

Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Definitions

“Barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical barrier, architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice;

“Disability” means,

- a. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes, involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. A mental disorder, or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

“Municipality” means the County of Perth, the Municipalities of West Perth and North Perth, and the Townships of Perth East and Perth South.

“Councils” mean the elected Councils of the Municipalities.

Objective

To fulfill the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 by providing vision and advice to the Councils of the County of Perth and Member Municipalities to create an accessible community.

Mandate

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) shall advise and assist Municipalities in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Municipality for citizens of all abilities including persons with disabilities. The AAC shall promote accessibility within the community to increase education and awareness. This aim shall be achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Mission Statement

Perth County's Accessibility Advisory Committee is committed to eliminating barriers for all persons regardless of ability. We are devoted to raising awareness, improving attitudes and creating full inclusion for everyone.

Required Duties

- Advise Councils annually, as required by the Act, regarding the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the Municipalities' annual accessibility plan.
- Advise Councils on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises, that Councils purchase, construct or significantly renovate; for which the Councils enters into a new lease; or that a person makes available as municipal capital facilities under Section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001.
- Review in a timely manner and advise Councils on the accessibility of site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act.

- Advise on existing and proposed procurement processes of the Municipalities with respect to the accessibility for persons with disabilities to the goods or services being purchased.
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.
- Review matters referred to the Committee by Councils and make recommendations as appropriate.

Other Duties

- Advise Councils to address issues for the inclusion of persons with disabilities relating to the provision of transportation, housing, employment, culture and recreation in order to achieve an accessible community for all residents including persons with disabilities.
- Consult with persons with disabilities, community groups and organizations representing persons with disabilities in order to capture and communicate emerging issues to Councils.
- Refer issues, make recommendations or suggestions for action to appropriate groups, agencies, committees and organizations in the community to address barriers that affect persons with disabilities.
- Monitor, advise, consult and report findings and recommendations with respect to government directives and regulations related to the status of persons with disabilities.
- To network with other communities to create opportunities for improved accessibility.
- Make recommendations with regards to by-laws and policies for the Municipalities.
- Review and make recommendations on barriers faced by persons with disabilities to existing facilities owned, leased or operated by Municipalities.
- Support, encourage and be an ongoing resource to the Municipalities, agencies, individuals and the business community by educating and building community awareness about measures for improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities, through the removal of physical barriers and education to overcome attitudinal barriers to make the Municipality accessible and livable for all people.

- Review, as needed the terms of reference of the Perth County AAC and recommend changes. Changes must comply with AODA 2005 and require the ratification of Councils.

Membership

The AAC will be comprised of a minimum of seven volunteer citizen/layperson members, as appointed by Councils. A majority of the members shall include persons with disabilities representing the interests of citizens with varying disabilities. These committee members shall reflect the cross disability nature of AODA 2005 definition of "disability", but where such representation is not feasible, no volunteer will be discriminated on the said basis that they don't fit the cross disability nature requirement. Members may also include a County elected official, parents or caregivers of a person with a disability, or citizens at large interested in disability issues, but who may also be a person with a disability.

In order to avoid potential conflict of interest, municipal employees with disabilities are not eligible to be voting citizen/layperson members of the AAC.

Representatives

Staff coordinator(s) are represented in a non-voting capacity and will provide advice and resources.

Length of Term of Appointments

The length of term of appointments for voting members of the AAC, after the initial term, shall be four (4) years. The terms of the appointments may be staggered on a two (2) year period to avoid expiry of terms for all members at the same time.

Meeting Chair

A committee chair will be elected annually from committee members to preside over meetings and committee business.

Minutes and Agendas

Agendas will be assembled and distributed by the staff coordinator in consultation with the Chair. Agenda circulation will be made to all committee members and related staff, electronically and hardcopy agendas will be made available at the meeting.

Reports of proceedings will be managed in accordance with Municipalities' records management practices.

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and distributed by the staff coordinator. Minutes will be circulated to all committee members with the next agenda. Minutes are reviewed by committee members at the following meeting. Minutes are of public record and are posted on the County and Municipality's websites.

Special Activities

The AAC may educate and promote awareness about accessibility. The AAC may attend or participate in activities and events in order to create opportunities for improved accessibility. Special activities include public awareness campaigns, tradeshow booths, workshops, networking with other communities and groups by attending their meetings and participating in accessibility initiatives within the Municipality.

Meetings

The AAC has four (4) regular scheduled meeting times a year in March, June, September and December on the first Thursday of the month. The committee will meet no less than the four (4) regular scheduled meeting times and no more than six (6) times a year. The committee has the option of determining additional meeting times or attending special activities as the additional two (2) meeting times on top of the four (4) regular scheduled meetings.

Meetings will be open to the public except if the subject matter being considered is within a category defined in Section 239 (2) or (3) or the Municipal Act, in which case the meeting may be closed. When a matter is considered in a closed meeting, members shall maintain confidentiality of the subject matter pursuant to municipal practices.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority, being 50% plus one, of the voting members appointed to the committee.

Voting

Members will work toward a consensus model for decision making, if this is not possible a simple majority vote will be held.

Absences

If a committee member is absent for three consecutive meetings without notice or justifiable reason, their membership may be reviewed by the Committee.

Remuneration

Each voting committee member will receive Perth County Committee half-day pay per meeting attended.

Travel expenses will be paid as per County of Perth policy for attending all meetings and special activities.

Working Groups

The AAC may establish, as required, working groups to research and make recommendations to the AAC with respect to specialized issues assigned to such working group by the AAC.

Working groups may draw upon members from the AAC and may include individuals who are not members, such as municipal staff, as well as outside resource members as necessary. This may include from time to time the advice or participation of individuals or organizations with a particular area of expertise.