



## Staff Report

If this information is required in an alternate accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 905-623-3379 ext. 2131.

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**Report To:** General Government Committee      **Report Number:** CLD-003-20

**Date of Meeting:** February 18, 2020      **By-law Number:**

**Submitted By:** Anne Greentree, Municipal Clerk

**Reviewed By:** Andrew C. Allison, CAO      **Resolution#:** GG-097-20

**File Number:**

**Report Subject:** 2019 Accessibility Annual Status Update

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### Recommendation:

1. That Report CLD-003-20 be received; and
2. That Report CLD-003-20 be placed on the municipal website.

## Report Overview

This Report is the Municipality of Clarington's annual update on the measures taken during 2019 to improve accessibility in our community and to report on the progress made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

## 1. Background

### Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 The Municipality of Clarington is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities when they live, work, play, visit and invest in our community.
- 1.2 We promote an inclusive, caring and respectful community where programs, services and facilities are available to everyone. Our goal is to make Clarington a barrier-free community and each year we come closer to achieving that goal.

## 2. Accessibility Legislation in Ontario

### *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*

- 2.1 The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) has been created as part of the Act to provide rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers. In addition to the General Requirements, the IASR contains mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas:
  - Information and Communications
  - Employment
  - Transportation
  - Design of Public Spaces
  - Customer Service

- 2.2 The Design of Public Spaces Standard focuses on removing barriers in areas not covered by the Ontario Building Code such as playgrounds, on and off-street parking, recreational trails and service counters. It applies to new construction or re-construction of existing spaces. It does not require organizations to retrofit in order to be compliant.

### **Ontario Building Code (OBC)**

- 2.3 The OBC regulates the minimum building standards for the construction of all new buildings and buildings that undergo a significant renovation. The Code includes requirements for minimum accessibility within buildings.
- 2.4 The OBC was amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, most new construction and extensive renovations will be subject to updated accessibility requirements. Existing buildings, where no work is planned, are not affected by these new requirements.

## **3. Accessibility Annual Status Update**

### **Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee**

- 3.1 The Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) is a citizen committee that acts as an advisory body for Council. Its mandate is to advise on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.
- 3.2 Each member of the CAAC is a volunteer with the exception of the Council representative. The majority of CAAC membership is held by persons with disabilities. The CAAC is supported by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Clerk's Department.
- 3.3 The CAAC's term coincides with Council's term. Following the 2018 Municipal Elections, a new CAAC was formed and will work within its mandate until 2022. The 2018-2022 CAAC members bring a wide range of personal and professional experiences and perspectives related to the challenges faced by people with disabilities. They provide invaluable advice and support as we continue to work toward a barrier-free Clarington.
- 3.4 Under the AODA, the Municipality is required to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) when new developments and municipal projects are being planned. In 2019, the CAAC reviewed approximately 40 site plan applications and three municipal projects for barriers to accessibility. This is a role the Committee takes seriously. They take pride knowing they have helped contribute to a more accessible Clarington by advising applicants to exceed minimum accessibility standards. In 2019, the CAAC continued to advocate for accessible housing when reviewing residential site plans and accessible places of employment when reviewing commercial/industrial site plans.

3.5 In 2019, the CAAC also:

- Made a delegation to Council in support of National AccessAbility Week.
- Raised the Access Clarington flag for National AccessAbility Week.
- Hosted a booth at AppleFest, in partnership with the Diversity Committee (see photo below).



- Hosted awareness tables at five municipal facilities in support of National AccessAbility Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Attended Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings and the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Forum and Awards night.

- Hosted an event to recognize organizations the Committee nominated for a Durham Regional Accessibility Award. (See photo below)



- Attended the Metrolinx/Durham Region Transit annual consultation in December.
- Provided feedback on the Orono Hall Accessibility Renovation, the Clarington Public Library's Main Branch accessibility renovation, and phase two of Farewell Creek Trail.

3.6 Feedback was also provided on numerous smaller municipal projects lead by the Engineering Department.

### **Accessibility Governance**

3.7 The Accessibility Coordinator acts as a resource for all municipal service areas and facilitates compliance with the AODA. To ensure Clarington continues to meet or exceed the requirements of the AODA, the Coordinator continued to stay informed about legislation and participated in accessibility networks such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) and other Accessibility Coordinators in Durham Region through attendance at quarterly coordinators meeting.

- 3.8 The Coordinator provided legislated, mandatory training for all employees and volunteers on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities, the IASR and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities, as required under AODA. Additionally, training and support continued to be provided to staff in the area of creating accessible documents. With the introduction of TTY (teletype) in 2018, training and support was provided on using SimpliciTTY software to communicate with customers who use a home TTY device.
- 3.9 The Accessibility Coordinator continued as the staff liaison to the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee and facilitator of site plan and municipal project reviews by the Site Plan Review Sub-Committee.
- 3.10 In an effort to support accessibility retrofit projects in older municipal facilities, the Coordinator prepared accessibility grant applications and managed the implementation of grant projects in collaboration with various departments.

**Summary of Accessibility Activities**

Activity	Number of Occurrences
Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings	7
AODA training sessions	21
Accessible document training sessions	5
TTY training sessions	4
Site plans reviewed	~40
Municipal projects reviewed	3

**Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation - General Requirements**

- 3.11 The Municipality of Clarington continues to monitor and update its accessibility policies as necessary.
- 3.12 The Municipality of Clarington’s [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2023](#) outlines the initiatives the Municipality has taken to ensure compliance with AODA. Additionally, the Plan outlines how the Municipality will continue to meet its legislated obligations under AODA and address the needs of our growing community as we work towards a fully accessible and inclusive community. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is posted on the Clarington website.

- 3.13 The Purchasing Department continues to include accessible design, features and criteria when purchasing goods, services or facilities. If the Municipality was not able to purchase accessible goods, services or facilities, the Municipality gave an explanation as to why, upon request.
- 3.14 We continue to ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to all municipal employees, volunteers, persons who participate in developing policies and person who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Municipality.

### **Information and Communications - Website**

- 3.15 The Municipality of Clarington website complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, an achievement the Municipality met well before the January 1, 2021 deadline prescribed by the AODA.
- 3.16 Staff across all departments continue to work hard to ensure everything on the website is in an accessible format. In some situations, we have not been able to post content that is in an accessible format. Where something is not accessible to a person, we encouraged them to contact us and we worked with them to find a suitable accessible format.
- 3.17 Our website continues to feature BrowseAloud. The BrowseAloud feature has a number of helpful tools that make our website even more accessible such as: toolbar downloads, text magnifier, highlighting, reading out loud, and language translation. For 2019, this feature was used 173 times.

### **Accessible Documents**

- 3.18 In support of accessible documents for our website, we continued to provide training to municipal staff on how to create accessible Word 2013 documents throughout 2019. The Accessibility Coordinator continued to train and support staff who need help creating accessible documents.
- 3.19 The Municipality remained dedicated to making both internal and external documents accessible and continued to make great strides in providing documents in an accessible format. We continue to encourage individuals who find a document inaccessible to contact us via phone or email to request it in an alternative format.

## **Employment**

- 3.20 The Municipality of Clarington remained committed to accessible and equitable hiring practices and continued to meet its Employment Standard obligations under the AODA. All job postings included a statement about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process.
- 3.21 Successful candidates are informed, through their offer of employment, that accommodations are available for people with disabilities. All employees are informed of policies regarding job accommodations. The Municipality continued to provide workplace and emergency response information in accessible formats to employees who required it.

## **Transportation**

- 3.22 In 2019 the Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted on the updated Vehicle For Hire Bylaw (previously Taxicab Bylaw). Their insight and feedback were included in the updated Bylaw.
- 3.23 The Region of Durham is responsible for transportation within Clarington. Metrolinx (Go Transit) also provides transportation service through Clarington.
- 3.24 Any feedback regarding transportation is shared with Durham Region Transit and/or Metrolinx. The Accessibility Coordinator frequently liaised with Durham Region Transit on issues relating to accessible public transportation in Clarington.
- 3.25 Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee continued to participate in public meetings held by Durham Region Transit and Metrolinx and advocate for improvements to public transit services for people with disabilities.

## **Design of Public Spaces**

- 3.26 The Municipality of Clarington continued to ensure that all new and redeveloped public spaces complied with the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This means that new and redeveloped parks, trails, parking lots, service counters and pathways of travel were designed to make things easier for everyone – people with disabilities, seniors and families – to use and enjoy public spaces. Where accessible requirements are not met in any Municipal project, staff continue to work together to ensure that any deficiencies identified are corrected in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 3.27 Although the Municipality is not required to retrofit public spaces under this Standard, we continued to proactively make accessibility improvements, as is the case with the Bowmanville Library Branch renovation project, currently underway. We will work towards creating a barrier-free Clarington by removing barriers and exceeding our legal requirements whenever possible.



## **Customer Service**

- 3.28 The Municipality of Clarington continued to be in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. When accessing goods, services and facilities provided by Municipality, individuals may use their assistive devices. Guide dogs and service animals may be used in all areas/premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. People with disabilities can access their support person/worker when accessing Municipal goods, services and facilities.
- 3.29 We continue to train all new employees and volunteers on Accessible Customer Service, including how to communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their abilities. We will work with the person with a disability to determine what methods of communication works best for them.
- 3.30 We will continue to explore best practices for accessible customer service and investigate assistive technologies that can assist staff in providing accessible customer service to our residents and visitors.

## **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Throughout 2020, the Municipality of Clarington will continue to work towards meeting, maintaining and exceeding its obligations under AODA and its Integrated Accessibility Standards. In keeping with our goal of becoming a barrier-free community we will:
- Explore the opportunity to develop Clarington's Universal Design Standards.
  - Respond to requests for information in an alternative format.
  - Continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents.
  - Continue conducting accessibility audits on Municipal buildings and facilities.
  - Continue to review and update accessibility policies and perform a gap analysis of missing policies.
  - Provide current staff and volunteers with updated information on changes to our accessibility policies and continue providing accessibility training to all new staff and volunteers.
  - Continue to review by-laws to ensure they are consistent with the principles of the AODA and that they meet or exceed the minimum Standards required under the AODA.
  - Respond to public inquiries related to accessibility.
  - Continue to collaborate with the Clarington Board of Trade and BIAs.
  - Monitor accessibility trends, themes and actions at the grassroots, provincial and federal levels.
  - Continue advocating for greater accessibility within the community.
  - Continue to seek out funding opportunities that support accessibility and inclusion.

- Explore assistive technology and devices to improve access to Municipal facilities, programs and services.

## **5. Concurrence**

This report has been reviewed by the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee.

## **6. Conclusion**

It is respectfully recommended that the 2019 Accessibility Annual Status Update report be received for information and be placed on the municipal website.

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Staff Contact: Jeannette Whynot, Accessibility Coordinator, 905-623-3379 x 2131 or [accessibility@clarington.net](mailto:accessibility@clarington.net).

Attachments:

Not Applicable

Interested Parties:

The following interested parties will be notified of Council's decision:

Accessibility Advisory Committee