

# Township of Adjala-Tosorontio



## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) received Royal Assent on June 13, 2005. The AODA was developed to assist organizations in both the public and private sector in identifying barriers to accessibility.

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility which are related to goods, services, facilities, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 1, 2025.

The Plan describes the measures the Township has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Township.

## 2.0 Municipal Profile

The Township of Adjala-Tosorontio is a rural municipality located in the southwest part of Simcoe County, north of the Greater Toronto Area. With a population of 10,975 (as per the 2016 Statistics Canada Census) the Township covers an area of 372.3 km<sup>2</sup>. The Township is bounded by the Town of Caledon to the south, Town of Mono and Township of Mulmur to the west, Township of Clearview to the north and Township of Essa and Town of New Tecumseth to the east. Seven settlement areas complement the Township along with Earl Rowe Provincial Park and Canadian Forces Base Borden.

## 3.0 Definitions

**Accessible Formats** – May include, but are not limited to: large print, plain language, recorded audio or electronic formats such as Word, Adobe PDF, Rich Text or HTML, Braille or other formats utilized by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Device** – A technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

**Barrier** – Anything which prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. These barriers may be physical, architectural, information or communication related, attitudinal or due to a policy or practice.

**Communication Supports** – May include, but are not limited to: captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

**Communications** – The interaction between two (2) or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.

**Disability** – Includes any one of the following:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

As defined in Section 2 of the AODA.

**Information** – Data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital, or images, that convey meaning.

**Medical Aid** – An assistive device which may include, but is not limited to, respirators and portable oxygen supplies.

**Mobility Aid** – A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.

**Mobility Assistive Aid** – A cane, walker, or similar aid.

**Service Animal** – Any animal specially trained to provide support or perform tasks for a person with a disability to benefit the individual's daily life.

**Support Person** – Another person, identified by the service provider, who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services, or facilities.

## 4.0 Our Commitment

Council of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio supports the vision of a more inclusive municipality which endorses independence and opportunity for all people through the elimination of barriers to access, and is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all persons with disabilities.

## **5.0 Council's Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. According to Statistics Canada, 1.85 million people in Ontario have disabilities which represent 15.5% of Ontario's population. Disability tends to increase with age. In two decades it is estimated that 20% of the population will have disabilities. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on the future prosperity of Ontario.

The AODA requires municipalities to develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the regulation.

Municipal governments play a crucial role in the planning and development of our communities: in their streets, parks, public transit, libraries, social housing, ambulance services, public buildings and elections. Responsibilities, which include enforcing the barrier-free access requirements of the Ontario Building Code and implementing key accessibility considerations under the ODA and AODA, are crucial to realizing a vision of local communities that improve accessibility and mobility for their residents.

The AODA builds on relationships and practices which currently exist among councillors, planners, builders and community groups to make municipalities more accessible to people with disabilities.

The legislative requirements provides standards that all organizations in the private and public sector, including the Township of Adjala - Tosorontio, must follow to ensure that existing barriers for people with disabilities are removed over time and that no new barriers are created.

Council appointed an Accessibility Advisory Committee to update our Accessibility Plan, report on accomplishments and act in an advisory capacity as required.

## **6.0 Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The AODA states that municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 form an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The Township has had an Accessibility Advisory Committee since 2011. In 2015 the County of Simcoe established a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC), which the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio joined in 2019. The participating municipalities are:

- County of Simcoe
- Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
- Township of Oro-Medonte
- Township of Springwater
- Township of Tay

Section 29.3 of the AODA states that “A majority of the members of the committee shall be persons with disabilities.” The JAAC membership consists of the following:

Five (5) publicly appointed members, with one (1) from each municipality.  
One (1) appointed member of Council, and  
One (1) staff support.

The Committee will also consult with members of the community with disabilities as needed so as to provide a barrier-free Township.

Section 29(4) of the AODA sets out the mandate of the JAAC as follows:

- Advise the Council of their respective municipalities the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Council may seek its advice under their duties as outlined in the Act.
- Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act that the Committee selects.
- Perform all other functions that are specified within the regulations of the AODA.

## **7.0 Objectives of the Accessibility Plan**

The objectives of the Accessibility Plan are to:

- 1) Review recent initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- 2) Describe the process that the Township will use to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in the future.
- 3) List the facilities, policies, procedures, practices, and services that the Township will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
- 4) Identify the measures that the Township will take in the coming year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- 5) Identify the means in which the Township will make the accessibility plan available to the public.

The outcome of these initiatives should include (but not be limited to) the following key goals:

Equal access is ensured for all citizens which improves quality of life.  
Barriers within our municipality are identified and barrier-free design principles are incorporated into the planning and development process.

Municipal and local workforces to include and accommodate more people with disabilities, where appropriate.

Municipal planning will continue to consider persons with disabilities and the aging demographics.

These goals will enable the municipality to identify, modify, and implement recommendations that restrict current and future barriers to access in an ongoing manner.

It should be recognized that the identification and removal of all barriers cannot be undertaken all at once, but should typically be incorporated within the planning stages of any new construction or renovation process being proposed within the Municipality subject to budget constraints.

## **8.0 Barriers**

A “barrier” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including an attitudinal barrier, communication/information barrier, environmental barrier, organizational/systemic barrier or technological barrier which are defined as:

### **Attitudinal**

An attitudinal barrier is prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that all visually impaired persons can read Braille.

### **Communication or Information**

A communication barrier includes obstacles with processing, transmitting, or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read, or documents that are not available in alternative formats.

### **Environmental Barrier**

An environmental barrier includes features, buildings, or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body mobility and strength.

### **Systemic Barrier**

A systemic barrier is a barrier within an organization’s policies, practices, and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, a practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.

### **Technological Barrier**

A technological barrier occurs when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive device and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.

## **9.0 Standards under the AODA**

The AODA makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to create comprehensive accessibility standards in all areas of daily life and calls on all, including the business community, public sector, not-for-profit sector, and people with disabilities or their representatives to develop implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards through this Act; various working committees were established with the mandates of developing standards in specific areas that include:

- Accessible Customer Service
- Accessible Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Employment Accessibility
- Built Environment

## **10.0 Accessible Customer Service Standard**

The Township's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service O. Reg 429/07 requires that the Municipality provide notice of temporary or emergency disruptions of services to persons with disabilities.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard states that the municipality shall have procedures for preventive and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide notice for disruptions of service to accessible features in the case of emergency failure, vandalism or maintenance, and to minimize these interruptions through monthly inspections and preventive maintenance. The procedure is outlined as follows:

A monthly inspection and documentation of the state of all accessible features will be undertaken. This would include accessible washrooms, automatic doors, accessible playground equipment, parking areas and trails. If during the inspection defects are detected they will be documented and preventive maintenance will be undertaken immediately to maintain the reliability of the feature and the continuity of service. In an attempt to reduce service disruptions spare maintenance parts for essential accessible equipment such as automatic doors have been stocked.

In the event of an unexpected failure of accessible infrastructure such as trail systems, accessible ramps or parking areas due to natural events or otherwise, the feature upon



notification of failure will be immediately closed and marked with a Notice of Service Disruption placard which will include, what the disruption is, the period in which the disruption will be in effect and any alternative temporary solutions until the repairs can be undertaken. In the case of a large scale event that is not localized it may be necessary to prioritize repairs to other infrastructure items such as roads, water and wastewater systems to maintain essential services.

Whether a disruption is scheduled or unplanned the posted Notice of Service Disruption placard will state service alternatives whenever possible until repairs have been completed with every effort being made to restore accessible services as soon as possible.

## **11.0 Integrated Accessibility Standards**

On July 1, 2011 the Integrated Accessibility Standards became law; the purpose of the integration was to align three (3) of the four (4) remaining standards that encompass transportation, information and communication, and employment.

### **Accessible Transportation**

The transportation standard was developed to provide the public with accessible transportation including taxis and buses.

The Transportation Standard, at this time, does not currently apply to the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio as the municipality does not have a public transportation system nor are taxi services licensed. The Committee will continue to follow this Standard in the event that in future a public transit system comes to the Township or should the Township being to license taxis, so that these services would be accessible to all residents.

### **Information and Communication**

The Information and Communication Standard was designed to achieve equitable access to communication and information, to cover the broadest range of how people send and receive information and facilitate communication.

This standard requires the municipality to provide information in an accessible format upon request taking into consideration the needs of the individual. The Township is also required to ensure that all new materials are produced in an accessible format.

This standard requires that emergency procedures, plans or public safety information, if prepared, are also available in an accessible format as soon as possible upon request.

The Township is also required to make its website and content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The Township's

Information Technology Coordinator in partnership with the County of Simcoe manage our website compliance.

The Information and Communication Standard has many implications for the Township. The municipality is required to develop policies, procedures and a statement of commitment towards providing accessible information and communications. The policies outline:

- How the Township will address requests for information in alternate formats.
- How the Township will address requests for communication supports and services.
- How the Township's procurement policies address accessibility.
- The criteria used to determine what information and communications will be made available in plain language.

Other features of this standard include training, emergency and public safety information, including evacuation procedures and incidents that threaten life, property, operations or the environment and related procedures, technical requirements including websites, and priority areas including health, education, libraries, legal, financial, elections and voting.

## **Employment Standard**

The goal of the Employment Standard is to help employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Features of this standard include the requirement for accessible employment policies and training, recruitment, assessment, selection and hiring requirements, retention requirements, and indicators of progress, which are all currently practiced within the policy guidelines.

The employment standard focuses on policies, procedures and training requirements to identify and remove barriers in the workplace.

This standard requires employees to have processes in place to determine an employee's accommodation needs, and also addresses all elements of the recruitment process, from selection through to retention.

In addition to the recruitment process, current employees who develop a disability may review an accommodation plan with Human Resources, along with providing information as required for a workplace emergency response plan.

The Township's Chief Administrative Officer ensures all policies and procedures are complaint with the AODA requirements.

## 12.0 Built Environment Standard

The Built Environment Standard, often referred to as the Design of Public Spaces standard focuses on removing barriers in public spaces and buildings that are newly constructed or developed. Technical requirements have been developed to have impacts on public spaces which include some of the following characteristics:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use seating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Service counters
- Maintenance

The Township consults with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee prior to the design and construction of new or redeveloped public spaces.

The Standard includes technical requirements such as surface and widths of public trails, slope of ramps, number of accessible parking spaces per lot, signage and number of accessible service booths. Exceptions were also noted in several categories including facilities of heritage, cultural, and natural significance.

There were changes made to the Ontario Building Code to accommodate barrier-free designs in buildings of new construction or with major renovations. The Township will ensure that municipal buildings having significant renovations or any new builds will meet these standards. Similarly, accommodation of barrier-free designs will be implemented on new construction or major renovations of recreational outdoor spaces; such as playgrounds. Additionally, plans shall be reviewed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Township understands the importance of an accessible built environment. Public spaces receive regular inspections and preventative maintenance to ensure that accessible elements are in proper working order. If an accessible element becomes damaged and is unusable a service disruption notice will be placed on the municipal website notifications will be posted on the site as appropriate. Emergency maintenance will take place to ensure that the accessible element is restored to its proper working order as soon as possible.

## **13.0 Annual Status Reports**

Staff will prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the plan along with progress and accomplishments and post this status report on the Township's website after being reviewed by the JAAC.

## **14.0 Feedback and Comments**

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general.

Obtaining feedback is an integral part of the evaluation process. The Township will continue to review and expand strategies to engage key stakeholders in providing accessibility related feedback, including persons with disabilities.

Please contact the Township to express your accessibility related comments through the contact information outlined in the Plan.

## **15.0 Communication of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

Copies of this plan will be made available upon request from the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio municipal office and on the Township website. Alternate format requests should be made to:

Township of Adjala-Tosorontio  
Kathryn Pearl, Clerk  
7855 Sideroad 30  
Alliston ON L9R 1V1

Telephone: 705-434-5055, ext. 263  
Email: [kpearl@adjitos.ca](mailto:kpearl@adjitos.ca)  
Website: [www.adjitos.ca](http://www.adjitos.ca)