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**Title: Accessible Customer Services Standards**

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**Department/Division:** Corporate Services / Human Resources

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**Purpose:**

1. Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* S.O. 2005, c.11 ("AODA") which came into force January 1, 2008, all municipalities shall meet the requirements of the accessibility standards established by regulation. It is the purpose of this policy to establish procedures for the City of Owen Sound (the "City") in accordance with O. Reg 191/11, Part IV.2 – Customer Service Standards under the AODA.

**Scope:**

2. This policy applies to all City employees, elected officials, volunteers, members of the public and contracted service providers of goods or services for the City of Owen Sound.

**Definitions:**

3. For the purposes of this policy,

"Assistive Devices" means a cane, walker, or similar mobility aid.

"Guide Dog" means an animal, specifically a canine, as defined in the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

"Service Animal" means an animal, as defined in O. Reg. 429/07, used for the support of a person with a disability.

"Support Person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

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**Policy:**

**Establishment of Policies and Procedures**

4. The City shall establish policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
5. The City shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the following principles:
  - a. the goods or services provided shall be in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
  - b. the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others shall be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services; and
  - c. persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
6. When communicating with a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

**Use of Service Animals**

7. If a person with a disability, accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, attends a City operated facility, the City shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter onto the premises of the facility with the animal, provided that the person with a disability keeps the animal with him or her.
8. For the purpose of this section, an animal, under the control of its owner, is a service animal for a person with a disability if, any one of the following are met:
  - a. it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
  - b. The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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9. If a service animal is excluded by law from the City operated facility, the City shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods or services.

**Use of Support Persons**

10. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the City shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the City operated facility together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
11. The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the City operated facility premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.
- a. Before making this requirement, the City will consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs, consider the health or safety reasons based on available evidence, and determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.
  - b. If the City determines a support person is required, the City will waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect to the support person's admission to the City operated facility.
12. If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the City operated facility or in connection with a person's presence at the facility, the City shall ensure that information is available about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

**Use of Assistive Devices**

13. People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing City goods, services, or facilities.
14. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other

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measures will be taken to ensure the person with a disability can access City goods, services, or facilities.

**Notice of Temporary Disruptions in the Delivery of Goods or Services**

15. If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from City goods or service, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the City and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the City shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
16. Notice of the disruption shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
17. Notice may be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the premises operated by the City, by posting it on the City website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

**Training of Staff**

18. The City shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provisions of City goods or services to persons with disabilities:
  - a. every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise; and
  - b. every person who participates in developing the City's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

**Related Policies & Legislation:**

19. [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 S.O. 2005, c.11 \("AODA"\)](#)

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**Appendices:**

20. None

**Revision History:**

<b>Approval Authority</b>	<b>Date</b>
By-law 2021-023	March 1, 2021