

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2021-2025



The Corporation of the
Township of O'Connor
330 Highway 595, R.R. #1
Kakabeka Falls, ON
P0T 1W0

December 16, 2013

(Amended November 22, 2021)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning	2
Objectives	2
Description of the Township of O'Connor	2
Population	2
Municipal Highlights	2
Community Facilities	3
Implementation and Process on the AODA Regulations	3
Customer Service Standards	3
Assistive Devices	3
Communications	3
Service Animals	4
Support Persons	4
Notice of Temporary Disruption	4
Training	4
Procurement	4
Feedback Process	5
Modifications to this or Other Policies	5
Progress	5
Goals	5
Information and Communication Standards	5
Progress	6
Goals	6
Employment Standards	6
Progress	6
Goals	6
Transportation Standards	7
Design of Public Spaces Standards	7
Progress	7
Goals	7
Review and Monitoring of the Process	8
Communication of the Plan	8
Appendix "A" - Customer Service Initial Complaint and Feedback Form.....	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a law established in 2005 by the government of Ontario in Canada to develop and enforce accessibility standards for government, businesses, nonprofits, and public sector organizations. Their goal for the province of Ontario is to be accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. The AODA does include specific requirements that define whether something is accessible or not; however, it places greater emphasis on process-oriented requirements.

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodations and buildings. The target date for reaching this goal is no later than January 1, 2025.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation or the IASR (Ontario Regulation 191/11), under the AODA, was enacted in June 2011 to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Section 4(1) of the IASR requires the Government of Ontario and designated public sector organizations to create, maintain and make publicly available a multi-year accessibility plan. The accessibility plan must be created, reviewed, and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities. The multi-year accessibility plan must also be reviewed at least once every five years, and all organizations are required to prepare a bi-annual status report on the progress that the organization has made to implement their accessibility plan and comply with the IASR. The status reports must be made available to the public.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards is a grouping of five standards that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) developed. Regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 include accessibility standards in:

- Customer Service (January 1, 2012) - requirements for removing barriers for people with disabilities so they can access goods, services, and/or facilities.
- Information and Communications (January 1, 2016) – the requirement to create, provide, and receive information and communications that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Employment (January 1, 2016) - requires that employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.
- Transportation (not applicable to the Township of O'Connor)
- Design of Public Spaces (January 1, 2017) – the requirement for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces to be made accessible for people with disabilities.

This plan describes the goals and progress that the Township of O'Connor has set and rectified in the past, as well as goals that the Township has set for the future identifying the need for the removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities who are

either employed by the Township or utilize the facilities and services that the Township provides.

The Council and Staff of the Township of O'Connor shall review this plan every five years, with a bi-annual status report to be prepared on the progress of the plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated with open consultation provided to the residents of the Township of O'Connor including customers with disabilities and businesses within the Township.

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

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

- The continual planning and improvement of accessibility to all municipally owned facilities, premises, and services for persons with disabilities, and
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community, including persons with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

This plan will:

1. Describe the process by which the Township of O'Connor identifies, removes, and prevents barriers to persons 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 persons with disabilities.
4. Describe future goals to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons 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 per Statistics Canada, the 2016 Census, the population of the Township of O'Connor is 663 with 272 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, multi-residence housing facilities, or hospitals. The

Township does not currently 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 basketball court (summer)/skating rink (winter) with rink shack, a baseball diamond, and horseshoe pit, a ground level Municipal Office, a Public Works Garage, Fire Hall, Disposal Site and Cemetery.

This plan does not apply to construction that is external to the Township of O'Connor for which the Township has provided a permit, however compliance to the AODA Built Environment Standards should be encouraged.

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) This plan applies to all Township employees, volunteers and to third parties who provide services or facilities to the public on behalf of the Township.

Customer Service Standards

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

Assistive devices

We will ensure that our employees 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. The Township of O'Connor will only use facilities for meetings and public events that are accessible for persons with disabilities who use mobility aids and devices or have other facility-related needs.

Communications

We will communicate accordingly with persons with disabilities. We will train our employees on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Service animals

We welcome persons with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. We will ensure that our employees are trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Support persons

We welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. We will ensure that our employees are trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

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. Notices will include information regarding the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Notices will be provided via the Township's website, the digital sign outside the Municipal office, the bulletin boards in the Municipal Office and Community Centre, as well as on the exterior doors, and in the Township's monthly newsletter should there be a lengthy disruption.

Training

The Township of O'Connor will provide annual training to all employees, volunteers and to third parties who provide services or facilities to the public on behalf of the Township current to:

- The Township of O'Connor Multi-Year Accessibility Plan,
- The purposes of the AODA and requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07),
- The requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to Persons with Disabilities.

The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place, as soon as practicable, and shall be recorded upon completion.

Procurement

When procuring goods or services, the Township of O'Connor shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features unless it is not feasible or practicable. If not practicable, the Township shall provide an explanation upon request.

Feedback process

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the Township of O'Connor's provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities can submit the feedback form as per Appendix "A", 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 plan or other policies

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

Progress

- Train all employees, volunteers and third-party providers who serve the Township of O'Connor's customers or those who make plans and policies that shape how the Township's services are delivered.
- Review and update plans, policies, procedures, and practices regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.
- File compliance reports as required with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.
- Consult, research, and implement improvements to services and facilities as they relate to the Accessible Customer Service Standards.

Goals

- Continue to train employees, volunteers and third-party providers who serve the public or make plans or policies that shape how services are delivered.
- Review and update policies, plans, 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 and provided in a manner that accounts for a suitable timeframe and the person's accessibility needs due to their disability,
- At a cost that is no greater than the Township's standard cost,
- Through consultation with the person making the request and to determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support,

- Through public notification concerning 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 boards.

Progress

- Website improvements that conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 that allow people with and without disabilities to have access to the information they want and need from our website.
- Provide, upon request, accessible or alternative formats when feasible.

Goals

- Continue training and updating current plans, policies, and procedures.

Employment Standards

The Township of O'Connor is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as meeting their accessibility and accommodation needs in a suitable timeframe, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal 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 that demonstrates how the Township will comply with these requirements.

Progress

- Adopted the Accessible Employment Policy that outlines requirements under the Regulation and includes:
 - o Individual Accommodation Plans,
 - o A "Return to Work" Process and Plan,
 - 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 plans, policies, and procedures.
- Additional accessibility implementations to be added with funding for Shop "B" in the Municipal Garage.

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 neither licenses any conventional, specialized, or public transportation services currently, nor does the Township license taxicabs.

Design of Public Spaces Standards

The goal of the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces 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 191/11 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.
- In 2014, the O'Connor Community Centre underwent renovations which included painting walls and entrance ways in contrasting colours, installation of a platform-lift that accesses three levels of the centre, and an automatic power door opener for the main entrance of the centre.
- In 2017, an air conditioning system was installed in the O'Connor Community Centre.

Goals

- 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 updated every five years and reviewed annually, thus allowing Council, employees, and the public to monitor the goals identified in this plan, the progress in which the Township has achieved, and the need for future goals 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 Municipal Office and on the Township's website making it available to persons with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy in braille be requested, Council and Staff will make every effort to accommodate through inquiry to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

Approved by Council Resolution #7, November 22, 2021

APPENDIX "A"

CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIAL COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK FORM



Customer Service Initial Complaint and Feedback

The Township of O'Connor is committed to providing high quality customer service. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs. We welcome your comments to help us monitor and improve our services and experiences. Please submit your completed form to any of the following:

Mail or deliver to:

Fax to:

Email to:

Township of O'Connor
330 Highway 595
R.R. #1
Kakabeka Falls, Ontario
P0T 1W0

807-473-0891

twpoconn@tbaytel.net

Please tell us the date and time of your contact with us: _____

Did we respond to your customer service needs? Yes No (Please explain below)

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?
 Yes Somewhat No (Please explain below)

Please provide the details of your customer service experience.

If you wish to be contacted by a staff person, please provide your information:

Your full name	Day telephone number	Evening telephone number
Address	E-mail address	

Personal information contained on this form is collected pursuant to Ontario Regulation 429/07, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and will be used for the purpose of responding to your request. Questions should be directed to the Clerk-Treasurer, 330 Highway 595, R. R. #1, Kakabeka Falls, Ontario P0T 1W0 or at 807-476-1451.

For Township of O'Connor use only

Request number	Received by (name)	Date received
Comments		