



## **REPORT ADM-2024-055**

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TO: Mayor and Members of Council

PREPARED BY: Sarah Huether, Interim Deputy Clerk

PRESENTED BY: Sarah Huether, Interim Deputy Clerk

MEETING DATE: November 20, 2024

SUBJECT: Township of Puslinch Annual Accessibility Status Report

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Report ADM-2024-055 entitled Township of Puslinch Annual Accessibility Status Report be received for information.**

#### **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 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Schedule "A").

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 2022-2026 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, through collaboration with all Township departments including Public Works, Parks & Facilities, Finance, Fire, Building and Administration.

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 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based upon the legislative requirements of the ODA and AODA.

In addition to addressing the specific goals and priorities identified in the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Township staff will consult with the County of Wellington and Member Municipalities' Accessibility Advisory Committee on various policies and procedures in preparation for the 2026 Municipal Election.

\*Projects identified on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that are marked with an asterisk "\*" are contingent upon available grant funding opportunities.

## 2024 Status Update

### Customer Service

- (Ongoing) Continue to provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff, new employees and volunteers
- (Ongoing) Continue to review and improve current process to receive feedback from the public, where possible
- (Ongoing) Continue to review and improve current processes and standard operating procedures 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
- In the Fall of 2022, Township staff approved the *Accessible Election Corporate Procedure*, to ensure that all reasonable efforts are made to provide accessible options to election information and services (Attachment 2)

**Information and Communications**

- (Ongoing) The Township website software performs continuous 'Accessibility Checks', to identify accessibility issues with website content, and provide tips and steps on how to update the content to make it accessible, that staff review and action
- (Completed) Fall of 2023, the Township in partnership with Aubs and Mugg (Township's website support provider) performed a comprehensive Accessibility audit of the Township's website, to further identify areas for improvement.
- (Ongoing) Staff actively monitor the Townships website to improve accessibility.
- (Completed) Fall of 2023, the Township confirmed that its partner DocuPet had completed an internal audit, confirming its website is meeting accessibility standards.
- (Ongoing) 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
- (Ongoing) Created online accessible fillable forms and converted existing forms to PDF forms for easier use
- (Ongoing) Documents offered in accessible formats when requested
- (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 websites and the local County newspaper
- (Ongoing) Provided accessibility training to all new staff as part of new employee onboarding program

**Transportation**

- (Ongoing) In 2019, Wellington County, in partnership with the Province of Ontario, launched *Ride Well*, an on demand public transit service available to all residents and visitors in Puslinch Township. Service can be arranged by using the RIDE WELL app or by phone. The Township, in partnership

with the County, continues to identify opportunities to advertise and promote this program through local mediums.

- 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**

- A Space needs analysis was completed (2021-2022) regarding the re-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. The next steps for this project is to obtain detailed design options to determine budgetary cost estimates.
- (Completed) The Playground upgrades at the Puslinch Community Center Park were completed Spring of 2024, with the addition of a fully accessible playground, shade structure with accessible seating and accessible walking paths throughout the Puslinch Community Centre Park. As well, additional accessible parking spaces have been added to the renovated rear parking lot at the Puslinch Community Centre Park.
- (Completed) In 2023, the installation was completed of a new accessible playground and accessible shade structure at Boreham Park.

### **Financial Implications**

None

### **Applicable Legislation and Requirements**

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

### **Attachments**

Schedule A – 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by:

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**Sarah Huether, Interim Deputy  
Clerk**

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**Justine Brotherston, Interim Municipal  
Clerk**



TOWNSHIP OF

**PUSLINCH**

EST. 1850

**2022-2026**

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**



## 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

### Table of Contents

Township of Puslinch Commitment to Accessibility	3
Legislation and Responsibilities	3
2022-2026 Goals and Priorities	
1. Customer Service	4
2. Information and Communications	4
3. Employment	4
4. Transportation	5
5. Built Environment	5
Monitoring and Annual Reporting	6
Feedback and Contact Information	6



## 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

# Township of Puslinch Accessibility 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 to all citizens.

In 2021, the Township reaffirmed its commitment to equal access and participation for people with disabilities, by enacting a Corporate Accessibility Policy which supports treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence, by enacting a Corporate Accessibility Policy.

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan builds on a foundation set by the 2011-2017 and 2017-2021 Multi-Year Plans and outlines the Township's approach to ensuring an inclusive workplace and ensuring that our services are accessible to the public.

The Township's goal is to ensure accessibility within the organization for the public and employees in services and facilities.

## Legislation and Responsibilities

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 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (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 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based upon the legislative requirements of the ODA and AODA.





2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2022-2026 Goals and Priorities

Accessibility Standard	Goals and Priorities	Timeline
<b>Customer Service</b>	Review best municipal practices and improve (if necessary) current processes on how the public can request alternative formats, where possible	Ongoing
	Support corporate efforts to ensure compliance with AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards	Ongoing
	Review and update (if necessary) Township of Puslinch Policy regarding Accessible Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices	2022
<b>Information and Communications</b>	Ensure public documents are provided in accessible formats when requested	Ongoing
	Conduct accessibility audit of Township website to ensure content meets internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario’s accessibility laws. In addition to an automated scan, include a real human test/review of the website.	2023
	Conduct Website Redesign in accordance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements, AODA standards, and municipal best practices*	2026 & 2031
<b>Employment</b>	Provide Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff, new employees and volunteers	Ongoing
	Provide accessibility training to all new staff as part of new employee onboarding program	Ongoing
	Provided accommodation measures as required during recruitment processes upon request	Ongoing

	Ensure job postings and descriptions in alternative formats upon request	Ongoing
	Advertise job postings in a variety of newspapers and websites	Ongoing
<b>Transportation</b>	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	
	As a municipality in the County of Wellington, residents of the Township of Puslinch can access RIDE WELL, a demand based, accessible public transit service	
<b>Design of Public Spaces</b>	Playground upgrades at the Puslinch Community Centre Park*	2022-2023
	Parking lot and associated enhancements (curbing, entrance, and additional lighting) at the Puslinch Community Centre*	2023
	Incorporate accessible design features in accordance with public space accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code, and the County of Wellington's Facility Accessibility Design Manual, into future renovations/additions to the Municipal Office*	2022-2026
	Playground upgrades at Boreham Park (also known as Arkell Park)*	2024
	Bar Counter, Bar Door, Cosmetic Upgrades at the Puslinch Community Centre	2025

\*Projects identified on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that are marked with an asterisk "\*" are contingent upon available grant funding opportunities.

## **Monitoring and Annual Reporting**

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated every five years. The next update will occur in 2026.

Township Staff will prepare for Municipal Council an annual status report to document and highlight the progress and measures taken to implement the Multi-Year Plan and meet the requirements of the AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

## **Feedback and Contact Information**

The Township of Puslinch welcomes feedback on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and on the accessibility of our services and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions in the spirit of continuous improvement, please contact us.

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Mail: Clerk's Office Attention: Deputy Clerk  
7404 Wellington Road 34  
Puslinch, ON  
N0B 2J0  
Email: [admin@puslinch.ca](mailto:admin@puslinch.ca)

The Multi-Year Accessibility Policy is available on the Township's website at [puslinch.ca/accessibility](http://puslinch.ca/accessibility).

Alternative formats, including paper copies of the Accessibility Plan are available upon request.