


Procedure Title: Accessible Documents			Procedure Number ADM 140-008
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Approval: Chief Administrative Officer 		Point of Contact Corporate Communications	

Procedure Objective

The Accessible Documents Procedure supports the City's ongoing efforts to provide accessible information. This includes providing the opportunity for all to receive documentation in an accessible format, while meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, Information and Communications Standard. This procedure defines the criteria and various application processes involved in creating accessible documents.

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01 Definitions

- 01.01 **Alternate Text** – provides descriptive text for graphics and images.
- 01.02 **Assistive Technologies** – every person will access information differently regardless of their ability. Some people who may access your documents using assistive technologies could be:
 - a person who uses a screen reader, screen magnifier, switch, or voice activated software; and/or
 - a person with limited technology experience, or without the most recent version of the software program.
- 01.03 **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)** – a technology that enables you to convert different types of documents, such as scanned paper documents, PDF

files, or images captured by a digital camera into editable and searchable data. The City uses Laserfiche (document management system) for this purpose.

- 01.04 **Portable Document Format (PDF)** – a universal file format that preserves the fonts, images, and layout of source documents that are created in a wide range of software applications. There are two primary types of PDFs – those created by computer applications, and those created as images by such mechanisms as a scanner.
- 01.05 **Source Document** – original software application that the document was created in.

02 Guidelines

- 02.01 The goal of achieving a barrier-free community is to ensure processes are in place to provide access to information and services to all individuals in a way that respects their ability to communicate. Training materials and resources to assist with creating accessible documents are available on the Intranet under Corporate Corner, Accessibility, Accessible Documents.
- 02.02 Accessible Documents for the Website

Since January 1, 2021 all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012 are required to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA, as outlined in the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

This means that any PDF document uploaded to pickering.ca must be accessible and pass the Full Check for accessibility in Adobe Acrobat. The Website Coordinator will conduct regular scans of the website for accessibility compliance, and any document found not to be accessible will be temporarily removed and sent back to the website content creator for remediation. The Website Coordinator may provide guidance to staff on how to create an accessible document, but the department of where the document originated from is ultimately responsible for making the document accessible. Online training and resources are available on the staff Intranet.
- 02.03 Consultants, outside agencies, and vendors who provide documents to be shared on the City website must provide accessible documents that pass the Full Check for accessibility in Adobe Acrobat, or equivalent software. Please see 'Outside Vendors' tip sheet on the staff Intranet for details.

03 Fundamentals of Accessible Documents

- 03.01 Accessible Documents

Accessibility must be considered at the point of document creation. For example, Word documents need to be accessible before converting to PDF.

Documents must be created in a way that they can be converted to alternate formats or accessed by persons using assistive technologies.

City staff creating documents need to be aware of accessibility features in the software being used. Training materials are available through the Intranet under Accessibility.

PDF files created from scanned documents are likely not accessible to persons using assistive technology. File optimization using software such as Adobe Acrobat is required in order to adjust file properties, recognize text, add tags for structure, add Alt Text on images, add bookmarks, etc.

Paper documents can also be scanned with OCR using Laserfiche. This will provide a text layer in the document, and further optimization can be achieved using software such as Adobe Acrobat.

03.02 Print Material

The City's Communications Policy provides for documentation standards related to:

- print material;
- date and time standards;
- numeric standards;
- font sizes;
- spelling conventions; and
- correspondence and report templates.

The need for accessible font in printed materials must be balanced with the need for a strong corporate identity and consistency in documentation. However, the font choice should be included in Sans Serif category.

Consideration must also be given to the fact that there is no one size fits all solution to fonts in printed information. The City will provide any document produced by the City in an alternate format upon request unless it is not technically feasible to do so and subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Alternate formats can include, but are not limited to:

- web access;
- large print versions of the document; and
- text only electronic files which can then be read by a computer or printed in braille.

Requests for information in an alternate format will be sent to the Customer Care Centre and forwarded to the department most responsible. Staff will consult with the requester to determine the most appropriate format and will

make every effort to provide the information in the preferred format as soon as possible.

03.03 Clear Print Guidelines

The following is a summary of guidelines to keep in mind when designing letters, memos, emails, flyers, signage, forms, business cards, agendas and minutes:

- black and white is most readable;
- with shaded boxes that include text - text should be boldface;
- Arial font (or a Sans Serif for promotional materials, where Arial may not be best suited);
- keep text large, between 12 and 18 font size;
- use upper and lower case characters;
- do not use all caps;
- do not use italics unless referring to an Act;
- use more white space; and
- use good colour contrast.

03.04 Appropriate Use of Colour and Colour Contrast

- is helpful to everyone;
- for people who have low vision or have limited colour vision;
- background and font colour - ensure there is enough colour contrast;
- do not use colour as your only means of communication; and
- people using braille displays or other tactile interfaces can detect text cues by touch.

03.05 Clear Writing Principles

For clear effective writing, follow these ten principles - remember to write to express, not to impress:

- keep sentences short;
- keep it simple, not complex;
- use familiar words;
- avoid unnecessary words;
- use action in your verbs;
- write as you would talk;
- use picturable terms (these are terms that are capable of being pictured, or represented by a picture);
- introduce acronyms and spell out abbreviations;
- use of variety and descriptive terms; and
- tie-in with reader's experience.

03.06 Section 9 of the Corporate Writing Guide provides additional information on Accessible Communication, including:

- document design: type (use of colour, font choice, spacing, alignment);
- document design: layout (page design, tables);
- printing and binding documents;
- electronic documents;
- presentation materials;
- alternate formats (large print, text only, braille, audio tapes);
- images; and
- writing for the public.

03.07 Writing for the website should include the following guidelines:

- Front-load the important information. Start with the content that is most important to your audience followed by additional details. The lead will cover the what, followed by the who, when, why, where, how;
- use active voice in body (welcome and encourage persons with disabilities);
- only the most pertinent information with a link to other text;
- key messages with headings, boldface type, bullet points and visual cues; and
- avoid jargon, clichés and acronyms.