



## Clerk's 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

**Date of Meeting:** Jan 22, 2018

**Report Number:** CLD-005-18

**Resolution:**

**File Number:**

**By-law Number:**

**Report Subject:** 2017 Accessibility Annual Status Update

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### **Recommendation:**

1. That Report CLD-005-18 be received for information.

## Report Overview

This Report is the Municipality of Clarington's annual update on the measures taken during 2017 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

## 1.1 Statement of Commitment

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.

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.

## 1.2 Accessibility Legislation in Ontario.

### 1.2.1 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

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

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.

## 1.2.2 Ontario Building Code

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.

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.

## **2. Accessibility Annual Status Update**

### 2.1 Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee

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.

The CAAC's term coincides with Council. Following the 2014 Municipal Elections, a new CAAC was formed and is working within its mandate until 2018. Each member of the CAAC is a volunteer, with the exception of the Council representative. The CAAC is supported by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Clerk's Department.

The current 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.

In 2017, the CAAC reviewed 22 site plan applications and 5 municipal projects for barriers to accessibility. Having the CAAC review site plan applications is a core requirement of the AODA and one that 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 2017, the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee also:

- Attended Maplefest (Bowmanville) and Harvest Festival (Newcastle) and handed out brochures and promotional material. Materials were also distributed by Clarington Tourism at the Orono Fair (Orono) and Applefest (Bowmanville),
- Made two delegations to Council regarding National Accessibility Awareness Week in June, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities in November,
- Co-presented “Access Profits: making your business accessible to everyone” to Clarington Board of Trade,
- Participated in flag raising ceremonies, raising the Access Clarington flag for National Accessibility Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities,
- Attended Regional AAC meetings and Joint Accessibility Advisory Committees Forum and Awards event, and
- Hosted an event to recognize the four organizations the Committee nominated for a Durham Region Accessibility Award.



Figure 1 Accessibility Advisory Committee and Clarington nominees for Durham Region Accessibility Award

## 2.2 Accessibility Governance

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. As well, the Coordinator provided legislated, mandatory training for all employees and volunteers on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities, the integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 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.

The Accessibility Coordinator maintained participation on the Durham Regional Transit's Specialized Services Appeals Panel (hearing eligibility appeals for Specialized Service), and continued as the staff liaison to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and facilitator of site plan and municipal project reviews by the Sub-Committee.

### Quick Facts:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of occurrences</b>
Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings	9
AODA groups training sessions	11
Number of staff and volunteers trained	194
Accessible documents training sessions	3
Site Plans reviewed	22
Municipal projects reviewed	5
Specialized Transit appeals meetings	6
Public Inquiries	15
Staff requests for accessible document assistance	35
Public feedback on accessibility via Multi-Year Accessibility Plan survey	50
Articles regarding accessibility contributed to Clarington Board of Trade newsletter	9
Requests for information in an accessible format	5
BrowseAloud speech requests (screen reader) on Clarington Website	774

## 2.3 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

### 2.3.1 General Requirements

The Municipality of Clarington continues to develop and revise accessibility policies that govern how we achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards. In 2017, the Municipality formalized:

- Accessible Information and Communications policy
- Accessible Public Spaces policy

The Municipality of Clarington's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was reviewed and updated in 2017 in consultation with the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee to make sure we are meeting or exceeding our obligations under AODA. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 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 2018-2023 is posted on the Clarington website.

The Purchasing Department continued to include accessible design, features and criteria when purchasing goods, services or facilities. If the Municipality is not able to purchase accessible goods, services or facilities, the Municipality gave an explanation as to why, upon request.

Where the Municipality offers services and/or products through self-service kiosks, steps have been taken to make them accessible, on a go forward basis, to people with disabilities, so they can be used independently and securely. The electronic payment terminals at customer service desks remain accessible.

### 2.3.2 Information and Communications

#### **Website**

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.

Staff across all departments continued 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.

Our website continues to feature BrowseAloud. The BrowseAloud feature has a number of helpful tools that make our website even more accessible such as: highlighting, reading out loud, and language translation. For the period from December 2016 to November 2017, there were 576 toolbar downloads and 774 speech requests.

## **Accessible Documents**

In support of accessible documents for our website, municipal staff received training on how to create accessible Word 2013 documents throughout 2017. The Accessibility Coordinator continues to train and support staff that need help creating accessible documents.

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 encouraged individuals who find a document inaccessible to contact us via phone or email to request it in an alternative format.

### **2.3.3 Employment**

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.

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.

In 2017, the Municipality upgraded the elevator in the Municipal Administration Centre so that it is fully accessible to employees with vision loss. A new elevator control panel was installed to equip the elevator with Braille and an audio speech synthesizer, which provides audio cues such as which floor the elevator is on and when the doors are closing. The Main Branch Library, already equipped with Braille, will be upgraded to install an audio speech synthesizer in early 2018. These improvements have and will allow all users, regardless of their ability, to use the elevators independently, and will ensure that our facility is accessible and safer for employees with visual impairments. The project, which benefits employees and the community at large, was partially funded through Employment and Social Development's Enabling Accessibility Grant: Workplace Accessibility Stream.

### **2.3.4 Transportation**

The Region of Durham is responsible for transportation within Clarington. Metrolinx (Go Transit) also provides transportation service through Clarington.

All feedback regarding transportation is shared with Durham Regional Transit and/or Metrolinx. The Accessibility Coordinator frequently liaised with Durham Regional Transit on issues relating to accessible public transportation in Clarington. The Accessibility Coordinator also continued to serve as an Appeals Panel member for Durham Regional Transit's Specialized Service appeals.



### 2.3.5 Design of Public Spaces

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.

Although the Municipality is not required to retrofit public spaces under this Standard, we continued to proactively make accessibility improvements. We will work towards creating a barrier-free Clarington by removing barriers and exceeding our legal requirements whenever possible. In 2017, the Municipality completed several projects that can be enjoyed by people of all abilities, including:

- Bond Head Parkette (new) in Newcastle which was designed to incorporate accessible pathways and picnic areas, as well as a seasonal beach access mat.
- Buttonshaw Park (new) in Bowmanville incorporates an accessible playground and seating.
- Garnet B. Rickard Recreation Complex (redeveloped program area) in Bowmanville incorporates accessible halls for community programs and banquets, washrooms, and customer service desk.

In addition, the Municipality has created priority seating for people with disabilities within Council Chambers. The seating is designated with blue seat covers.

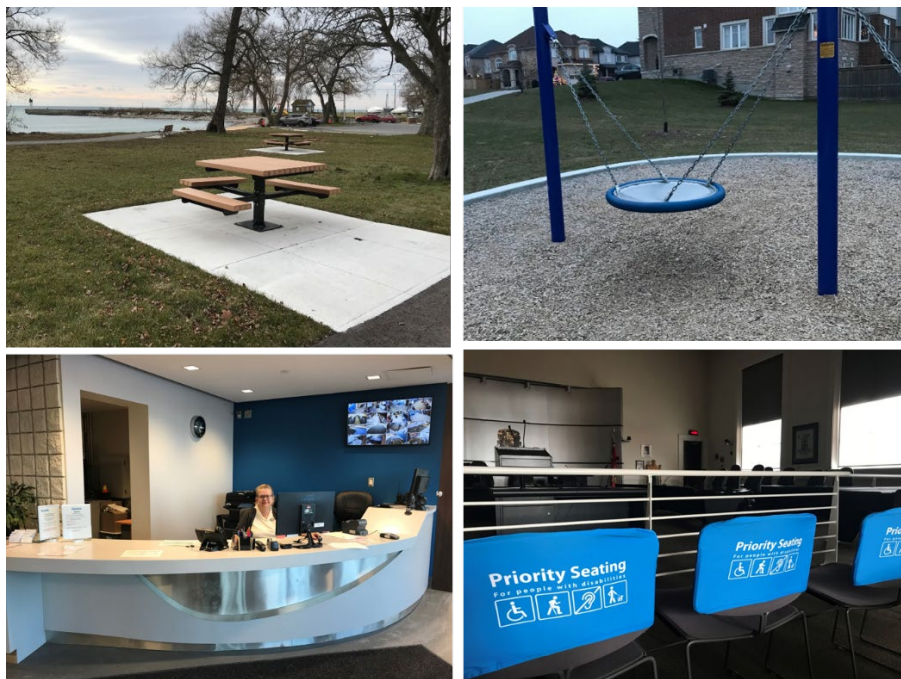


Figure 1: Images of Bond head Parkette, Buttonshaw Park, Garnert B. Rickart Recreation Complex and Council Chambers Priority Seating



### 2.3.6 Customer Service

The Municipality of Clarington has been in compliance with the Customer Service Standard since 2009. 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.

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.

In 2017, assistive technology was introduced at the main customer service desk at Town Hall to facilitate a variety of alternative communication options, including providing information in large print and audio formats, and enabling written communication and interpretation.

### 2.4 Next Steps

Throughout 2018, the Municipality of Clarington will continue to work towards meeting, maintaining, and exceeding its obligations under the AODA and its Standards. In keeping with our goal of becoming a barrier-free community we will:

- Respond to requests for information in an alternative format.
- Continue conducting accessibility audits on municipal buildings and facilities.
- Continue to review and update accessibility policies and preform 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, including people who will be working at the 2018 municipal elections.
- Ensure people with disabilities have an opportunity to fully participate in the Municipal Elections with dignity and in a consistent manner with all Clarington electors.
- 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 contribute monthly to their newsletter.
- Monitor accessibility trends, themes and actions at the grassroots, provincial and federal levels.
- Continue advocating for greater accessibility within the community.

### 3. Concurrence

The 2017 Accessibility Annual Status Update has been reviewed and endorsed by the Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### 4. Conclusion

In early 2017, staff provided Council with an Accessibility status update as at December 2016 and detailed the goals and objectives for 2017. All of those goals have been met or exceeded. It is respectfully recommended that the 2017 Accessibility Annual Status Update report be received for information.

### 5. Strategic Plan Application

Not applicable.

Submitted by:

  
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Municipal Clerk

Reviewed by:

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CAO

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There are no interested parties to be notified of Council's decision.