



TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

MULTI-YEAR MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2021-2025*

Extension Year of 2026

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Acknowledgements

The Township of Wilmot would like to thank the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee for its guidance and advice throughout our membership, and in the development of the Township's 2021-2025 Municipal Accessibility Plan.

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Background and Purpose

The Township of Wilmot is pleased to present its multi-year municipal accessibility plan (2021-2025) in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 191/11 (O.Reg 191/11), the Integrated Accessibility Standards. The purpose of the Plan is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities, to make the public aware of the Township's ongoing initiatives regarding accessibility matters, to establish goals and objectives, and to comply with provincial accessibility legislation.

The Township of Wilmot is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free Township for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit and invest in Wilmot.

UPDATE: The Wilmot Township Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was reviewed by the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Township Council in 2025. There was consensus that the existing Plan be extended for one additional year through 2026, with the direction that Township staff prepare a new multi-year accessibility plan in 2026, for implementation in 2027. Minor updates were made to the Plan in 2025, inclusive of the addition of alternate text, and the removal of tables from the Plan.

Provincial Legislation

In 2001, the province passed the Ontarians with Disability Act (ODA) that required, among other things, that municipalities of a certain population form an accessibility advisory committee and prepare an accessibility plan. The AODA was passed in 2005. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. The ODA has since been repealed and incorporated in to the AODA and O.Reg, 191/11. The AODA applies to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The purpose of the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards: (Information and Communication Standards, Employment Standards, Transportation Standards, Design of Public Spaces Standards, and Customer Service Standards) is to create a province where everyone who lives or visits can participate fully. Under the Act, all municipalities are required to prepare accessibility plans for the public. The Township of Wilmot's Plan may be found on our website: www.wilmot.ca. The purpose of this plan is to make the public aware of The Township of Wilmot's initiatives in regard to accessibility and improving opportunities for persons with disabilities. The plan establishes goals and objectives for the next five (5) years.

Population and Overview of the Township of Wilmot

Formed in 1850, The Township of Wilmot is located in the Region of Waterloo and is a lower tier rural/urban mix municipality with a history deeply rooted in its rural past. It includes the Settlement Areas of New Hamburg, Baden, New Dundee, St. Agatha, Mannheim, Lisbon, Petersburg, Foxboro Green, Philipsburg, Haysville, Wilmot Centre, Shingletown, Sunfish Lake and Luxemburg. Wilmot has grown to a population of approximately 21,800 residents while retaining its strong sense of community.

Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) was created in compliance with the ODA and is a committee that provides advice to local municipal councils about the identification, prevention and removal of municipal barriers to full citizenship for persons with disabilities. GRAAC advises the Councils of the Region of Waterloo, the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, and the Townships of North Dumfries, the Townships of Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. The Township of Wilmot formally joined GRAAC in 2015. The Committee currently consists of 15 voting members.

The Committee has reviewed the multi-year Wilmot Accessibility Plan and provided their input into its development prior to the presentation to Council for final adoption.

Compliance with AODA: Customer Service Standard

The Township of Wilmot Customer Service Policy has been practiced since 2010. The Township:

- Established policies, practices and procedures on how the Township provides goods and services to people with disabilities;
- Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access the Township's goods and services and about any other measures the organization offers to enable access to goods and services;

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- Used reasonable efforts to ensure that the policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity;
- Established a process for people to provide feedback on how the Township provides goods or services to people with disabilities and how the Township will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. The information about the feedback process is made readily available to the public;
- Communicates with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability;
- Trains staff, volunteers, and informs any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on our behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard,
- Trains staff, volunteers, and informs any other people who are involved in developing our policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard;
- Allows people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises the Township owns or operates that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, other measures are used to provide services to the person with a disability;
- Permits people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties;
- Where admission fees are charged, provides notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability; and
- Provides notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use the Township's good or services are temporarily disrupted.

Communication of the Wilmot Plan

Once the Accessibility Plan is approved by Wilmot Township Council, it will be made available on the Township's website. www.wilmot.ca Printed copies of the Plan will be prepared by Information and Legislative Services, and in alternative formats, upon request. As policies, procedures and technical guidelines develop and/or are updated, they too will be placed on the website.

Main Contacts

The main contact for inquiries regarding the municipality's Accessibility Plan, or issues related to access for persons with disabilities is:

Municipal Clerk or Deputy Clerk

60 Snyder's Road West Baden, Ontario, N3A 1A1

519-634-8444 Ext 230

519-634-5037 - TTY

Conclusion

Accessibility legislation has municipalities across the province working to improve access for persons with disabilities. In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its impact on municipalities, the Township of Wilmot is committed to identifying, addressing and removing barriers, ensuring full access to our community. Wilmot Township will continue to develop plans and support initiatives, taking a leadership role in achieving and setting an example for the private sector in terms of access and integration, in accordance with provincial legislation.

On-going Goals and Actions

General Requirements

Training

Train employees, volunteers and all persons who participate in development of policies and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Township on Integrated Accessibility Standards, as well as Ontario Human Rights Commission as it relates to people with disabilities.

Information and Communications

Accessible feedback processes

Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request (refer to Alternative Format policy)

Monitor, evaluate and take action on any customer feedback which may be received in relation to the website, or at any municipal facility, through email or telephone.

Accessible formats and communication supports

Provide or make arrangements for accessible formats and communication supports when a person with a disability requests such as;

Provide in a timely manner and at no additional cost than the regular price charged to everyone for the same information;

Consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Employment

Recruitment

Notify the public and employees about availability of accommodations for job applicants who have disabilities;

Inform applicants that accommodations for people with disabilities are available on request for interviews and other selection processes; and

When making offers of employment, notify the successful applicant of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Employment accommodation

Ensure the availability of supports to employees with disabilities;

Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports; and

Develop and implement a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

Employees returning to work

Put process into place for employees returning to work requiring disability-related accommodations.

Performance management, career development and redeployment

Take into account accessibility needs of employees with disabilities in performance management and career development processes; and

Take into account accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploying employees with disabilities.

Transportation

GRT Transit

Wilmot does not directly provide transportation service, however the Region of Waterloo began providing transit service to the Township in 2016. Township staff continues to work with the Region through communicating any feedback of this service, including any accessibility concerns, to ensure transit needs of Wilmot residents are met.

Built Environment

Trails Master Plan

AODA criteria to be considered include: operational experience, width, longitudinal/running slope, cross slope, total slope surface, changes in level and signage. Guidelines and technical requirements in the Built Environment Standards will be referred to during trail design and construction.

1. Information and Communication Barriers

a) Accommodations for Persons Who Are Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing in Municipal Services

Goals:

- to proactively investigate and establish formal practices to accommodate persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing in municipal services

Actions:

- Clerk's office will engage ASL interpreters through the Waterloo Branch of the Canadian Hearing Society on an as needed basis for public meetings of Township-wide interest. (No requests have been made to-date for this service.)
- Assisted Hearing Devices have been included with the Council Chambers sound system purchase and are available on demand for meetings in the Council Chambers.
- TTY: The TTY component of the telephone system with computer-based technology was installed in June of 2014. The TTY number is 519-634-5037

b) Corporate Communications – Alternate Formats

Goals:

- To provide municipal information in 'alternate formats' to residents with disabilities.

Actions:

- The Township developed a policy in 2010 for responding to requests for information in alternate formats. The policy is attached as Schedule "A". Upon request, information in alternative formats will be provided as per the Township policy.
- The Township website reiterates the ability to request information and documents in alternate formats throughout the website.

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2. Technological Barriers

Goals:

- To improve the Township's website accessibility.

Actions:

- The Township website includes a 'Feedback' button for comments about the website and Accessibility Feedback relative to the website, municipal facilities, municipal services and by-law enforcement that impedes mobility.
- As part of a website refresh, compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA. All documents attached to the website have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the same guidelines.

3. Policy/Practice Barriers

Recreation: Wilmot Township offers a Personal Attendant for Leisure (PAL) Card program. The program is offered at Wilmot Recreation Complex and is administered by aquatics staff. The program allows free admission to PAL card holders when accompanying a person in need of assistance. In 2012, the program was expanded to include public skating at the new recreation complex as well. This program will be expanded to include other recreation programs and activities where possible i.e. public skating. The availability of a PAL Card is on the municipal website and will be advertised in the municipal information pages of the Wilmot Recreation Guide.

Facility Design: The Township of Wilmot provides accessible facilities for all residents to enjoy. The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted on facility design features prior to new construction or renovations to existing facilities as per legislated requirements.

Snow Clearance: Property owners/occupants in Settlement Areas of the Township are required under By-law No. 84-72 to clear the sidewalk that is adjacent to their property of snow and ice. Enforcement staff respond to public commentary and complaints as received. Municipally owned properties are maintained by Township staff

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Accessible Parking: Wilmot Township established By-law No. 2003-56 regarding accessible off-street parking. A minimum provincial fine of \$300 has been approved by the Attorney General for any violators found parking, setting or standing in a space marked for disabled parking.

Building Design: Township of Wilmot plans for new municipal buildings or building additions are reviewed by the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee as per legislated requirements.

Emergency Evacuation:

The Red Cross audited emergency evacuation centres for accessibility in 2006. The facilities that were audited were: Waterloo Oxford & District Secondary School, St. Agatha Community Centre, New Dundee Public School, New Hamburg Community Centre and Arena. The Wilmot Recreation Complex was also audited recently.

Election Accessibility:

Goals

- Define areas noted during previous elections where accessibility can be improved throughout entire election process

Actions

- Ensure all municipally owned voting locations are barrier free. Ensure all non-municipally owned voting locations are accessible or have accommodations in place to achieve independent voting. All locations are visited by the Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk to complete inspections of the facility. Location specific accommodations are made and elections workers for those locations are appropriately trained.
- Schedule multiple advance voting days to aid in and provide voting opportunities with lower attendance.
- Advance voting days provide for a Ballot Marking device to allow for an independent ballot marking experience for everyone.

- The Township of Wilmot provides an honorarium to Kiwanis Transit to allow for free transportation to voting locations on Voting Day and on Advance Voting Days.
- Provide higher quality magnifying lenses at each voting location to assist those with low vision. Devices used in election prior to 2018 used lower quality magnifying sheets that were largely ineffective.
- In previous elections, one location, the Wilmot Recreation Complex, was noted as having parking issues that required some voters to walk too great of a distance. The rooms used for the voting location was on the second floor, accessible by elevators. To alleviate this issue, rooms on the main floor were utilized.
- All election workers are provided the same Accessible Customer Service Training as full and part time municipal staff. Election worker materials contain advice to provide barrier free voting experiences. Election workers were encouraged to approach voters who may need assistance if they returned more than one spoiled ballot or otherwise seemed to be struggling with the voting process or with the physical space.
- Provide seating to voters while waiting in line at voting location.
- Ongoing feedback is received during the election process for candidates, election staff and voters. The Township of Wilmot continues to implement best practices learned in past elections and from other municipalities. As new technologies are made available, barrier free elections are made more efficient and cost effective.
- Alternate voting methods continue to be explored to evaluate the cost/benefits. More municipalities in Ontario are transitioning to online and telephone voting to provide a barrier free election. Council will be asked to consider alternate voting methods in early 2021.
- In 2018, staff met with voters from Alderview Services to provide information on municipal elections and the voting process. This was a fun and interactive session that allowed a group of residents who may otherwise feel overwhelmed by the election process to feel welcomed. This initiative will continue and opportunities for expansion will be explored. Support staff from Alderview suggested that photos of the candidates at the voting location would be helpful to assist Alderview residents in associating the name with the right candidate. This initiative will be looked at to ensure compliance with the Municipal Elections Act and with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- In 2018, staff attended a seniors' residence, the Imperial, to ensure the residents were on the voters list. These residents expressed

concern that they may not be recorded on the Voters' List properly given the newness of the property. This experience was positive for staff and for the residents. Going to their location made amending the voters list a more accessible process. This initiative will continue and will be expanded.

- Ensuring that the dignity and independence of voters, candidates, and election workers with disabilities are met and that all voters with disabilities are able to participate in the election process is essential. Significant improvements were made with respect to an accessible election in Wilmot. The principles, practices and procedures that respect the dignity, independence of electors that were identified have been implemented as ongoing procedures. The Township of Wilmot and associated staff continue to be vigilant in our efforts to review, address and improve the process for future municipal elections.
- Policies relevant to access were included as part of orientation training for election staff.

4. Physical/Architectural Barriers

Municipal Facilities:

In 2007 the Township of Wilmot constructed Phase I of the Wilmot Recreation Complex, a new state of the art multi purpose facility. The facility was constructed with barrier free provisions for accessibility. The facility design includes barrier free entrance with automated sliding doors at the south entrance, elevator access to the upper level, accessibility ramp to the arena seating areas, access to the seating areas by power operated doors, designated areas for those in wheelchairs to view activities on the arena floors. The facility also includes barrier free washroom facilities on the upper and lower levels which include accessible counters and fixtures, and angled/sloped mirrors. Directional signage includes Braille for the visually impaired. Parking for the current facility includes 8 accessible parking spots.

Phase II of the Wilmot Recreation Complex was constructed in 2010/11, has also been designed to be barrier free. Phase II of the Wilmot Recreation Complex exceeds the number of barrier free provisions required by law. Phase II was completed in 2013 and includes an additional/2nd elevator, power operated doors at each of the access points to Phase I of the facility, extra barrier free shower stalls, extra barrier free change stalls, additional barrier free washrooms/change

rooms immediately off the pool deck including barrier free counters and fixtures, extra barrier free parking stalls, wider walking lanes on the walking track, handrails on the walking track, extra barrier free seating areas in the pool for both levels, a deeper covered canopy at the North entrance, power operated doors at the additional south entrance and the north entrance of the facility. In the Aquatic Centre both pool tanks are accessible. The competitive pool tank has an access ramp with handrails leading down into the tank. The leisure pool has a zero depth entry with handrails as well.

Snow Clearance / Grass & Weeds Upkeep Barriers:

Goals:

- Investigate individuals and firms who provide assistance to people with disabilities with respect to snow clearing and grass cutting services.

Actions:

- Volunity is the youth volunteering initiative operated by Wilmot's Youth Action Council that addresses the gap between people or organizations in need of volunteers and people wanting to volunteer within Wilmot. This arrangement will help to ensure that people that need assistance will be able to stay in their homes and thereby enhance the quality of life. Please visit 'Volunity' on the Township's website at www.wilmot.ca.
- Contact information for Snow Angels and Community Care Concepts is posted on the Township website for people who need help clearing snow and ice from their sidewalks.

5. Attitudinal Barriers

Actions:

- Customer Service Standards:

The first standards under the AODA are the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07. Designated public sector organizations were required to comply with the standard by January 1, 2010. This standard is the law and obligated organizations must comply with the standards and report on compliance by a deadline of March 31, 2010.

In 2009, Wilmot Township established its Customer Service Standards Policy which was adopted by Council on April 27, 2009. All requirements of the new Customer Service standards have been complied with by the Township and the policy is available on the township's website or upon request by any person.

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A review and update to the Customer Service Standards Policy is recommended as part of this Plan.

6. Multi-year Action Plan 2021-2025

Planned Accessibility Action Items

Comprehensive Accessibility Policy Review

The Township will undertake a review and update of the following policies and the Accessibility Policy Program as whole:

1. Policies for the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities (O. Reg 191/11 section 80.46)
2. Policies for the use of service animals and support persons (O. Reg 191/11 section 80.47)
3. Policies for the notice of temporary disruptions (O. Reg 191/11 section 80.48)
4. Feedback Process policies (O. Reg 191/11 section 80.50)
5. Format of documents policies (O. Reg 191/11 section 80.51)

Information and Communications

- Continue to monitor comments received regarding accessibility for the website. Update website as necessary to maintain compliance with current legislation and WAG guidelines
- Prepare and train staff on Style Guides including AODA compliant documents and plain language writing.
- Review website to include the availability of accessible formats upon request.
- Provide staff with updated policies as they are approved.
- Obtain feedback from GRAAC and other organizations on community engagement procedures to ensure Ontarians with disabilities within Wilmot are included in community consultations processes and feel listened to.

Employment

- Ongoing training of Council and staff for new and updated policies. Training new staff on all AODA related policies and procedures.
- Review policies and procedures related to accessibility and accommodation during the hiring process, new staff orientation, during employment and, when applicable, when returning to work.

Transportation

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- Continue to support Kiwanis Transit in the provision of accessible transit.
- Continue to support Grant River Transit to promote and enhance transit services in Wilmot Township.

Built Environment

- AODA criteria to be considered include: operational experience, width, longitudinal/running slope, cross slope, total slope surface, changes in level and signage. Guidelines and technical requirements in the Built Environment Standards will be referred to during trail design and construction.

APPENDIX "A"

ALTERNATE FORMATS POLICY

The Township of Wilmot will respond to requests for documents in alternate format on a case-by-case basis.

The fee to obtain a document in alternate format shall be the same as the fee the resident would pay for the unaltered document.

The Township will use a cost effective approach in the generation of documents in alternate format. The Township will produce information in Braille through an external organization; in a digital format and in large print.

All requests for information in alternate formats or plain text received by the Township shall be treated in a confidential manner.

APPENDIX “B”

Municipal Parks and Facilities

Parks

Baden

Sir Adam Beck Park, 215 Snyder's Road East, Baden

Livingston Square, Administrative Complex, 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden

Linear Park, Schneller Drive, Located on Schneller Drive, Baden

Shantz & Livingston Blvd., Corner of Shantz Drive and Livingston Blvd., Baden

Baden Parkette, On Foundry Street at the Baden Creek, Baden

Haysville

Haysville Park, 3433 Huron Road, Haysville

Mannheim

Anna Tuerr Park, Milne Drive, Mannheim

Mannheim Community Park, 1476 Mannheim Road, Mannheim

New Dundee

New Dundee Community Park, Main & Bridge Streets, New Dundee

Doug Fischer Ball Diamond, 1028 Queen Street, New Dundee

New Dundee Optimist Parkette, Main and Alderside Drive, New Dundee

New Hamburg

Wilmot Township Arboretum, Waterloo Street, New Hamburg

Constitution Park, Hincks Street, New Hamburg

Greenwood Park, Greenwood Drive, New Hamburg

Heritage Park, 75 Hunter Street, New Hamburg

Kirkpatrick Park, Wilmot Street, New Hamburg

Norm S. Hill Park, 251 Jacob Street, New Hamburg

Optimist Youth Park, Bier Crescent, New Hamburg

William Scott Park, 75 Hunter Street, New Hamburg

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Riverside Park, Riverside Drive, New Hamburg

Petersburg

Petersburg Park, 1338 Notre Dame Drive, Petersburg

St. Agatha

Sararas Park, St. Ann Avenue, St. Agatha

St. Agatha Community / Lions Park, 1793 Erb's Road, St. Agatha

Wilmot Centre

Oasis in the Centre, Bleams Road and Wilmot Centre Road

Facilities

Baden

Township of Wilmot Administration Complex, 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden

Wilmot Recreation Complex, 1291 Nafziger Road, Baden

Wilmot Seniors Woodworking & Craft Shop, 35 Beck Street, Baden

Waterloo Regional Public Library, Baden Branch, 115 Snyder's Rd. East, Baden

Station 1 Baden, 99 Foundry St, Baden ON N3A 2P9

Township of Wilmot Public Works Operations – Service Centre, 2719 Sandhills Road, Baden

Haysville

Haysville Community Centre, 3433 Huron Road, Haysville

Mannheim

Mannheim Community Centre, 1476 Mannheim Road, Mannheim

New Dundee

New Dundee Community Centre, 1028 Queen Street, New Dundee

Station 2 New Dundee, 55 Front St, New Dundee ON N0B 2E0

New Hamburg

New Hamburg Municipal Building, 121 Huron Street, New Hamburg, Ontario

New Hamburg Memorial Complex, 251 Jacob Street, New Hamburg

Waterloo Regional Public Library, New Hamburg Branch, 145 Huron Street, New Hamburg

Station 3 New Hamburg, 121 Huron St., New Hamburg ON N3A 1K1

St. Agatha

St. Agatha Community Centre, 1793 Erb's Road, St. Agatha

Policy Number: CA - 58

Policy Name: **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy**

Date Adopted by Council: April 27/09

APPENDIX "C"



TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Customer Service Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers.

In general, providers must deliver service in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Providers must also integrate services and equal opportunity.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in regulation 429/07 to establish a policy for the Township of Wilmot for governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

3. STATEMENT

The Township of Wilmot provides goods, and services to all residents. Every effort will be made to ensure the following:

- The goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be 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 or services.

- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.
- That the Township of Wilmot employees when communicating with a person with a disability shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

4. APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township of Wilmot, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

5. DEFINITIONS

"Accessibility Coordinator" shall mean the person appointed by Council as Accessibility Coordinator for the Township of Wilmot.

"Assistive devices" shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

"Disabilities" shall mean the same as definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

"Employees" shall mean every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township of Wilmot.

"Persons with Disabilities" shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

"Service Animals" shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

"Support persons" shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, friend to who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

6. EXCLUSIONS

This Accessibility Customer Service Standards Policy shall not apply during any period where Council has declared a "State of Emergency" as defined under the **Emergency Management Act**.

7. DOCUMENTATION

The Township of Wilmot shall upon request, give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person.

8. PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

To implement this policy, Senior Management shall:

- establish practices and procedures;
- evaluate practices and procedures,
- revise practices and procedures as required.

9. REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

The Accessibility Coordinator shall be responsible for the review process and any subsequent amendments to this policy document.

10.0 ADOPTION

Adopted by Council this 27th day of April 2009 by Resolution No. 2009-

Mayor

Clerk

BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Accessible Customer Service follows four basic principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity

What can I do to help people with disabilities access our services?

- Ask how you can help
- Offer a variety of methods of communication
- Understand the nature and scope of the service you offer

FEEDBACK

Feedback from our customers gives the Township of Wilmot opportunities to learn and improve. The Township recognizes the right of our customers to make a complaint, compliment or make suggestions on ways to improve our services.

To assist the Township of Wilmot in ensuring that the delivery of goods and service to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide their feedback as follows:

In writing, in person, e-mail, or telephone, addressed to:

Accessibility Coordinator
Township of Wilmot
60 Snyder's Rd W
Baden ON N3A 1A1
Phone: 519-634-8444
TTY: 519-634-5037
Fax: 519-634-5522
E-mail: clerks@wilmot.ca

The Accessibility Coordinator will respond either in writing, in person, e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of feedback. The Co-ordinator will forward any complaints to the relevant department to respond.

SERVICE ANIMALS, SUPPORT PERSON(S)

What about service animals and support persons accompanying a person with a disability?

Service animals, such as guide dogs, offer independence and security to many people with various disabilities. Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas, such as food preparation areas; however, service animals are permitted in most public situations.

Support people assist people with disabilities in a variety of ways, by assisting with communication such as an intervener sign language interpreter, or as a Personal Support Worker providing physical assistance. A support person may also be a friend or relative that will assist and support the customer.

- Every employee shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices to access goods and/or services.
- Every employee shall allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by law. Where an animal is excluded by law from the premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the persons with disabilities. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with disability.
- When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the person with the disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse access to goods and services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.
- Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by their support person while accessing goods and/or services.

ADMISSION FEES – ADVANCE NOTICE

In the event that admission fees are charged, advance notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged to a support person shall be posted in a conspicuous place.

SERVICE DISRUPTION – NOTICE

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an entrance way that is under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruptive in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

People with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging a ride. By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip.

Notice will be provided either on the website, over the phone, in writing and posted in a conspicuous place on site, where appropriate.

UNEXPECTED DISRUPTION IN SERVICE – NOTICE

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, notice may be provided in a variety of ways and will be done as quickly as possible.

In the event of a service disruption, alternative methods of service may be considered and those impacted by service interruption shall be informed of any alternative methods.

TRAINING

- Every person who participates in developing the policy, practices and procedures under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Every person who deals with the public on behalf of the Township of Wilmot, including 3rd parties i.e. employees, agents, volunteers, management.
- Current employees, agents, volunteers, management, etc. shall receive training by January 1, 2010.
- New employees, agents, volunteers, management, etc. shall receive training as soon as "practicable", after being assigned.
- Ongoing training on changes to policies, procedures, and new equipments shall be provided.

The method and amount of training shall be geared to the trainee's role in terms of accessibility.

TRAINING RECORDS

Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided, number of individuals to whom the training was provided.

TERMINOLOGY

Talk about Disabilities – Chose the Right Word

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction.

Here are some general tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

- Use *disability* or *disabled*, not *handicap* or *handicapped*.
- Never use terms such as *retarded*, *dumb*, *psycho*, *moron* or *crippled*. These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say *person with a disability*, rather than *disabled person*.
- If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.

The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities prefer these terms.

- Instead of "Afflicted by cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc.", please use "person who has cerebral palsy", "person who has multiple sclerosis", "person who has arthritis, etc", or "person with a disability"
- Instead of "aged", please use "seniors";
- Instead of "autistic", please use "a person with autism" or "a person who has autism"
- Instead of "birth defect, congenital defect or deformity", please use "a person who has a congenital disability, or a person with a disability since birth";
- Instead of "blind or visually impaired", please use "a person who is blind", "a person with a vision disability", "a person with vision loss", or "a person with a visual impairment";
- Instead of "brain damaged", please use "a person with a brain injury" or a "person with a head injury";
- Instead of "confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound", please use "a person who uses a wheelchair";
- Instead of "crazy, insane, lunatic, pyscho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind or schizophrenic", please use "a person with a mental health disability", "a person who has depression", "a person with schizophrenia";
- Instead of "cripple, crippled, and lame", please use "a person with a disability", "a person with a mobility impairment", "A person who uses a walker", "a person who uses a mobility aid", or "a person with arthritis";

- Instead of “deaf or hearing impaired”, please use “a person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss who communicate using sign language)”, “a person who is deafened (dead later in life)”, “a person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech)”, “a person with a hearing loss”. When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use “the Deaf”;
- Instead of “deaf and dumb or deaf mute”, please use “a person who is deaf without speech”;
- Instead of “differently abled” please use “a person with a disability”
- Instead of “disabled”, please use “a person with a disability”;
- Instead of “elderly”, please use “seniors”, or “older adults”;
- Instead of “epileptic”, please use a “person who has epilepsy”;
- Instead of “fits, spells or attacks”, please use “seizures”;
- Instead of “handicapped”, please use “person with a disability”, the term handicapped may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier in a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance;
- Instead of “hidden disability”, please use “non-visible disability”;
- Instead of “invalid”, please use “person with a disability”;
- Instead of “learning disability, learning disordered, or the dyslexics”, please use “a person with a learning disability”, or “a person with learning disabilities”;
- Instead of “mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble-minded or imbecile”, please use “a person with an intellectual disability”, or a “person with a developmental disability”;
- Instead of “midget or dwarf”, please use “a person of short-stature”, “a person who has a form of dwarfism”, “a little person”, or “a person diagnosed with Anchondroplasis, SED or their specific diagnosis”;
- Instead of “mongoloid or mongolism”, please use “person with Down Syndrome” one can use this terminology only when it is directly relevant;
- Instead of “normal”, please use “person who is not disabled”, “person who is able-bodied”, “Person who is able bodied. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory”;
- Instead of “patient”, please use “person with a disability”, the word my be used when referring to a relationship between the medical professional and a client”;
- Instead of “spastic”, please use “person who has muscle spasms”; and,
- Instead of “stutterer”, please use “a person with a speech impairment or impediment”

For additional information visit the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services website at <http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss>

PHYSICAL disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis. A physical disability may affect an individual's ability to:

- Perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or grip a door knob
- Move around independently
- Control the speed or coordination of movements
- Reach, pull or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. It may be difficulty to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to someone who is with them
- People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, don't touch, move or lean on them.
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.)
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter.
- If a counter is too high or wide, step around it to provide service.
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line.
- Be Patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.

HEARING loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of hearing may be unable to:

- Use a public telephone
- Understand speech in noisy environments
- Pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating.

Here are some tips on service customers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout. Speak clearly.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth.
- Deaf people may use a sign language interpreter to communicate – always direct your attention to the Deaf person – not the interpreter.
- Any personal (e.g. financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information.
- Don't touch service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.

DEAF-BLINDNESS is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind is significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities. Deaf-blindness interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility. People who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and any combination thereof. Many people who are deaf-blind use the services of an intervener who relay information and facilitate auditory and visual information and act as sighted guides.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Do not touch or address the service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency.
- Understand that communication can take some time – be patient.
- Direct your attention to your customer, not the intervener.

VISION disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Vision loss can result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces.
- Difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places.
- Inability to differentiate colours or distances.
- A narrow field of vision.
- The need for bright light, or contrast.
- Night blindness.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Vision disabilities can restrict your customer's abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have vision disabilities:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact.
- If the person uses a service animal – do not touch or approach the animal – it is working.
- Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary.
- Offer your arm to guide the person. Do not grab or pull.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it is an emergency.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Don't walk away without saying goodbye.

INTELLECTUAL disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Down's Syndrome, exposure to environmental toxins, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders. A person with an intellectual disorder may have difficulty with:

- Understanding spoken and written information
- Conceptual information
- Perception of sensory information
- Memory

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use clear, simple language.
- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information.
- Remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decisions.
- Be patient and verify your understanding.
- If you can't understand what is being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

SPEECH disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical disabilities include problems with:

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- If possible communicate in a quiet environment.
- Give the person your full attention. Don't interrupt or finish their sentences.
- Ask them to repeat as necessary, or to write their message.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Verify your understanding.
- Patience, respect and willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

LEARNING disabilities include a range of disorders that effect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities can result in:

- Difficulties in reading.
- Problem solving.
- Time management.
- Way finding.
- Processing information.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

- Learning disabilities are generally invisible and ability to function varies greatly – respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in filling forms and so on with courtesy.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH disabilities include a range of disorders however there are three main types of mental health disability:

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Behavioral

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; be perceived as pushy or abrupt; be unable to make a decision; start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

Best practices and procedures for Customer Service:

- Treat each person as an individual. Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations.
- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behaviour, focus on the service they need and how you can help.

SMELL disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odours and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odours, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

TOUCH disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations.

TASTE disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.

OTHER disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.

Sample Forms

1. Notice – Expected service disruption
2. Notice – Unexpected disruption in service
3. Notice – Training Record
4. Pamphlet – Understanding Accessible Customer Service
5. Pamphlet – Accessible Customer Service Policy



TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

NOTICE OF **SERVICE DISRUPTION**

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the_____. The disruption will be from_____until_____.

These disruptions include:

- _____ (repairs to doors)
- _____ (repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Township of Wilmot we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

Department Contact

519-634-8444

519-634-5037 – TTY



TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

NOTICE OF

DISRUPTION IN SERVICE

There is currently an unexpected service disruption. The estimated time of the service disruption will be from _____ until _____.

These disruptions include:

- _____ (repairs to doors)
- _____ (repairs to technology)

On behalf of the Township of Wilmot we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

Department Contact

519-634-8444

519-634-5037 - TTY

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY



**TOWNSHIP
OF WILMOT**

TRAINING RECORD

Date: _____

Location: _____

Type of Training: _____

Trainer: _____

Name	Signature

What if a person with a disability has a suggestion or comment on how we deliver services?

We welcome any comments on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities. Comments can be directed to:

Accessibility Coordinator: Dawn Mittelholtz

E-mail: dawn.mittelholtz@wilmot.ca

Telephone: 519-634-8444 Ext 228

TTY: 519-634-5037

In person, or in writing:

The Corporation of the Township of Wilmot

60 Snyder's Rd W

Baden ON N3A 1A1

The comments provided will be reviewed by staff, and where applicable by the **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**. An annual report on the nature and results of the comments and feedback will be made by the **Accessibility Coordinator to the AAC**.

The Corporation of the Township of Wilmot

Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Township of Wilmot provides goods or services to all residents, including those with disabilities. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- The goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or

support persons in the access of goods and services.

Understanding Accessible Customer Service



The Corporation of the Township of Wilmot

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility that are designed to help make Ontario more accessible.

One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Customer Service Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers.

In general, providers must deliver service in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Providers must also integrate services and equal opportunity.

What is Accessible Customer Service?

Accessible customer service can mean many things. Mostly, it is the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation.

For example, a person who is blind may need to have information read aloud to them; an individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down; and someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding a route they can use.

Accessible customer service is good customer service – courteous, helpful and prompt.

What can I do?

Always start with people first. In language, that means saying "person with a disability", rather than "a disabled person". In any interaction, it means addressing the person's service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

Take some time to understand what some of the various disabilities involve – but don't jump to conclusions! Each person, and each disability, is different, but it can be helpful to know a little about how to best communicate, interact, and assist people with disabilities.

Most importantly, relax! People with disabilities are generally aware they may need some accommodations and will work with you. Just remember to ask how you can help.

What happens if we can't serve a person with a disability?

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an elevator under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

People with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging a ride. By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip. Notice can be provided on the website, over the phone, and/or in writing.

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, provide notice in a variety of ways and as quickly as possible. Consider offering alternative methods of service while informing those that may be impacted personally.

Comments

We welcome comments on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

Comments can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator by telephone, e-mail, in person or in writing:

E-mail:
dawn.mittelholtz@wilmot.ca

Telephone: 519-634-8444

In person, or in writing:

The Township of Wilmot
60 Snyder's Rd W
Baden ON N3A 1A1

Comments and feedback will be made by the Accessibility Coordinator to the AAC.

If you are a person with a disability, or if you provide support for a person with a disability, please:

- Let us know how we can help. We are open to discussing your ideas on the service options available.
- Help our staff understand your needs.

Comments provided will be reviewed by staff, and where applicable by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). A timely response will be provided. An annual report on the nature and results of the



Accessible Customer Service Policy

Background

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One of the specific standards that has been developed, and made law, is the Accessible Customer Services Standard. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers.

In general, providers must deliver service in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement

The Township of Wilmot provides goods and services to all residents, including those with disabilities. Every effort will be made to ensure the following:

- The goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.

- People with disabilities may use assistive devices, guide animals and/or support persons in the access of goods and services.
- Communication with a person with a disability shall be done in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

