

# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2024

FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA  
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

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# INTRODUCTION

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) came into force and effect to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in identifying, removing and preventing barriers. The ODA mandates municipalities prepare an Accessibility Plan. The ODA continues to be in force and effect until it is repealed.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) reinforces the requirements of developing and enforcing of accessibility standards by all organizations to make Ontario fully accessible by the year 2025. A full range of disabilities are addressed by the Act including physical, sensory, mental health development and learning. The AODA identifies the following accessibility standards:

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Accessible Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07, came into force and effect on January 1, 2008 and required municipalities to establish policies, procedures and practices on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

On July 1, 2016, the Accessible Customer Service Standard went under a review and amendments were made to bring it in line with the Integrated Accessible Standards Regulation.

The next four (4) standards, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces have been combined under one regulation – the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation – is now law and is being phased in between 2011-2025.

## MUNICIPAL PROFILE

Ramara Township is situated in Central Ontario along the northeastern shores of Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. Ramara is located in Simcoe County, in the heartland of Cottage Country, offering a touch of urban lifestyle in beautiful rural surroundings.

Ramara is a gateway to relaxation, recreational activities, and retirement communities. The Township of Ramara has miles of shoreline properties, clean water, public beaches, cottage rentals, summer resorts, family camping, sporting activities, Casino Rama, conference centres (Geneva Park and Fern Resort), as well as, retirement/resort communities (Lagoon City and Bayshore Village). Ramara is proud of its strong agricultural and resource extraction industries.

Just imagine relaxing in a comfortable chair, reading a good book, enjoying the warm summer breeze, or perhaps watching the glorious sunset over a beautiful lake.

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Ramara is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Ramara believes in integration and equal opportunity. Ramara is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

## ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

Ramara adopted the following policies under the Accessible Customer Service Standard November 2009, which have been amended from time to time:

### Guide Dogs/Service Animals

Any person with a disability accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal is to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him/her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded from the premises by law.

If the service animal is excluded from the premises by law, the Township will look to other available measures to allow the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

## Support Persons

When a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, both are permitted to enter together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. It may be a requirement of the Township that a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person in order to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability while on the premises.

Where fees for goods or services are required as admission to the premises the Township will waive any fee or fare with respect to support persons.

## Disruption of Services

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in a facility or service usually used by persons with disabilities, the Township shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

The notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and provide alternatives, if available.

## Feedback Process

The public is permitted to provide feedback on accessibility of the provision of goods and services by telephone or in person through the Customer Care Call Centre; correspondence; and the Annual Accessibility Public Meeting.

## Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use personal assistive devices in order to access goods or services of the Township. The Township may also provide assistive devices if available in order that persons with disabilities may access the goods or services.

## Training for Staff

All employees, including volunteers, students and contractors shall receive training on the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

# GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plans

The Township shall establish, implement, maintain and document this multi-year Accessibility Plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation; post the Accessibility Plan on the Township's website, and provide the Plan in an accessible format upon request; and review and update the Accessibility Plan at least every five (5) years.

The Township shall establish, review and update this Plan in consultation with persons with disabilities, and in consultation with Senior Staff.

The Township shall update this Plan following the Annual Public Meeting and report to Council on the progress of measures taken to implement the accessibility strategy. The updated Plan will be posted on the Township's website. Accessible formats are available upon request.

## Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The Township shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not feasible to do so. If the Township determines that it is not feasible to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, it shall provide an explanation to the public, upon request, in accessible format or with the appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable.

## Self-Service Kiosks

If the Township begins providing public services through one (1) or more interactive electronic self-serve kiosks, it shall consider and incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring such kiosks.

## Training

The Township shall ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the IASR and on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities to all employees and volunteers; all persons who participate in developing policies; and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Township. The

training shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons.

Every person shall be trained as soon as feasible and such training shall be provided in respect of any changes to the policies on an ongoing basis. The Township shall keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

### Emergency Information

Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information that is made available to the public will be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as practicable.

### Feedback

Ramara shall maintain its accessible feedback process as developed under O. Reg 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Further, the Township shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request. Ramara shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### Accessible Websites and Web Content

2014-Ramara shall ensure that all new internet websites and web content on those sites conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A.

2021-Ramara shall ensure that all internet websites and web content on those sites conform to the WCAG 2.0, Level AA.

### Accessible formats and communication supports

Ramara shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request, and in a timely manner that takes into account the person's needs; and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged for the same information. The Township will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or

communication support. The Township shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

The Plan will be available to the public on the Township's website. The Plan is also available in alternate formats upon request.

## EMPLOYMENT

The Township shall:

- Make reasonable effort to create an overall accessible work environment.
- Create a suitable accessible work environment for employees with disabilities as soon as practicable after the Township becomes aware of the disability.
- Consult with the employee to take into account their accessibility needs.

Employees are responsible to make the Township aware of their disability. However, if an employee appears to be struggling in the workplace or is clearly unwell, the employee's Supervisor/Manager can consult with the Chief Administrative Officer to obtain advice.

### Workplace Emergency Response Information

Ramara will provide individualized emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

### Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

Ramara will advise job applicants that people with disabilities will be accommodated throughout the recruitment, assessment and selection process. If a job applicant requests accommodations, Ramara will consult with them and make adjustments that best suit their needs. Successful applicants will be notified of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### Information for Employees

Ramara will provide information to employees with disabilities in a manner that meets with their disability.

## Processes to Accommodate Employees

Ramara will work with employees to develop plans and processes that meet their needs.

## Personal Workplace Emergency Response Information

In order to prepare for the specific needs of employees with disabilities in emergency situations such as fire, power outages, severe weather, natural disasters and security incidents, the Township shall work with employees with disabilities to develop individualized workplace emergency response information while discreetly respecting the employee's privacy.

## Individualized Accommodation Plans

The Township will develop written Individual Accommodation Plans for employees with disabilities upon request. Individual accommodation plans are not required if the employee does not make the Township aware of their disability.

## Return to Work Process

The Township shall ensure that the written Return to Work Process adequately supports employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require accommodations to return to work. The process will address steps to take to facilitate the return to work including the development of an individual accommodation plan.

## Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment

The Township shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and Individual Accommodation Plans in the Performance Management process, when providing career development and advancement opportunities, and when considering redeployment for an employee with a disability.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Accessible Taxicabs

If Council decides to licence taxicabs, Ramara will ensure they are prohibited from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons

without disabilities for the same trip; and from charging an additional fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.

## DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

The Design of Public Spaces Standards applies to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped on and after January 1, 2016.

### Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes

The Township will ensure that any new or reconstructed recreational trails and beach access routes will meet the requirements of the design of public spaces standard including minimum width and height measurements and surface material and shall consult with the public, persons with disabilities and the appropriate staff with regards to:

- i. The slope of the trail
- ii. The need for and location of ramps
- iii. The need for, location and design of: rest areas, passing areas, viewing areas, amenities and any other pertinent features of the trail

Trailhead signage must contain information about the physical characteristics of the trail (i.e. length, average and minimum width and location of amenities). Other media used to provide trail information such as website or brochure must contain the same information as the trailhead signage.

Note: Wilderness trails, backcountry trails, portage routes and trails meant exclusively for cross-country skiing, mountain biking or driving motorized recreational vehicles (i.e. snowmobiles and ATVs) are excluded from the Standard.

### Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

The Township will ensure that any new or reconstructed outdoor public use eating areas meet the requirements of the Standard including:

- i. Minimum 20% of new tables added, and no fewer than one, must be accessible to people using mobility devices;
- ii. Ground surface leading to accessible tables must be level, firm and stable for people using mobility devices;
- iii. Sufficient clear space surrounding accessible tables for people using mobility devices;

## Outdoor Play Spaces

The Township will ensure that any new or reconstructed outdoor play spaces containing play equipment such as swings and/or play features such as logs, rocks, sand or water meet the following requirements:

- i. Consult with the public, people with disabilities and appropriate staff to identify the needs of users in the local community;
- ii. Incorporate sensory components to promote active play experiences (sand, water or sound);
- iii. Ensure there is sufficient space for children and caregivers to move through, in and around the play space;
- iv. Ensure ground surface is firm, stable and shock absorbing to prevent injuries;

## Exterior Paths of Travel

Exterior paths of travel are sidewalks and walkways but do not include paths of travel regulated by the Ontario Building Code (from parking lot to building entrance). The Township will ensure that newly constructed or reconstructed exterior paths of travel will meet the technical requirements of the Standard:

- i. Minimum width and height measurements for sidewalks and walkways;
- ii. Minimum width, maximum steepness of slopes, size of landings and handrail requirements;
- iii. Stairs that connect to an exterior path of travel will be a certain size, have high tonal contrast and tactile walking surface at the top of each flight
- iv. Pedestrian curb ramps will align with direction of travel, minimum width and maximum steepness, tactile walking surface indicators;
- v. Accessible pedestrian signals will include features for people with vision loss and those who are deaf-blind;
- vi. Consult with the public, people with disabilities and the appropriate staff regarding the placement and design of rest areas;

## Accessible Parking

Off and on-street parking requirements when building new or making significant modifications:

- i. Off-street accessible parking will include:
  - a. The required number of standard width accessible spaces and wider spaces identified as “van accessible”;
  - b. Accessible parking spaces will include access aisles between the parking spaces;
  - c. Accessible parking space signage must meet the requirements of Regulation 581 of the Highway Traffic Act.

- ii. On-street accessible parking will include:
  - a. Consultation with public, people with disabilities and appropriate committee/staff regarding the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking;

## Obtaining Services

The Township will ensure that all new or replaced service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas, whether inside or outside, include a section that is accessible to people with disabilities:

- i. An accessible service counter must be useable by someone sitting in a mobility aid and have enough clear space to approach the counter
- ii. Queuing areas need to be wide enough to accommodate people using mobility devices and if there is more than one queuing line, there must be least one clearly identified as an accessible queuing area.
- iii. New or significantly altered waiting areas must have at least 3% of the new seating area to be accessible and no less than one accessible seating space.

## Maintenance Planning of Public Spaces

The Township will incorporate within its accessibility plan, procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with disruptions when accessible elements required under the design of public spaces standards are not in proper working order.

## PRIORITY LIST

Recommendations to Council:

### ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Continue to educate owners of public buildings when applying for renovations for permits that all structural renovations must be accessible
- Continue to investigate Rural Broadband sources
- Continue to receive public and staff feedback regarding barriers to accessibility and act upon it when deemed necessary by staff and Council
- Continue to improve access for all services for people of all abilities
- Continue with inclusion recreation for people with special needs
- Recreation & Parks Master Plan recommendations ongoing
- Annual Autism Awareness Flag Raising Ceremony
- Continue to implement Age Friendly programs and initiatives

## SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES

- Implementation of software initiatives to allow more online participation by residents;

## LONG TERM INITIATIVES (as identified by the public)

- Act upon recommendations received by the Active Transportation Plan for safe bicycle and pedestrian routes
- Accessible chirping signals suggested at traffic lights in Brechin and Atherley on Provincial Highway 12
- Public access to beach at Lagoon City - Suggestion- Boardwalk
- Accessible Trails and Open Spaces
- Continue to investigate transit options

## REVIEW AND MONITORING

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually following the Public Meeting, which will be held following the Committee of the Whole meeting in September of each year.

As barriers are identified, further recommendations will be made to Council. Township policies, bylaws, programs and services will continue to be reviewed, monitored and added throughout the year and years to come. The Township will strive to become barrier free to persons with disabilities.

## COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

This plan will be available at the Township Administration Building, the Ramara Centre, both libraries and on the Township's website at [www.ramara.ca](http://www.ramara.ca). This plan will also be available in an alternate format or with the appropriate communication support as soon as practicable, upon request.

If you have any questions regarding the Accessibility Plan for the Township of Ramara, please feel free to contact:

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