

## **ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2001**

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 was passed into legislation by the Government of Ontario on December 31, 2001. The Act ensures that persons with disabilities have improved opportunities and provides for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in life. In September 2002 the Lieutenant Governor proclaimed that all municipalities must have a municipal accessibility plan adopted and published by no later than September 30, 2003.

### **Definition of Persons with Disabilities**

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 defines persons with disabilities in the following manner, which is the same definition used in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

A “disability” is:

a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes, but is not limited to:

- 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;
- 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*.

### **Definition of Barriers to Persons with Disabilities**

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 defines a “barrier” as anything that stops a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Some barriers include:

- physical barriers, e.g. a step at the entrance to a store;
- architectural barriers, e.g. no elevators in a building of more than one floor;
- information or communications barriers, e.g. a publication that is not available in large print;
- attitudinal barriers, e.g. assuming people with a disability can't perform a certain task when in fact they can;
- technological barriers such as traffic lights that change too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get

- through the intersection; and
- barriers created by policies or practices, for instance not offering different ways to complete a test as part of job hiring.

## **ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005**

The Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) provides for the development of standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

There will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 until they are repealed. The planning requirements of the ODA, 2001 will not be repealed until they have been replaced by standards under the new act.

The Minister responsible for the AODA is required to establish a process to develop and implement all accessibility standards necessary to achieving the purposes of this Act. Within this process, standards development committees are established by the Minister to develop proposed accessibility standards.

Persons or organizations may be required to meet more than one accessibility standard under the AODA.

## **JOINT ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

In April 2002, the Council of the County of Lennox and Addington supported the creation of a single joint accessibility advisory committee to address the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. Through consultation with the County's local municipalities, it was determined that a joint committee would be appointed for the County of Lennox and Addington, the Town of Greater Napanee and the Townships of Stone Mills and Addington Highlands. In January 2003, the municipalities supported the inclusion of the Lennox and Addington County General Hospital within the committee's mandate.

The Hospital and the Municipalities agreed to Terms of Reference for the joint accessibility advisory committee, the appointment of the Committee's membership and the designation of the administration contacts for the five public service agencies.

In 2005, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee recommended to County Council that the Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to:

- expand the membership of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee to include a representative of the business community and an additional representative of the community with a disability, for a total membership of seven.

- create an auxiliary panel as affiliates to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide support and advise, to be comprised of a maximum of eight participants including one staff representative from each of the five partner organizations of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, and three representatives from the community who are directly involved with services to improve accessibility and opportunities for citizens with disabilities.

County Council adopted these recommendations with the passing of By-law No. 3012/05 on September 28, 2005 and obtained the confirmation of the Committee's joint partners for these changes.

In May 2006, Loyalist Township Council requested that the mandate of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee be broadened to include the Township's participation. County Council approved this request. The Terms of Reference for the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee were revised in June 2005 to reflect the addition of Loyalist Township as a partner. The vacancies in the Committee's membership were also filled at that time. The Committee's joint partners confirmed the changes.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Jointly Serving:**  
**County of Lennox and Addington**  
**Township of Addington Highlands**  
**Town of Greater Napanee**  
**Loyalist Township**  
**Township of Stone Mills**  
**Lennox and Addington County General Hospital**

#### **A. Mandate**

The mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to advise the Councils of the County of Lennox and Addington, the Township of Addington Highlands, the Town of Greater

Napanee, Loyalist Township and the Township of Stone Mills and the Board of Governors of Lennox and Addington County General Hospital on the preparation and implementation of annual accessibility plans in order to remove barriers for people with disabilities and ensure that no new barriers are created.

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will include reviewing and advising the Councils and the Hospital Board on the following areas:

- site plans of new and existing municipal buildings.
- major capital purchases.
- significant renovations to municipal facilities.
- leased facilities or any other facility used as a municipal building.
- goods and services provided by the municipality or agents providing services under contract with the municipality.

## **B. Membership**

### **I. Appointment**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be comprised of the following members appointed by County Council:

- two (2) members of County Council
- four (4) members from the County community with disabilities
- one (1) member from the community with involvement in business

The members will be confirmed by the Councils of the Township of Addington Highlands, the Town of Greater Napanee, Loyalist Township and the Township of Stone Mills, as well as the Board of Governors of Lennox and Addington County General Hospital.

## **II. Criteria**

The following criteria will be used in the appointment of the Accessibility Advisory Committee members from the County community. Individuals to be considered shall:

- exhibit a strong commitment to the community in order to improve its accessibility.
- sensitive to the accessibility barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities
- demonstrate understanding of the municipality's roles and service responsibilities
- demonstrate understanding of the County community's business, social and cultural interests and diversities.
- volunteer the necessary time to ensure full participation and interest.

## **III. Attendance**

The Chairperson of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will



require the resignation of any member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings without notice or reason.

#### **IV. Term**

A member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee from the County community will be appointed for a term of two (2) years, which may be repeated.

#### **C. Auxiliary Panel**

An auxiliary panel will provide support and advice to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and will be comprised of the following nine (9) members:

- one (1) staff representative from each of the six (6) partner organizations of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
- three (3) representatives from the County community who are directly involved with services to improve accessibility and opportunities for citizens with disabilities.

Note: The three (3) representatives from the County community will be appointed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years which may be repeated.

## **D. General**

### **I. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be selected by the accessibility Advisory Committee from within its membership at the commencement of each calendar year.

### **II. Meetings**

Meetings will be held 3-4 times per year, as required, or at the call of the Chairperson. An agenda for the meeting will be circulated in advance and a record of the proceedings will be maintained.

### **III. Report to Councils and Hospital Board**

A report outlining the recommendations of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to the municipal councils and Hospital Board will be filed on a regular basis. No action shall be taken on a recommendation until such time as it has been adopted by the respective councils.

### **IV. Quorum**

A quorum for Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings will consist of four (4) members. A majority vote of members present will be used to reach a decision on the matter.

## **Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Activities**

### **Highlights from 2011**

#### **TOWNSHIP OF STONE MILLS Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Stone Mills is committed to:

- The continued improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all persons with disabilities.
- The concept of universal design, which makes the environment more user friendly for everyone.
- The provision of quality services to members of the Municipal community with disabilities.
- The continued participation on the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and support of its work to develop, recommend and monitor solutions to overcome barriers.

## **Recent Initiatives to Remove/Prevent Barriers**

The County of Lennox and Addington has attempted to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities through a number of initiatives in 2010 and 2011. Some of these initiatives include:

- The Municipality provided accessible customer service training for all members of County Council, County staff and volunteers.
- The County updated its Emergency Plan, to include accessibility for persons with disabilities during emergency situations.
- Disabled parking spaces at the Municipal Office and Public Works Facility were repainted and additional signage for the spaces was provided in order to make them more distinct and easier to distinguish.
- Opened the new fully accessible library branch in Yarker, which includes: an automatic door opener, wide aisles, wheelchair accessible circulation desk, a handicap accessible washroom and large print keyboard and large viewing monitor.
- Interior and exterior ramps were built to

## **Measures to be Undertaken in the Coming Year**

The Township of Stone Mills will undertake the following measures in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities:

- Through the development of the 2012 Budget, Municipal Council will consider fiscally responsible solutions to address accessibility deficiencies and identify potential resources.
- The Municipality, through the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, will continue a program of consultation with persons with disabilities through representative agencies in the area.
- The Municipality, through the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, will continue to work to raise awareness regarding accessibility issues.
- The Municipality will develop policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

## **Communication of the Accessibility Plan**

The Township of Stone Mills Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Municipality's website and available at the branch

libraries located in Camden East, Tamworth and Yarker.