	Page 1 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

Background

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA"). Its goal is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Currently, the AODA consists of five (5) standards with specific timelines for compliance across Ontario in an effort to remove barriers for people with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity for accessing goods, services, programs, facilities and employment.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11 entitled "Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation" ("IASR") came into force in July 2011. Part II of the IASR establishes accessibility standards specific to information and communications.


Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that information and communication released to the public from Clearview Township is produced in accessible format, whether it is created in-house or on behalf of the Township, in all aspects of municipal business in compliance with the requirements of the Information and Communications Standard under the IASR.

Producing information and communication in an accessible format:

Considering the needs of people with disabilities when interacting with the public (or individuals) and following accessible format design for developing information/communication accordingly. Information and communication interaction can include:

- Reports, Letters and Memos, News Releases
- Email
- Data files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Websites
- Meetings
- Newsletters
- Presentations
- Announcements
- Promotional Information, including Posters, Brochures and Catalogues
- Signs
- Emergency Plans
- Forms, Surveys and Comment Cards
- Menus
- Videos

 CLEARVIEW	Page 2 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
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Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all employees, council members, volunteers and other persons or organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township.

Application

This policy and procedure applies to all information and communication produced by Clearview Township for release to the public whether it is created in-house or on behalf of the Township (e.g. documents created by Consultants and/or Volunteers).

Exception:

As provided by the IASR, exemptions to the provision of accessible documents may include:


- When the technology to convert the information is not readily available; or
- The information may be lost in the conversion process and cannot be conveyed in a meaningful way (example: - visual information in an architectural blue print or graphic design that aims to create visual appeal for the purpose of gaining attention).

Policy

Clearview Township is committed to providing an accessible environment in which residents, visitors and employees have equitable access to municipal programs, services and facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence and provides equal opportunity to each individual.

The Township Shall:

- Ensure that information and communication for the general public will be written/communicated in a manner /format that will be best suited for the target audience. Publications and communications shall be created in electronic formats such as, but not limited to, PDF, TIFF, MS Word, jpeg, png, Video, Flash or mp3.
- Ensure that the Township's website(s) conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 – Level A, and increasing to Level AA by January 1, 2021.
- Make every effort to ensure internal-use documents are also prepared in accessible format to ensure dignity, independence and equal opportunity is

 CLEARVIEW	Page 3 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

provided to employees (as there may be employees affected by disability - now or in the future).

- Ensure that the person's disability is taken into account when communicating with a person affected by disability and four (4) core principles will be followed when preparing (or responding to) communication:
 - Dignity
 - Independence
 - Integration
 - Equal opportunity
- Upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of alternate accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities, in a timely manner, which takes into account the person's accessibility needs, at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. Consultation with the person making the request is required in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
- If it is not possible to convert the requested material, the author (or designate) of the material shall provide the requester with an explanation as to why the information or communication are unconvertible and a summary of the information or communications requested (verbally or in Word format – whichever is deemed most appropriate in the circumstances).
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.


Definitions

Accessible formats

May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio, electronic formats such as PDF, TIFF, MS Word, jpeg, png, Video, Flash or mp3; braille, read, write or draw, closed captioning, assistive devices, sign language or interpretation, repeating, clarifying or restarting the information, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communications

The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

	Page 4 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

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 communication. Common communication supports are:


- Screen reader software (e.g. Browse Aloud);
- Verbal explanation of a written document;
- Video captioning, transcripts;
- Alternative and augmentative communication supports such as an FM loop system or Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART);
- Sign language interpretation
- Read, write or draw
- Clarifying or restarting the information

Information

Includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

Disability

- 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 coordination, 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.
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a development 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;
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

 CLEARVIEW	Page 5 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

Assistive Device


Is a device that a person with a disability uses for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from information and documentation, e.g., Hearing Aids. At all times, it is the responsibility of the person with the disability to be in care and control of the assistive device.

Procedures and Guidelines

Printed materials and publications

In-house printed material and publications produced on behalf of the Township shall contain a note indicating "alternative formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information. Where possible, Township publications shall adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards, being, but not limited to:

1. Use high contrast colours for text and background (examples: black or dark blue text on a white or yellow background, or white/yellow text on a black/dark blue background, avoid use of red);
2. Printed material is most readable in black and white and reserve coloured text for titles, headlines or highlighted material;
3. Sans serif fonts are easier to read than serif fonts. Use Arial or Verdana font;
4. Do not use text smaller than 11 points (text that is 10 points or smaller is NOT accessible) - Keep the text preferably between 12 and 18 points;
5. Presentations should be at least 16 points;
6. Leading space, which is the space between lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30 per cent of the point size;
7. When emphasizing a word or sentence, use a bold or heavy font; avoid italics or upper-case letters;
8. Chunk information into bulleted or numbered lists instead of dense text;
9. Write clearly and use short sentences;
10. Align text to left margin. Avoid full justification. Aligning text to left margin keeps spacing between the words even;
11. Separate text into columns to make it easier to read;

	Page 6 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

12. Use wide margins (at least 0.5 inches);
13. Use larger spaces between sections than between paragraphs;
14. Use flat pages;
15. Use a matte or non-glossy finish to cut down on glare;
16. Avoid watermarks or complicated background designs;
17. Use distinctive colours, sizes and shapes on the covers of materials to make them easier to tell apart;
18. Avoid using the return key to add multiple spaces.
19. Additional guidelines for creating accessible documents are available in the attached guide – “How to Create Accessible Documents”


Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that any documents, presentations and/or web content that is created, is produced in an accessible format.
- Providing information and/or communication in alternate format upon request to the public to ensure accessibility and good customer service.
- Verifying their work for accessibility compliance (using the Microsoft Accessibility Checker) and resolving any issues prior to distributing materials.
- Ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Managers/Directors are responsible for:

- Administration of, and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure;
- Ensuring employees or third party “document creators” who are creating documents/informational material on the Township’s behalf (including volunteers and/or consultants) is producing documents/materials that meets the Information and Communication Standards under the IASR.
- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination towards persons with disabilities;
- Budgeting for the costs associated with accessible formats and communication supports or materials originating from their departments;
- Ensuring employees are providing the public with the requested accessible format and communication support;

	Page 7 of 7 Created: Sep 18, 2015
Subject: Accessible Information and Communication	Updated:
Approved By: Council	Approved: Dec.7, 2015

- Ensuring that employees are providing the public with an explanation as to why information or communications are unconvertible.

Communications and I.T. Coordinators are responsible for:

- Developing and managing accessible content for the Township's website(s);
- Supporting and maintain the accessible technology for the Township's website(s); Ensuring that the Township's website(s) conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 – Level A, and increasing to Level AA by January 1, 2021.
- Conducting accessibility checks for Clearview website(s) for accessibility compliance and will ensure that all web pages and web content meets WCAG 2.0 level A (level AA by 2021). Any issues reported shall be resolved immediately.
- Providing training on creating accessible documents for all new staff as part of the orientation process.
- Providing ongoing assistance with accessible document creation and related technology to existing staff as required.
- Ensuring that all public documents received for web content are accessible (unless they meet the exception criteria for unconvertible materials). Any documents that are not accessible will be returned to its creator for amendment.

Human Resources Manager/Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for:

- Providing orientation to all new staff on accessibility standards and related employee responsibilities.
- Providing ongoing guidance to all staff and managers to ensure that Clearview Township's communication and information is in compliance with the AODA.

Related Policies

- Accessibility: Operating principles and customer service

Attachments

- Guideline: How to Create Accessible Documents