



# MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2021 - 2026

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## Introduction

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (A.O.D.A.) and Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, organizations must create a multi-year plan, that outlines what steps an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The multi-year plan must be updated at least once every five years as well as provide annual status reports.

The Corporation of the Township of Ramara (hereinafter called Ramara) strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Ramara is committed to fulfilling its requirement under the A.O.D.A. This plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The plan is reviewed annually and updated at least once every 5 years.

## 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*.

## Past Achievements (to 2019)

### Customer Service

- ✓ New administration building was officially opened in July 2011 allowing for a fully accessible work environment, Council Chambers and public access point.
- ✓ Amendments to the Accessible Customer Service Policy.
  - Incorporate into the IASR;
  - Continue to train all members of the organization on accessible customer service;
  - Service Animals – expand to accept documentation from a regulated health professional;
  - Support Persons – to waive admission fee or fare for support person, if one exists;
  - Feedback – ensure feedback process is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request;
  - Documenting policies, practices and procedures – continue to put accessible customer service policy in writing and make it publically available.
- ✓ Recreation Dept. continues to seek programs that meet the rising population of seniors within the Township
- ✓ Recreation Dept. continues to seek programs that are FREE or low cost to allow everyone to participate in activities without a financial burden
- ✓ Recreation continues to encourage support persons or guide dogs to accompany persons with disabilities to recreation programs at no cost to the support person

### Information and Communications

- ✓ Annual Public Accessibility Plan Meeting
- ✓ Ramara Centre LED sign installed to serve as an information vehicle to the public
- ✓ UPDATE – red bulbs are considered hard to read at night, staff looking into options to replace (grants)
- ✓ Rural Broadband connection program information sessions held in October 2012. Township continues to work with the County and internet service providers to find alternatives for residents who cannot access reliable and affordable high speed internet.
- ✓ Implementation of online newsletter
- ✓ Council receives Recreation & Parks Master Plan
- ✓ Upgrade to Ramara Township website allowed for electronic accessibility of Council Meeting Minutes and Agendas
- ✓ Implementation of iCompass (electronic meeting management software)
- ✓ Implementation of Bang the Table (online community engagement software)
- ✓ Audio recordings of meetings available online

## Employment

- ✓ Inclusion Facilitator hired for recreation (camp) programs
- ✓ Positions for Leaders in Training were created for children with special needs who have aged out of the day camp environment – giving them opportunities for Community Service Hours for high school requirements, essential job skills and confidence in the workplace and social setting.

## Procurement

- ✓ Identified need and added purchases of eBooks and audiobooks as part of the library collection
- ✓ Daisy Reader purchase to play books on tape
- ✓ Community Foundation grant received to purchase inclusion equipment for use in recreation programs
- ✓ Increase in eBook and audiobook selection

## Self-Service Kiosks

- ✓ Ramara Centre library installs accessible computer workstation with large print keyboard and font
- ✓ Internet Voting for Municipal Election

## Training

- ✓ New Human Resources Manual
- ✓ Staff sent to “Train the Trainer” workshop to be able to in-house train Council, Committees, Staff and Volunteers on regular intake
- ✓ Sensitivity training for all staff from Marion Tizzard from Independent Living Services
- ✓ Ongoing training for staff and volunteers

## Design of Public Spaces

- ✓ Zoning Bylaw 2005.85 was amended to include the requirement for Accessible Parking spaces
- ✓ Lack of sidewalks in Atherley identified as an issue for pedestrian /mobility device travel – planning study complete.
- ✓ Medical Centre renovations included accessible ramp, washrooms and automatic doors
- ✓ Entrance to Udney Community Centre made accessible with automatic doors
- ✓ Entrance to Longford Community Centre made accessible with automatic doors and access ramp
- ✓ Ramara Centre adds accessible door installations to access large hall and library
- ✓ Accessible entrance doors added to the Environmental Services building
- ✓ Inclusion Recreation and camp programs continue to grow

- ✓ Community Foundation grant received to allow for accessible bussing for camp field trips – Summer 2011
- ✓ Street lighting is budgeted for 4 installations annually
- ✓ Entrance to Admin building includes accessible doors and ramp
- ✓ Entrance to Udney CC made accessible with parking paved at front accessible entrance
- ✓ Accessible parking spaces designated and signed at Longford CC
- ✓ Accessible parking spaces identified and painted in the Environmental Services parking lot
- ✓ Brechin Library branch renovations completed to accommodate accessibility – ramp, doors, washrooms and aisle width
- ✓ Curb cuts identified and completed to Brechin sidewalks during sewer project
- ✓ Ramp purchased to allow wheelchairs and mobility devices to access stage at the Ramara Centre
- ✓ Fire alarm visual signals installed at Longford, Udney and Ramara Centre to alert persons with hearing disabilities in the event of a fire emergency
- ✓ Access to Poplar Crescent mail bar improved ground conditions and snow clearing to aid in access
- ✓ Walk signal installed at Creighton St & Hwy 12
- ✓ Curb cuts identified as needed along Rama Rd trail to access at Floral Park – comments added to Active Transportation Plan and forwarded to County
- ✓ Brechin Public Library shelving project completed – allows for wheelchair mobility around shelving units
- ✓ Outdoor perimeter lighting added to Environmental Services building(formerly Building/Planning department)
- ✓ Interior upgrades to the Environmental Services building include main floor meeting room, access to washroom, low counters
- ✓ Brechin Community Centre Board completes the rebuild of the ball park building which now includes accessible ramp, meeting room and washrooms open to the public made possible by grant received from the EnAbling Accessibility Fund
- ✓ Trail completed with matching grant from County of Simcoe Trails Connecting Communities Fund – included upgrades to inclines, resurfacing, trail widening and culverts to improve accessibility.
- ✓ Line Painting completed at Brechin to Lagoon City trail across to Laguna Parkway.
- ✓ Ramara Centre accessible parking spots identified as trouble spots as vehicle users would have to exit vehicle and travel to the back of the vehicle to get to the Centre. Bollards moved and concrete sidewalk added to the front of the parking spots to improve this issue.
- ✓ Longford Community Centre – front door moved to provide a wider door for improved access.

- ✓ Mara Medical Centre completes total renovation of the Centre –with help from CDC grant – to provide an accessible clinic space which will allow access to healthcare and aid in attracting a physician to the area for our rural population
- ✓ Street lighting is budgeted for 4 installations annually – 1 on Fairgrounds at McArthur, 1 at Fountain Drive, 2 on Hwy 12 at Ramara Centre
- ✓ Firehall # 3 – accessible access ramp added
- ✓ Lagoon City Mailbar access identified as inaccessible for those using mobility devices –referred to Council September 2016
- ✓ Curb cuts in trail along Simcoe Road
- ✓ Street Lighting – Ramara Centre
- ✓ Identified need for a Township Facility Checklist for accessibility.
- ✓ Site plan review for multiple unit residential, commercial, industrial and institutional buildings by persons with disabilities. Accessibility is considered during the staff review stages of site plans.
- ✓ Change tables installed at Ramara Centre, Longford CC and Udney CC

#### Other

- ✓ Fines for parking in accessible spaces were addressed in the No Parking Bylaw
- ✓ Audit from Independent Living Services on all Township owned facilities
- ✓ Bylaw/ Policy Review – is ongoing. Accessibility is considered during preparation to ensure barriers are not created. Bylaws and policies are amended when barriers are identified.
- ✓ EnAbling Access Grant received to update Simcoe County Library Co-op Libraries – including Ramara – to accessible status
- ✓ Community Foundation grant received to allow for accessible bussing for camp field trips – Summer 2011
- ✓ Recreation programs continue to foster an inclusive environment



## Strategies and Actions

### Customer Service

Ramara is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with the same high quality and timeliness as others. Ramara has adopted the following policies, which are amended from time to time.

Ramara will continue to:

- Abide by the Accessible Customer Service Standard;
- Engage public feedback regarding goods, services and facilities;
- Engage the public on important issues;
- Provide training to employees and volunteers;
- Provide information in an alternate accessible format upon request;

### 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

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.

### 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. Hearing devices are available in the Council Chambers for those who are hard of hearing or deaf.

### 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.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired or appointed and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of training provided including dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

### Information and Communication

Ramara is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. Information is available through the Township's website, iCompass meeting portal and social media.

The Township continue to:

- Ensure that the Township's website is compliant with the Web content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA;
- Ensure that documents are created in accessible formats and provide information in alternate formats upon request;
- Work with consultants to provide accessible documents requested by the Township.

## 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.

## 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. E-Solutions website was launched in 2020. Ramara strives to publish documentation that is accessible for screen readers and closed captioning is available on our YouTube recorded meetings.

## 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

Ramara is committed to fair and accessible employment practices and shall:

- Make reasonable efforts 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;
- Consider accessibility when reviewing or creating policies and procedures;
- Ensure the recruitment and hiring processes provide all applicants with fair and inclusive opportunities;

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 provides 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 advises 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 provides 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.

### Procurement

Ramara is committed to incorporating accessibility features when acquiring goods, services and facilities. When making purchases Ramara continues to consider:

- The barriers that people with disabilities might face in attempting to use the goods, services or facilities being acquired;
- If the goods, services or facilities will be used by employees or members of the public
- Appropriate accessible criteria and features and how they can be incorporated into the procurement process.

Upon request, Ramara will provide an explanation as to why an accessibility criteria or feature was not incorporated when procuring goods, services or facilities.

### Self-Service Kiosks

Ramara is committed to incorporating accessibility features and consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks. Ramara will be implementing accessible electronic voting kiosks for the next (2022) and future elections.

### Training

Ramara is committed to providing training in the requirement of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

Ramara shall ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the I.A.S.R. 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 practicable and such training shall be provided in respect of any changes to the policies on an ongoing basis. The Township continues to 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.

### Design of Public Spaces

Ramara will meet accessibility laws when building new or making major changes to 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 websites or brochures 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.

### Transportation

Ramara does not have a public transportation system and therefore this Standard does not apply. However, Ramara will continue to encourage the County of Simcoe to expand its accessible Linx Transit service to Ramara Township.

### 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.

### Summary

Ramara is committed to continuing its journey to making Ontario fully accessible by the Year 2025 and will complete an updated Accessible Facilities Audit of its buildings and public spaces in order to help achieve this goal. Ramara will continue to monitor its policies, procedures and practices to improve accessibility for all persons with disabilities.



## For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

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Please visit Ramara's Accessibility webpage at <https://www.ramara.ca/en/municipal-office/accessibility.aspx?mid=64509> for more information and a copy of this plan.