

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2016-2020



The Corporation of the
Township of O'Connor

330 Highway 595, R.R. #1
Kakabeka Falls, ON
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end, the ODA mandates that each municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards which include:

- Customer Service Standards
- Information and Communications Standards
- Employment Standards
- Transportation Standards (not applicable to the Township of O'Connor)
- Built Environment Standards

The Customer Service Standard became law (Ontario Regulation 429/07) on January 1, 2008, and the Township of O'Connor put in place an Accessible Customer Service Plan in December of 2013 to be compliant with this standard. The next three standards – Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation – are all part of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation or IASR (Ontario Regulation 191/11), which became law on June 7, 2011. The Transportation Standard pertains to public transportation and at this time does not apply to the Township of O'Connor.

The Built Environment Standard, which is not yet law, will help remove barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces for people with disabilities. The Standards for Public Spaces (Ontario Regulation 413/12) only apply to new construction and planned redevelopment. Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will happen at a later date through Ontario's Building Code, which governs new construction and renovations in buildings.

This plan describes the measures that the Township of O'Connor has taken in the past and the measures that the Township will take in the future in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who are employed by the Township and those who utilize the facilities and services provided by the Township.

The Council and Staff of the Township of O'Connor shall review this plan every five years, with an annual report to be prepared on the progress of the plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities.

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

The Council and staff of the Township of O'Connor are committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities, and
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

This report will:

1. Describe the process by which the Township of O'Connor will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the Township will review in the coming years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures that will be taken in the coming years to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describe how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR

Population

As of the 2011 Census the population of the Township of O'Connor is 685 with 285 households.

Municipal Highlights

The Township of O'Connor is located in Northwestern Ontario in the District of Thunder Bay and is southwest of the City of Thunder Bay. The Township is a bedroom community, with no schools, senior's homes, hospitals or rental units. The Township does not have a taxi or limousine service and does not provide public transit. The residents of the Township of O'Connor have access to the Oliver Paipoonge Public libraries located in the neighbouring Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge.

Community Facilities

The Township facilities include a Community Centre which has an outdoor skating rink and a baseball diamond, a ground level Municipal office built in 2010 that meets all Accessibility Standards, a Public Works garage and Fire Hall. The Township also has a Municipal Cemetery.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS ON THE AODA REGULATIONS

The following outlines the Township of O'Connor's commitment and our progress in meeting accessibility standards as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Customer Service Standards

The Township of O'Connor is committed to excellence in serving all customers including those with disabilities in the following areas.

Assistive devices

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with the various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide, that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

Support persons

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

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities in the municipal office or the community centre, the Township of O'Connor 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 placed on the Township's website, on the bulletin board in the Municipal office and Community centre, and if a lengthy disruption, in the Township's newsletter.

Training

The Township of O'Connor will provide training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf.

Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

- All employees and volunteers
- All persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and

- All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and requirements of the Customer Service Standards.
- The Township of O'Connor's plan related to 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 support person.
- How to use any devices or equipment if this will be in the area of customer service.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Township of O'Connor's goods and services.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to the plan.

Feedback process

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way the Township of O'Connor provides goods and services to people with disabilities can submit the feedback form available in the Municipal office or on the Township's website, verbally or by email. All feedback, including complaints, will be reviewed by the Clerk-Treasurer and Council. Customers can expect to hear back within 20 days.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policy of the Township of O'Connor that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Progress

- Continuing to train all staff, volunteers and contractors who serve the public or make policies that shape how services are delivered.
- Review and update policies, procedures and practices regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.
- Continue to file compliance reports as required with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.
- Continue to consult research and implement improvements to services and facilities as they relate to the Accessible Customer Service Standard.

Goals

- Continue to train staff, volunteers and contractors who serve the public or make policies that shape how services are delivered.

- Review and update policies, procedures and practices regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.
- Continue to file compliance reports as required with the Ministry of Community and social Services, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Information and Communication Standards

The Township of O'Connor shall be obligated to provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for the persons with disabilities;

- Upon request, provided in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Consult with the person making the request and to determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports using various communications tools such as, but not limited to, the monthly newsletter, website and community bulletin board.

Progress

- Website improvements that conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 that allowing people with and without disabilities to have access to the information they want and need from your website.
- Providing accessible/alternate formats when possible, and upon request.

Goals

- Continue training and updating current policies and procedures.

Employment Standards

The Township of O'Connor is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and to meet the accessibility and accommodation needs of employees with a disability in a timely manner, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

The Township has adopted an Accessible Employment Policy that outlines the requirements established under the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as they

relate to Employment Standards and to demonstrate how the Township will undertake to comply with these requirements.

Progress

- Adoption of an Accessible Employment Policy that outlines requirements under the Regulation which includes;
 - o Individual Accommodation Plans,
 - o Return to work Process,
 - o Provision of accessible formats and communications supports for job applications and employees with disabilities
 - o Accessible workplace emergency response information

Goals

- Continue training and updating current policies and procedures.

Transportation Standards

The Transportation standard of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 does not apply to the Township of O'Connor as the Township does not currently license any conventional, specialized or public transportation services, nor does the Township license taxicabs.

Built Environment Standards

The goal of the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment is to remove barriers in public spaces and buildings in order to make it easier for all Ontarians, including people with disabilities, seniors and families, to access these spaces and buildings. The standard for public spaces only applies to new construction and planned redevelopment.

The Township of O'Connor shall meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces. When undertaking new construction or redevelopment, the Township shall refer to and comply with legislation requirements as they pertain to Ontario Regulation 413/12 under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11

Progress

- In 2010 the Township of O'Connor constructed a new municipal office. The office is a one storey building equipped with automatic power openers at the front entrance and an accessible washroom. The reception desk was designed to meet the needs of individuals using wheelchairs.
- The O'Connor Community Centre underwent renovations which included painting walls and entrance ways in contrasting colours, installation of a platform lift that access three levels of the centre and an automatic power door opener for the main entrance of the centre.

Goals

- Installation of an air conditioning system in the O'Connor Community Centre to provide relief during community functions from heat related health concerns.
- Continue to refer to the Ontario Building Code for any new construction or re-development, as well as the Design of Public Spaces Standards to ensure compliance.

REVIEWING AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS

Council is committed to following through with this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan will be reviewed annually thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the goals identified and the direction to which the township is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be posted at the Township office and on the Township website. Every attempt will be made to make it available to those with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy in Braille be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the CNIB to inquire if it could be translated.