

**SECTION:** OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

**DEPARTMENT/DIVISION:** CITY MANAGER / OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

**SUBJECT:** ACCESSIBILITY

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***POLICY STATEMENT***

It is the policy of The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay that all people achieve accessibility, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity as set out in *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

***PURPOSE***

This Policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines of The City of Thunder Bay (City) in order to comply with the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, 2005, the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* established by Ontario Regulation 429/07, and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* established by Ontario Regulation 191/1, and all regulations pursuant to this Act.

***APPLICATION***

This Policy applies to all City employees, volunteers, and to third parties who provide goods, services or facilities to the public on behalf of the City and who develop policies on behalf of the City.

## ***PRINCIPLES***

The City of Thunder Bay:

- Is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.
- Believes in inclusion and equal opportunity
- Is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner,
- Is committed to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

## ***GENERAL REQUIREMENTS***

The City of Thunder Bay is a designated public sector organization under the AODA and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

## ***ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is established by City Council. It is required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The Committee is responsible for advising City Council on the development and implementation of the Municipal Accessibility Plan and advising Council on issues relating to citizens with a disability.

## ***ACCESSIBILITY PLANS AND POLICIES***

The City shall produce a Multi-year Accessibility Plan. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be:

- reviewed and updated at least every five years, and
- established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

If through public consultation, feedback, and our own accessibility action and planning processes, it is determined that the Multi-year Accessibility Plan needs revision, the City of Thunder Bay will update it to reflect these insights.

The City of Thunder Bay has an internal Administrative Accessibility Committee that meets regularly to review progress in meeting the requirements of the AODA and to monitor progress on implementing the accessibility plan and to determine that barrier-removal and barrier-prevention strategies are implemented effectively.

An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multiyear accessibility plan will be prepared. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan and accompanying status report will be posted on the City's web-site and provided in an accessible format upon request.

## ***PROCUREMENT***

When procuring goods, services, self-service kiosks or facilities, the City shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the City shall provide an explanation, upon request.

## ***TRAINING***

All City employees, volunteers and third parties providing goods and services to members of the public on the City's behalf, as well as those who develop the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties will receive accessibility training.

This training shall include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
- A review of the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the AODA *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities.

The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place as soon as is practical and upon completion, the City shall keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

## ***INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS***

### **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the City shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

## **Websites and Web Content**

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by the City will conform to the World Wide Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 in accordance with the schedule set out in the Information and Communication Standards of the IASR.

## ***EMPLOYMENT***

The City of Thunder Bay is committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all and providing accessibility for people with disabilities throughout the employment life cycle in accordance with the requirements and timelines set out in the Employment Standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

The City is committed to providing accessible public transportation services through both conventional and specialized transit services in accordance with Transportation Standards of the IASR.

## ***BUILT ENVIRONMENT***

The City shall comply with the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for The Built Environment) when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible Parking;
- Obtaining Services; and
- Maintenance of accessible elements.

This policy does not apply to construction that is external to the City for which the City has provided a permit however compliance with the AODA Built Environment Standards should be encouraged.

The City shall ensure that the City's Accessibility Design Standards reflect the AODA Built Environment Standards.

## ***CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD***

The City of Thunder Bay is committed to the provision of excellent customer service. The Accessibility Policy No. 01-08-11 effective since in January 2010, outlined the customer service standards as required by the AODA. The contents of this Policy are now included in this document where appropriate.

### **Guide Dogs, Service Animals**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the City will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, the City will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

### **Support Persons**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the City, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

### **Disruption of Services**

If there is a temporary disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, the City will give notice of the disruption to the public.

### **Assistive Devices**

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services of the City, they are allowed to use such devices.

### **Accessibility Feedback**

The City of Thunder Bay has an accessible feedback process. Feedback on how services are delivered to people with disabilities shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including in person, by mail, phone, email and TTY.

## ***NON COMPLIANCE***

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*. Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Agents who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to contract termination.

## ***REFERENCE***

Report No. 2013.097

<b><i>APPROVED BY:</i></b>	City Council	<b><i>Date:</i></b>	July 29, 2013
<b><i>Replacing/Amending:</i></b>	01-08-11		
<b><i>Originating Department:</i></b>	City Manager		
<b><i>Contact:</i></b>	John Hannam, City Clerk		
<b><i>Departmental Procedural Manual:</i></b>	Yes		
<b><i>Affected Departments:</i></b>	N/A		