

<b>SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY</b>	<b>SCOPE: ALL EMPLOYEES, COUNCILLORS &amp; VOLUNTEERS</b>
<b>ISSUE DATE:</b> September 23, 2009	<b>REVISED:</b> December 11, 2013 July 26, 2017

**PURPOSE:**

This policy will act as the main accessibility policy for the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex and meet the requirements of Ontario Regulations 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

**SCOPE:**

Southwest Middlesex is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities, the Municipality will:

- Ensure policies, practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality.
- Strive to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, at a cost no greater than that for people without disabilities.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods, services, programs and facilities.

The Municipality will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, the Municipality will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan will outline the Municipality's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

## **Definitions**

- Disability: as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Service Animal: A “guide dog”, as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act; or
  - An animal used by a person with a disability if:
    - it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
    - the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

## **Accessibility Planning**

The Municipality will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan. The multi-year accessibility plan will outline how the Municipality will prevent and remove barriers to accessibility as outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The multi-year accessibility plan will be developed with the assistance of Middlesex County and other participating lower tier municipalities within the County.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be reviewed at least once every five years. An annual status report will be prepared. In conjunction with Middlesex County, the Municipality will consult with people with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

## **Purchasing**

The Municipality will ensure accessibility criteria and features are considered when purchasing goods, service and facilities. When it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria, the Municipality will provide an explanation upon request.

## **Accessible Formats**

The Municipality will provide alternate formats of information and communication that is produced or in direct control of the Municipality. This will be done upon request, in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the cost charged for the original format.

When it is not practicable to provide an alternate format, the Municipality will provide an explanation and a summary of the document in an accessible format.

## **Communication Supports**

The Municipality will provide communication supports to members of the public upon request. If the Municipality is unable to obtain the requested communication support, the Municipality will work with the individual to determine an appropriate

alternative method of communication.

### **Obtaining Public Feedback**

The Municipality will accept feedback from members of the public relating to the provision of accessible services provided. When seeking feedback from the public, the Municipality will provide accessible formats and/or communication supports to members of the public upon request.

### **Service Disruptions**

If a temporary service disruption is planned, the Municipality will give notice of the disruption. Notice will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place as well as by posting the information on the Municipality's website.

### **Support Persons**

The Municipality will allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person in all Municipal-owned and operated public facilities. The Municipality reserves the right to request a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.

Admission fees will be waived for support persons who accompany a person with a disability.

### **Service Animals**

The Municipality welcomes service animals into all Municipally-owned or operated facilities where the public is allowed. Service animals will be allowed to accompany a person with a disability to allow them access to facilities and services.

If an animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Municipality will ensure that other measures are available to allow a person with a disability to obtain or benefit from the good(s) or service(s).

### **Use of Assistive Devices**

The Municipality will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain services offered by the Municipality.

If a person with a disability is unable to access a service through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Municipality will work with the individual to determine an alternate means for accessing services.

### **Training**

Training will be provided to all staff, Council members and volunteers in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The Municipality will

retain training records.

### **Built Environment**

The Municipality will ensure that interior and exterior spaces conform to appropriate legislation, including, but not limited to the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public Spaces – Ontario Regulation 191/11

### **Legislative Authority**

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11

### **PROCEDURES:**

Operating procedures will be developed for specific requirements based on each Department's needs.