

Prince Township Accessibility Plan 2019 - 2024

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. These include Braille, larger print, various electronic formats and being read aloud at the Municipal Office.

Introduction

This plan was developed to comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and the corresponding document entitled *A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*. Under the AODA, Prince Township is required to establish, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that outlines the community's strategies to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. It is required to update this plan once every five years and review it annually to assess the progress made to implement the strategies outlined in the Plan.

About This Plan

Prince Township is classified as a small designated public-sector organization with 1-49 employees with a population of 1005 according to the 2016 census. As such, Prince Township is required to meet certain accessibility standards on a given timeline. The Prince Township Accessibility Plan 2019 - 2024 is an update, developed to meet these standards in compliance with the AODA regulations and correspond to the relevant sections under *A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* accordingly.

For ease of use, this plan is divided into the following categories:

1. General Requirements
2. Customer Service Standard
3. Information and Communications Standards Requirements
4. Employment Standard Requirements
5. Transportation Standard Requirements

These categories correspond to the format of the AODA regulation, with the addition of the Customer Service Standard. The addition of a "Built Environment" category at the end identifies specific accessibility barriers pertaining to the Prince Township Community Centre.

Under each category, the intent for meeting each AODA regulation is explained. In the "Going Forward" section Prince Township identifies how it will fulfill the level of accessibility required under the AODA legislation. These requirements are time-sensitive and the deadlines for compliance for Prince Township are listed along with each requirement.

General Requirements

Sections 3 - Accessibility Policies

Under *A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, all organizations are required to establish policies on how they will meet their obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

This document seeks to fulfill those requirements for Prince Township through a written plan made publicly available in multiple formats.

"Going Forward"

Prince Township will review their Accessibility Plan annually and update it every 5 years.

Section 4 - Accessibility Plans

The intent of this requirement is to ensure Prince Township develops a multi-year accessibility plan, outlining strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. Once developed, Prince Township must maintain their accessibility plan.

The Prince Township Accessibility Plan 2013 - 2018 was developed in consultation with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and CNIB. The "Built Environment" category details recommendations from representatives of these organizations to improve accessibility at the Prince Township Community Centre.

"Going Forward"

- Prince Township will ensure their Accessibility Plan is available on the Township website and available at the Municipal Office in multiple accessible formats.
- Council will be required to review the Plan annually and make changes as necessary. It is requested Council consider budgeting for and implementing the accessibility improvements proposed.

Section 5 - Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The intent of this requirement is to ensure proper accessibility considerations are made when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so.

"Going Forward"

- Accessibility will be a consideration in all Municipal purchasing decisions.

Section 7 - Training

Prince Township was required to provide training on the AODA and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The link for the Accessibility Training online (<https://aoda.ca/free-online-training/>) has been distributed to all department heads for all staff and volunteers to refresh their training.

"Going Forward"

-Prince Township will maintain a record of the dates when employees receive such training and the number of employees to whom it is provided.

-Training will be given through the online AODA training module.

-All training will comply with AODA regulations and will focus on fulfilling the Customer Service Standards.

Customer Service Standards

The Customer Service Standards sets out obligations requiring that Prince Township provide goods and services in a way that is accessible to people with disabilities.

As detailed in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service document, Prince Township shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration, except when alternate measures are necessary to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Equal opportunity

Prince Township will allow certified service dogs into the Community Centre. Service animals will not be allowed in areas with food prep, or where otherwise disallowed by law.

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Individual accommodations will be made available as requested.

Customer Service training regarding accessibility will be provided to all new hires.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA and an awareness of the Prince Township Accessibility Plan 2019 - 2024;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and telecommunications devices for the hearing impaired;

- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

Training shall be mandatory for all new employees upon their initial orientation. In addition, all employees should receive additional training every 5 years thereafter. Training shall be done online through the AODA Training at <https://aoda.ca/free-online-training> or in person through the CAO or another authorized individual, in compliance with relevant government legislation, as updated.

"Going Forward"

- All Prince Township staff and volunteers re committed to delivering a high standard of accessible customer service with individual accommodation being made as required to the best of the Township's resources.
- Policies and public documents are available in alternative formats upon request by patrons through contacting the Municipal Office.
- Mechanism for gaining public feedback will be offered to ensure the Township is fulfilling a high level of accessible customer service.
- All employees shall be informed of accessible Customer Service Standards and shall complete the required training.

Information and Communication Standard

The intent of the requirements falling under the Information and Communication Standard are to ensure municipalities provide and receive information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. These include:

Section 11 - Accessible Feedback Processes

The processes for receiving and responding to public feedback are available in accessible formats and with appropriate communication supports, as requested.

"Going Forward"

- Prince Township requires all comments/complaints to be submitted to the Municipal Office in writing. Upon patron request, individual accommodation can be made as required and office staff can assist with this writing process or transcribe a verbal comment or complaint.

Section 12 - Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The intent of this requirement is that all organizations provide information and communicate in an accessible manner about their goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities, on request.

"Going Forward"

- Public documents are available in paper format at the Municipal Office and most documents are also available on the Township website. Alternative viewing formats for public documents will be made available in a timely manner and at a

cost that is no more than the regular price charged to others, through contacting the Municipal Office.

- Through consultation with the patron placing the request, staff can help provide the appropriate accessible format to meet specific accommodation needs.
- If requested, municipal documents are available to be ordered in Braille. However, there is a waiting process.

Section 13 - Emergency and Public Safety Information

The intent of this requirement is that publicly available emergency and public safety information is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as requested.

"Going Forward"

- Prince Township's CAO/Administrator will ensure all employees are aware of evacuation and emergency procedures. Individualized emergency plans are provided to employees under Section 27.
- Evacuation plans and safety information has been posted in the Community Centre.
- Residents who have self-identified as requiring extra assistance in the event of a power outage or natural disaster are kept on record through the Vulnerable Persons Registry. First responders will be aware of these individuals and will provide the appropriate assistance they need. Notification asking residents who need extra assistance to self-identify to the Municipal Office will continue to be published in the Township newsletter and available online.

Section 14 - Accessible Websites and Web Content

The intent of this requirement is that public organizations make their websites accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility.

"Going Forward"

- The Prince Township website is in compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 at Level AA, which is the provincial standard.
- The Township received grant money to improve the website and fulfill accessibility requirements.

Section 19 - Public Libraries

The intent of this requirement is that, when requested, public libraries provide access to accessible library materials, where they exist.

"Going Forward"

-the Prince Township Library attempts to offer accessible formats for library materials as best as can be provided.

-the Library Board will publicly post notifications to let the public know about their accessible materials and the accessibility options available to enjoy library materials.

Employment Standards

The intent of the Employment Standard is to integrate accessibility into existing employment processes by ensuring that the needs of employees with disabilities are considered throughout all stages of the employment life cycle. The Employment Standard is intended to remove barriers to employment during the recruitment and employment processes. The Employment Standard applies only to paid employees.

Sections 22-24 - Recruitment

The intent of these requirements are for Prince Township to provide notification to all internal and external job applicants that, on request, accommodations for disabilities will be provided to support their participation in all aspects of the recruitment process.

"Going Forward"

-Prince Township will provide notification in written job postings and verbally during the interview and recruitment processes about accommodation options for job candidates.

-Prince Township will encourage applicants needing accommodation during the recruitment process to self-identify to the CAO/Administrator. Accommodations will then be made to best of the Township's resources, while maintaining the integrity of the recruitment process.

- The successful applicant will be notified by the CAO/Administrator of policies to accommodate employees with disabilities when offering employment.

Sections 25, 26, 28 - Employee Accommodation

The intent of these requirements are for Prince Township to inform new and existing employees of the policies for supporting employees with disabilities, including providing employment-related accommodations for disabilities. Written accommodation plans may be developed for employees, as needed.

"Going Forward"

-Prince Township will determine whether applicants require accommodation upon hiring and will provide accommodations suited to the needs of the individual.

-Prince Township will maintain a policy (as detailed in the Human Resources Manual) of self-identification to the CAO/Administrator of accessibility needs open to all employees at any time.

-Written accommodation plans may be jointly developed, as required, by employees and the CAO/Administrator.

Section 27 -Workplace Emergency Information

The intent of this requirement is that all employers will prepare for the specific needs that employees with disabilities may have in emergency situations.

"Going Forward"

-Annual reviews of evacuation procedures for staff.

-Evacuation plans and routes are posted in the Community Centre.

-Any employee requiring special accommodation or assistance during an emergency will need to self-identify their needs to the CAO/Administrator.

-Special arrangements or accommodations to help all employees feel safe during an emergency will be made to the best of the Township's resources and abilities.

Section 29 - Employees Returning to Work

The intent of this requirement is that employers will have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities. If an individual's illness or injury is covered by the return to work provisions of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, then that Act's return to work process would apply.

"Going Forward"

-Prince Township will follow the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and the Return to Work policies detailed in the Human Resources Manual to document consistent policy decisions for injured employees.

Sections 30 - Performance Management

The intent of this requirement is that Prince Township, as an employer, uses performance management processes that take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities.

"Going Forward"

-Prince Township is committed to creating a productive work environment, where all employees are given the tools needed to succeed.

-Prince Township supervisors will provide informal and formal coaching and feedback in a manner that takes into account an employee's disability.

-If an employee's responsibilities change, revisions to that employee's individual accommodation plan may also need to be changed.

-Performance appraisals will be used as tools to help facilitate employee success, while considering accessibility concerns and working to meet accommodation needs.

Section 31 - Career Development and Advancement

As an employer, Prince Township must provide career development and advancement opportunities that take into account the accessibility needs of employees who have disabilities. This may provide employees with disabilities the opportunities to advance within their organizations.

"Going Forward"

-When providing career development and advancement opportunities, Prince Township will take into account what accommodations employees with disabilities may need to succeed elsewhere in the organization or to take on new responsibilities in their current position. Revisions to the employee's individual accommodation plan may then be made as necessary, jointly by the employee and the CAO/Administrator.

Section 32 - Redeployment

All employers that use redeployment processes must consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when moving them to other positions, so that employees can continue to have their accommodation needs met.

"Going Forward"

-The CAO/Administrator will provide notification to employees during redeployment, requesting employees to self-identify their accessibility needs in their new position.

-Employees with individual accommodation plans or with specific accommodation equipment will be able to continue to have these when redeployed in a different position.

Transportation

Currently, Prince Township is not offering or facilitating any transportation services for residents. However, the Red Cross volunteer drivers are available to help seniors and people with physical mobility disabilities. Please call 705-759-4547 ext 33 and speak with Jenny McDonald to see if you are eligible for this service.

Built Environment

The Prince Township Community Centre has identified a number of physical barriers to accessibility. All of these concerns need to be addressed over the next few years in going forward.

It is recommended that Council, staff and community members work together to plan and budget appropriately to rectify these barriers over the next five years. It is at the discretion of Council to identify and address the most urgent barriers on a priority basis.

Municipal Office

The Municipal Office has a few accessibility issues to address, most significantly the height of the counter. The inclusion of chairs in the office is appreciated.

- Counter height - At this point a table and chair is provided at the counter. Budget is being proposed for 2021 for a new counter with two levels
- Automatic opener for doors have been installed at both entrances
- Contrast the door frame and the door with a different coloured paint

Museum

The Museum has many displays in one classroom, so it is important to keep enough clear floor space available with wide aisles to pass between the displays. Another issue is ensuring visibility so the displays can easily be read and seen.

- Interior doorway is a bit too narrow. Budget for 2021 to be proposed for this project.
- Cabinets have been moved to allow for a wider space for a wheelchair to enter at the doorway
- Displays have been arranged around the perimeter of the room for easier access.
- Improved signage may be needed along with audio guided tours for those with vision impairments
- Obtain valuable feedback from the public concerning Museum accessibility after patron visits
- Signage for the Museum could be made more clearly visible

Should the Museum decide to charge a user fee for an event, a policy regarding fees for support persons would be required. For example, if a visitor to the Museum is accompanied by a support worker, the support worker would be charged 50% of the fare. Such a policy, if implemented, must be publicly displayed in a visible manner and clearly posted on the Museum page of the website. At this point, there is no intention to charge fees for any visitors.

- Exterior walkways should be of a continuous hard, smooth, stable, non-slip material. Acceptable materials for walkways include finely ground stone, concrete, asphalt and brick. It is important to make the ground more level for improved access between the Museum buildings. Budget considerations for 2021 for this purpose are being proposed.

Washrooms

The washroom renovations this year will address some accessibility barriers; however there is always more that can be done.

- Door actuators or automatic openers as the main door is heavy to push open
- Temperature control taps to prevent scalding
- Inclusion of at least one-full length mirror is recommended to accommodate all persons
- Need 5 ft. of clear floor space in accessible stall to allow for proper turning radius - accomplished in one stall
- No diagonal grab bar - install a second grab bar to form an "L" shape will allow people to lift and pull themselves up
- Move toilet paper to middle of "L" grab bar, but not in the way of the grab bar

Hall

The Community Hall is fairly accessible when both double entry doors are opened.

- Additional lower coat rack is being ordered.
- Mark the edges of the steps with bright yellow paint or tape

During a security alarm or a fire alarm, visual indicators (eg. flashing lights) are recommended.

Kitchen

The kitchen is currently is not very accessible due to the number of appliances and space limitations present. Some improvements can be made with simple re-arrangements, while other would require significant renovations to rectify. It is recommended that accessibility be kept in mind for any long-term or major kitchen renovations undertaken.

- Both doorways to the kitchen are too narrow
- Aisles around kitchen island could be widened
- A larger turning radius is required at kitchen entrance ways
- It is suggested that the microwave cart is moved to allow for more room at the doorway
- Fridge position - pushed back against the wall for easier access
- Signage for the Kitchen could be made more clearly visible

Library

The library has fairly good accessibility. Barriers in the library may be non-physical, such as assistance required for computer usage or in utilising other library resources. Accommodations made upon patron requests are appreciated.

- Screen reader software would assist the visually-impaired
- Door to library is only 30 inches wide, which is too narrow
- Library sign is quite busy - clearer lettering with 70% contrast in colour would improve visibility

Parking Lot

The signage for access to parking at the North entrance of the Community Centre is adequate, which directs to a paved parking area at the North entrance. It is important to remember that side-loading accessibility vans need 8 ft. of space for loading and unloading.

- North doors now have door actuators to open as they are quite heavy
- Main (east) entrance doors also have door actuators now.
- Label the outside doors

Conclusion

It is our hope that Prince Township's commitment to accessibility and inclusion will be fulfilled with the help of this document as we work together to build a more equitable community for everyone.

The intent is for this document to be utilized daily and referenced often. Appropriate budgeting and due consideration to decisions affecting accessibility in Prince Township are necessary to move forward. It is required for Council to review the Accessibility Plan annually and update it every 5 years.

