

Request for Accessible Format or Communication Support Procedure Accessibility Policy 003-2013 (as amended and approved January 25, 2017)

Application

This procedure applies to Municipal employees, volunteers and other persons or organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality, in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulation developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, 2005, and in support of the Municipality of North Middlesex Accessibility Policy. (003-2013)

This procedure applies to all materials and communications products produced or purchased (e.g. consultant reports) by the Municipality for release to the public. It does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information, or information that the Municipality does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Each publication should be produced in such a way as to reduce barriers in the original document. Adaptation to another format can be accommodated easily and quickly when accessibility is considered during the development.

Notification

The Municipality will advise the public of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

The Municipality will include:

- A link on the Municipal website to the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Request Form
- The line "Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request" is to be placed at the bottom of the front page of:
 - all Council and Committee agendas;
 - all documents for public consultation (such as the Budget Overview or the Official Plan);
 - anywhere else the Municipality determines that notification is reasonable.

Processing Requests

Requests for an accessible format or communication support can be received by staff in person, by phone or by electronic formats such as emails or service requests. Upon receipt of a request, staff will complete the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Request Form which is forwarded to the Accessibility Coordinator. The request is to be responded to by the Accessibility Coordinator in consultation with the department from where the request is originating.

All Municipal staff shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided:

- in a timely manner;
- taking into account the person's accessibility needs; and,
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Once the appropriate format or support is determined with the requestor, staff shall provide or arrange for the provision of the accessible formats and/or communication supports for persons with disabilities.

- If the Accessibility Coordinator determines that information is unconvertible, they shall, in consultation with the department from which the information is originating, provide the person requesting the information or communication with:
 - (a) a written explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and,
 - (b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

Timeframe

The timeframe for the conversion process of a document into an accessible format, or the provision of a communication support, can vary depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and the number of documents to be converted. The information requested shall be provided in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

If the document being requested is the subject of a public consultation or has a set timeframe for public comment, the timeframe for document conversion and distribution must be taken into consideration.

Cost of Conversion

Creating information and communications in accessible formats on websites can help reduce the cost of conversion.

When a member of the public requests a Municipal document in an accessible format or information with a communication support, the department of origin is responsible for the cost of conversion, materials and distribution of information.

Definitions

Accessible Formats – these may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Common Accessible Formats – some of the most common accessible formats are (but are not limited to):

- HTML or electronic text version online that meet the WCAG 2.0 level A or AA;
- Text saved as an accessible Word document;
- Large text;
- Plain language versions; and,
- Braille.

Communications – the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

Communication Supports – these may include, but are not limited to: captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Common Communication Supports – some of the most common communication supports are (but are not limited to):

- Screen reader software;
- Verbal plain language explanation of a written document;
- Video captioning, transcripts;
- Alternative and augmentative communication supports such as an FM Loop system or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART); and,
- Sign language interpretation

Electronic Text – an electronic text means of presentation of information that enables various computer programs to convert the information into a "readable" format; electronic text where all illustrations or graphical information is explained fully in text.

Information – includes data, facts and knowledge that exist in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that convey meaning. The AODA information and communication standard does not apply to the following:

1. Products and product labels.
2. Unconvertible information or communications.
3. Information that the Municipality does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible – it is not technically possible to convert the information or communications, or the technology to convert the information or communications is not available.

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

If you receive a request for an ASL Interpreter, fill out the Request for Accessible Information and Communications Form. You will need to get some information from the resident making the request, including:

- Name
- Best way to contact the individual. (Keep in mind that the individual requesting an interpreter will likely have a communication disability, and may not be able to use a telephone. Suggest email, fax or Bell Relay Service as a way to communicate.)
- Date of meeting
- Location of meeting
- Make note of what type of meeting it is.

*NOTE: An individual may request a specific interpreter. If they do, you are obligated to try to obtain that specific interpreter for the meeting.

Private interpreters are found through the [Ontario Association of Sign Language Interpreters](#). You can search by individual or by geographical location.

The [Canadian Hearing Society](#) also provides real time captioning (CART) services as an alternative to interpreting.

Contact the Municipality's Accessibility Coordinator for a list of local private ASL interpretation service providers.