

## **Municipality of West Elgin**

### **Schedule “A” to By-Law #2019-99**

#### **Policy #2019-08**

### **Four Counties Community Transportation Service Accessibility Policy**

**Effective Date: 16/12/2019**

Review Date:

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to address the accessibility requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

#### **Policy Statement:**

The Municipality of West Elgin is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The Four Counties Community Transportation service recognizes the diverse needs of all our riders and will respond by striving to provide services that are accessible to all.

#### **Procurement of Goods, Services or Facilities**

The Municipality of West Elgin shall incorporate accessibility features and design criteria when procuring goods, services or facilities as it relates to the Four Counties Community Transportation Service. When it is not feasible to incorporate accessibility features and criteria, The Municipality of West Elgin shall provide an explanation, upon request.

#### **Availability of Information on Accessibility Equipment**

The Municipality of West Elgin will make publicly available their current information on the accessible equipment and accessibility features of their vehicles, routes and services. Information will be available at <http://www.westelgin.net/residents/four-counties-community-transportation-service>

#### **Non-functioning Accessibility Equipment**

If the accessibility equipment on the vehicle is not functioning and equivalent service cannot be provided, the Municipality of West Elgin will take reasonable steps to

accommodate people with disabilities. The Service Provider will repair accessibility equipment as soon as practicable.

### **Accessibility training**

The Municipality of West Elgin shall conduct accessibility training to employees, volunteers and for all persons who participate in developing policies, provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of The Municipality of West Elgin. The accessibility training shall include training on:

- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- The requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) as it pertains to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons
- The Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities
- Safe use of accessibility equipment and features
- Acceptable modifications to procedures in situations where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on a vehicle fails
- Emergency preparedness and response procedures related to the safety of persons with disabilities

Training will be provided to staff, volunteers and third parties as soon as practicable after they are assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Four County Community Transportation Service policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Municipality of West Elgin is responsible to keep a record of the training provided including dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

### **Booking of Appointments**

All appointment requests must follow the bus mission statement – provide rides to: medical appointments, other health related activities, community programs and shopping. Ensure that the bus has proper seating for clients enquiring about a program – this may include wheelchair users, scooter users and other mobility device users. Discussion of required fee for transportation of client, along with the method of payment (cash, cheque, billed) is required. Clients should be informed of pickup time as well as other stops being made before they arrive for their appointment.

## **Client Cancellation**

All cancelled appointments are to be properly documented and appropriate persons notified.

Upon receiving a telephone call or telephone message, the following steps are to be taken:

- a) Update appointment information in booking log
- b) If on same day, notify the driver as soon as possible to inform of cancellation
- c) Inform driver in timely fashion if cancellation is a future date
- d) Encourage clients to notify transit service of cancellation promptly in order to inform driver and to make bus available to others for that appointment time
- e) Re-book appointment with client for bus service if they have a new date and time

If Driver arrives at client's home and discover client is cancelling, the driver will:

- a) Inform client of need to cancel before bus arriving (unless emergency situation)
- b) Determine if client will be charged for cancelled trip

If Driver arrives at client's home and client does not come out to the bus, the Driver will:

- a) Knock on the clients door and wait for a response (no more than five minutes)
- b) If the Driver deems that they should not leave the bus for safety of the passengers on the bus, the driver will call the client from the bus
- c) If there is no answer, the Driver will telephone the Municipality of West Elgin
- d) The Municipality will attempt to call the client while the Driver resumes his/her duties
- e) If there is still no answer after telephoning the client, the client's emergency contacts will be contacted in an attempt to locate the client
- f) The details/outcome of the search will be documented

## **Emergency Preparedness and Response**

The Municipality of West Elgin must ensure that the bus drivers are prepared and the bus is equipped for emergency situations as follows:

- a) Ensure the bus is equipped with cellular phone and appropriate office and emergency numbers
- b) Ensure standard emergency equipment is on the bus including flares, first aid kit and fire extinguisher

In the event of an emergency or unusual situation, the Driver will:

- a) Pull vehicle over to the side of the road, when safe to do so

- b) Ask all clients to remain sitting and remain calm
- c) See to the safety of the clients first
- d) Evaluate the situation
- e) Remove the clients to a safe location if it is deemed dangerous to stay on the bus
- f) Use the cellular phone to call for help: 911 if appropriate, notify the West Elgin office

In the event of an emergency or unusual situation, the Municipality of West Elgin will:

- a) When notified by the driver, will discuss requirements needed to assist with the emergency or unusual situation
- b) Provide support to the driver if possible e.g. call a tow truck/garage
- c) Arrange alternate transportation for clients
- d) Review incident report with the driver
- e) Discuss need for any revision to emergency preparedness and response practices

### **Service Area and Routes**

The designated service area is the “Four Counties Area” which includes the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex, the Municipality of West Elgin, the Village of Newbury and the Easterly portion of the Municipality of Chatham Kent (East of County Road 15). All rides with the service must be pre-booked.

### **Fares**

The Four County Community Transportation Service will not charge people with disabilities a higher fare than it charges to people without disabilities for the same trip. The Four County Community Transportation Service will not charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability, when the person with a disability has a support person travel with them.

### **Service Animals**

People with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal are permitted access to the Four County Transportation Service. All service animals must be under the care and control of their handler at all times. A service animal must not place passengers or bus operators at risk.

All people using a service animal must meet the requirements stated in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Passengers with service animals may be asked to present a letter from a regulated health professional stating that the animal is required for reasons relating to the disability.

## **Support Persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be permitted to have that person accompany them while using The Four County Transportation Service. There shall be no charge to support persons accompanying a person with a disability while using the FCTS. It is the responsibility of a person with a disability to demonstrate to the service provider their need for a support person to accompany them.

The Four County Transportation Service may deem it necessary to require a support person for a person with a disability in order to protect the health and safety of that person or others using the service. This will only occur after a consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access the service.

## **Service Disruptions**

If for whatever reason the Four County Transportation Service is not operating, and there is a disruption to service, you must notify the public. Notice of the disruption must include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative services, if any, that are available. Notification to the public could include posting this information on the Municipality of West Elgin's website.

## **Assistance and Requirements to People with Disabilities**

Operators of the Four County Transportation Bus will:

- Deploy lifting devices, ramps or portable bridge plates upon the request of a person with a disability
- Ensure that adequate time is provided to persons with disabilities to safely board, be secured, and deboard transportation vehicles and that assistance will be provided, upon request for these activities
- Assist with safe and careful storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices used by persons with disabilities. Operators will store and return mobility aids and mobility assistive devices to people with disabilities who use them.

The Four County Transportation Service will not charge a fee for the storage of a mobility aid or a mobility assistive device.

## **Establishment of Accessibility Plans**

The Municipality of West Elgin falls under the County of Elgin's Multi Year Accessibility Plan. The plan shall be available on the Elgin County website and shall be made available in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request. Progress on the measures taken to implement the strategy to prevent and remove

barriers and meet the requirements shall be provided annually. The plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.