



Schedule 'A'  
To By-Law #2009 - 40

North Algona, Wilberforce  
Township

Municipal Accessibility Plan

Policies & Procedures

## Prologue

North Algona Wilberforce Township is committed to the vision of providing a vibrant, safe and attractive community where efficient services make it possible for families, individuals and the business community to grow, prosper, and enjoy a high quality of life without barriers due to a disability.

The Township is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents. To do this, the Township must recognize that our residents have diverse needs and be willing to respond to those needs by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As an employer, and a provider of services, the Township is committed to ensuring all its services are provided in an accessible manner.

North Algona Wilberforce Township will promote accessibility to all its residents and visitors regardless of their disabilities through the development of policies, procedures and practices. To do this the Township must ensure the policies, procedures and practices address **integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity**.

## Legislative Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* is the guiding document for accessibility in the province and replaces the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001*. The intent of the legislation is to make Ontario fully accessible for people with disabilities by the year 2025. The scope of the legislation includes the private sector as well as government and the broader public sector.

The development of mandatory standards to address the full range of disabilities and barriers; the introduction of timelines to identify that the standards are implemented and the development and implementation of an enforcement tool to ensure compliance with the standards is the primary focus of the AODA. The accessibility standards are being developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and organizations that have obligations under the Act.

The Province has enacted the Customer Service Standards, the first set of standards to be approved. The Customer Service Standards came into force January 1, 2008.

Until such time as the remainder of the standards have been developed and implemented, North Algona Wilberforce Township is committed to following through with its responsibilities for Accessible Customer Service as outlined in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, including the preparation of the annual Accessibility Plan.

## Target Group

The target groups in this Municipal Accessibility Plan are the concerned general public, persons with mobility, physical, audio or visual impairments, seniors, and supportive stakeholders. The Township will conduct visual inspections and gather information on barriers that would affect every day activities for those individuals that have disabilities. The Township shall work towards eliminating those barriers over time. The Township shall have high regard to barriers when constructing new facilities and making renovations to existing facilities. In addition to physical modifications, regard must be had to programs, processes and policies that are reviewed and/or created. All new programs and services offered shall be reviewed with consideration given to accessibility and attempt to ensure that the programs are as inclusive as possible.

## **Procedures and Practices**

Reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that the municipal practices strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- (a) That goods and services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- (b) The provision of goods and services to people with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- (c) That people with disabilities be given an opportunity equal to that given to others
- (d) That communication will be considered in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.
- (e) Those people with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the North Algona, Wilberforce Municipality and that are open to the public.
- (f) That staff will receive appropriate training.

## **Support Persons**

*Support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.*

North Algona Wilberforce Township has adopted a policy that allows for people with disabilities who require to be accompanied by a support person be admitted in all municipally owned and operated public facilities.

The Township will waive admission fees for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability into any event sponsored by or controlled by the Township. This waiver shall cover the cost of admission to the event only. Any ancillary costs such as but not restricted to food, beverages or other costs associated with the event are the responsibility of the support person or person being supported.

The Township will recommend that this policy be adopted by any person or group hosting any event on municipal property; however the person or group hosting any event is under no legal obligation to follow this guideline.

*The Township reserves the right to request the person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.*

*The Township reserves the right to request documentation that the person in question requires a support person where the necessity of such person is not self evident.*

## **Service Animals**

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- (a) A "guide dog," as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*; or
- (b) A "service animal" for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability;
  - (i) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or
  - (ii) If the person provides a letter signed by a Medical Doctor, Psychiatrist or a Licensed Mental Health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
  - (iii) The Township reserves the right to exclude any service animal from any premises where the owner of the service animal cannot or refuses to produce such documentation.
- (c) The Township will allow the person and the animal onto all municipally owned and operated public facilities, and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal except where excluded by law where:
  - (i) Food is prepared: and
  - (ii) Where medical procedures are performed
- (d) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township will take all reasonable steps to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the municipal services.

## **Feedback Process**

### **Suggestions:**

Any member of the public wishing to provide the Township with a suggestion on how to improve our service shall:

- (a) Submit the comment or suggestion in writing to the Municipal Accessibility Coordinator.
- (b) The Accessibility Coordinator shall consider the comment or suggestion and if warranted take such comment or suggestion to the Municipal Council for their consideration.

### **Complaints**

Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint in regards to the service they have received shall submit the complaint in writing to the Municipal Accessibility Coordinator who shall:

- (a) Within 2 business days of receipt of such complaint begin an investigation: and
- (b) Within 5 business days convene a meeting to include the Clerk and Supervisor of the employee or service to which the complaint was directed: and
- (c) Within 10 days make a full report to Council outlining the findings of the investigation and recommendations for actions: and
- (d) Within 15 days respond to the person making the complaint with an explanation of the municipal response to the complaint.

## Service Disruption

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, people with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Township shall give notice of the disruption to the public. Notice of the disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises as well as by posting it on the municipal website.

## Format of Documents

Any member of the public may request that any document produced by or on behalf of the Township be made available in an alternative format that takes into account the person's disability except where the publication or divulgence of that document is prohibited under the Freedom of Information or Municipal Freedom of Information Act(s).

Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Township will contain a note indicating, "Alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

The Township and the person with a disability will try to agree upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy. Alternative formats that should be considered by the Township and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited to:

(a) Print Requests:

Requests for alternate formats should be honored in the most practical manner depending on the media chosen, the size and complexity of the document, the quality and source of the documents, the feasibility of the request (including the cost) and the number of documents to be converted. It should be noted that when a request for one of these formats is received and deemed feasible, staff should make every attempt to respond to the request in the most practical manner and to the satisfaction of the requestor. If it is determined that the format requested is not feasible, then other alternate methods of providing the information should be explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor (e.g. Audio CD or explaining the information verbally etc.).

- (i) Employee receives request from member of the public for alternate format;
- (ii) If it is a simple request the employee performs the printing task and forwards the information to the member of the public
- (iii) If the print request is complicated or involves multiple documents the employee will forward the request to the Clerk for action.
- (iv) The Clerk will comply with the request in an appropriate and timely manner taking into account the feasibility, complexity and cost of the request.
- (v) If not feasible; contact individual with an alternative solution or to advise them that no alternative is available.

Note

The feasibility of supplying documents will be determined based upon cost in relation to size of document and time associated with processing document requests. The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted. Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible. In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards where applicable.

- (b) American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Request:
- (i) Employee receives request from public for ASL Interpreter;
  - (ii) Employee passes the request to the Accessibility coordinator
  - (iii) The Accessibility coordinator contacts Canadian Hearing Society to make request;
  - (iv) Once Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of ASL Interpreter, the employee contacts individual; and
  - (v) If ASL Interpreter is not available, individual will be contacted with an alternate solution or to advise them that no alternative is available.

**Training**

North Algona Wilberforce Township shall ensure that every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise; receive training about the provision of its goods or services to people with disabilities:

- (a) Training shall include but is not limited to:
- (i) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
  - (ii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
  - (iii) How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
  - (iv) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.
- (b) The Township will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.
- (c) The Township will customize the training going forward, based on the implementation of the additional standards of the Act.

## **Assistive Devices**

North Algona Wilberforce Township will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Township. Should a person with a disability be unable to access the municipalities services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Township will ensure the following measures:

- (a) Determine if service is inaccessible, based upon individual requirements.
- (b) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
- (c) Notify person with a disability of alternative service and how they can access the service, temporarily or on a permanent basis: or
- (d) Notify the person with the disability that providing access to that service cannot be reasonably done and what alternate options can be put in place.

## **Operational Review**

Planned reviews will be set for every twelve months. Rationales for the planned timed reviews are within the scope of activity to further investigate possible barriers and to overcome the barriers, resources that are needed to cover the cost to overcome the barrier, and the design of the facility or service in question. Some buildings have architectural design barriers. Methodologies that will be used to conduct reviews of barriers are to seek public input, construction process/policies, renovation process, and building accessibility. Public input will be mainly sought through the publication of the Accessibility Plan and gathering of comments and suggestions from residents. The Accessibility Plan will be available on the Township's Website along with a request for comments/suggestions page.