



Township of Stone Mills Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2027

Plan Statement and Organizational Commitment

The Township of Stone Mills is committed and guided by the four core principles of Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equal Opportunity and supports the full inclusion of persons as set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The Township of Stone Mills will make every effort to ensure that we meet the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of this policy

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Township of Stone Mills Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and addresses the current and future requirements of the AODA. The Township of Stone Mills will report annually on the progress and implementation of the plan, post the information on the Township website and will provide it in alternative formats upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The Township of Stone Mills provides services to people with disabilities with particular consideration of the following areas:

- **Communication**

The Township of Stone Mills communicates with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staff who communicate with customers have been trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. The Township is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Staff have been trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual.

The Township will create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

- **Assistive Devices**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use of benefit from our services. Staff have been trained and made familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

Staff are trained to know how to use assistive devices which are available on our premises, including electronic door openers and elevators.

- **Billing**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices are provided in an alternative format such as by large print or by email, upon request. Any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice will be answered in person, by telephone or e-mail.

- **Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, in the areas of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff, are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter The Township of Stone Mills buildings with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on Township premises.

No admission will be charged to the support person for admission to Township of Stone Mills Facilities. *Note: No such facilities exist at this time.*

Third party events using municipal halls are excepted to follow this commitment as well.

- **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

The Township of Stone Mills provides customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or service usually used by people with disabilities. This notice includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipation duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice is placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises, as well as the Township website.

- **Training**

The Township of Stone Mills provides training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

The accessible customer service training is provided during orientation, in a timely manner after staff commence their duties.

Training includes the following:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
 - How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
 - How to use the automatic door openers on the Township of Stone Mills premises
 - What to do if a person is having difficulty in accessing the Township of Stone Mills goods and services
 - The Township of Stone Mills policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard
 - Staff are also trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. This training continues on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.
- **Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of The Township of Stone Mills is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving all people, including those with disabilities. Comments regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way The Township of Stone Mills provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by using an on-line feedback form, by mail, e-mail, or verbally. All feedback should be directed to the Compliance Coordinator. Customers can expect a response within thirty (30) days.

- **Information and Communications**

The Township of Stone Mills public libraries are outfitted with large print books, audio books and DVD's, Daisy Readers and accessible desks and keyboards.

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to providing its Emergency Plan in accessible formats upon request.

- **Employment**

The Township of Stone Mills provides workplace accommodations to staff under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The Code protects people from discrimination and harassment because of past, present and perceived disabilities. These accommodations include modifying the terms and conditions of employment and/or making adjustments in the workplace.

- **Procurement**

The Township of Stone Mills has regard for accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.

When procuring third party services, the Township ensures that the firm provides accessible customer service and that their staff have had accessible customer training.

- **Self-service Kiosks**

The Township of Stone Mills does not provide any services using self-service kiosks.

- **Other Achievements**

The Township of Stone Mills has had many achievements in removing physical barriers to accessibility. These projects have included:

- Accessibility upgrades to the Township office;
- Installation of a ramp and accessible doors at the Newburgh Community Hall;
- Construction of a fully accessible washroom and access at the Tamworth Medical Centre.
- Live streamed Council meetings due to COVID restrictions which has also increased accessibility of Council meetings;
- Improved accessible parking space signage;
- Installing accessible door openers at the Stone Mills Community Centre and Stone Mills Libraries;

Strategies and Actions

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities and will do so with the following strategies:

- **Customer Service**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timelines as others.

In order to comply with the Customer Service Standard, Stone Mills will continue to:

- Take people's disabilities in account when communicating with them;
- Familiarize staff with assistive devices available to people with disabilities;
- Provide billing information to customers in alternate formats, upon request;
- Allow service animals and support persons to remain with people with disabilities in all service areas which are open to the public;
- Provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or service usually used by people with disabilities;
- Train new staff on the following:
 - The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard;
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
 - How to use the automatic door openers and elevators available at facilities operated by Stone Mills;
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Stone Mills goods and services;
 - The Township of Stone Mills policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- Provide ongoing training on any changes made to the Township's Accessible Customer Service policies, practices and procedures.

- **Information and Communications**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. Staff will make every effort to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. Initiatives include the following:

- Continue to provide access to Council meetings by live streaming Council meetings on the Township of Stone Mills YouTube channel;
- Having a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback;

- Providing communications in an alternate format, upon request;
- Notifying the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports;
- The Township of Stone Mills website is being redeveloped with all content to meet the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.

- **Employment**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. The Township will:

- Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process when job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process;
- Consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's disability, upon request;
- Notify the successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities;
- Inform employees of the Township policies which support employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- Have documented individual accommodation plans in place for employees with a disability, upon request;
- Take into account the accommodation needs and/or individual accommodation plans of employees when using performance management processes, when providing career development and advancement information and when redeploying employees;
- Work with employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. Such accommodations will be documented and will outline the steps that the Township will take to facilitate the return to work and include an individual accommodation plan.
- Consult with employees with disabilities who request accessible formats and communication supports to determine suitable format and supports

- **Procurement**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to accessible procurement processes. The Township will:

- Have regard for accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities;
- Consider accessibility from the outset of the procurement process.

- **Self-service Kiosks**

The Township of Stone Mills does not provide any services using self-service kiosks at this time. In the event that the Township begins to offer the use of self-services kiosks, we are committed to incorporating accessibility features and considering accessibility for people with disabilities in their design.

- **Training**

- The Township of Stone Mills is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities. The Township will:
 - Train all employees, volunteers and policy developers on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities;
 - Train new employees, volunteers and policy developers as soon as practicable;
 - Provide additional training to all employees, volunteers and policy developers if any changes are made to the Township's Accessibility Policy;
 - Maintain record of dates when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided;
 - Provide specific training to staff who create documents for the Township website on how to create accessible documents.

- **Design of Public Spaces**

The Township of Stone Mills is committed to meeting accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

The Township will:

- Follow the Design of Public Spaces standard when building or making any changes to exterior paths of travel, rest areas, ramps and stairs;
- Provide the number of accessible parking spaces at new or renovated Township service locations, in-keeping with the numbers set out in the Design of Public Spaces standard;
- Determine the best location for the accessible parking spaces in relation to providing the greatest access to accessible entrances;
- Notify the public at the site and on the Township website if there is a disruption to any of these services.

- **Other Initiatives:**

The Township of Stone Mills plans the following accessibility initiatives:

- Upgrades to the council chamber audio visual equipment to allow for a clear presentation broadcasting council meetings online.

- Increase accessible access to landfill sites to accommodate easy disposal of waste.

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact Township Clerk at 613-378-2475 ext. 225, clerk@stonemills.com

Standard and accessible formats of this document are also available free of charge, on request by contacting the Compliance Coordinator.