



## **REPORT ADM-2021-047**

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TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Jeff Bunn, Deputy Clerk

MEETING DATE: July 14, 2021

SUBJECT: Township of Puslinch Annual Accessibility Status Report  
File: A22 ACC

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Report ADM-2021-047 regarding the 2021 Annual Accessibility Status Report be received.**

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an annual status update on the progress of measures taken to implement the Township 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Attachment 1).

The Township of Puslinch has established a multi-year accessibility plan to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and to meet requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

This Annual Status Report details the required annual update for 2017-2021 on the progress of measures taken to improve accessibility within the Township. The purpose of this report is to track the organization's progress and make the public aware of our initiatives. Moving forward staff will be presenting to Council on a yearly-basis on the progress made towards making Puslinch more accessible.

This report will be available online at [www.puslinch.ca/accessibility](http://www.puslinch.ca/accessibility).

#### Background

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA), 2001, mandates public organizations have an accessibility plan that integrates accessibility planning into their operations and facilities.

In 2015, the Ontario Government introduced the AODA, which provided a foundation of how to achieve a fully-accessible province for all citizens by 2025.

The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025, and contains standards in the following five areas:

1. Customer Service;
2. Information and Communication;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and,
5. Design of Public Spaces.

The Township's 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based upon the legislative requirements of the ODA and AODA.

For the past number of years, the Township has received an annual \$10,000 grant from the County of Wellington to support accessibility initiatives. Projects funded by the grant program have been identified with an "\*".

## 2021 Status Update

### Customer Service

- (2021) Launched DocuPet which provided a new accessible online venue for citizens to access pet licensing services
- (Ongoing) Continued to provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff, new employees and volunteers
- (Ongoing) Continued to review and improve current process to receive feedback from the public, where possible
- (Ongoing) Continued to review and improve current processes on how the public can request alternative formats, where possible
- (Ongoing) Continue to support corporate efforts to ensure compliance with AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards

### Information and Communications

- (2020-2021) Website redesign in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- (2020-2021) Website content written in plain language, appropriate heading tags for content, alternative text tags for images and documents that are friendly to those using assistive devices
- (2020-2021) Created online accessible fillable forms and converted existing forms to PDF forms for easier use
- (Ongoing) Documents offered in accessible formats when requested

- (2017) \*Upgrades to the Council Chamber to include audio system and video recording to make the meetings more accessible to Citizens
- (Ongoing) Reviewed information and communications processes and products to improve accessibility

### **Employment**

- (Ongoing) Provided accommodation measures as required during recruitment processes upon request
- (Ongoing) Provided job postings and descriptions in alternative formats upon request
- (Ongoing) Ensured job postings were advertised in a variety of newspapers and websites
- (Ongoing) Provided accessibility training to all new staff as part of new employee onboarding program

### **Transportation**

- As the Township of Puslinch does not have a public transit system, the majority of the Transportation standard does not apply
- In 2009 the Township entered into an agreement with the County of Wellington to delegate authority for licensing taxicabs within the Township of Puslinch. In 2011, the County of Wellington ensured Taxi By-law 5266-11 met the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Regulations as they relate to the Transportation standard

### **Design of Public Spaces**

- (2021) \*Completing a space needs analysis and design of municipal office in accordance with public space accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code, and the County of Wellington's Facility Accessibility Design Manual
- (2020) \*Installation of accessible sidewalks along portions of Brock Road
- (2019) \*Installation of accessible walking trail at Fox Run Park
- (2018) \*Installation of accessible doors at the Puslinch Community Centre
- (2015) \*Installation of accessible front counter at the Municipal Office

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

**APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

*Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001*

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

**ATTACHMENTS**

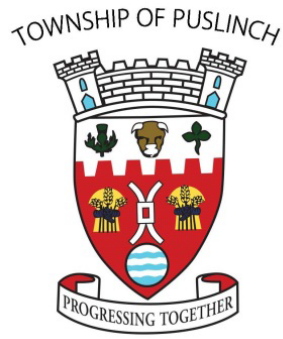
Attachment 1 – 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by:

Jeff Bunn, Deputy Clerk

Glenn Schwendinger, CAO



# **Township of Puslinch**

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**



## **Commitment**

The Township of Puslinch is committed to being responsive to the needs of its residents and to recognize the diverse needs of all residents. The Township of Puslinch strives to provide services and facilities that are accessible.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to ensuring an inclusive workplace and ensuring that our services are provided in an accessible manner for the public.

Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public in our services and facilities.

## **Obligations**

The Multi-Year Plan is based upon requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. It contains standards in the following five areas:

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

The Accessible Customer Service Standard came into effect in 2008. In 2011, the Province combined the Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation Standards into one regulation, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The Built Environment Standard is still with the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

# **Multi- Year Accessibility Plan Timeline and Deliverables**

## **Outcomes**

- People with disabilities will have access to accessible services.
- People with disabilities will have access to alternate formats and communication supports.
- A barrier-free recruitment process.
- Greater accessibility in Township-owned facilities.

## **Approach**

The Township of Puslinch will:

- Develop policies and procedures.
- Incorporate accessibility into planning processes.
- Train staff.
- Engage the public in feedback.
- Work to remove barriers to employment.
- Continue to make facilities accessible.
- Ensure there is access to information and communications.

## **Deliverables and Timelines**

### **2017-2018**

- Develop and implement an Accessibility Plan for the 2018 Municipal Election.
- Continue to train current and new staff.
- Continue to remove barriers to employment.
- Continue to make sure that documents uploaded onto the Township website are accessible.
- Continue to make facilities accessible in accordance with the County's Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM).
- Continue to review feedback processes.
- Continue to provide and improve accessible formats and communication supports.
- Continue to consult with the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee when needed.

## **2019-2021**

- Continue to remove barriers to employment.
- Continue to make sure that documents uploaded onto the Township website are accessible.
- Continue to make facilities accessible in accordance with the County's Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM).
- Continue to review feedback processes
- Continue to provide and improve accessible formats and communication supports
- Continue to consult with the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee when needed.



## **Accessible Customer Service**

The Township of Puslinch is committed to ensuring that all customers receive services in a timely and accessible manner. Members of the public will receive customer service in a manner that will meet their needs and ensures integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity. The Township of Puslinch will achieve this by:

- Reviewing and updating policies to ensure high quality, accessible service.
- Embedding accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials.
- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action.

### **Progress**

- Reviewed and amended the Accessible Customer Service Policy (2009) to include the Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements.
- Set up internal processes for staff to request a communication support or alternate format.
- Continue to make alternate formats are available through the Township Clerk
- Continue to provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff, new employees and volunteers.
- Continue to review and update policies to ensure consideration of people with disabilities.
- Continue to review and improve current processes to receive feedback from the public.
- Continue to review and improve current processes on how public can request an alternate format.

## **Information and Communications**

Information and communications are a large part of Township of Puslinch operations and service provision. It is important to the Township that information and communications are created in a way that considers accessibility.

The Township will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, intranet sites, print communications materials as well as face-to-face interactions.

The Township is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities. We will do this by:

- Achieving compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure that both internal and external websites are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Developing resource materials for creating accessible documents for common software programs such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Developing a training strategy to ensure that staff have the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials.

### **Progress**

- (2011 – 2012) Create an Accessible Communications Booklet that includes Plain Language Guidelines for Staff
- (2014) Create Accessible Documents Training (Word and PDF)
  - Provide resource material to staff
  - Ensure resource material is readily available to staff
  - Training specific staff on how to verify and repair PDF's
- (2014) Website Redesign in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- (2018) Webcasting of Council Meetings allowing members of the public to watch meetings online.
- (On-going) Ensure documents are available in an alternate format, upon request.
- (On-going) Review information and communications processes and products to improve accessibility.

## **Employment**

The Township of Puslinch is committed to ensuring that the process of finding, getting and keeping a job is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce. Human Resources staff will receive training in order to meet compliance under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. It is expected that training will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Understanding employer obligations to provide employment accommodations.
- How to identify and remove barriers in the workplace.
- Enhancing workplace emergency responses through individualized emergency response information and assistance as required.
- Revising individual work plans and developing a manager's guide, tools and templates to remove barriers from the recruitment process.

### **Progress**

- (2012 – 2013) Review and improve recruitment process to remove barriers from the hiring process.
  - Review job advertisements and descriptions on a go-forward basis.
  - Remove barriers from the selection process. All applicants invited to interviews will continue to be given alternate accommodations, should they request them, in order to participate.
- (2015) Create an Accommodations Policy for employment.
- (Ongoing) Job advertisements are currently posted in a variety of newspapers and websites. Job advertisements and descriptions are available in an alternate format upon request.
- (Ongoing) Accessibility training included as part of new staff orientation.

## **Transportation**

The majority of the Transportation standard does not apply to the Township of Puslinch, as the Township does not have public transit systems.

With regard to accessibility requirements for taxicabs, the Township of Puslinch entered into a reciprocal agreement in 2009 with the County of Wellington. This agreement delegates the authority of the Township to the County for the licensing and regulation of taxicabs, accessible taxicabs and limousine services. In December, 2011, the County of Wellington amended Taxi By-law 5266-11 to reflect the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation.

## **Accessible Built Environment**

The Township of Puslinch has adopted the County of Wellington Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM). The FADM is a manual that addresses accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities, as well as the retrofit, alteration and addition to existing facilities. It incorporates the belief in universal design, which recognized the broad diversity of people who use Township facilities. Currently, the FADM exceeds the Barrier-Free section of the Ontario Building Code.

The Township of Puslinch will strive to ensure that new facilities and extensive renovations are designed and built in accordance with the FADM. Once the Accessible Built Environment Standard has been enacted by the Province of Ontario, the Township will ensure that compliance is met or exceeded.

Accessibility improvements have been or will be increased in to the following buildings and open spaces:

- The Optimist Recreation Centre (2010) – Accessible features included within new construction.
- Puslinch Community Centre building (2012/2013) – Accessible washrooms installed.
- Township office (2017) – Construction of an accessible counter

All renovation and construction projects moving forward will comply with the FADM.

## Contact Information

The Township of Puslinch is committed to removing barriers for people with disabilities and providing accessible services for our residents. As we strive to be more accessible, we would like your input. Do you have any thoughts or feedback on what we have accomplished so far? Or do you have ideas on how our projects or policies could be improved?

Please contact us with your questions and ideas.

**Phone** 519.763-1226

**Mail** Courtenay Hoytfox, Deputy Clerk

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This document is available in alternate formats.

