



EASTHOLME MULTI- YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Eastholme strives to treat all individuals in a manner that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Eastholme promotes integration and equal opportunity and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.

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Contents

Eastholme Accessibility Plan Background and Statement of Commitment.....	3
Communication	4
Service Animals	4
Support Persons	5
East Parry Sound Community Support Services (CSSP) - Specialized Transportation	5
Eligibility and access to service (including emergency)	5
Fees, fee parity and payment options	5
Access to service, coordination of service and hours of operation	6
Companions and children.....	6
Equipment failure	6
Training	6
Feedback and Availability of Documents.....	7
Employment & Individual Accommodation Plans	8
Built Environment Standards – Design of Public Spaces.....	8
Eastholme’s response to AODA.....	8
Eastholme Accessibility Working Group	8
Accessibility Standards Successes	9
General Standard	9
Customer Service Standard	9
Accessible Emergency Information	9
Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)	9
Training Standard	9
Information and Communication	10
Employment Standard.....	10
Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.....	11
Accessibility Future Plans	11
General Accessibility Standard	11
Information and Communication Standard.....	11
Employment Standard Goals	12
Design of Public Spaces Standard.....	12
Customer Service Standard	12
Accessible Transportation Standard.....	12

Eastholme Accessibility Plan Background and Statement of Commitment

Eastholme is a 128-bed Home for the Aged located in the municipality of Powassan. The Home is supported by 14 municipalities in the territorial district of Parry Sound East and is operated by the Board of Management. The Board of Management is appointed by the municipalities and includes 2 provincial appointees.

Eastholme is committed to providing quality long-term care service to the residents of the Home, and as one of the largest employers in the district, we offer a variety of career opportunities. We provide care and services to our residents and community clients with compassion and ensure they are treated with respect and dignity.

The Board of Management also administers the East Parry Sound Community Support Services Program. The program staff, with the assistance of many dedicated volunteers, deliver much-needed services throughout the district including: meals-on-wheels, frozen prepared meals, transportation, seniors' luncheons, and falls prevention-balance and stretch classes.

Established in 1967 and re-developed in 2001 and 2004 to increase the number of beds, within the updated Ministry design standard of Class A beds, at that time the building was designed to ensure most areas of the home were accessible by people who required wheelchairs or walkers or other mobility aides.

Eastholme strives to treat all individuals in a manner that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Eastholme promotes integration and equal opportunity and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will seek to achieve this by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and by meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) and Ontario's accessibility laws.

Eastholme is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination and understands that AODA standards do not limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or Obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

As indicated in our Mission statement, Eastholme's purpose is to provide quality long-term care services to our residents. Our Philosophy of Care indicates we will provide care and services with compassion to the residents and ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity. We will strive to create an atmosphere within our home of warmth and friendliness.

Communication

Eastholme will make every reasonable effort to communicate in the most appropriate way with persons with disabilities, which includes communicating in ways that take into account the person's disability. This may include the following types of communication:

- large print
- recorded audio
- visual and electronic formats
- braille
- and other useable formats

Eastholme will strive to offer communication supports which may include use of captioning, plain language, sign language, or use of communication aides as may be appropriate to facilitate effective communication.

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

Service animals may be prohibited from entering certain areas of the home which may be subject to other regulatory requirements (such as a kitchen, food pantry, electrical room, boiler, roof, etc). Where

appropriate, other considerations will be made at the time of request for entry to these areas with a service animal to determine validity of request, and whether there is an alternate approach to accommodating the request. Additional information can be found in the service animal policy.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises. The Ministry of Long-Term Care provides for essential care givers to support residents of Eastholme.

Where other members of the public at large require a support person, Eastholme will permit such person to enter while accompanied by the person with the disability.

Where for health and safety reasons of the person with a disability or others on premises, Eastholme may assign a support person. In such circumstances, Eastholme will consult with the person with the disability to understand their needs, consider 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 premises.

East Parry Sound Community Support Services (CSSP) - Specialized Transportation

Eastholme's CSSP program provides transportation services for people who require specialized wheelchair accessible service. The CSSP program operates a van equipped with a BraunAbility conversion side entry wheelchair ramp. Additionally, the van contains space for other mobility aides.

Eligibility and access to service (including emergency)

The service is available to seniors and individuals with a disability (either temporary or permanent) who would otherwise be unable to access transportation service. All individuals contact the main service line (705-724-6028) to request service. There is only one van operated by the CSSP program and rides are booked in advance of the date requested. Where possible, however, staff will try to accommodate last minute requests due to emergency situations or unforeseen circumstances. This may not be possible if the van is already booked and/or in use for the requested period of time.

Rides are scheduled using the Ride-Scheduler program. There are currently no wait times for the service. The individual is provided with the option to re-schedule if the van has already been booked for the time requested.

Fees, fee parity and payment options

Fees for the service are based on a per km rate which is equal to those charged for other volunteer programs (who do not have disabilities). The rates are comparable to those charged by other/similar CSSP programs.

CSSP provides multiple payment options for individuals requiring the service. These include cash, cheque, money order, e-transfer, or online payments.

Access to service, coordination of service and hours of operation

Driveways are required to be plowed and accessible by wheelchair vans in order allow for provision of service. Where other local agencies are not able to provide service, CSSP will work with that provider to offer service (if the wheelchair accessible van is available).

Hours of operation are Monday to Friday between 8am to 4pm. Where the hours fall outside of the regular operating hours, CSSP will make an effort to accommodate the ride for the time requested.

Companions and children

The wheelchair accessible van has a bench at the back of the vehicle which allows for a family member or dependent to travel with the individual requesting the service. If traveling with children, the individual requesting the service must also provide the required car seat and remain responsible for the children.

Equipment failure

CSSP follows a regular maintenance program for the wheelchair van and attached equipment. Should the vehicle or equipment malfunction while in use the driver of the van will notify the program coordinator, who will make alternative arrangements.

Training

Eastholme is committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the following people will be trained on AODA, and accessibility laws, as well as Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to their specific role. This includes staff who participate in the development of policies as well as those staff members who are responsible for assisting members of the public or who provide service to residents of Eastholme.

Training includes:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities. These include:
 - Tablet, or other communication device
 - Sign
 - Other device provided by person with disability

Training is provided upon hire (orientation), with a refresher when accessibility related policies are revised, for administration, management, and supervisory staff. Additional training may be provided when there is an identified need.

Feedback and Availability of Documents

Eastholme strives to continue to provide accessible customer service to everyone entering or visiting the home. Feedback will assist with the identification and removal of barriers as well as to help improve our service delivery.

All feedback (including complaints) alternate communication supports as well as a requests for documents in alternate accessible formats, will be available by contacting:

Donna Mae Robins by telephone at (705)-724-2005 extension 224 or by email at dmrobins@eastholme.ca.

A response to the inquiry will be submitted within 10 business days. Where additional time is required to review the circumstances of the complaint, the response will include the nature of the actions being taken, and the estimated time to respond.

We are happy to provide requests for documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their abilities. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If Eastholme determines that information or communications are unconvertible, Eastholme shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by request to the individuals noted above.

We will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment & Individual Accommodation Plans

As an accessible employer Eastholme is committed to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to succeed in the workplace regardless of disability, from the recruitment stage through to the career development and re-development stage of employment.

At the recruitment stage all postings include options for access for communicating a request for accommodation. At the selection stage, Eastholme considers any appropriate accommodation in supporting the interview and assessment phase in determining the candidate's suitability for the position. When individuals with a disability are employed with Eastholme, employee specific suitable accommodations which take into account the employee's abilities are considered and provided to allow the employee to actively contribute to their role.

Individual accommodation plans are created and updated as necessary to ensure that there are no barriers in the return-to-work process (for injured workers), and to support workers in performing their work.

Built Environment Standards – Design of Public Spaces

While Eastholme has no current plans to engage in new construction or significant redevelopment of its facilities at present, Eastholme will meet the Accessibility Standards for all built obligations should any such construction take place in the future.

Eastholme will put procedures in place to prevent service disruption to its accessible parts of public spaces. In the event of a service disruption, Eastholme will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

Eastholme's response to AODA

The coming into force of the AODA's and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and its requirements in 2013 set out requirements in the areas of customer service, information and communication, employment and public spaces. Eastholme is a municipal home, with 14 contributing municipalities. Eastholme is committed to working through the provisions listed in the legislation to make this home a fully compliant and accessible public space.

Part of Eastholme's philosophy of care is "to provide care and services with compassion to residents and ensure they are treated with respect and dignity". We are committed to finding ways to remove barriers for people with disabilities who work, visit or live here.

Eastholme Accessibility Working Group

Eastholme has established an internal working group to review the standards and requirements which includes the considerations of persons with disabilities who access this building or other locations. The

working group meets on a regular basis to identify areas of concern and provide recommendations to be implemented in the multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) including any budget and other relevant considerations. This group will also review feedback from resident and family council (when available), consider implications of renovations and the implementation of the design of public space standards, and strive to propose appropriate recommendations to address concerns cited. The feedback from these meetings is used to create adjustments to the MYAP.

This group is composed of the Administrator, the Assistant Administrator & Environmental Services as well as other members of the management team who represent the various departments of the home. Resident and Family councils may participate or provide feedback through their respective meetings. The MYAP plan is presented to the Board of Management for review and approval.

Accessibility Standards Successes

In 2017 the Administrator and designated staff began the process of ensuring Eastholme was successful in aligning its processes with the standards proposed in AODA and the IASR standards. Eastholme developed the following standards.

General Standard

2021/22 – Add new tubs to all tub rooms, including the chair lift to maintain accessible design and IPAC Standards.

2022 – Initiation of staff scheduling system to report time

2023 – Addition of individual schedules to staff scheduling system, which are more easily accessible and can be viewed in larger print at staff discretion.

Customer Service Standard

2017 – Eastholme developed the Accessible Customer Service Policy

Accessible Emergency Information

2017 – Protocol was established to make available emergency response information to customers and clients in an accessible way upon request. Eastholme also provided employees with disabilities the opportunity to assist with development of an individualized emergency response plan (as required).

Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)

Training Standard

2017 – Eastholme worked to determine the job specific training required for staff as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training was provided to All employees, independent contractors, volunteers and those who participated in policy development.

2023/24 – Provide refresher training to staff members.

Information and Communication

2017 – Eastholme began the process to review communication standards and seek alternative ways to provide information in accessible formats (upon request) while consulting with the person with the disability to determine the most appropriate format.

2017 – Eastholme was compliant with Worldwide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level A.

2020 – A new website was developed that was easier to navigate.

2021 – The website was reviewed and equipped with audio eye to provide accessibility features. The website was considered to be WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliant.

2017 – Main contact was set as the Director of Administrative Services – Donna Mae Robins (705-724-205 ext 224)

Employment Standard

2017 – Job postings were adjusted to notify candidates of the existence of available accommodations for persons with disabilities. These modified postings were published on the website and external posting sites.

2017 – Internal processes were changed to notify job applicants of the start of the selection process, and to ensure candidates were aware that there were accommodations available upon request. The process included consultation with candidates to determine the most suitable accommodation that considered the applicant's accessibility needs due to the disability.

2017 – Notice to successful applicants was added to include the review, and modification of procedures and processes necessary to accommodate as well as inclusion of notification on policies on accommodating employees with disabilities in employment letters.

2017 – Eastholme informed all employees that it would support employees with disabilities and provide for job accommodations that take into consideration the employees accessibility needs.

2017 – Eastholme incorporated new accessibility requirements under IASR to ensure the removal of barriers to reentry in the workplace for employees with disabilities. This included meeting with employees, developing and documenting individualized accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. Along with this, Eastholme created processes to request evaluation of needs by medical or other expert, determination of how to provide accommodation, steps to protect employee's privacy, frequency of plan reviews, reasons for denial, and communication provided (in accessible format).

2017 – Return to work process (RTW) were refined to include documentation of steps taken to facilitate the RTW, development of individualized written plans, and use of individual accommodations suitable for the employee.

2017 – Performance Management and career development and re-development processes were modified to ensure that the employee's individual accessibility needs were considered.

2022 – Workplace Accommodation Policy and Procedure and Individual Accommodation Plans policy revised.

Transportation and Design of Public Spaces

2020 – Additional off-street parking added due to additional agency and contract staff engaged. Additional spaces were added to the service lot (containing the delivery vehicle loading dock). The addition triggered a review of the condition of the existing spots and their signage.

2017 Transportation – Our East Parry Sound Community Support Services Program offers specialized transportation services. There is a central intake process for the service that considers the needs of individuals requesting access to this program and establishes standardized fees.

Accessibility Future Plans

Eastholme's accessibility working group continues to meet regularly to identify areas of potential improvement. During 2022 and early 2023 Eastholme conducted a systematic review of internal and external spaces to identify potential areas for improvement. The following is a list of the areas of priority for the next five years (2023 – 2027).

General Accessibility Standard

Work to align CSSP program and Eastholme main location in terms of accessibility.

Consider program design at various locations where CSSP provides service delivery and consider whether there are any barriers preventing access to service.

2023/24 – Review exterior environment and re-measure and paint accessible parking spots, as well as update signage.

2023/24 – Make improvements to front counter/reception area.

2023 – Update policy to better define procedures for service animals.

2023 – Update Resident Survey required under *Fixing Long Term Care Act 2021* and related reporting to ensure they are prepared in accessible formats.

2024/25 – Investigate options for adding Braille to resident room numbers.

2024/25 – Investigate options for adding voice instructions to main elevators.

2024/25 – Create/improve south side outdoor area to include light displays.

Information and Communication Standard

2023/24 – Continue to ensure all public-facing documents are accessible.

2023/24 – Training to be provided to administration and management regarding AODA.

Develop a training plan for staff on creating accessible documents, forms, templates, reports, presentations, brochures, notices, etc.

Review of internal process for document collection and retention. Identify appropriate digital formats to be used to meet future accessibility needs as we consider moving to more digital solutions. Identify alternative formats that may be provided upon request, by document type.

Review of formats for documents posted on website for compliance with accessibility standard and revise as necessary.

Define formats required for various documents retained.

2023 – Addition of individual time banks to staff scheduling system, which are more easily accessible to request time off.

2023 – Program communication portal in staff scheduling system – to provide more flexible means of corresponding with manager around individual needs.

2023/24 – Update physical signage.

2023/24 – Update personal emergency plan information in staff scheduling portal.

2024/25 – Consider upgrade to phones, to include features for those who are hard of hearing.

Employment Standard Goals

Eastholme continues to review and update staff training on accessibility according to role and identified need. We continually strive toward an inclusive workplace culture that is free from discrimination of any form.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

2023 – Evaluate outside spaces and wheelchair ramps for frost heaving or other uneven conditions, re-set as necessary, paint and add slip proof material.

2023 – Review condition of resident walkways and outside visitation spaces – review for trip hazards and uneven surfaces.

2023 – Review outside picnic/eating areas for appropriate wheelchair spaces.

Customer Service Standard

2023/24 – Undertake a review of public facing forms to ensure they are provided in accessible formats.

2023/24 – Review signage and general environment in all corridors and public areas of the building to improve navigation and reduce confusion (especially moving toward south wing).

2023/24 – Evaluate need for social worker for residents under the Resident Health and Well Being Funding Policy.

Accessible Transportation Standard

2023/24 – Review signage and general environment in all corridors and public areas of the building to improve navigation at the CSSP office.

2023/24 – Undertake a review of public facing forms to ensure they are provided in accessible formats.

2023/24 – Consider van specific updates (security features such as grab bars, etc), when looking for a new vehicle for lease.