

The Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs

By-law Number 2023-075

Being a By-law to adopt a policy for Accessible Customer Service Policy and repeal By-law 40-2016.

Whereas Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) requires that the Township, as a public sector organization, create written and publicly available accessibility policies.

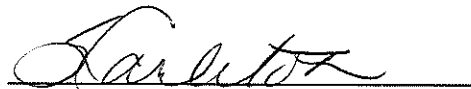
Whereas the Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to providing, to the greatest extent possible, municipal policies, services, programs and facilities that are accessible to residents, ratepayers, and visitors of all abilities;

Now Therefore the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs enacts as follows:

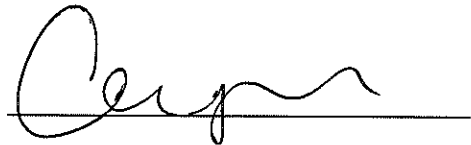
1. That policy LEG-02-23 – Accessible Customer Service Policy, attached hereto as Schedule “A” to the By-law, is hereby adopted.
2. That By-law 40-2016 is repealed.
3. That this By-law shall come into force and effect upon being passed by Council.

Read a first and second time this 8th day of November, 2023.

Read a third time and finally passed this 8th day of November, 2023.



Mayor – Sue Carleton



Acting Clerk – Carly Craig



Policy LEG-02-2023

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Implemented: November 2023
Revision Date: N/A

References and Related Documents: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation 191/11, LEG-01-2023 - Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy, Accessible Feedback Form

This document is public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Policy Statement

The Township is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for persons with disabilities. We are committed to treating persons with disabilities with respect and access to resources and services in a way that allows them to maintain independence and dignity.

The Township believes in integration and is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, through the implementation of this policy in accordance with the spirit and intent of all applicable legislation and associated regulations including the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Township is committed to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility by meeting the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation.

Purpose and Scope

Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) requires that the Township, as a public sector organization, create written and publicly



available accessibility policies. These policies are formal rules put in place by the Township to achieve accessibility goals and ties in with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Where there is a conflict between this policy and the AODA and O Reg. 191/11, the AODA legislative standards shall apply.

Definitions

“Accessible formats” may include (but are not limited to) large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“Accommodation” an arrangement made, or assistance provided to a person requiring assistance to enable them to participate.

“Communications” an exchange between two or more persons where information is given or received.

“Communication supports” may include (but are not limited to) captioning, alternative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“Mobility aid” means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability.

“Mobility assistive device” means a cane, walker, or similar aid.

Policy Requirements

1.0 Customer Service

The Township shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. Municipal services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.



2. Where possible the Township shall integrate the provision of municipal services to persons with disabilities and others unless an alternate measure is necessary, on a temporary or permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain or use municipal goods or services. Services should not be parallel or duplicated but shall be universally used, where possible, by all persons.
3. Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to access municipal services.
4. Where a request is received for the use of assistive devices by a person with disabilities to obtain municipal services, the Township shall take reasonable measures to enable them to do so.
5. When communicating with a person with a disability, The Township shall do so in a manner that considers the person's disability.
6. The Township's policies related to customer service shall be publicly available and available in an accessible format upon request.

2.0 Assistive Devices

All customers are welcomed and encouraged to use their own assistive devices when accessing services, goods, or using the Township's facilities.

In cases where an assisted device presents a significant/unavoidable health or safety concern, it may not be permitted. Other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access Township services or facilities. Other measures will be determined as appropriate with the customer.

The Township will ensure that customer service staff are trained and familiar with assistive devices we have onsite, or that we provide and may be used by persons with disabilities when accessing services and using facilities.

3.0 Service Animals

Service animals are permitted and welcomed in all public spaces when accompanying a person with a disability.



A service animal may be easily identifiable if it wears a vest or harness or can be observed assisting an individual perform tasks. When it cannot be easily identified that the animal is a service animal, staff may ask to see documentation (ie. letter or form) from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires a service animal. A regulated health professional is a member of any of the following:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are not permitted by any other law, to ensure the person can access our services and facilities, the Township will:

- Explain why the animal is not permitted
- Determine another way to provide access to services and facilities with the customer

The Township does not prohibit service animals from any public space or facility.

4.0 Support Persons

A support person accompanying a person with a disability is permitted to accompany them to all public spaces and facilities. If a fee is normally charged to a person accessing services or facilities, the fee will be waived for support persons.



We will notify persons of this by posting a notice at the following locations:

- Township Administrative Building
- Shallow Lake Community Centre
- Derby Community Centre
- Kemble Community Centre

The Township may in certain cases require that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person for the safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises. Before making a decision, the Township shall:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs.
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence.
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

If the Township requires a support person accompany the person with a disability, a fee/fare will not be charged.

5.0 Notice of Service Disruption

Where there is a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Township will promptly notify customers. The notice will be posted clearly and include information about:

- The reason for the disruption
- The length of time of the disruption
- Description of alternative services or facilities if available

Service disruption notices will be communicated by:

- Posting a notice on the Township's website
- Posting a notice at the location
- Via Email
- By telephone or in-person where possible



This applies to all locations where services are provided and in public spaces, including:

- Township Administration Building
- Shallow Lake Community Centre
- Derby Community Centre
- Kemble Community Centre
- Balmy Beach Tennis Court
- Sarawak Family Park
- Cedar Hill Park
- Centennial Park

Where possible, the Township will prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

6.0 Customer Feedback Process

The Township of Georgian Bluffs welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Feedback from customers will help the Township identify concerns and address barriers to participation.

Feedback may be provided in the following ways:

- Feedback Form embedded on the Township's Accessibility webpage or on any page on the Township's website
- Feedback form via Microsoft Word Document available for download on the Township's Accessibility webpage
- Feedback Form available via printed paper copy available at the Township Administration Building
- The Township's Contact GB webform and concern portal

Customers can expect to receive a response within three (3) business days.



The Township is committed to ensuring the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

7.0 Notice of Availability of Documents

The Township shall notify the public that all documents (where possible) are available upon request in an accessible format by posting a notice in the following locations/methods:

- Township of Georgian Bluffs Website
- At the top of all Township produced documents, reports, Council Agendas and Minutes
- Administration desk at the Township Administration Building

The Township shall require that all consultants preparing documentation for public view create and provide the documents in an accessible format.

The Township will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support on request. We will consult with the requestor to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. The accessible format shall be provided in a timely manner and without cost.

8.0 Self-Service Kiosks

The Township will ensure that all self-service kiosks available for use (iPads/Tablets) have accessibility features enabled. We will incorporate and consider accessibility for persons with disabilities when acquiring, procuring, or designing self-service kiosks.

9.0 Public Participation in Governance

The Township shall ensure persons with disabilities can participate in council, committee, and board meetings and public engagement opportunities.



Agendas and minutes of Council, committees, and boards and their attachments are available in an accessible or alternate format upon request and will be provided as soon as practicable.

All Council, committee, and board meetings shall be livestreamed with virtual and in-person participation options available to the public and members to ensure accessibility. The Township shall offer the virtual participation via a platform with built-in accessibility features (ie. closed captioning).

10.0 Information and Communications

The Township shall make available accessible printed customer service information where possible.

The Township will approach communications with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. They may include:

- Verbal
- Written
- Or in accessible formats such as:
 - Large print
 - Recorded audio
 - Electronic formats compatible with screen readers (Accessible Word and PDF)

We work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works best for them.

The Township has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

We communicate with people with disabilities in methods that take their disability into account. When requested, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:



- a) In a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to their disability; and
- b) At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format of communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications cannot be made accessible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications cannot be made accessible; and
- b) A summary of the inaccessible information or communications.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports in accordance with 7.0 of this policy. The Township is also committed to meeting the internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility legislation.

11.0 Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of this organization that do not comply with, respect, or promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified, replaced, or repealed.

Monitoring and Review

This policy shall be reviewed bi-annually with any pressing amendments made by the Clerk's Department as required.



Accessible Feedback Form

Please submit completed forms to: clerks@georgianbluffs.ca

Your Information

Name:

Date:

Email:

Phone Number:

Address:

Your Comments or Questions

Please let us know how we can improve:

Response from the Township of Georgian Bluffs (For Office Use Only)

Staff Name:

Date:

Response Details:

The Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services to people of all abilities.