



Title: CORPORATE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Policy No. 2021-004

Date: Adoption: July 14 2021 Regular Council Meeting
Amendment:

Subject: Accessibility

Policy

General

The Township of Puslinch (hereafter “the Township”) is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Township believes in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Township will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario’s accessibility laws.

The Township is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The Township understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Customer Service

The Township is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

Township accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all Township staff and volunteers.



Procedure

Training

The Township is committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, the Township will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training of Township employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities.

The Township will train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

The Township maintains records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing Township goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

The Township will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices on site or that the Township provides that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities.



Communication

The Township will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- In-person interactions
- Phone calls
- Written communication (e.g., public notices, letters, etc.)
- Email
- Social Media
- www.puslinch.ca

The Township will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service Animals

The Township welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When the Township cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks. Visual indicators must be issued from a registered service animal training organization.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
- College of Nurses of Ontario;
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
- College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
- College of Psychologists of Ontario; and/or,
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

If service animals are prohibited by another law, the Township will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded; and,
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities.



Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

If a fee is normally charged to a customer for accessing goods, services or facilities, a fee will not be charged for the support person.

In certain cases, this organization might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability; and/or,
- others on the premises.

Before making a decision, the Township will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs;
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence; and,
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Township will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be made publically available in the following ways:

- Written notice posted on the impacted facilities main entrance;
- Township social media accounts; and,
- www.puslinch.ca.

Feedback Process

The Township welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback may be provided in the following ways:

- In-person
- Phone calls
- Written communication
- Email
- Social Media
- www.puslinch.ca/accessibility



All feedback, including complaints, will be directed to the Department Head responsible for operations of the impacted department.

Customers will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their feedback within two business days.

The Township will ensure the feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of Availability of Documents

The Township will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location(s)/way(s):

- at the bottom of official communications published by the Township
- on the Townships website www.puslinch.ca/accessibility

The Township will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. The Township will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. The Township will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Procurement

The Township incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, the Township will provide an explanation upon request.

Information and Communications

The Township has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

The Township will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, the Township will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and,
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

The Township will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the Township determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the Township shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and,



- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

The Township will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by communicating on the bottom of Township publications and on the Township's website at www.puslinch.ca/accessibility.

The Township will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

The Township notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. The Township will notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. The Township will consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

The Township will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

The Township will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. The Township will provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

The Township will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. The Township will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, the Township will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, the Township will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

The Township will provide the information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

The Township will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.



The Township will have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

The Township will have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

The Township's performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Design of Public Space

The Township will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. This standard consists of the following Public Spaces, Services and Planning requirements:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services
- Future/maintenance planning for public spaces.

The Township will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publically available. Accessible formats are available upon request.