ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS POLICY

1. Preamble

The mission of the Tay Township Public Library Board is to be the community of choice for living, working and playing by providing each resident value added services and support.

In fulfilling our mission, the Tay Township Public Library Board strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

2. Purpose

This policy and its related procedures facilitate compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and applicable Regulations and Standards, as may be amended from time to time.

This policy and its related procedures facilitate the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities to enable better access to municipal goods, services and facilities.

3. Application

This policy and its related procedures apply to the following, unless otherwise stated:

- All employees, volunteers, boards and commissions.
- Anyone who participates in or oversees the development of policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods, services or facilities to members of the public or other third parties.

4. Definitions

Accessible Formats: "accessible formats" may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

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 a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.
Communication Supports:	May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.
Disability:	As defined by the Human Rights Code, 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 inquiry, 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.*

Employment Life Cycle: Processes involved in designing a job, identifying the essential duties, recruiting and hiring a person to do the job, retention of the employee and termination.

IASR: Means the *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation*, O.Reg, 191/11, as amended

Municipal Goods, Services or Facilities: Goods, services or facilities provided by the Library or an agent on behalf of the Library.

Service Animal: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

(a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or

(b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:

i) A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
ii) A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
iii) A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
iv) A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
v) A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
vi) A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
vii) A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.

viii) A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
ix) A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

Support Person: In relation to a person with a disability, a support person is another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Third Party: A representative of a business or organization who is receiving municipal goods or services or acting in an official capacity. Examples include, but are not limited to, Provincial inspectors, vendors or local media.

Library: The Tay Township Public Library, appointed officials, its boards and advisory committees.

5. General Statement

The Library shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and others, will 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 and services;
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services;
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services;
- Communication with a person with a disability shall be done in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

In order to assist persons with disabilities access our services, employees can:

- Ask how they can help.
- Offer a variety of methods of communication and how to interact with persons with disabilities. And,
- Understand the nature and scope of the service offered.

6. General

The Library is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, including but not limited to:

i) Accessibility Plan

Establish, maintain, and update a multi-year Accessibility Plan in conjunction with the Township of Tay at least every five years outlining the strategy to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

An annual status report will be created which will identify the progress of the measures taken to implement the Plan.

In accordance with the AODA, the Plan and annual status report will be available to the public through the Township's website.

ii) Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The Library will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except when it is not practicable to do so. The Library will provide an explanation, upon request, when it has not been practicable to incorporate accessibility features.

iii) Training

The Library is committed to ensuring training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards to all employees, persons who participate in the developing of policies, and other persons who provide goods and services on behalf of the municipality.

Employees will be trained as soon as practicable. Training will also be provided in respect to changes in the policy on an ongoing basis to ensure that all new employees are trained, as well as the opportunity for re-training is provided in a timely manner.

Records of the training will be maintained – including dates and names of individuals trained.

The amount or format of training will be tailored to suit each employee's interactions with the public on behalf of the Library, and in accordance with the requirements of the Act and Regulations.

The content of the training will include, but not limited to:

- areas of the accessibility standards that are relevant to their work responsibilities:
  - employment;
  - information and communications;
  - transportation;
  - design of public spaces.
- the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (where it relates to people with disabilities).
- when the Library makes any changes to the Accessibility Policy or applicable procedures.

7. Information & Communication

The Library will create, provide and receive information and communicate in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities as outlined as follows:

i) Communicating with Persons with Disabilities

- When communicating with a person with a disability, employees shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;
- Should the Library be requested to provide a person with a disability a public document or information, the Township will take into consideration the communication needs of the person with the disability and provide the document or information in a format that is agreed upon by the person with the disability;

- If one form or method of communication cannot be used by a person with a disability, the Library will do their best to provide another form or method, or a combination.

ii) Accessible Formats & Communication Supports

The Library will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request, by including a notice on its website and documents produced.
Upon request, accessible formats or communication supports will be provided or arranged.

iii) Feedback

The ultimate goal of the Library is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. The Library will ensure that the processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- Feedback or complaints from members of the public shall be received by the Library C.E.O. in any form appropriate for the person providing feedback or complaint;
- Any responses will be coordinated appropriately and in a timely manner;
- Feedback or complaints will be reviewed by the appropriate employees to ensure that all appropriate and available measures will be undertaken by the Library in the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- Feedback or complaints will be considered confidential

iv) Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Library will ensure the official website and web content conforms to the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Except where meeting this requirement is not practicable, this conformity applies to websites, web content and web-based application that are controlled directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for the modification of the product and to web content.

v) Emergency Procedure, Plan or Public Safety Information

The Library will, upon request, provide emergency procedure, plan and public safety information in an accessible format or with communication support, as soon as practicable.

vi) Notice of Disruptions in Services and Facilities

In the event of a planned or unforeseen disruption of any services or facilities provided by the Library, the Library will make all reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public.

The notice may include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, description of any alternative facility or service and any other available information.

Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises, by posting it on the public website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

8. Use of Service Animals, Support Persons, and Assistive Devices

i) Service Animals

The Library in its provision of goods, services and facilities to customers, will ensure that a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal is permitted to enter Township owned and operated premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

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

ii) Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Library will ensure that both people are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

The Library may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the Library's premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. If required, the person with a disability shall make arrangements for and cover the costs for the required support person.

If a fee is payable for a person's admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises/event, provided that the person with the disability is a paying participant, where fees apply, then fees will not be charged for support person for admission to Library premises, events or programs.

iii) Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability requires the use of personal assistive devices to access goods, services and facilities, the Township will ensure that the person is permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

We will ensure that our staff is familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services. In the event that a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services and after consulting with the customer, the Township will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the customer by using any other assistive measures available.

9. Employment Standards

The Library will identify, prevent and remove barriers across the employment life cycle for people with disabilities. Further, the Library will adopt or amend any personnel policy impacted by the IASR and AODA.

10. Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

When constructing or redeveloping public spaces, the Library shall meet all of the requirements set out in the standards under the IASR.

These include technical specifications and requirements for consultation with people with disabilities for the following categories of public spaces:

- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Obtaining services (service counters, queuing guides, and waiting areas)

11. Review & Amendments

We are committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities; therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

This policy shall be reviewed a minimum of once per Council term to ensure its effectiveness.