



The Corporation of the City of Welland,
2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

**If you require this document in an alternate format, please contact the Office of the City Clerk,
election@welland.ca or 905-735-1700 ext. 2204**

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2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the City's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors, candidates* and third party advertisers, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience for all. Disabilities can take many forms. They may be permanent or temporary; developmental or physical; severe or mild; visible or non-visible. It is important, then, that the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan strives to accommodate everyone regardless of ability.

The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice. The Office of the City Clerk will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

* *Please note: throughout the balance of this document, reference to candidates shall be deemed to include third-party advertisers.*

a. Mission Statement

To ensure the provision of services and goods in a manner that enables all the opportunity to fully participate in the electoral process.

b. Goal

To establish objectives, initiatives and actions that address the needs of electors, candidates and service providers of all abilities.

Understanding that persons with disabilities may have different needs, services and goods will be provided in a manner that;

- i. respects the **dignity** of persons with disabilities;
- ii. respects the **independence** of persons with disabilities;
- iii. is **integrated** for persons with disabilities unless an alternate measure is necessary (either temporarily or on a permanent basis); and
- iv. is **equal** to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services provided.

c. References

i. **Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended** – Legislative Requirements

The City Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2022 City of Welland Municipal Election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states the following:

12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

12 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

12 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without

the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

ii. City of Welland Customer Service Policy

Excerpt from the City's Policy:

"The formation, provision, and delivery of City of Welland customer service will be in due regard to, in conjunction with, and as guided by, the following values and principles:

COURTESY – services will be provided in a friendly, respectful and courteous manner

CONFIDENTIALITY – information gathered or held in conducting business will be done so in strict confidence

COMMUNICATION – responses will be delivered in a clear, concise and timely manner whether by mail, fax, email, telephone, or alternative mode of communication

SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS – citizens and businesses are partners in raising and maintaining standards

COMPLAINTS – will be handled fairly, justly and promptly

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – City information will be available in a format accessible to all citizens, and will be regularly updated

COMMITMENT – to professional standards and delivery, and timely review of customer service policies and goals

DIGNITY – services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity of all citizens

EQUITY – services will be provided in a manner that affords equal opportunity and benefit

INCLUSION – services will be provided in a manner that promotes the integration and full participation of all citizens

INDEPENDENCE – services will be provided in a manner that supports a person’s maximum autonomy, while respecting their right to privacy and security

SENSITIVITY – services will be provided in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of each individual.”

The full customer service policy is attached as ‘Appendix A’.

iii. City of Welland Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy

Excerpt from the City’s Policy:

“To comply with the Information and Communication Standard requirements of the IASR, with compliance dates from 2018-2023, the City will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

To comply with the Employment Standard requirements of the IASR, with compliance dates from 2018 - 2023, the City will identify, prevent and remove barriers across the employment life cycle for people with disabilities.

To comply with the Transportation Standard requirements of the IASR, with compliance dates from 2018 - 2023, the City will implement accessible transit service and facilities.”

The complete City of Welland Accessibility Policy is attached as “Appendix B’.

iv. Definition of Disability

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines “disability” as follows:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

2. FEEDBACK

The Office of the City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes.

Please provide us with your feedback. Feedback on this Plan can be submitted through the following channels:

Online form: www.welland.ca/elections

Email: election@welland.ca

Phone: 905-735-1700, ext. 2204

Fax: 905-732-1919

TTY: 1-866-273-5094

By Mail:

Corporation of the City of Welland

Office of the City Clerk

Attn: Election Coordinator

60 East Main Street,

Welland, Ontario L3B 3X4

3. OBJECTIVES

a. Consultation:

To gain greater knowledge and understanding in conducting elections that are accessible to all through consultation. Consultations would also be a tool used to provide accountability throughout the implementation of the accessibility initiatives.

Initiative	Action	Review
Consult with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons of all abilities and backgrounds in order to gain a better understanding of their needs, ensure goals and actions are relevant and implemented effectively and to obtain feedback on this Plan.	Present accessibility initiatives to the internal Accessibility working group, to ensure that they are consistent with and complementary to the City of Welland Customer Service Policy and Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements Policy.	
	Present accessibility initiatives to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for review and comment.	
	Provide and promote continued opportunity for stakeholders to comment and provide feedback throughout the process.	
	Provide and promote feedback opportunities for electors and candidates with respect to the accessibility during the event.	
	Identify new or revised initiatives and actions as a result of feedback received	
	Conduct post-election review and evaluation of feedback on accessibility initiatives.	

b. Communications and Information:

To ensure effective communication and information initiatives for candidates and electors. To make sure election information is accessible and available in alternative formats.

Initiative	Action	Review
Ensure all election related documents are designed to consider accessibility, visibility and legibility	Ensure use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.	
Provide an informative and accessible election website that includes all relevant election information pertinent to voters and candidates https://www.welland.ca/elections	The City of Welland is committed to making all of the website accessible and identifies tools and tips for users on it's Accessibility webpage (link below): https://www.welland.ca/accessibility.asp This includes providing a free web page reader to assist individuals who have difficulty reading online. Partnering with the City's Communications and Information Services teams in the development and maintenance of the Election website so that this same commitment is reflected there.	
	Present all election information in clear, simple language.	
	Regularly update election information posted on the City's website to reflect the most recent developments.	
	Establish and continuously update a dedicated accessibility section on the election website identifying the initiatives undertaken, links to accessibility tools and resources. ie. Adobe Reader and customer feedback information and form.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Provide all elector information in alternative formats and through multiple channels	Provide and make information available in alternative formats, where requested. Accessible PDFs will be posted on the election webpage. Paper copy of information available upon request.	
	Post notices that outline key election information, including information about accessible services offered, through newspaper, municipal digital information service boards and online media (City of Welland Facebook and Twitter).	
Provide candidates with information re: how to make their campaigns accessible.	Include the following in Candidates information package: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections, produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerk’s and Treasurer’s of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Province. 2. Information regarding campaign expenses and, in particular, rules affecting candidates with a disability. 	
Provide candidates with information in accessible and alternative formats.	Have all Candidates information package material available in electronic format if requested, as Accessible PDFs as well as in paper format.	
	Provide additional links re: Accessibility on the Election website, Candidates information page.	
	Provide the Voters’ List in an electronic format to all candidates. The Voters’ List will also be provided in paper format to candidates upon request.	

c. Voting Locations:

To ensure that voting locations are accessible to all who use them.

Initiative	Action	Review
Identify and establish accessible voting locations for Advance Polls and Voting Day	Review and update existing accessibility checklist, as required, for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location.	
	Conduct site visits of all potential voting locations, including parking lots and paths, to ensure full accessibility. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where possible, make modifications to potential voting locations to make them accessible, for example, temporary ramps 2. Places that cannot be made accessible will not be used; new locations identified, or voting merged with other accessible voting locations in the vicinity 	
	Conduct an additional accessibility check in October to ensure there have been no changes to the locations.	
	Have election staff perform final accessibility checks just prior to the advance vote and/or on voting day and various times throughout each voting day to verify the continued accessibility of the voting location.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Clearly identify all voting location access routes and entrances	Design location specific site plans that clearly identify accessible access routes and entrances and provide to election workers at each site,	
	Identify designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location where parking is available.	
	Mark parking spaces clearly with accessibility symbol or sign if they are not already clearly marked.	
	Provide appropriate signage at voting locations.	
	Direct electors with accessibility needs to the accessible voting entrance by use of prominent signage.	
	Where possible have one main entrance that is fully accessible such that the entrance place is common for all.	
Ensure all voting location owners and managers are aware of accessibility requirements	Notifying all facility owners and managers of legislative accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to voting rooms.	
Provide mechanism for feedback on the list of proposed voting locations	Present the list of proposed voting locations to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for review and request feedback and comment.	
	Use the received feedback to ensure that all voting locations are accessible to electors	

Initiative	Action	Review
Set up of Voting Location to maximize accessibility and flow of 'traffic'	Design location specific site plans that clearly identify where tables chairs etc. are to be located and how traffic will flow.	
	Use site plan, provided to election workers at each location, to clearly identify and set up specific to that voting location.	
	Clearly identify emergency exits and procedures on each location specific site plan	
Provide one central voting location during both Advance Vote and on Voting Day with accessible voting equipment, in addition to being physically accessible.	Provide a central voting location at Civic Square/Welland Public Library (Seaway Mall Branch) for all Advance days and on Welland Community Centre on Voting Day giving eligible voters with accessibility concerns an opportunity to vote using accessible voting equipment if they wish.	
Provide a "Vote Anywhere" location to provide flexibility for voters and to enhance accessibility.	Implement "Vote Anywhere" on at all Polling Locations.	
Service animals and support persons to be permitted in all voting locations.	Train election staff re: service animals and support persons in addition to customer service.	
	Have oral oath available at all locations, ensuring support persons are able to take an oral oath of prior to assisting an individual in the voting process.	
	Communications with owners and managers of facilities, being used as voting locations, will include the requirement that the presence and use of service animals be permitted.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Public Transportation Access	Where possible, select voting locations that provide easy access to public transit.	
Set up process to facilitate notification of disruptions to service or last minute changes to voting locations	<p>In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting locations during the advance vote or on voting day, post notices of disruption in real time and in accordance with the City of Welland Customer Service Policy which states: Notice of temporary service disruptions -</p> <p>1) Notice of service disruption will be placed in a conspicuous place on the premises and on the City website.</p> <p>2) If alternative services are being provided during a disruption, the City will provide services for persons with disabilities to accommodate their circumstances.</p> <p>Specifically, post a Notice of Service Disruption;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the affected voting location. • on the City website main page, and election page. <p>Ensure all information regarding the provision of services during the disruption is included on the notice.</p>	

d. Voting Process:

To make certain that every eligible elector has an equal opportunity to cast their ballot in secrecy, independently and with dignity.

Initiative	Action	Review
Identify accessible voting equipment, ensuring it meets the needs of electors.	Provide information re: accessible voting equipment specifications to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and feedback.	
	Respond to feedback provided.	
Provide accessible voting equipment at one location during all advance voting days and on voting day.	Have accessible voting equipment available at Civic Square/Welland Public Library (Seaway Mall Branch) for all Advance days and on Welland Community Centre on Voting Day. Equipment supplied will have the capability to provide for an audio ballot with the use of the following devices: Braille control, hand or foot paddles, and a sip and puff device.	
Provide clear instructions on use of accessible voting equipment	Provide instruction for use on the election website. Instructions will include pictures and visual aids. Ensure audio directions can be listened to through the site web page reader.	
	Provide instructions provided in hard copy (print) upon request. Instructions will include pictures and visual aids.	
	Election staff will be fully trained on use of accessible voting equipment, should an elector request assistance.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Schedule extended advance voting opportunities	Plan several advance voting opportunities, that offer both evening and weekend options.	
Promote advance voting opportunity for electors with disabilities.	Post the full list of advance voting opportunities on the website and on Voter Notification Cards (VNC).	
	Provide notice of advance voting and the availability of accessible voting equipment through public notices, newsletters, and social media.	
	Engage and encourage community stakeholders and Candidates in promoting advance voting opportunities for electors with disabilities.	
Provide supplies to support independent voting	Have magnification screens available in all voting locations for use by visually impaired electors if requested.	
	Have note pads and pens available at all voting locations to assist communication with electors with deafness or a hearing impairment, muteness or a speech impairment.	
In accordance with section 45(7) of the Municipal Elections Act, provide voting opportunities at institutions and retirement homes.	Voting will be provided on a reduced hours basis depending on size of facility and number of residents, to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote in their own home.	
	Have election staff provide bedside voting service where required.	
	Coordinate with on site facility staff to ensure all electors at the site can take advantage of the opportunity.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as required	Have an election official in the voting location trained and ready to accommodate a voter in whatever manner required, including assisting in the casting of their ballot when requested.	
Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting locations:	Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the Office of the City Clerk or any voting location with their support person or service animal.	
Facilitate assisted voting by friends, companions, support persons or election officials.	The individual assisting the voter will be required to take an oath to assist an elector.	
Provide Accessible Voting Options	Provide curbside voting at all voting locations, if requested. The election official may attend to the elector anywhere within the voting location, which includes the parking lot.	
	Provide for proxy voting. In cases where an elector is unable to attend a voting location, the elector can appoint another person to act on their behalf. Communications and the election website will contain information on voting by proxy. Staff to be trained on providing information on voting by proxy and processing proxy voters.	

e. Election Staff Training and Support:

To ensure that each election official receives training and reference tools specific to providing accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standards, enabling them to provide a positive voting experience.

Initiative	Action	Review
Develop Accessibility Training modules for all election staff	Include AODA, customer service standard, and serving people with disabilities messaging in all training modules and materials being provided to elections staff.	
Ensure all elections staff receive accessible customer service training	Hold training sessions for election staff to familiarize them with accessibility requirements, serving people with disabilities and with the accommodations and special services and tools available to assist electors.	
	In consideration of the fact that people learn differently, train using different methods ie. visual aids and hands on activities.	
	Create a certificate for staff to sign that they received elections and accessibility training and retain a copy for compliance purposes.	
Ensure all elections staff are aware of the integrated accessibility standards regarding workplace accommodation	During recruitment, ensure that potential workers are notified that accommodation re: materials and processes is available upon request for applicants with disabilities.	
	Make individual accommodations available during recruitment and training in response to a request for same.	
	Advise staff of the ability to request an individualized workplace emergency response plan.	
	Create an individualized workplace emergency response plan when requested.	
	Develop a strong model for retaining, distributing and supporting any individualized workplace emergency response plans requested.	

Initiative	Action	Review
Reference materials to be provided	Provide every election staff member with an Accessible Customer Service Handbook and pamphlets regarding workplace accommodation and employee rights and responsibilities.	
	Election Staff support webpage will include links to the applicable legislation, FAQs and additional support information as identified.	
Review of initiatives by Human Resources	Election staff training and support manuals, training and reference documents will be reviewed by the City’s Human Resources department for to ensure they are consistent with and complement the City’s staff training and support.	

- f. Post-Election Accessibility Report:
To use the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan as a tool in preparing the Post-Election Accessibility Report.

Section 12.1 (3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended states the following:
“Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.”

Initiative	Action	Review
Review the implementation and effectiveness of this Accessibility Plan	Add a Review column in which to document feedback, changes, developments etc. for reference purposes and to support observations and suggestions provided in the Post-Election Accessibility Report.	
	Add the Accessibility Plan as an Appendix to the Post-Election Accessibility Report	
	Post the report on the Election website	
	Distribute the Post-Election Accessibility Report, to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and feedback	
	Distribute the Post-Election Accessibility Report to other stakeholders as requested.	

**CITY OF WELLAND
POLICY**

Policy Title: Customer Service	
Date of Approval: October 21, 2008	Policy Number: HUM-001-00025
Lead Role: All Departments	Support Role: All employees
Cross Reference: Code of Conduct, Customer Service Policy Guidelines	Next Review Date:
Council File Number: 06-166	Revision Date: June 1, 2009

Policy Statement:

City Council encourages, supports, promotes, and commits to the provision of barrier-free municipal services in a professional, timely, and courteous manner.

This policy will comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O.Reg. 429/07 and will be reviewed and update annually to ensure that it remains in compliance with various Federal and Provincial Acts and Regulations.

The formation, provision, and delivery of City of Welland customer service will be in due regard to, in conjunction with, and as guided by, the following values and principles:

- COURTESY** – services will be provided in a friendly, respectful and courteous manner
- CONFIDENTIALITY** – information gathered or held in conducting business will be done so in strict confidence
- COMMUNICATION** – responses will be delivered in a clear, concise and timely manner whether by mail, fax, email, telephone, or alternative mode of communication
- SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS** – citizens and businesses are partners in raising and maintaining standards
- COMPLAINTS** – will be handled fairly, justly and promptly
- ACCESS TO INFORMATION** – City information will be available in a format accessible to all citizens, and will be regularly updated
- COMMITMENT** – to professional standards and delivery, and timely review of customer service policies and goals
- DIGNITY** – services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity of all citizens
- EQUITY** – services will be provided in a manner that affords equal opportunity and benefit

APPENDIX ‘A’

Health & Safety Hum-001-0025

INCLUSION – services will be provided in a manner that promotes the integration and full participation of all citizens

INDEPENDENCE – services will be provided in a manner that supports a person's maximum autonomy, while respecting their right to privacy and security

SENSITIVITY – services will be provided in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of each individual

PURPOSE:

To establish standards, procedures, guidelines and best practices that will facilitate the delivery of exceptional customer service to all stakeholders.

SCOPE:

This policy shall apply to all City of Welland employees both union and non-union, the Mayor, all members of Council, contract employees of subsidiary organizations, part-time, summer, and co-op students, and volunteers.

POLICY DETAILS:

Customer Service Training

- 1) The City of Welland will ensure that all individuals identified within the scope of this customer service policy receive customer service training. The training will include:
 - a) A review of the City of Welland Customer Service Policy
 - b) A review of the requirements in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, O. Reg. 429/07
 - c) Specific instruction about the following matters:
 - i) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - ii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
 - iii) How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
 - iv) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

- 2) The Customer Service training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable upon commencement of employment with the City. Training must be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

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- 3) The City of Welland will keep records of the Customer Service training provided, including the dates on which training is provided and the names of individuals that participated in the training.

Establishment of policies, practices and procedures

- 1) The City of Welland will establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to people with disabilities.
- 2) The provision of goods or services to people with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- 3) People with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

Notice of temporary service disruptions

- 1) Notice of service disruption will be placed in a conspicuous place on the premises and on the City website.
- 2) If alternative services are being provided during a disruption, the City will provide services for persons with disabilities to accommodate their circumstances.
- 3) Where a planned service disruption occurs, the City of Welland will inform customers in advance of the anticipated duration of the disruption, and identify the alternative service.
- 4) Where an unanticipated service disruption occurs, the City of Welland will inform customers of the service disruption, of its anticipated duration and of any alternative services that are available.

Feedback and response process

- 1) The City of Welland will establish and make available a barrier-free process to receive and respond to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to citizens. The City will document all feedback occurrences.
- 2) The City of Welland will communicate through appropriate service channels (ie. TextNet, brail, sign language, website, etc.) How to access its customer service policy, alternative customer services and accessible customer service feedback process.

Use of service animals, support persons and assistive devices

- 1) The City of Welland will permit the presence and use of services animals, support persons, and assistive devices by people with disabilities.
- 2) If a guide dog or other service animal accompanies a person with a disability, the City will ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- 3) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the City will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods or services.

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- 4) If a support person accompanies a person with a disability, the City will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with the disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- 5) The City of Welland may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the 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.
- 6) If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the City of Welland will ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount payable by a support person.

Provision of Documents

- 1) Please contact the Human Resources Division for supportive documentation relating to this Customer Service Policy.
- 2) The City of Welland will provide a document, or information contained in a document, in a format that takes into account a person's disability.
- 3) The City of Welland and a person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

**CITY OF WELLAND
POLICY**

Policy Title: Accessibility Policy	
Date of Approval: June 15, 2021	Policy Number: SER-015-0009
Lead Role: Manager, Recreation & Culture	Support Role:
Cross Reference: Report R&C-2021-17	Next Review Date: 2023
Council File Number: 02-85	Revision Date:

Policy Statement:

The City of Welland is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner; we will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario’s accessibility laws. Further:

- The City of Welland is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.
- The City of Welland understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.
- The City of Welland is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services, and facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.
- Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

‘APPENDIX B’

Name of Policy SER-015-0009

POLICY DETAILS:

Training

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service and Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- a) Purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- b) Our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- c) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- d) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- e) How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- f) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities.

List Equipment/Devices

- Ubi-Duo
- Hearing assistance

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training on changes to the policies as and when they are made.

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Name of Policy SER-015-0009

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, and facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, and facilities.

We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services, and facilities.

Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- Assistive devices
- Accessible formats

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

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public, as well as third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- 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

Name of Policy SER-015-0009

- 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 prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

If a fee or fare is normally charged to a customer for accessing City of Welland goods, services, or facilities this fee/fare will not be charged for support persons.

In certain cases, the City of Welland may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- The person with a disability
- Others on the premises

Before making a decision, this organization name will:

- 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

Training Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, this organization will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

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Services/Facilities included in this policy include Civic Square, Welland Community Wellness Complex, Welland Arenas, Welland International Flatwater Centre, Quaker Rd. Baseball Stadium, Hooker St. Tennis Facility, City of Welland Parks, and City of Welland Community Halls. The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

- City of Welland website
- City of Welland Social Media accounts: Facebook and Twitter
- Facility closure notices at Welland Arena and Welland Community Wellness Complex

Feedback Process

The City of Welland welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback may be provided in the following ways:

- Via email to accessibility@welland.ca
- By Phone: 905 735-1700
- In person at 60 East Main St., Welland ON, L3B 3X4
- Accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request
 - Assistive devices are available for persons providing in-person concern or complaint via in-person: Ubi Duo, assistive hearing devices

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner:

- A notification of the complaint will be shared to the City's Accessibility Coordinator
- The Accessibility Coordinator will make the relevant staff aware of the complaint and will seek comment to explain the matter, or as required will seek feedback on how to rectify the matter in the most efficient manner
- A reply to the individual who has shared the complaint will be provided within 5 business days, providing an explanation and summary of next steps, or to request additional time to address the nature of the complaint

Information & Communications

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

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- a) In a timely manner, taking into account the person’s accessibility needs due to 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 or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on <https://www.welland.ca/Accessibility.asp>

The City of Welland is committed to meeting the internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario’s accessibility laws.

Notice of Availability of Documents

The City of Welland notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting a notice at <https://www.welland.ca/Accessibility.asp>

The City of Welland will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Procurement

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

Employment

The City of Welland notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are

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available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation. Further:

- We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.
- We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
- We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) When the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) When the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

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Design of Public Spaces

The City of Welland is committed to meeting accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Our public spaces include:

Recreational trails/beach access routes

- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
Accessible off-street parking
- Accessible on-street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queueing lines and waiting areas
-

Transportation

The City of Welland is committed to meeting accessibility laws when making our transportation services accessible. Our accessible transportation services include

- Welltrans
- Audio notification for bus stops
- Accessible bus access

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

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.