, and architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. A summary of the standards which reference these barriers is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

An example of each type of barrier is shown below:

<b>Barrier Type</b>	<b>Example</b>
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body mobility and strength.
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter.
Informational	Typefaces (fonts) that are too small to be read by a person with low vision.
Communicational	A website that is not accessible to people who are blind. A person who talks loudly when addressing a person who is deaf.
Attitudinal	A receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair.
Technological	A paper tray on a laser printer that requires two strong hands to open.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.

### ***Barrier Identification Methodology***

Site visits of all buildings and facilities were conducted by the Chief Building Official to conduct building condition audits. The audits reviewed the facilities and provided recommendations for enhanced accessibility to these facilities. The recommendations form the basis of the Accessibility Plan as they pertain to physical and architectural barriers and are outlined in Appendix 3.

In addition to the physical and architectural barriers, recommendations to remove other barriers identified in the Communication and Information Standard and the Employment Standards are also included in Appendix 3.

The Township continues to consult with people with disabilities and other stakeholder groups for advice and recommendations.

### ***Consultation Activities***

Input on this plan has been received from municipal staff, persons with disabilities and the public and the United Counties of Leeds Grenville accessibility Committee.

***Review and Monitoring Process***

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

The Plan will be updated at least once every five years in consultation with persons with disabilities, the public and staff and be presented to Council for approval.

***Communication of the Plan***

Copies of the Plan will be made available upon request from the Clerk's office and on the Township's website at [www.augusta.ca](http://www.augusta.ca). The Plan will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

## APPENDIX 1

### **Accessibility Standards**

#### ***Customer Service Standard***

The Accessible Customer Service Standard regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and came into force on January 1, 2008. 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. Additionally, all staff (including volunteers 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 disabilities. Every person who participates in the development of the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties must receive customer service training as well.

The following requirements of the customer service standard apply to all providers that are covered by the Standard. If you are a provider, you must:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access goods and services and any other measures the Township offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use of your services.
3. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his/her disability.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

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9. 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.
10. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on, to access or use goods or services, are temporarily disrupted (i.e. elevator/lift out of service).
11. 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.

Public Sector organizations must also:

1. Document in writing all policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service and meet other document requirements set out in the Standard.
2. Notify customers that documents required under the Customer Service Standard are available upon request.
3. When giving documents required under the customer service standard to a person with a disability, provide the information in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

## ***Integrated Accessibility Standards***

This regulation establishes the accessibility standards for Information and Communications; Employment; Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.

This regulation applies to every designated public sector organization, which includes the Township of Augusta and to every other person or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public and that have at least one employee in Ontario.

As a small designated public sector organization, having less than 49 employees, the Township will work under the requirements of the AODA timelines.

### **1. GENERAL**

#### Accessibility Policies:

Every obligated organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves accessibility through meeting its requirements under the standards of the regulation. There is a requirement to include a statement of organizational commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and further that these policies will be made available publicly and in an accessible format upon request.

#### Accessibility Plans:

Every organization shall:

- Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the regulation.
- Post the plan on the organization's website and make it available in an accessible format upon request.
- Review and update the plan at least every five years in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- Prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the plan and post this status report on their website and make it available in an accessible format upon request.

#### Procuring/Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities:

Every obligated organization shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring/acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so and if determined not practical shall provide an explanation upon request.

#### Self-Serve Kiosks:

Obligated organizations shall incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks (an interactive electronic terminal intended for public use that allows users to access 1 or more services/products).

Training:

Every obligated organization shall provide training on the requirements of accessibility standards referred to in this regulation to all employees, volunteers, individuals who participate in developing organizational policies or who provide goods and services on behalf of the organization. Training will be appropriate to the duties of the individual and will be delivered as soon as practical and whenever changes to policies are made.

Further the organization will maintain printed records of training provided including dates and names of trainees.

**2. STANDARDS:**

**Information and Communication Standard:**

The Information and Communication Standard includes communications between two or more individuals where information (data, facts or knowledge) is sent or received in text audio, digital or image formats.

Feedback:

Every obligated organization that receives or sends feedback shall ensure that processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing/arranging for the provision of accessible formats/supports upon request.

Accessible Formats/Supports:

Every obligated organization, upon request, shall provide/arrange for the provision of accessible formats/supports in a timely manner and at no additional cost beyond regular costs. The person making the request will be consulted with to determine the suitability of format/support; however, the final decision rests with the organization. The public shall be notified of the availability of accessible formats/supports.

Emergency Plans/Public Safety Information:

If an obligated organization prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and that information is made available to the public then that information must be available in an accessible format as soon as possible upon request.

Websites and Web Content:

The obligated organization shall make its internet website and content conform to the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)2.0 initially at Level A and then Level AA as follows:

**January 1, 2014 – new websites and content – Level A**

**January 1, 2021 – all websites and content – Level AA**

Other requirements pertaining to education materials, educators and libraries are included but do not apply to the Township and have not been included in this Plan.

Employment Standard:

The Employment Standard applies to those organizations that have paid employees – it does not apply to volunteers or non-paid individuals.

This standard requires that employers do the following:

*Recruitment:*

- During the recruitment process, the Township shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities;

*Selection Process:*

- Notify job applicants, who are selected to participate in the selection process for a job that accommodations are available upon request pertaining to the materials/processes to be used. If the applicant requests an accommodation, the employer shall consult with the applicant and provide for a suitable accommodation with the ultimate decision resting with the employer.

*Offers of Employment:*

- Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

*Informing Employees:*

- Notify its employees of its policies used to support employees with disabilities, including job accommodations.
- Notify new employees as soon as possible as to their policies/practices with respect to accessibility and provide information to all employees when changes are made to their existing accessibility policies.

*Communication Supports for Employees:*

- When an employee with a disability requests it, the township will consult with the employee then provide the information needed to perform their job plus any other information that is available to other employees in accessible formats/communication support that is suitable, with the ultimate decision resting with the Township.

*Accommodation Plans for Employees:*

- Shall develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individuals accommodation plans for employees with disabilities;

The development process shall include:

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- The manner that the individual requesting the accommodation can participate in the development of the plan;
- The means by which the employee is assessed;
- The manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside expert (at the owner's expense) to determine if/how accommodation can be achieved;
- The manner in which the employee can request participation by the bargaining agent or other representative;
- The steps taken to protect privacy;
- The frequency that plans will be reviewed and updated;
- If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner that the employee will be notified of the denial;
- The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the disability;
- Plans shall document the accessible formats/communications supports, include individualized workplace emergency response information and any other accommodations provided.

### *Return to Work:*

- Not overriding any other return to work process created under any other statute, the Township shall develop a return to work process that includes a documentation process for those who have been absent due to a disability and require a disability related accommodation to return to work;
- The process shall outline the steps the employer will take to facilitate the return to work and will use individual documented accommodation plans.

### *Performance Management:*

- When using performance management, the Township shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans.

### *Career Development/Advancement:*

- An employer that provides career development and advancement to its employees shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans.

### *Redeployment:*

- An employer that uses redeployment shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans.

*Workplace Emergency Response Information:*

- Shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that it is necessary and the Township is aware;
- With the employee's consent, the Township shall provide the emergency response information to the individual designated to assist the employee;
- Shall provide this information as soon as practical after the Township becomes aware of the need for accommodation;
- Shall review individual workplace emergency response information when the employees change location with the organization; when the employee's accommodation needs are reviewed and when the Township updates its general emergency response policies.

**Transportation Standard:**

The Transportation Standard is a sector-specific standard. This standard will apply only to organizations that are in the business of providing or licensing passenger transportation services in the public and private sector, e.g. fixed route and public transit service, taxi services and school transportation.

If applicable, the Township will be required to address the following:

*Taxicabs:*

- Consult with persons with disabilities on the proportion of on-demand accessible taxis.
- Identify process steps to be taken to meet the need of accessible taxis.
- Ensure fares are equal (or less) for people with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip.
- Prohibit the charging of a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.
- Ensure that taxicab owners and operators place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxi.
- Ensure that taxicab owners and operators make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format.

**Built Environment Standard:**

The Built Environment focus is on removing barriers in two particular areas: public spaces and buildings. Requirements of the Standard address new construction and renovations in buildings.

*Recreation Trails and Beach Access Routes*

- All new or redeveloped recreation trails must be accessible with the exception of trails solely intended for cross-country skiing, mountain biking or the use of motorized snow vehicles or off-road vehicles, wilderness trails, back country trails and portage routes.

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- Newly constructed or redeveloped beach access routes must be accessible.
- Prior to the construction or redevelopment of recreation trails, the obligated municipalities must consult based on requirements of the Standard.

### *Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas:*

- The Standard applies to newly constructed and redeveloped outdoor public use eating areas including tables that are found in the public areas and are specifically intended for use by the public as a place to consume food.

### *Outdoor Play Spaces:*

- Outdoor play spaces consist of an area that includes play equipment, such as swings, or features such as logs, rocks, sand or water where the equipment or features are designed and placed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers.

### *Exterior Paths of Travel:*

- The Standard applies to newly constructed or redeveloped exterior paths of travel that are outdoor sidewalks or walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and are intended to serve a functional purpose and not to provide a recreational experience.

### *Accessible Parking:*

- The Township shall ensure that when constructing new or redeveloping off-street parking facilities that they intend to maintain such facilities in compliance with the requirements of the Standard.

### *Obtaining Services:*

- When replacing existing service counters or constructing new service counters, the Township must ensure that the counters accommodate mobility aids as set out in the Standard.
- If queuing guides are in use, all new fixed queuing guides must be in accordance with the Standard.
- Waiting areas that are new or are under redevelopment, where the seats are fixed to the floor, must ensure that there is no fewer than one accessible seating space.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Achievements**

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD:**

- Accessible Customer Service Policy and Procedures established and adopted by Council (2009)
- Accessible Customer Service training delivered to all members of Council, staff, volunteers and third party contractors (2009, ongoing)

#### **INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION:**

- Developed accessibility policies documenting how the Township will meet the legislated compliance deadlines of the Regulation
- Delivered training programs to appropriate personnel on new policies (ongoing)
- Prepared updated accessibility plan
- Renovation to the Merwin Lane Dive site included accessible change rooms, outdoor washroom, picnic table and access to the water.
- Township office equipped with ramps and automated door mechanisms and accessible washrooms as well as rooms on one level.
- The ramp and the Maitland education and recreation centre was repaired.
- Successful grant application to widen the Maynard recreation centre doors.
- Pavement at the Maitland outlook was repaved.
- North Augusta recreation renovation included improved wheel chair access to building, accessible door handles, light fixtures and washrooms
- Roebuck doors were widened and other past projects ensured facility was fully accessible.

**APPENDIX 3**

**PRIORITIES FOR 2014-2019**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Procurement</b>		
Develop accessibility criteria for use when purchasing goods or services	A	Update procurement By-Law and incorporate accessibility criteria in RFP & Tenders
<b>Customer Service</b>		
Continue to provide accessible customer service training as required.	A	Ongoing
<b>Information and Communication</b>		
Develop feedback process and ensure that processes are accessible by the provision of accessible formats/supports upon request	A	
Develop policy for provision of documents in accessible formats/support and notify the public of the availability	B	
Ensure that emergency information that is available to the public is available in accessible formats or with communications support upon request.	A	
Website compliance	B and C	Continue to make website accessible and be fully compliant by 2021
<b>Employment</b>		
Policy for notification of public and employees regarding availability of accommodation during recruitment & selection process	A	Job ads and interviews shall include notice of availability to accommodate accessibility requirements.
Policies and procedures for informing of accommodation for new and existing employees	A	
Accommodation plans, Return to work procedures, performance management, career development and redeployment.	A	Review and improve Township policies
Workplace emergency response information, individual workplace response information	A	
<b>Built Environments</b>		
Conform to accessible Parking requirements.	B	Ongoing
Remove barriers in public spaces & buildings	C	Any renovations or new build construction that occurs will comply with accessibility requirements/standards.