



Policy

Policy Name:	Accessibility Policy
Policy Owner:	Corporate & Financial Services – Manager, Projects and Support Services
Approved by:	Executive Management Team
Effective Date:	January 1, 2013
Date of Last Revision:	July 20, 2016 (as per Accessible Customer Service Standard Changes July 1/16)
Review Date:	Annually as needed (in conjunction with accessibility planning process)
Policy Status:	New -and- replacement of Accessible Customer Service Policy

Purpose:

This policy establishes the Accessible Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation; Employment, Information and Communications, Transportation and Public Spaces developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11* (AODA) for the City of Richmond Hill.

These standards are in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment's intent to "streamline, align and phase in accessibility requirements and allow for progress on accessibility and reduce the regulatory burden for obligated organizations."

Policy Principles:

The City of Richmond Hill is committed to providing equal access to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. This commitment extends to residents, visitors and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities.

City services, programs, goods, and facilities, are to be available to people with disabilities in a manner that takes into consideration the five items below:

- Is free from discrimination;
- Reflects the principles of dignity and independence;
- Seeks to provide integrated services;
- Provides an opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services, and;
- Takes into consideration a person's disability.

Definitions:

Below is a list of 21 definitions related to this policy:

Accessible Formats

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

Accommodation is the arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities.

Assistive Devices

Assistive Devices are defined as any piece of equipment or product that is use to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Barrier

Barrier shall mean anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. Barriers may include physical, architectural and attitudinal barriers as well as any information.

Communication Supports

Communication Supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications. Accommodations may vary depending on the persons unique needs.

Communications

Communications means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information in provided, sent or received.

Conversion Ready

Conversion ready means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.

Disability

Disability is defined, per Section 2 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11* and the *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19*, as per five bullets below:

- a) “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 [in] a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.*”

IAP

IAP means an Individual Accommodation Plan

Information

Information is data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format including text, audio, digital or images that convey meaning.

Internet Website

Internet Website means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public.

Kiosk

Kiosk is an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

Maintenance of Public Spaces

Maintenance of public spaces means activities that are intended to keep existing public spaces in good working order or restore the spaces or elements to their original condition examples of which include painting or minor repairs.

New Internet Website

New Internet Website means either a website with a new domain name or a website with an existing domain undergoing a significant refresh.

Redeployment

Redeployment means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organizations as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated.

Service Animals

Service animals are defined, per Section 4(9) of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07, as “an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) if the person provides documentation from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.”

Service Disruptions

A Service Disruption is defined as planned or unplanned unavailability of facilities or services operated by the City of Richmond Hill such as elevators or websites.

Support Person

A Support Person is defined, per Section 4(8) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07, as “a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.”

City

City means the Corporation of the City of Richmond Hill.

Unconvertible

Unconvertible means information or communications are unconvertible if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications or, the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines means the world wide web consortium recommendations dated 2008, entitled “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines” (WCAG) 2.0.

Scope

This Policy applies to all City employees, volunteers, and to any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, in accordance with the legislation.

Policy

General Standards

The City of Richmond Hill is a designated public sector organization under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The City of Richmond Hill has established an advisory committee that includes members with disabilities. The committee serves to advise Council about the requirements and implementation of AODA accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, including access for persons with disabilities to a building or premises, and other matters for which Council may seek advice.

Establishment of Accessibility Plans and Policies

The City shall produce a multi-year Accessibility Plan which outlines a phased in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and addresses the current and future requirements of the AODA. The plan will be posted on the City's website and shall be made available in an accessible format and with communication supports, upon request. Progress on the plan will be provided annually in an update report to Council. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

The City of Richmond Hill maintains policies governing how the City shall meet its requirements under the AODA, and the City shall make the documents publicly available and shall provide in an accessible format, upon request.

Procurement of Goods, Services, Facilities and Kiosks

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 on the City's behalf shall be required to undergo training on the requirements of the AODA accessibility standards

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 practicable and upon completion, the City shall keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Customer Service Standard

The City of Richmond Hill is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service to its customers. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that reflect the principles of independence, integration, dignity and equal opportunity.

Assistive Devices

A customer with a disability is permitted to use their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the City has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a customer with a disability or the health and safety of others.

In these situations and others, the City may offer a customer with a disability other measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City has such other measures available.

It is the responsibility of the customer with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

If the City provides any assistive devices, we will ensure a staff person knows how to operate that assistive device.

Service Animals

Where the City provides goods and services, customers with a disability may enter premises owned and/or operated by the City, accompanied by a service animal and may keep the service animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the service animal is not otherwise excluded by law, such as food preparation areas as prohibited by Food Premises, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 562 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7*. If a service animal is excluded by law, the City will use reasonable efforts to ensure that alternate means are available to enable the customer with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the City may ask the customer with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the customer requires the service animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times.

Support Persons

The City, where it provides goods and services, will ensure that a customer with a disability may enter premises owned and/or operated by the City with a support person and have access to their support person while on City premises.

At times, the City may require that a customer with a disability be accompanied by a support person while on City premises. This will be required where it is deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of the customer with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises

In situations where the confidential information of a customer with a disability is to be discussed, the City may require a statement of permission and/or consent from the customer with a disability allowing their support person to be present. The City may require the support person to sign an agreement where confidential City matters are being addressed.

Where a fee is charged for admission to an event, service or in connection with the customer's presence on City premises, the City will provide advanced notice of the amount, if any, charged to the support person.

Notice of Service Disruption

The City is aware that the operation of certain services and facilities is important to customers with disabilities. However, temporary disruptions in services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the City's control or knowledge.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including the following three bullets below:

- reason for the disruption;
- anticipated duration;
- description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruptions, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of an unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the City will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the City's services and/or facilities used by customers with disabilities, the City will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the City's

website (RichmondHill.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances, as soon as possible.

Information and Communication Standards

The City will create, provide and receive information and communication in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

If the City determines that it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications, or the technology to convert the information or communication is not readily available, we will be obligated to provide the person that requires the information, with an explanation as to why the information or communication are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the City of Richmond Hill shall, upon request provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities and consider the following four bullets:

- in a timely manner;
- taking into account the person's accessibility needs;
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons;
- consult with the person making the request and determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that the City does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are unconvertible, the department shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- (a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and,
- (b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

The City shall provide the public notice of the availability of alternative formats through its website.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by the City of Richmond Hill, or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product, shall be made accessible in accordance with the requirements of the World Wide Web Consortium Guidelines, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A initially and increasing to a Level AA by 2021. All

information backdated to 2012 will be accessible. If the City develops a new website, then all content will be accessible from the beginning.

Emergency Procedures, Plans and Information

The City shall provide all existing public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports in a timely manner, as soon as practicable, upon request.

Feedback

The City of Richmond Hill is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback on how services are delivered to people with disabilities shall be accepted, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback shall be collected by telephone, in writing, by e-mail and in person at any of the City's service locations including at Access Richmond Hill located at 225 East Beaver Creek Road. The feedback process shall be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required.

Information about the feedback process will be available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the City's website (RichmondHill.ca/Accessibility). Further information can be found in the City of Richmond Hill Customer Feedback Card Policy.

Employment Standards

The Employment Standard builds upon the existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code in relation to how we provide accessibility throughout the entire employment cycle; recruitment, assessment and retention. It applies in respect to new employees, current employees and does not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals.

Recruitment

The City of Richmond Hill shall post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process. The City shall consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability.

Assessment

Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing shall be notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request.

Retention

Successful applicants shall be notified about the City's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

Employee Supports

The City will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. The City will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employee

Upon an employee's request, the City shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports 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.

The City will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

If an employee disclosed they have a disability and requests accommodation, a documented Individual Accommodation Plan shall be processed for employees with disabilities with participation from both the employee and employer (see the Employment Accommodation Procedure.) The following twelve points for the development of an IAP will be considered:

- The employee's participation in the development of the IAP;
- Assessment on an individual basis;
- Identification of accommodations to be provided;
- Timelines for the provision of accommodations;
- The City of Richmond Hill may request an evaluation by outside medical or other expert, at our expense, to assist with determining accommodation and how to achieve accommodation;
- Employee may request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where represented, or otherwise a representative from the workplace where employee is not represented by a bargaining agent;
- Steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- Frequency with which the IAP will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;

- If denied, the reasons for denial are to be provided to the employee;
- A format that takes into account the employee's disability needs;
- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided;
- Identification of any other accommodation that is to be provided.

Return to Work Process

The City shall have in place a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability-related accommodations. This return to work process shall outline the steps that the City shall take to facilitate the return to work and include an IAP.

Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement and Redeployment

The City shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing for three points below:

- Performance management processes;
- Career development and advancement ;
- Redeployment procedures.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and the City is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the City reviews its general emergency response plan.

Transportation Standards

The transportation standard will make it easier for people to travel in Ontario, including people with disabilities, older Ontarians, and families travelling with children and strollers. The Transportation Standard does not apply to us an organization, but we will endeavor to inform staff of the upcoming changes and its significant impact and benefits to the community for people with disabilities accessing transportation.

Taxicabs

Owners and operators of taxicabs licensed by the City of Richmond Hill are prohibited from charging additional fares or fees to persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities and for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices. The City requires that taxicabs licensed by the City make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format.

The City shall consult with its municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.

Public Spaces Standard

The City of Richmond Hill shall incorporate accessibility into public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped on and after January 1, 2016. We will ensure that we follow the existing requirements stated under the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) in the following six areas:

- recreational trails and beach access routes;
- outdoor public use eating areas;
- outdoor play spaces;
- exterior paths of travel;
- accessible parking; and
- service related elements.

When developing recreational trails we shall consult with the public and persons with disabilities. We shall also provide maintenance and restoration of public spaces by ensuring our multi-year accessibility plan includes procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this section are not in working order. Accessibility reports shall be provided every two year.

Related Documents:

Below are related accessibility documents:

Federal Law and Covenants

Canadian Human Rights Act (1997)

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)

Canadian Employment Equity Act (1995)

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified in 2010)

Legislative and Administrative Authority

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O. Reg. 191/11

Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c H.19

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c 32

City of Richmond Hill Policies, Procedures and Plans

City of Richmond Hill Annual Accessibility Plan

City of Richmond Hill Customer Feedback Card Policy

City of Richmond Hill Accessible Customer Service Procedures

Alternative formats of this document are available by contacting:

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