



# Seguin Township Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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2020-2025



*Making our Community Accessible for All*



## Introduction

Seguin Township's 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies, achievements and actions that Seguin Township has put in place to remove barriers and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Plan details the Township's approach to building an inclusive organization for all who live, work, and visit Seguin Township.

Seguin's 2014-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was the Township's first multi-year accessibility plan. The Plan aligned with the objectives of the Township's long term vision while continuing to meet the Province's requirements for full development, implementation and enforcement by January 1, 2025. As such, the Township will continue to align the 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan with the updated 2019-2022 Strategic Plan priorities and objectives.

## Message from the CAO

*Seguin is committed to providing quality services and facilities that are accessible to all persons the Township serves. The Township will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.*

*Seguin is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.*

Michele Fraser

Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Seguin Township





## Definitions

### *Barrier*

A “barrier” is anything that stops a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Some barriers include:

- Physical barriers, for example, a step at the entrance to a building or a door knob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper-body strength;
- Architectural barriers, for example, no elevators in a building of more than one floor or a hallway or a door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter;
- Information barriers, for example, a publication that is not available in large print and typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with low-vision;
- Communication barriers, for example, a staff person who talks loudly when addressing a co-worker who wears a hearing aid.
- Attitudinal barriers, for example, assuming people with a disability cannot perform a certain task when in fact they can or a receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair;
- Technological barriers, for example, traffic lights that change too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get through the intersection or a paper tray on a printer that requires two strong hands to open; and
- Systemic barriers, for example, a practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing limitations cannot interpret clearly.

### *Disability*

The following is the same definition as used in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

A “disability” is:

(a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes, but is not limited to:

- Diabetes mellitus;
- Epilepsy;



- A brain injury;
- Any degree of paralysis;
- Amputation;
- Lack of physical co-ordination;
- Blindness or visual impediment.

## Types of Disabilities

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively hard to perform everyday tasks such as operating a keyboard, reading a sign, differentiating colours, distinguishing sounds, climbing stairs, grasping small items, remembering words, or doing mathematics.

There are twelve different disabilities that all forms of named disabilities can be categorized under:

1. Physical – includes minor difficulties moving or coordinating a part of the body, muscle weakness, and tremors and in extreme cases, paralysis in one or more parts of the body. Physical disabilities can be congenital, such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis.

Physical disabilities affect an individual's ability to:

- Perform manual tasks, such as to hold a pen, grip and turn a key, type on a keyboard, click a mouse button, and twist a doorknob;
- Control the speed of one's movements;
- Coordinate one's movements;
- Move rapidly;
- Experience balance and orientation;
- Move one's arms or legs fully, e.g. climb stairs;
- Move around independently, e.g. walk any distance, easily get into or out of a car, stand for an extended period;
- Reach, pull, push or manipulate objects;
- Have strength or endurance.





2. Hearing – Hearing loss includes problems distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words, ringing in the ears and total (profound) deafness.

A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing may be unable to use a public telephone, understand speech in noisy environments, or pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers.

3. Speech – Speech disability is a partial or total loss of the ability to speak.

Typical voice disorders include problems with:

- Pronunciation;
- Pitch and loudness;
- Hoarseness or breathiness;
- Stuttering or slurring.

People with severe speech disabilities sometimes use manual or electronic communication devices. Individuals who have never heard may have speech that is hard to understand.

4. Vision – Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness. A person with reduced visual acuity may have trouble reading street signs, recognizing faces or judging distances. They might find it difficult to maneuver, especially in an unfamiliar setting.

He or she may have a very narrow field of vision, be unable to differentiate colours, have difficulties navigation or seeing at night, or require bright lights to read. Most people who are legally blind have some vision.



5. Deaf-blind – Deaf-blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. It results in significant difficulties accessing information and performing activities of daily living. Deaf-blind disabilities interfere with communication, learning, orientation and mobility.

Individuals who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, standard PCs equipped with Braille displays, telephone devices for the deaf-blind and communication boards. They navigate with the aid of white canes, service animals and electronic navigation devices.

People who are deaf-blind may rely on the services of an intervener. Interveners relay and facilitate auditory and visual information and act as sighted guides. Interveners are skilled in the communication systems used by people who are deaf-blind, including sign language and Braille.





6. Smell – Smell disability is the inability to sense, or a hypersensitivity to odours and smells.

A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odours, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

7. Taste – Taste disability limit the ability to experience the four primary taste sensations: sweetness, bitterness, saltiness and sourness.

A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify ingredients in food, spoiled food, or noxious substances.

8. Touch – Touch disability alters the ability to sense surfaces and their texture or quality, including temperature, vibration and pressure. Touching sensations may be heightened, limited, absent (numbness), or may cause pain or burning.

A person with a touch disability may be unable to detect (or be insensitive to) heat, cold or changing temperatures. Alternatively, a person with a touch disability may be hypersensitive to sound, physical vibrations, or heated surfaces or air.

9. Intellectual – An intellectual disability affects an individual's ability to think and reason. The disability may be caused by genetic factors (e.g. Down Syndrome), exposure to environmental toxins (as in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), brain trauma and psychiatric conditions.

A person with an intellectual disability may have difficulty with:



- Language: understanding and using spoken or written information;
- Concepts: understanding cause and effect;
- Perception: taking in and responding to sensory information;
- Memory: retrieving and recognizing information from short or long-term memory;
- Recognizing problems, problem solving and reasoning.

10. Mental Health – There are three main kinds of mental health disabilities:

- Anxiety: a state of heightened nervousness or fear related to stress;
- Mood: sadness or depression;
- Behavioral: being disorganized; making false statements or inappropriate comments; telling distorted or exaggerated stories.

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; exhibit blunt behavior; be perceived as being pushy or abrupt, start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

11. Learning – Learning disabilities are disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding, processing, organization and use.

People with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence, but take in information, retain it and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities affect reading comprehension and speed, spelling, the mechanics of writing, manual dexterity, math computation, problem solving, processing speed, the ability to organize space and manage time, and



orientation, directions and way-finding.

12. Other- Disabilities result from other conditions, accidents, illnesses, and diseases, including ALS (Lou Gehrig disease), asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke, and joint replacement.

## Accessibility Legislation

Regulated accessibility planning in Ontario began with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). Under the ODA, municipalities were required to have annual accessibility plans that would report on the measures taken by the organization to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) which became law in 2005, builds on the progress made under the ODA. The AODA is made up of five Standards, and a number of General Requirements.





The Standards include:

- Customer Service Standard;
- Information and Communications Standard;
- Employment Standard;
- Transportation Standard;
- Design of Public Spaces Standard.

The AODA standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR includes, in addition to requirements specific to each standard, the following General Requirements:

- Accessibility training for staff and volunteers;
- Developing an accessibility policy;
- Creating a multi-year accessibility plan and updating it every five years;
- Considering accessibility in procurement and when designing or purchasing self-service kiosks.

## Looking Back: 2016-2019

### **Seguin Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The AODA's accessibility standards establish rules and timelines that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to effectively identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

Seguin Township's first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Council and introduced in 2016 and laid the groundwork for how Seguin would meet the obligations set out in the IASR.



Extensive work has been carried out to ensure that the Township was in compliance with the General Requirements and each of the Five Standards. The following are milestones that have been achieved up to the end of 2019:

## General Requirement Successes:

- Accessibility policies have been established to reflect the Township's commitment in achieving the Accessible Customer Service Standard and Integrated Standards Regulation;
- An established multi-year accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent existing barriers for people with disabilities and indicates progress being made in accomplishing future legislative requirements;
- Accessibility features, services, and facilities are more inclusive to people with disabilities;
- All Township employees, including contracts and summer students, are trained on the requirements of the IASR and the relevant portions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This requirement is ongoing and forms part of the list of mandated training that must be completed when starting work for Seguin Township.



## Customer Service Standard Successes:

- Continued awareness of the Accessible Customer Service Standard ensuring that all residents and visitors with disabilities are treated with respect, dignity, inclusion and independence and are welcome at all of our facilities and municipal programs;



- In addition to the Accessible Customer Service Policy, there are several improvements in day-to-day procedures incorporating accessibility in various departments. Staff is better equipped to assist customers with disabilities with resources that are available to them;
- The Township has established processes for feedback and Notice of Service Disruptions;
- Emergency procedures, plans and public safety information is provided in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request;
- The Township distinguishes pets from service animals allowing access into Township facilities, property and programs;
- Increased recruitment of diversity with Human Resource practices.

## Information and Communications Standard

### Successes:

- Roles and responsibilities introduced to Seguin staff for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports. Training on creating accessible documents was provided;
- Seguin Township has introduced staff to the use of plain language in their writing whenever possible, so as to limit potential barriers in information sharing;
- Seguin Township has committed to ensure website accessibility for persons with disabilities. The 2017 Seguin website update incorporated Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA.



## Employment Standard Successes:

- Seguin Township has made employment practices more accessible through recruitment, employees returning to work, employee accommodation, communication supports, performance management, career development and redeployment.

## Design of Public Spaces Standard Successes:

- The Chief Building Official ensures compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standard and also all accessibility requirements in the Building Code Act, 1992;
- Accessible elements including trails, signage, playgrounds, furniture, etc. are inspected monthly as per CSA guidelines. Accessible elements are addressed immediately or closure with service disruption is posted until it is in working order;
- Successful renovation of the Foley Agricultural Hall to the fully accessible Foley Community Hall and Resource Centre;
- Enabling Accessibility Project funding for the Rosseau Waterfront (2016) provided accessible playground elements, accessible picnic tables, accessible beach mat (mobi mat) and barrier free washroom doors;
- Successful Rosseau Memorial Hall renovation (2017) included the installation of an elevator to provide barrier free access in addition to an outdoor cement ramp leading to the lower level automated door.





## Moving Forward: 2020-2025 Seguin Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Seguin Township continues to be proactive in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to ensure that everyone can participate fully in a diverse and growing community.

By addressing barriers, people with disabilities will be able to maintain their dignity and live more independently in a community that supports them. The Seguin Township 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan aims to create a more inclusive community that people with all abilities can participate in.

### General Requirements Goals:

- Monitor and update accessibility policies, as necessary;
- Monitor and update Seguin's accessibility plan, as required;
- Incorporate accessible design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities, unless it is not practical to do so;
- Train new employees on the requirements of the IASR and Human Rights Code, as it relates to people with disabilities;
- File an accessibility compliance report every two years.

### Customer Service Standard Goals:

- Develop and implement a training cycle to ensure staff remain up-to-date on accessibility legislation, corporate policies and best practices for interacting with people with disabilities;
- Regularly review policies, procedures and practices to ensure accessibility;
- Enhance physical wayfinding, including improved signage



through all buildings and increasing font size on posted signs;

- Increasing self-serve options, including more online options for residents to perform tasks themselves through the use of various technologies. This includes expanding the registration process and investigation alternative payment options;
- Continue to ensure that Community Groups offering programs such as Early-ON program are offered in community spaces that are fully accessible to enable inclusion of all families who wish to participate.



## Information and Communications Standard

### Goals:

- Seguin Township will continue its work to ensure that the Seguin website and web content meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA;
- A brand standards style guide defining standards and general practices for digital and print media will be created in conjunction with the update to the branding guidelines. The style guide will incorporate accessibility considerations including font, style, colour, contrast and use of language;
- Create a statement to be added to the Township's website to inform the public that documents are available in an accessible format upon request;
- Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to accessible formats;
- Continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents;
- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats.



## Employment Standard Goals:

- Seguin Township will continue to regularly review its employment policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports they need;
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure employees with disabilities are aware of the availability of accommodations and individual emergency response plans;
- Addressing ergonomics in the workplace. Develop a self-assessment tool to help employees adjust their work stations to address any accommodation or accessibility needs that they may have;
- Explore partnerships with community organizations that support people with disabilities with the goal of providing volunteer and/or paid employment to people with disabilities;
- Consider accessibility means when completing emergency management mock sessions.

## Transportation Standard Goals:

- Seguin Township will investigate the need for on-demand accessible transportation services in our community and the potential partnerships required to provide it.

## Design of Public Spaces Standard Goals:

Seguin is committed to removing barriers and to ensuring that all our Municipal buildings are accessible. This is achieved by ensuring industry best practices are met and identifying opportunities for improvement. Ongoing consultation with the public will assist staff in identifying and breaking down barriers.

- Incorporate public consultations into existing processes wherever possible;



- Continue to enhance the accessibility of new and redeveloped playgrounds;
- Seguin Township will consult with the public and persons with disabilities when constructing new or redeveloping existing trails;
- Align accessible parking requirements with Seguin Township's zoning By-law;
- Future arena renovations to include barrier-free change rooms to accommodate individuals with disabilities and provide larger barrier-free washrooms;
- Investigate cost of hands-free dryers and soap dispensers in all accessible washrooms;
- Increase contrasting way-finding signage;
- Addition of digital display boards for Humphrey Arena;
- Ensure exterior paths of travel such as sidewalks, ramps, curb ramps and rest areas meet the AODA technical requirements.

## Conclusion:

The 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides a path to a barrier-free Seguin Township by reducing and eliminating barriers, making Seguin a municipality of choice, and one where persons of all abilities can actively participate and have a sense of belonging.

Council, employees, and those providing a good, service, program or facility on the Township's behalf are responsible for adhering to the parameters of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed when accessing the Township's goods, services, programs and facilities. Ensuring an accessible Seguin will be a team effort.



## Accessibility Plan Feedback:

Seguin Township is committed to providing accessible customer service to all of our citizens. We welcome your comments and feedback regarding the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Assistance may be provided in an alternate format or necessary communications support.

Mail to: Accessibility Coordinator  
Seguin Township  
5 Humphrey Drive  
Seguin, On P2A 2W8

Email to: [info@seguin.ca](mailto:info@seguin.ca)

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