

Accessibility Policy for The Township of North Dumfries

Policy Statement:

The Township of North Dumfries (the “Township”) is committed to being responsive to the needs of all residents, visitors, and employees of the Township of North Dumfries in the delivery and provision of all municipal goods, services, programs, and facilities. To meet the needs of people with disabilities the Township will provide goods, services, programs, and facilities in a manner that is:

- Is free from discrimination;
- Provides an opportunity of equity in relation to the broader public with the respect to the use and benefit of goods, services, programs, and facilities;
- Protects the dignity and independence of all people, and;
- Strives to provide responsive and integrated services.

The Township will provide leadership and education to employees, volunteers, and necessary contractors through training and development in matters of accessibility.

This policy provides guidance on how the Township will ensure all goods, services, programs, and facilities are approached in an inclusive manner that takes into account the needs of people with disabilities.

Definitions:

1. Disability: as defined in section 10 of the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990 c. H.19.
2. Service Animal: A ‘guide dog’, as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act, R.S.O.1990, c.B.7; or
 - a. An animal used by a person with a disability, including but not limited to a dog, if:
 - i. It is readily apparent that such animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability; or
 - ii. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.
3. Support Person: A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Operating Principles:

This Accessibility Policy will function as an overarching policy for the requirements of the standards developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11 (the “AODA”). The Township develops policies, practices, and procedures which contribute to ensuring that goods, services, programs, and facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. The following principles shall be met when developing such policies, practices, and procedures:

1. Accessibility Planning

The Township will establish, implement, maintain, and documents a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the AODA. The multi-year accessibility plan outlines the ways the Township

will identify, prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the standards developed under the AODA.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be:

- Reviewed and updated at least once every five years; and
- Established, reviewed, and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the municipal accessibility advisory committee.

An annual status update report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared. The multi-year accessibility plan and accompanying status update reports will be posted to the Township's website and provided in accessible formats upon request.

2. Procurement

Whenever possible, Township staff will take into account the accessibility features and criteria of goods, services, and facilities procured, purchased, or acquired.

When not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, staff shall provide, upon request an explanation.

3. Alternate Formats

The Township will provide alternate formats of information that are produced or controlled by the Township to members of the public upon request, in a timely manner.

When it is not practicable to provide an alternate format the Township will provide an explanation and a summary of the document in an accessible format.

4. Communication Supports

The Township will provide communication supports to members of the public upon request, in a timely manner.

If Township staff are unable to obtain the requested communication support, they will work with the requestor to determine a practicable and appropriate method for communication.

5. Public Feedback

The Township will provide, upon request, accessible formats and communication supports when seeking public input, feedback, and advice, when practicable. The Township shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Should Township staff be unable to provide a requested accessible format or communication support they will work with the citizen to determine alternate means for participation in citizen feedback.

The Township has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback in the manner in which the Township provides goods and services to persons with disabilities. Members of the public may provide feedback through the Township's website, the general enquiries email, telephone, and in person.

All feedback received from the public on the accessibility of services will be provided to all relevant Township staff members who will take any appropriate action and follow up.

6. Service Disruptions

If a temporary disruption of service is planned, the Township will give notice of the disruption. Notice will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the premises as well as by posting it on the Township's website.

7. Emergency Procedure, Plans, or Public Safety Information

Where the Township prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes that information available to the public, that information will be in an accessible format with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable and upon request.

8. Support Persons

The Township will allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person in all Township owned and operated public facilities. The Township reserves the right to request the persons with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety by the person with a disability or others on the premises.

The Township will provide notification of any applicable admission fees or fares that apply to support persons by posting such admission fee or fare where all other fees or fares are posted.

9. Service Animals

The Township welcomes service animals into all Township-owned or operated facilities where the public is allowed. Service animals will be allowed to accompany a person with a disability to allow them to access facilities and services.

If a service animal cannot have access to a premise, Township staff will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods or services.

10. Use of Assistive Devices

The Township will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain services offered by the Township.

If a person with a disability is unable to access the Township's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, Township staff member will work with the customer to determine any alternate means for accessing services.

11. Training

Township staff members will be trained in accordance with the regulations under the AODA and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Ongoing training will also be provided with legislation changes and updates.

The Township will log and retain records containing the details of the training provided, the number of people trained, location, and date the training completed.

12. Accessible Workplace

The Township will meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the AODA and, in particular Part II Employment Standards of such Regulation by:

- Ensuring the recruitment process is inclusive of people with disabilities;
- Informing employees of supports available for employees with disabilities;
- Accommodating employees with disabilities under the AODA in the areas of:

- Workplace emergency response information;
- Information and communications needed to perform the employer's job or that is generally available to employees in the workplace, and
- Other accommodations as required;
- Taking into account employee accommodations in:
 - Performance management;
 - Career development and advancement; and
 - Redeployment; and
- Developing and implementing a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

This will be completed in accordance with the timelines set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA.

13. Transportation

The standards of transportation do not apply to the Township of North Dumfries at this time.

Review Period

This policy shall be reviewed once per Council term and will be revised in light of any legislative or organizational changes.

Responsibilities

Township Council and staff are responsible for adhering to the parameters of this policy and for ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in goods, services, programs, and facilities.