The Township of South-West Oxford
2014-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Accessible Format

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the Clerk at cao@swox.org 519-485-0477.

Background

Since 2003, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)* influenced public organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers. In June 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was passed with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The AODA gave the province the mandate to create sets of standards in accessibility, which will apply to both public and private sector organizations. Ontario is the first and only Canadian jurisdiction to regulate accessibility standards. The province has since committed to developing and implanting standards in:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Built Environment

On July 1, 2011, the Ontario government enacted the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (*Ontario Regulation 191/11* under the AODA) which requires all public sector organizations in the province to incorporate accessibility when they procure goods services and facilities.

Statement of Commitment

The Township of South-West Oxford is committed to inspiring all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in

integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

The Township of South-West Oxford will strive to remove existing barriers that limit inclusion and will provide a status report publicly to be available each year to highlight our accessibility achievements.

Accomplishments
2003-2004
- Physical access to the Mount Elgin Community Hall (Oxford County Library) was made easier for persons with disabilities with the installation of barrier free door openers and the renovation of the washrooms to an accessible design.

2008-2010
- Train the Trainer program to implement Customer Service Standard of AODA was launched where staff, board members took the online training.
- Front entrance of the Township was constructed to accommodate an accessible entranceway. The Township washroom was reconstructed to an accessible design.
- Brownsville Community Centre and library was built in 2010 and is fully accessible.
- Election 2010 – the Vote by Mail method was approved by Council to enable all eligible voters to vote at their place of residence. The one voting location was the Township of South-West Oxford's municipal office which is accessible.
- Beachville Community Park met the accessible standards for ground cover by the playground equipment.
- Dereham Centre Community Park met the accessible standards for ground cover by the playground equipment.

- Mount Elgin Community Park met the accessible component of play equipment with some of the equipment and the accessible ground cover.
- All other playgrounds have had ground cover replaced with accessible standard ground cover.

2011

- West Oxford Community Hall installed a push pad (automatic operator) for the front door and renovated the washroom to accessible standards.

2012

- West Oxford Community Hall installed a new accessible ramp to the front door.
- Front door of Township office was installed with a push pad (automatic operator).

2013

- Funding was received from the province's Accessibility Enabling Grant for Dereham Community Centre's remodeling for accessible washrooms and an entranceway.
- Township Office renovation was completed in November 2013 with the removal of carpet and the installation of vinyl flooring. Lever handles were installed on all office and washroom doors. The doors were widened to 36" (91.4 cm) to accommodate wheel chairs. Fully accessible washroom was added to basement.

Barrier Identification

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to prevent, identify and remove barriers. Barriers are obstacles that stand in the way of people with disabilities from being able to do many of the day-to-day activities that most people take for granted. A barrier is defined as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. The traditional definition of a barrier used in the context of accessibility has been

expanded to include obstacles beyond physical boundaries. There are several other categories of barriers to consider, such as:

Environmental Barriers: features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate entry by person in a motorized scooter.

Communication Barriers: obstacles with processing, transmitting or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read or documents not available in alternative formats.

Attitudinal Barriers: prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that all visually impaired persons can read Braille.

Technological Barriers: when technology cannot be or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.

Systemic Barriers: barriers within an organization's policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, listing a driver's license as an employment qualification for an office position may prohibit persons with visual impairments from applying.

Accessible Emergency Information
The Township of South-West Oxford is committed to providing people with disabilities with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training
The Township of South-West Oxford will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the

Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

The Township will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by **January 1, 2015.**
- Monitor current customer feedback mechanisms and look to increase feedback/engagement with persons with disabilities
- Ensure feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities
- Continue to conduct, assess and review accessible customer service training for staff volunteers and third parties

Procurement

The Township of South-West Oxford will take the following steps to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities by **January 1, 2014.**
- Review/revise procurement process and guiding documents to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring and acquiring goods, services or facilities, including accessibility features when designing self-service kiosks.

If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation on request.

Information and Communications

The Township of South-West Oxford is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

The Township of South-West Oxford will take the following steps to make all new websites and content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0, Level A by **January 1, 2014.**

- Provide ongoing staff training on how to create accessible online documents
- Develop tip sheets and staff resources
- Include accessibility considerations in site upgrades
- Coordinate comprehensive website redesign, providing the opportunity to incorporate new technologies and accessibility tools. Many of the site design are required to be corrected in coordination with the County of Oxford Information Services Department.

The Township of South-West Oxford will take the following steps to ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request by **January 1, 2015.**

- Review and develop relevant policy/procedure documents pertaining to the provision of accessible formats and communication supports to persons with disabilities, taking into consideration accessibility format/ communication support requirements.

The Township will take the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by **January 1, 2016.**

- Develop guidelines and resources for creating accessible documents for common workplace desktop applications: Word, Excel, PDF, and PowerPoint.

Employment
The Township of South-West Oxford is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired.

- Create a process for developing individual accommodation plans (2014).

- Update documented return to work procedures to take into account employees with disabilities (2014).
- Review and revise processes for performance evaluation and career development (2014).
- Review interview questions ensuring inclusivity and us of plain language (2014).
- Ensure that any policy, procedure, or practice at the Township of South-West Oxford respects and promotes the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. (Ongoing)
- Identify and remove barriers in the workplace. (Ongoing)
- Promote understanding of employer obligations to provide employee accommodations. (Ongoing)
- Train senior managers to support the intent and goals of the AODA. (2014)
- Public Awareness: Notify successful applicants, new, and existing employees of policies supporting people with disabilities. (2013)
- Technology: Provide accessible formats and communication supports for employees with disabilities. (Ongoing)

How We Will Achieve Accessible Employment
- Create individual emergency workplace response plan policy (HR Policies) and form for staff with a disability. To be approved September 2014.
- Revise employment advertisements to include a statement regarding providing accommodations under the Human Rights Code in all aspects of the hiring process. (2014)

Design of Public Spaces
The Township of South-West Oxford will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes.
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas.

- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities.
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signal.
- Accessible on and off street parking.
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas.

The Township of South-West Oxford will put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces.

- In the event of a service disruption we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

Other Barriers

The Township of South-West Oxford will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified.

- Site tours of buildings will be completed to determine how accessibility can be incorporated into various Township facilities.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

An Accessibility Advisory Committee is not required when Municipality has a population of less than 10,000.

Agencies and Associations that are supportive of persons with disabilities will be informed of the Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The Township of South-West Oxford's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be distributed for comment to the Citizens with Disabilities of Ontario (CWDO) Organization for their comments.

2013 AODA Accessibility Reporting

- Township of South-West Oxford has completed the online 2013 Accessibility Compliance Reporting.

For More Information

Accessible formats of this document are available if requested.

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

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