

# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Now to 2022

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**Accessibility Services  
City of Guelph**



# What's Inside

## Contents

What's Inside .....	2
Realizing an accessible community through our commitment .....	3
Accessibility through policy .....	3
About the City of Guelph's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.....	3
Goals and vision for an accessible city .....	4
How we have been building an accessible city .....	4
The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: How we fit .....	5
Our Strategic Focus: How We Will Get There.....	5
Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act .....	7
Our progress on the AODA regulations .....	8
Information and communication .....	9
Public Libraries .....	10
Employment .....	10
Procurement .....	11
Transportation .....	12
Built environment .....	14
Leading the Way Forward: A Final Word .....	16
Appendix 1: .....	17
Appendix 2: .....	18
Appendix 3: .....	20

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# **Realizing an accessible community through our commitment**

## **Accessibility in the City of Guelph**

For the City of Guelph, accessibility means everyone can equally benefit. From designing what we build, how we approach policies and programs, to improving the customer experience. We take into account and value the diversity of our community.

Our work to remove barriers to our services, programs and facilities began in the 1990s. Our commitment has evolved over the years to match, and often exceed, the requirements of Provincial accessibility legislation. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the current Provincial accessibility legislation, along with universal design principals has guided the City to become a corporation that recognizes people rather than groups of people. Each of us has our own experiences which lead to City services taking into account individual needs.

This advanced way of thinking began in 2005 with the development of the manual that the corporation uses to design its buildings. The following Universal Design Principals are at the core of that manual.

- **Principle 1:** Equitable Use
- **Principle 2:** Flexibility in Use
- **Principle 3:** Simple and Intuitive Use
- **Principle 4:** Perceptible Information
- **Principle 5:** Tolerance for Error
- **Principle 6:** Low Physical Effort
- **Principle 7:** Size and Space for Approach and Use

These principles are incorporated into our workforce training materials. As a results they have become an important accessibility consideration in most aspects of our services, programs and facilities.

## **About the City of Guelph's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The City of Guelph Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Now to 2022 is a road map that describes how we will continue to prevent and remove barriers to our programs, services, and facilities.

Following the City's first Multi-year Accessibility Plan, a roadmap that described how we build on our accessibility-related successes, this second plan builds on those successes to keep up with our community as it evolves. This plan is a high-level snapshot of what is to come.

## **Accessibility through policy**

With an industry-leading Corporate Accessibility Policy, the City further commits to set the stage for innovation in the coming years with accessible customer service,

accessible websites, continued attention to inclusive employment practices, accessible public transportation systems, accessible parks and outdoor open spaces as well as growing opportunities for the public to engage with the City regarding the needs in the community as well as providing feedback on our services, programs and facilities.

## **Goals and vision for an accessible city**

### **Statement of commitment**

The City of Guelph is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in access that follows universal design principles and integration. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting, and where possible exceeding, our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

### **We recognize the benefits**

Accessibility is a powerful tool – it improves our communication, it brings more people together, and it increases our competitive advantage. In an accessible organization, a broader range of people will be able to work for the City and more people will have access to our services and programs.

Our goal is to make City workplaces and customer service areas accessible and welcoming environments – places where both employees and customers are accommodated according to their needs. Employees need to be able to function effectively and customers need to receive timely, high quality services in a way that works for them.

We want to provide excellent services to the public and reflect that in everything we do. We want to attract the talented people we need to fill jobs. Building a dynamic and accessible organization will help us reach these goals.

To transform into an accessible organization, the City is evolving to a more cohesive approach in its accessibility efforts.

## **How we have been building an accessible city**

### **City's commitment to Persons with Disabilities continues**

Since 1995 the City has committed to understanding and removing barriers with the first Inclusion Coordinator position. As the years progressed the corporation demonstrated its commitment by implementing a Barrier Free policy.

The commitment of the corporation grew with the creation of the City's Accessible Customer Service Policy. With Provincial legislation in place that encouraged better understanding of barriers to accessibility, the City expanded the Accessible

Customer Service policy to the current guiding policy, the City of Guelph Corporate Accessibility Policy.

We are accessibility leaders in our community and in Ontario. Our goal remains to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our programs, services and facilities.

## **The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: How we fit**

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. Municipalities must meet requirements in five areas:

- Customer service
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

The accessibility standard for customer service came into force for municipalities in 2008. The next three standards – information and communications, employment and transportation – have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR is now law and the requirements will be phased in over time. The standard for the built environment for public spaces was released at the beginning of 2013. This regulation is also included in the IASR and is called the Design of Public Spaces.

## **Our Strategic Focus: How We Will Get There**

### **The City's Accessibility Strategy**

What does an accessible Guelph look like? Organizational change is complex and involves many components: policies, processes and practices; people; technology; infrastructure; communications and awareness. Taken together, these are the levers that will bring about change.

### **How we will achieve results**

#### **A strong foundation helps build success**

Building a solid structure and organization has been a key component of our success so far in creating an accessible organization.

We believe that the critical factors for our success include:

- Informed and committed leadership
- Organization-wide alignment and coordination
- Strong governance and accountability
- Measurement, evaluation and reporting

#### **Informed and committed leadership**

We need informed and committed leadership to propel us forward. City leaders have identified accessibility as a priority. The City is a large organization with a workforce of 1500 to 2000+ people, depending on the season. Informed leaders, guided by the City's Accessibility Services, will ensure an aligned and coordinated organization-wide process.

As the corporation moves towards strong governance and accountability, accessibility will become incorporated into how we provide service to our customers. This type of governance structure is key to realizing our vision. All employees have a role to play in accessibility, and key individuals and groups have been assigned responsibilities to ensure our goals are met:

**Executive and Senior Champions of Accessibility:** Executive Leadership, supported by their Senior Leadership Assistants will facilitate accessibility related messaging to Senior Managers. This level of government will champion the implementation of the AODA standards in their Service Area. The leadership and expertise of the Senior Managers will ensure a cohesive approach.

**Accessibility Advisory Committee:** These members of the community who are appointed by Council will provide advice on the implementation of the AODA Plan. With lived experience, these community members are a wealth of knowledge and can tell their story from the point of view of a person with a disability, a customer, a visitor to a facility, and many other aspects. This consolidated "voice" provides a critical perspective on the needs of persons with disabilities. This group is consulted frequently by department and project managers for feedback on accessibility strategies and implementation of key priorities.

**Accessibility Services:** Accessibility Services provides coordination, vision and leadership to the municipality in order to achieve organization-wide accessibility. This office works under the collaboration and advice of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee to develop the actions and messages required to comply with the AODA.

## **Accountability - measurement, evaluation and reporting**

The success of this strategy – like any other – depends on having a clear way to measure, evaluate and report on progress. At specific periods of time set out by the Province, City shall report their progress on accessible goals and any achievements that they've realized during the year. This reporting will be the responsibility of senior managers.

Accessibility services, with the assistance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will review these reports and develop recommendation for the services areas where appropriate.

In addition, the City recognizes that getting feedback from employees and customers is an important part of our evaluation process. The Multi-Year Plan and beginning in 2021 compliance report summaries will be posted on the City's website in HTML format and be available for reading or download in PDF format. Members of the public will be invited to provide their feedback on these documents as well as City programs, services and facilities.

# **Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

## **How we will get the job done**

The City is demonstrating leadership by being one of the first organizations in Ontario to meet the requirements of the AODA. We were of the first municipalities to report compliance with the customer service standard, and to meet requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). We are on track to be one of the first Ontario organization to publish accessible content on a municipal website by the end of 2020.

## **We achieve these goals by:**

### **Ensuring organizational readiness to meet compliance**

In order to meet and sustain compliance, the City will continue to revise policies and develop new ones with accessibility in mind. Policies and guiding principles not only help employees embed accessibility into everyday activities, but also help ensure that compliance activities are communicated and delivered in a consistent way across the organization.

### **Keeping compliance active**

Compliance with the AODA needs to be kept active, so ongoing maintenance and quality controls are needed as well as the opportunity to encourage adjustments that will only further the municipality's efforts. The following Multi-Year Plan will set out the City's vision, our commitment and how we will achieve our vision.

City employees will be supported in their efforts with tools, such as checklists and guides, which will assist in interpreting the requirements as well as provide guidance on making product selections, hiring through the contract process, and develop written materials that meet the requirements.

Comprehensive ongoing training give employees the knowledge, skills and tools they need to meet and exceed compliance requirements. City employees have a broad range of functions and roles. For that reason, training is adapted to suit the type of work, the work location, and the type of involvement employees may have with accessibility. Training topics include: developing alternate formats, hosting accessible meetings, and creating documents, policies and procedures with accessibility in mind. A variety of training materials, resources and best practices have been developed as a result, and are shared across the organization.

Beyond the required training, ongoing evaluation of the City's accessible services, programs and facilities, will assist in identifying potential education and awareness opportunities. This system will help ensure compliance with the legislation and keep the topic of accessibility front and centre.

## **Our progress on the AODA regulations**

The following outlines our commitments and our progress in meeting accessibility standards in six key areas: • Customer service • Information and communications • Employment • Procurement • Transportation • Built environment

### **Customer Service**

The City provides services to a diverse population at several facilities throughout the city. Developing an accessible customer service experience was an essential first step in our work.

#### **Our vision**

Customers must be served in ways that:

- Best achieve an equitable customer experience when accessing municipal services, programs and facilities
- Employ best efforts to develop and maintain customer service that is accessible
- Use available budgets and resources wisely

#### **Our commitment**

The City is committed to ensuring that all customers – whatever their ability – are served in an accommodating environment and receive accessible goods and services in a timely manner.

#### **How we achieve our vision**

- Reviewing and updating policies and standards regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service
- Consulting with key stakeholders and the City's AAC on emerging, or changing requirements
- Embedding accessibility requirements into employees training and orientation materials
- Using internal expertise to conduct reviews to ensure compliance and improve services
- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action
- Providing training for employees who serve the public, and make policies that shape how services are delivered

#### **Outcome**

Members of the public receive an equitable and effective customer experience that accommodates their needs.

#### **Our accomplishments**

**Customer Service Policy** - The City has had an accessible customer service policy since 2010. The policy is included in the training of all City employees and volunteers and meets the requirements of the customer service regulation within the IASR. Upon the development of this policy, the City determined that it already

had, in some areas, exceeds the regulation. For example, in the years leading up to the AODA requirement the City had developed a program that waived the admission/registration fees for a support person accompanying a person with disabilities attending a City hosted event/program.

**City Accessibility Resources and Guidelines** - The City developed several resource materials and guidelines that clarify mandatory requirements under the standard for customer service, and shares good practices. It is posted on an internal website for easy access by City employees.

**Ongoing Accessibility Training** - The City of Guelph developed training for employees and volunteers that are specific to their work tasks and City settings where they work. With customer service being the largest module of this training, it also includes information about all of the regulations within the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it supports people with a disability.

Further to understanding how to serve people with disabilities in ways that respect their dignity and independence, training is ongoing and includes updates as technology changes and the needs of the public evolve.

## **Information and communication**

Communicating and providing information in ways that work for all employees and customers is another cornerstone of building an accessible organization.

### **Our vision**

The City will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, communications materials, telephone communications and face-to-face interactions. The goal is to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

### **Our commitment**

The City is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities. Over the past four years, the organization has delivered training to staff on how to develop documents that are accessible. Over the next two years the Information and Communication requirements in the AODA will be the focus of training, purchasing of software, working through changes to existing software and making City websites accessible.

### **How we will achieve our vision**

- Achieving compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines-based (WCAG) commitments in the Information and Communication section of the IASR (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation) to ensure websites are accessible for all.
- Maintaining and updating guidelines that the City has developed and communicating these best practice guidelines to employees through training.

- Ensuring that information produced by the City, including emergency procedures, plans, and public safety is readily available in a variety of alternate formats such as large print, and accessible HTML and PDFs.
- Continuing to implement the training strategy to ensure that staff have the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials.
- Ensuring that kiosks have accessibility features in their design.
- Continuing to expand knowledge and use of accessible devices such as audio amplifiers.

## **Public Libraries**

### **How we will achieve our vision**

- Continuing to provide access to accessible materials in the Main Library
- Arranging for the provision of access to accessible materials, where they exist, will also continue
- Informing the public of the availability of these accessible materials
- Providing information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request
- Working to provide accessible formats for archival material, special collections, rare books and donations
- Collaborating with the CELA and other support agencies to provide direct access to audio materials for the blind and visually impaired
- Designing the new Guelph Central Public Library in keeping with the City's Facility Accessibility Design Manual.

## **Employment**

The process of finding, getting and keeping a job must be inclusive and accessible in order to build an effective workforce in the City.

### **Our vision**

As a top employer, the City will enable and encourage persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of employment with the organization.

### **Our commitment**

The City is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. The City understands the Ontario's Human Rights Code and has developed and implemented policies that support accommodation and address discrimination and harassment allegations.

### **How we will achieve our vision**

By 2022 the City will:

- Review employment-related policies and procedures to ensure they meet legislated requirements.
- Document recruitment, performance management and career development practices.

- Return to work, employee accommodations, and redeployment practices will also be set out in a document.

### **Employee Training**

Employees will receive accessibility training that supports the goals of the AODA. It is expected that the training will cover a range of topics such as:

- How to identify and remove barriers in the workplace for employees and customers
- Understanding and accommodating various types of disabilities
- Understanding employer obligations to provide employment accommodation
- Understanding the City's obligations and leadership under AODA regulations

### **Outcome**

- As required, individual workplace emergency response plans have been developed for employees with disabilities.
- Accommodation for disabilities is offered and provided as required.

### **Our accomplishments**

The City implemented a procedure to develop individualized workplace emergency response plans as required by the AODA. Further, the organization extended the policy and process to City volunteers.

### **Procurement**

The City is a major purchaser of goods and services. It is important that procurement processes are inclusive so that all customers can participate, and all vendors are aware of the need to provide accessible goods and services.

### **Our vision**

Availability of accessibility options is a high priority in the procurement process. The vendor community is aware of and understands the need to demonstrate leadership in removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

### **Our commitment**

The City is committed to integrating accessibility into procurement policies, procedures and practices by:

- Conducting regular reviews and updates of procurement-related directives, policies, procedures and standards.
- Consulting with key stakeholders, advisory groups and vendors on promoting awareness of accessible selection of products.
- Embedding accessibility requirements into the procurement process.
- Conducting reviews to ensure compliance and continuous improvement in procurement practices.

- Reviewing feedback on the procurement process and taking appropriate action as needed.

### **How we will achieve our vision**

The City is committed to implementing accessible procurement practices and processes. City vendors and partners will be aware of the requirement to incorporate accessibility considerations and requirements into the procurement cycle, including the planning and document development stages. A resource booklet will be available to employees who procure or acquire on behalf of the City.

Further resources are available to employees and range from guidelines on hosting accessible meetings to a list of product features to look for when procuring. This list of features often reflects the requirements in the City's Facility Accessibility Design Manual and at times exceed it in an effort to respond to concerns of a barrier.

Through policies and practices that include accessibility considerations, City buyers are able to conduct business in a way that accommodates customers of all abilities.

### **Outcome**

The City market influence has generated a heightened level of awareness and responsiveness in adopting accessibility measures in the vendor community.

### **Our accomplishments**

Procurement directives, tools and guidelines have been updated to meet new accessibility standards. Accessibility considerations of the IASR have been incorporated into the existing Accessible Customer Service directive in the City's procurement process.

## **Transportation**

### **Outcome**

To ensure that members of the community with a disability have access to a barrier-free public transit system

### **Our accomplishments**

Guelph Transit has been busy over the past couple of years implementing the requirements with the AODA. The following requirements have been completed:

Along with the below accomplishments Guelph Transit Mobility Service continues to improve the ridership experience. In 2018 Transit purchased 11 new vehicles to replace their aging fleet. They hired five more part-time drivers. In the first quarter of 2018 Transit rolled out a new program, call Mobility Services Automated Calls.

This new automated phone call service reminds passengers of their upcoming trip. These automated calls help to ensure that passengers never miss a pick-up, and it allows passengers time to reschedule or cancel a trip if necessary.

### **Types of automated phone calls**

1. One day prior notification – received one day prior to your schedule pick-up
2. Fifteen (15) minute notification – received 15 minutes prior to your scheduled pick-up
3. Eligibility expiration – a reminder that your eligibility for mobility service is about to expire and instructions for next steps

To receive these calls you will need to register for the service. When you register, you will have the option to choose one, two or all three types of calls; the choice is up to the passenger.

Guelph Transit have updated the Service Animals rules, to reflect current legislation across both the Conventional and Mobility bus services

Guide Dogs and Service Animals are permitted on Guelph Transit vehicles. When it is not readily apparent (can't easily and clearly be seen) that an animal is a Service Animal, a letter from a registered health care professional is needed to confirm that the person requires that animal for reasons relating to their disability. The letter must be presented to the driver when boarding a Guelph Transit vehicle upon request from the driver. All other animals, not classified as a Guide Dog or Service Animal, must be secured in a small enclosed pet carrier that needs to fit between the seats.

In September 2017 Guelph Transit changed the vision of the Community Bus service. The most noticeable change was using full size buses to run the service, and the next big change was, not picking up on private property. This allowed Transit to better maintain schedule adherence, and not be impacted by delays due to parked vehicle on private property. Since the change was implemented the ridership of this service has doubled.

The Community Bus service is a conventional sized bus that can serve passengers using mobility devices as well as those without. The Community bus provides service where passengers are able to flag the Community Bus along its routing when standing both at a bus stop and not at a bus stop. This means, if it is a safe location to stop the bus, an operator will pick up passengers to board their bus throughout the route who flag them down as they approach.

In addition, passengers are allowed to request a stop at existing bus stops or locations along the routing of the Community Bus. When requesting a stop that is not located at a bus stop, passengers speak to the bus operator before approaching the stop. This service is available Monday to Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

As part of the Community bus service an expansion is planned for the coming years that will increase frequency and hours of service. Also in the planning stage, an Intelligent On-Demand Software service that will allow customers to book pickups on demand, with little to no window of time, based on availability.

The Mobility services will have a similar expansion in 2019. How passengers book a trip is changing. The Mobility service will provide on-demand bookings, allowing passengers to book a trip when they need it based on availability. The goal of this program is to give passengers the flexibility and freedom to book when they want a ride rather than fitting their schedule to the availability of the Mobility bus schedule. As part of this program, Transit will launch a mobile app that give passengers the ability to book trips online.

### **Right sizing our vehicles;**

Mobility service will receive a newer type vehicle in the coming months. This vehicle will be smaller in size and will be utilized on the road to accommodate less volume in the off peak hours. This new vehicle will hold up to seven passengers, and will have rear and side entry for up to three mobility devices.

### **Supervisor Vehicle**

Mobility service has purchased a specialized vehicle for our mobility supervisor to assist with overflow and emergency situation. This provides an essential backup to any vehicle malfunctions or when emergency service is needed.

### **Built environment**

The City strives to be a leader in accessibility and is committed to providing a universally accessible built environment at its facilities. The City of Guelph Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM) acts as a guiding standard for City facilities. Updated periodically and upon the release of new legislation, the FADM exceeds the Ontario Building Code and in many regards it exceeds the Design of Public Spaces regulation recently released as part of the Integrated Accessibility Standard. The FADM will continue to be the guiding standard for City renovations and newly constructed buildings.

During 2017 the City conducted an accessibility audit at several of its facilities. These buildings will be renovated over the coming years. Further accessibility renovations or replacements on other City facilities will take place within other projects. The FADM is the guiding document for all City buildings.

The FADM is slated to go through an update upon the release of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) section(s) related to accessibility. The OBC is reviewed/updated by the Province approximately every five years.

With regard to the AODA Design of Public Spaces, the update schedule for this regulation is not known at this time. Upon its release, the FADM will be update to reflect those requirements as well.

### **Our vision**

Customers, employees and visitors will be able to move freely – unrestricted by barriers – in all City interior and exterior spaces as set out in the FADM.

## **Our commitment**

The City is committed to greater accessibility into, out of, and around our facilities. Our successes to date yet again demonstrate the City's commitment to accessibility as budget allocation to these renovations has been consistent over the years.

## **How we will achieve our vision**

The City will continue to undertake accessibility retrofits of existing facilities and build new facilities to the standards in the FADM.

## **Outcome**

City facilities will strive to have accessible and accommodating environments for employees, volunteers and customers.

## **Our accomplishments**

From picking up a bus pass to swimming in a City pool, City facilities are alive with activity every day. The City identifies barriers for people with disabilities and removes these barriers using universal design principles. For most, further accommodations are rare but can be requested of any City employee.

Since 2018 the following facilities have been newly built or renovated to improve accessibility:

- Wilson Street Parking facility
- Victoria Road Recreation Center
- Hastings Stadium – Improved spectator seating
- Margaret Green Park Washrooms
- Riverside Park Washrooms
- Main Branch Library
- 50 Municipal Street employee areas
- Replacement of park playground equipment

2020 projects:

- Exhibition Park Tennis Court Washrooms
- Planning for the South End Community Centre
- Guelph Transit office update
- Waterworks Pump House to offices
- The Boathouse

The City will review and update annually its procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

# **Leading the Way Forward: A Final Word**

## **Our Commitment**

The City is committed to making accessibility throughout the organization a reality. Our progress so far would not have been possible without the vision of senior executives, the leadership of City managers, the concerted efforts of each employee, and the commitment of the dedicated citizens who give their time and expertise to the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. We thank them for their invaluable feedback, input and dedication to this work.

There is much more to accomplish.

Many of our initiatives are in full swing and more are on the drawing board as we implement this plan. We will continue to identify and remove barriers at every level of the City in order to create accessible spaces, programs and services that everyone can use.

## **We'd like to hear from you**

Do you have any thoughts or feedback on what has been accomplished so far? Ideas on how plans or projects could be improved? Do you need any other information to move forward with your own plans? Please contact us with your questions and ideas. We would be pleased to hear from you.

This document is available online ([Guelph.ca](http://Guelph.ca)) in an accessible PDF.

For more information, to provide feedback or to request an alternate format of this document please contact:

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## **Appendix 1:**

### **Accessibility Principles**

A plan is only as good as its guiding light – in this case, a set of accessibility principles that all departments in the City will follow. Employees must use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, programs and services – including procedures and practices established to provide accessible service to persons with disabilities – reflect these principles.

#### **Dignity**

The principle of respecting the dignity of persons with disabilities means treating them as customers who are as valued and deserving of high quality and timely service as any other customer. Persons with disabilities are not treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. The delivery of goods and services must take into account how persons with disabilities can effectively access and use them.

#### **Independence**

In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others – in other words, the freedom to make one's own choices. It can also mean freedom to do things one's own way. People who move or speak differently must not be denied the opportunity to participate in a program or service, for example. People with disabilities need to be able to take the time they need, without being rushed or having a task taken away from them.

#### **Integration**

The provision of goods or services must be integrated so that persons with disabilities may benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. Integration means that policies, programs, services, practices and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.

#### **Equal Opportunity**

Equal opportunity means that persons with disabilities have the same access as others to obtain, use and benefit from goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain services. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience than any other customer.

## Appendix 2:

### Definitions

**Accessibility:** a general term used to describe the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, and environment) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to ensure it is barrier-free to persons with a disability and, by extension, highly usable and practical for the general population as well.

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005:** the purpose of the Act is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025 in relation to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment, facilities, structures and premises. The AODA came into force on June 4, 2005.

**Accessible:** that which can be easily reached or obtained; a facility that can be easily entered; posing no obstacles to persons with disabilities.

**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.

**Adaptive technologies:** technologies that enable persons with disabilities, primarily physical disabilities, to use regular versions of products such as computers or telephones.

**Assistive devices:** equipment that assists people to perform a given task; usually devices that people bring with them, such as a walker, scooter, wheelchair or personal oxygen tank.

**Assistive technology:** technological devices that have been developed with features specifically helpful for people with disabilities. Publishers may be asked to supply file formats that are compatible with particular types of assistive technology.

**Communications:** the interaction between two or more persons or entities, where information is provided, sent or received.

**Communication supports:** may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Conversion ready:** an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.

**Disability:** the interaction between the social, cultural or physical environment and a person's impairment that creates barriers. Disability may be apparent to others or hidden, inherited, self-inflicted or acquired, perceived or presumed.

**Diversity:** refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group or an organization. The dimensions of diversity include,

but are not limited to, age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise.

**HTML/XHTML (HyperText Markup Language):** the markup language for web pages and provides the basic building blocks of web pages. XHTML is a set of XML specifications that extend the rather limited capabilities of HTML and make it more disciplined. Both HTML 5.0 and XHTML 5.0 are currently under development by the World Wide Web Consortium.

**Information:** includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

**Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001:** requires government ministries, municipalities and public sector organizations such as transportation organizations, hospitals and school boards to develop an annual accessibility plan aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in a number of areas, such as government buildings, publications and internet sites.

**PDF (Portable Document Format):** a file format, which enables a document to be used on many different computer platforms but always to maintain the same visual appearance and page layout. Originally developed by Adobe in the early 1990s, PDF is now an ISO standard and is widely used throughout the publishing industry both as part of its process for producing printed products and for some types of electronic products. The specifications of PDF files may vary depending on their intended use; some forms of PDF (particularly those specifically aimed at printing applications) are far from ideal for use in the production of accessible editions.

# Appendix 3:

## Corporate Policy and Procedure



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Policy	Corporate Accessibility Policy
Category	Corporate
Authority	All Departments
Related policies	Animal Control Bylaw, Stoop and Scoop Bylaw, Exotic and Non-Domestic Animal Bylaw
Approved by	City of Guelph Council
Effective Date	January 1, 2013
Revision Date	

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### **Policy Statement:**

The City of Guelph is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees regardless of disabilities. To meet the needs of people with disabilities the City of Guelph will:

- Ensure its policies, practices, and procedures provide for dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities in accessing and using City of Guelph goods, services, programs, and facilities.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure that they can obtain, use, or benefit from City of Guelph goods, services, programs, and facilities and that they can do so in a timely manner, at a cost no greater than that for people without disabilities.
- Develop and train City of Guelph employees on providing accessible goods, services, programs, and facilities.

This policy provides guidance on how the City of Guelph ensures all its goods, services, programs, and facilities are provided in an inclusive manner that takes into the account the needs of people with disabilities.

## Definitions

- 1) "City": Refers to the City of Guelph and its service areas, but does not include local boards. Local boards may adopt this policy at their discretion.
  - a) "Disability": As defined in section 10 of the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19.
- 2) "Facility or Service Disruption": Means a planned or unplanned unavailability of facilities, programs or services provided or operated by or on behalf of the City, including but not limited to, washroom facilities that are closed, elevators that are inoperable, and websites that are unavailable.
- 3) "Service Animal": Means
  - a) A guide dog, as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O.1990, c. B.7; or
  - b) An animal used by a person with a disability, including but not limited to a dog, if:
    - I. It is readily apparent that such animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
    - II. The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.
- 4) "Support Person": Means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods, services, programs or facilities.

## Purpose

The City recognizes the diverse needs of all its:

- Residents and strives to provide goods, services, programs and facilities that are accessible to all. As a provider of goods and services, the City is committed to ensuring that its goods and services are provided in an accessible manner.
- Employees and strives to provide a workplace that is accessible to all of them. As an employer, the City is committed to ensuring that its workplace is accessible.

This policy, Corporate Accessibility Policy, is to function as an umbrella policy for the requirements of the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c.11.

## Principles

The City develops policies, practices, and procedures which contribute to ensuring that goods, services, programs, and facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. The following principles will be met when developing such policies, practices, and procedures:

## **1. Accessibility Planning**

The City will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The multi-year accessibility plan will outline the ways the City will prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The City will:

- Establish, review, and update the multi-year accessibility plan in consultation with persons with disabilities and the municipal accessibility advisory committee.
- Review and update the plan at least once every five years.

City employees will prepare an annual status update report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan and will post the plan and the status update reports on the City's website. City employees will provide accessible formats of the plan and reports upon request.

## **2. Accessible Customer Service**

The City will make reasonable efforts to ensure the following:

- That goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- That the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities, and to others, are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- That people with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

Note: Equal opportunity may require an individual accommodation in addition to this policy.

## **3. Procurement**

Whenever possible, City employees will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, and facilities.

When it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, City employees will provide, upon request, an explanation for this action.

Further, the City will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

#### **4. Employee Development (Training)**

City employees and volunteers, those who participate in developing the City's policies and procedures, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City will be trained in accordance with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the Integrated Accessibility Standards, as well as other regulations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The City 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.

#### **5. Alternate Formats**

The City will provide information that it produces or controls, in formats that take into account the disabilities of members of the public requesting the information. The City will provide these alternate formats in a timely manner and at a cost no more than the cost of the original format of the information.

City material printed in-house or produced on behalf of the City for the public should contain a note indicating, "Alternate formats are available upon request in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*" and include relevant contact information.

The City and the person with a disability requesting the document will agree upon the format to be used for the City document or information.

The timeframe attached to the process to convert the City document to an alternate format may vary depending on the media, the size, complexity, quality, and number of the source documents to be converted.

When it is not practicable to provide an alternate format, the City will provide an explanation and a summary of the document in an accessible format.

#### **6. Communication Supports**

The City will provide communication supports to members of the public, upon request. The City will provide the support in a timely manner, and in consultation with the person to determine suitability of the communication support so that it takes his or her disability into account. The City will not charge a cost that is more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

If City employees are unable to obtain the requested communication support, they will work with the requestor to determine a practicable and appropriate method for communication.

The City will notify the public about the availability of communication supports no less frequently than annually.

## **7. Feedback Process**

The City has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the City provides goods and services to persons with disabilities. Information about this process is available to any person.

Should members of the public wish to provide feedback they can do so:

- In person to a City Manager, Supervisor, Executive Director or the Accessibility Service Coordinator;
- By telephone, via the City's General Inquires telephone line: 519-822-1260 or TTY: (519) 826-9771;
- In writing to the attention of the Accessibility Services Coordinator, 1 Carden St, Guelph, ON, N1H 3A1;
- By using the form included in Appendix B: or
- In an electronic format or by email: [info@guelph.ca](mailto:info@guelph.ca)

Once feedback has been received, the City will implement the following process:

- If the feedback is received by a City employee other than a Manager, Supervisor, Executive Director or Accessibility Service Coordinator, the employee will forward the feedback form to his or her supervisor and the Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- The Supervisor will forward the form to the relevant Service Area or employee.
- The relevant employee will take appropriate action in a timely manner with the assistance of the Accessibility Services Coordinator and members of other departments if needed.
- Whether the feedback is intended to be a helpful suggestion or a complaint, the employee along with the Accessibility Service Coordinator will assess current policies, practices, and procedures to determine if any changes are required.
- Employees will follow up with the person who submitted the feedback if more clarification is needed, or if the person has requested that follow up take place.
- Employees will keep records of all steps taken, including any discussions with the person submitting the feedback and any actions taken.
- All feedback will be provided to relevant City employees who will follow up as appropriate.

## **8. Service Disruptions**

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods, services, programs or facilities, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the City, and if there is a temporary Facility or Service Disruption to those facilities or services, in whole or in part, the City will give notice of the Facility or Service Disruption to the public. The City employees responsible for posting such notice include facility and service managers or their designates.

Notice of the Facility or Service 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.

The City will give notice of the Facility or Service Disruption by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the relevant City premises and, whenever possible, by posting it on the City website and in the media as appropriate.

If the City should expect a planned temporary Facility or Service Disruption, the City will provide on its website, if possible, advance notice, in keeping with the conditions of this section of this policy.

## **9. Support Persons**

The City will allow a person with a disability to be accompanied by a Support Person in all City owned and operated public facilities. The City reserves the right to request that a person with a disability be accompanied by a Support Person, in the event that the City considers such accompaniment as necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

The City will provide notification of any applicable admission fees or fares that apply to Support Persons by posting such admission fees or fares where all other fees or fares are posted.

## **10. Service Animals**

The City welcomes Service Animals into all City-owned or -operated facilities where the public is allowed. The person requiring the Service Animal may keep it with him or her unless it is otherwise excluded by law.

If a Service Animal is excluded from premises by law, which could include, but is not limited to, City policy, bylaw, Federal or Provincial Public Health law, or government policy or guideline, the City will, upon request, use reasonable efforts to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City program, service, or facility. Appropriate "other measures" will be addressed on a case by case basis.

The concept of Service Animals may be new for some customers. As a result, there is a potential for misunderstandings between customers. People who use Service Animals often find themselves providing education about the use of Service Animals to those they meet. At times they report that they have difficulty with some individuals. If a customer accessing City services experiences difficulty from another person regarding the treatment of the Service Animal or himself/herself the following could take place. The person with the Service Animal could;

1. Mention to the other person that his/her animal is a Service Animal, and /or

2. Request assistance from City employees. City employees will, upon request, assist in a professional manner within their capacity.

A Person with a disability with a Service Animal is responsible for the control of that animal at all times. As well he or she must comply with all applicable legislation, which includes, but is not limited to, the *Dog Owners' Liability Act* and City by-laws (such as the Animal Control By-law, Stoop and Scoop By-law and Exotic and Non-Domestic Animals By-law).

If the Service Animal is not kept under control, City employees may use their discretion to request that the Service Animal, accompanied by a person, leave the premises until the Service Animal is under control. If the Service Animal has bitten another person or animal or is a menace to the safety of other persons or animals, the Service Animal, accompanied by a person, may be required to leave the premises. If this occurs, the person would be permitted to continue to access the City goods or services without the Service Animal. In addition, City employees will, upon request, consider alternate accommodations for the person in such circumstances. The City may refuse to permit the Service Animal to accompany the person until such time as the person has demonstrated to the City that the issue has been resolved and steps have been taken to correct the situation. The person could present the City with a letter from a veterinarian and physician or nurse that explains how the issue has been resolved and the steps taken to correct the situation. If the person plans on using City facilities, programs or services with the Service Animal, the City expects that the person would make every effort to ensure the issue would be resolved within a reasonable period of time as alternate accommodations provided by the City may be discontinued after a limited amount of time. City employees may take further action as described in the laws noted above.

If a conflict should arise concerning a Service Animal, employees will attempt to balance the needs of all persons involved by following conflict resolution strategies. These strategies will include collecting appropriate information from all persons involved and observing the rights of all individuals involved according to the *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. H-6.

## **11. Use of Assistive Devices**

The City will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the City.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the City's services through the use of his or her own personal assistive device, the City will assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.

## **12. Accessible Workplace**

The City will establish policies, practices, and procedures that ensure that the City remains an inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. These policies, practices, and procedures will:

- Ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Inform employees of supports available for employees with disabilities.
- Appropriately accommodate employees with disabilities in the areas of:
  - Workplace emergency response information,
  - Information and communications needed to perform jobs or that are generally available to employees in the workplace, and
  - Any other accommodations required.
- Take into account employee accommodations in:
  - Performance management,
  - Career development and advancement, and
  - Redeployment.
- Develop and implement a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

## **13. Transportation**

In addition to adhering to the policies within this Policy, Guelph Transit will develop and maintain policies and procedures unique to its service, and that are required in the regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Guelph Transit will make the policies required in the regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 available to the public upon request.

## **14. Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment**

The City is committed to providing a universally accessible built environment at its facilities. The City of Guelph Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM) acts as a guiding standard for building and renovating City facilities. Updated periodically and upon the release of new legislation, the FADM meets or exceeds the Ontario Building Code and in many regards it exceeds the Design of Public Spaces regulation O. Reg. 413/12. The FADM will continue to be the guiding standard for City renovations and newly constructed buildings.

## Review Period

This policy shall be reviewed by Council when the Multi-year Plan is reviewed and/or once per Council term and/or as accessibility legislation changes.

## Responsibilities

City Council, employees, volunteers and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the City's behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of this policy and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the City's goods, services, programs, and facilities.

## Contact Information

For more information about this policy, or questions related to accessibility at the City, please contact:

Accessibility Services Coordinator, City of Guelph  
1 Carden St., Guelph, ON N1H 3A1  
Phone: 519-822-1260 ext. 2670  
TTY: 519-837-5688 Fax: 519-837-5661  
Email: leanne.warren@guelph.ca

## Links

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm)
- Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r07429\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)
- Integrated Accessibility Standard <http://www.search.e-laws.gov.on.ca/en/isysquery/9be78d7d-0bd4-4cd0-8819-fcff68be4caf/1/doc/?search=browseStatutes&context=#hit1>
- Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment: <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/index.aspx>
- Ontario Human Rights Commission: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>
- Dog Owners Liability Act (Provincial Act): [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90d16\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90d16_e.htm)
- Blind Persons' Rights Act (Provincial Act): [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_900058\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900058_e.htm)
- City of Guelph documents related to Service Animals and Guide Dogs:
  - Animal Control By-law: [http://guelph.ca/uploads/PDF/By-laws/animal\\_control.pdf](http://guelph.ca/uploads/PDF/By-laws/animal_control.pdf)
  - Stoop and Scoop By-law: <http://guelph.ca/uploads/PDF/By-laws/stoop%20and%20scoop.pdf>
  - Exotic and Non-Domestic Animals: [http://guelph.ca/uploads/PDF/By-laws/exotic\\_animals.pdf](http://guelph.ca/uploads/PDF/By-laws/exotic_animals.pdf)

- Guelph Police Services AODA Information:  
<http://www.guelphpolice.com/aoda/>
- City of Guelph Facility Accessibility Design Manual:  
<http://guelph.ca/living/accessibility/facilities/>

## **City of Guelph Resource Documents**

Available on the Internet and/or Intranet under Accessibility:

- Service Disruption Notice
- Feedback Form
- Workplace Emergency Response Information for Employees and Volunteers with Disabilities Policy (available upon request)