



## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### Policy 1-002: Accessibility Policy

Approval Date: March 28, 2022

Approval Authority: Council

Effective Date: March 28, 2022

Next Scheduled Review Year: 2026

Department: Corporate Services

Last reviewed: 2022

Revision Date/s:

Schedules: None.

### **PURPOSE**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises. The AODA was enacted into law with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.

Furthermore, under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11 entitled "Integrated Accessibility Standards" (the "IASR") came into force on July 1, 2011. Under the IASR, the Province has committed to developing and implementing standards in:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment

- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of the IASR, under the AODA, which reflects a number of accessibility standards that organizations across Ontario, including the Town, are required to comply with.

NOTE: The requirements set out in this policy and the IASR are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the Human Rights Code. Nor do the standards or policy limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any legislation.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Accessible Formats:** May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Device:** A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

**Communications:** The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.

**Communication Supports:** Communication supports are alternative ways of communicating with people with disabilities. Examples of a communication support may include, but are not limited to, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language through an interpreter and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

### **Disability:**

- a. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. A mental disorder, or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Guide Dog:** A guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

**Mobility Aid:** A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability

**Service Animal:** Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily identified that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal or where the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to their disability;

- A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
- A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
- A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

**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, services or facilities. Examples of a support person may include, but are not limited to,

sign language interpreters, interveners, a guide for a person with vision loss, and personal care assistants.

**Town:** The Corporation of the Town of Tillsonburg.

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):** World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE**

### **1. Application and Scope**

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the IASR and addresses how the Town of Tillsonburg achieves accessibility through meeting the regulation’s requirements. It provides the overall strategic direction that will be followed to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in the provision of goods, services and facilities.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Council Members, committee members, persons who participate in developing the organization’s policies and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

### **2. Statement of Commitment**

The Corporation of the Town of Tillsonburg is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve. We will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

### **3. General Provisions**

- **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Status Update Reports**

In consultation with persons with disabilities, as well as input from agencies and associations supportive of persons with disabilities, the Town will establish, implement, maintain and update a Multi-Year

Accessibility Plan which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*.

Additionally, annual status update reports will be drafted to provide updates on the progress made each year toward achieving the strategy and targets identified in the multi-year plan. The multi-year plan and annual status reports will be posted on the Town's website and made available in an accessible format upon request.

- **Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities**

The Town shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. In the event it is not practicable to do so, an explanation will be provided upon request.

- **Training**

The Town shall ensure that training is provided to all relevant persons including, all persons who are an employee of, or a volunteer with, the Town of Tillsonburg, all persons who participate in developing Tillsonburg's policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Town.

The content of the training will include the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the IASR and the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of those being trained.

Training will be provided as soon as practical, as well as on an ongoing basis if changes to accessibility standards occur. The Town will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to who it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("MFIPPA").

#### **4. Information and Communications Standards**

The Town is committed to meeting the communication needs of persons with disabilities in accordance with the IASR and will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports as required.

- **Accessible Formats and Communication Standards**

Upon request, the Town will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

In determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support, the Town will consult with the person making the request.

If the Town determines that information or communications are unconvertible, it shall provide the individual requesting the information or communication with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

- **Feedback**

The Town has processes in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that these processes are provided in an accessible manner and with communication supports upon request. The Town shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports with respect to the feedback process.

Feedback can be provided via email [clerks@tillsonburg.ca](mailto:clerks@tillsonburg.ca) by phone 519-688-3009 or in person at the Customer Service Centre located at 10 Lisgar Ave, Tillsonburg. Feedback can also be provided by submitting an Accessibility Comment or Complaint Form as found on the Town of Tillsonburg website at the following link:

<https://www.tillsonburg.ca/en/town-hall/Accessibility.aspx>

- **Emergency Information**

Where the Town prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, the Town

shall provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

- **Accessible Website and Web Content**

Oxford County as our IT service provider in conjunction with the Town's website provider has processes in place to ensure that the Town's internet website and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) as required by the IASR.

## **5. Employment Standards**

The Town is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. The employment standards in the IASR outline the requirements for the accommodation of persons with disabilities during the recruitment and hiring processes and throughout employment with the Town.

- **Recruitment**

The Town shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes. Specifically, the Town shall:

- Notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used;
- Consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs, if the selected applicant requests an accommodation; and
- Notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

- **Informing Employees of Supports**

The Town's **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy** documents how the Town shall support its employees with disabilities,

including, but not limited to, the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

This information shall be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and shall be updated for all employees whenever there is a change to the existing policies.

- **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

As per the Town's **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy**, should an employee with a disability request an accessible format and/or communication support, the Town shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of suitable accessible formats and communication supports for:

- Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

- **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

The Town shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Town is aware of the need for accommodation. The Town shall provide the information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, the Town shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.

The Town shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- When the employee moves to a different location in the organization,
- When overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed, and

- When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

- **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Town has in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities under the Town's **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy**.

Individual accommodation plans shall:

- If requested, include any information regarding accessible format and communications supports,
- If required, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and
- Identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

- **Return to Work Process**

The Town's **Work Accommodation and Safe Return to Work Policy** documents the return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work. The process outlines the steps the Town will take to facilitate the return to work of employees absent due to disability and include documented individual accommodation plans.

## **6. Transportation Standards**

The transportation standards of the IASR sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation, so that everyone can travel more easily in Ontario. It covers:

- Conventional transportation services, such as:
  - Municipal transit buses
  - Motor coaches – (not including Federal)
  - Rail based transportation (e.g., subways, commuter trains, GO Train etc.) –(not including Federal);
  - Specialized transportation services for people with disabilities.

The Town provides transit services (T:GO) which is contracted to a third party and through the operator responsibilities of this contract, it is the contractor who ensures adherence to the required Accessibility Standards.

The Town currently licenses taxicabs and through the Licensing By-Law, where the owners are responsible to ensure adherence to the required Accessibility Standards.

## **7. Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)**

The Town is committed to designing public spaces that are free from barriers and accessible to all persons we serve. The Town will comply with the design of public spaces standards with respect to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped, including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths or travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services
- Maintenance of accessible elements

The Town shall ensure that all technical requirements are followed for public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped.

- **Consultation, recreational trails**

The Town of Tillsonburg shall consult on the following before construction of new, or redevelopment of existing recreational trails:

- The slope of the trail.
- The need for, and location of, ramps on the trail.
- The need for, location and design of,
  - a. Rest areas,

- b. Passing areas,
- c. Viewing areas,
- d. Amenities on the trail, and
- e. Any other pertinent feature.

The Town of Tillsonburg shall consult on the matters listed above by consulting with the public and persons with disabilities.

- **Maintenance of Accessible Elements Procedure**

The Town will maintain the following procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces:

- Staff will regularly monitor the accessible public spaces elements implemented in their service area. Staff will actively monitor feedback submissions or notifications from the public that an accessible element requires maintenance and implement corrective actions, as necessary.
- Staff will report any issue or deficiency impacting the accessible public spaces element(s) in a timely manner within their service area for further review and/or follow up. Potential outcomes may include, the element undergoes a plan for remediation and/or emergency maintenance may take place, depending on the circumstances.
- Notice of temporary service disruptions of accessible elements shall be provided to the public and in accessible formats upon request.

## **8. Customer Service Standards**

The Town of Tillsonburg is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for our customers. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence to all customers. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of the Town of Tillsonburg.

The *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, O.Reg. 429/07 was revoked on July 1, 2016, as it was consolidated into the IASR. Under the customer service standards of the IASR, the following requirements are included:

- Establishment of policies for the provision of goods, services, and facilities to persons with disabilities;
- Use of service animals and support persons;
- Notice of temporary disruptions;
- Training;
- Feedback process; and
- Format of documents.

**Next revision date: (every five years)**

March 28, 2027

**Accessible Formats:**

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the Clerk at [clerks@tillsonburg.ca](mailto:clerks@tillsonburg.ca) or 519-688-3009.