

**SOCIAL PROSPERITY PROJECT  
FOR DUFFERIN COUNTY**

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN  
ADDENDUM  
DISABILITY PERSPECTIVE

Prepared for the Steering Committee of  
the Social Prosperity Project

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## Environmental Scan - Disability Focus

### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Purpose and Scope**

The Environmental Scan main section is based upon quality of life indicators experienced by the general population within Dufferin County as measured by census data and county reports. This section reflects the realities and experiences of people with disabilities within Dufferin County. Unlike the general findings, there are aspects which only impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities and these are the issues, which will be addressed.

People with disabilities experience different needs some require human service supports and others basic accommodation to fully participate in society. To ensure a socially prosperous community an awareness of the needs of all members of the community as well as the resources available to meet their needs must be made know.

There are many different types of disabilities experienced by people in Dufferin. Because of the differing needs and barriers experienced, the purpose of this section of the scan is not to address each specific disability and associated barriers but to identify the reality of different quality of life indicators in a general way as issues which many people with disabilities may experience that the general population may not.

Although a number of environmental scans have been completed on differing aspects of life in Dufferin County from my research I have established that this is the only scan which focuses on disability issues in a broad way within Dufferin County. There have been other reports addressing specific disability issues including; People of Dufferin: A resilient community (1999), and Housing for People with Serious Mental health Issues in Waterloo Region, Wellington-Dufferin. This report takes the issues identified in other scans and applies them to the more general disability experience. This has been done in order to identify quality of life indicators, which solely affect the lives of people with disabilities.

#### **1.2 Methodology**

This report is based primarily on sources of demographic and statistical data from provincial and federal ministries between 1996-2004, Statistics Canada, District Health Council and Regional Health Unit reports and studies. Data collected from different Organizations and Agencies that pertain to the disability community as well as other environmental scans and needs assessments completed in Dufferin County and surrounding areas. Some data is reflective of the provincial or national experience of people with disabilities as there is limited data within this region. Some of these statistics have been applied to Dufferin County information to develop an approximate view of what is occurring in this area. The research for this project was conducted between September 2004 and January 2005.

### 1.3 Theoretical Perspectives

Throughout the completion of this scan, there have been two perspectives which have guided the philosophical production of the research, the first being the social model of disability. This model is based on the premise that disability is socially constructed, based on this evaluation of disability the scan focuses on how society impacts on the quality of life indicators for people with disabilities. Further, it is barriers in society that cause people who have impairments become disabled.<sup>(1)</sup> This scan based on this model will identify barriers and their affect on people with disabilities. Identification is the initial step toward the removal of barriers which have been created in society.

Social Role Valorization is the second model upon which the analysis within the scan is based. Social Role Valorization's focus is to improve the societies view of those who are devalued or at risk of becoming devalued. This effort is based on the acquisition of valued social roles held by people who are typically devalued. One of the elements of this model is that in order to attain valued social roles one must be able to access their community.<sup>(2)</sup> As each aspect of the community is reviewed in this scan those areas which may impact the ability of people with disabilities to participate in society and to gain socially valued roles will be assessed based on the values of Social Role Valorization.

### 1.4 Summary of Findings

The following are the key points identified through the research which impacts on the quality of life indicators for people with disabilities in Dufferin County.

- The rural landscape of this community creates both opportunities and barriers and in the case of most people with disabilities, it is the barriers which become prevalent. This type of community like many others is impacted by its rural location. For people with disabilities it affects their ability to access services, which are centrally based within the county or in neighboring Peel or Wellington Counties. This creates issues regarding access. Outreach, which is often how service is provided to rural communities, may mean limited services provided and reduced service hours due to location. Although many of these issues apply to the general population many people with disabilities require some level of support or service to live independently in the community and with the dynamics of a rural setting this can be a huge challenge and could be reflective of a negative quality of life indicator for the disabled in Dufferin.
- Transportation is the second component associated with the barriers created by a rural community, which also seemed to impact on the needs of people with disabilities. Residing in a rural setting transportation is essential and requiring specialized transportation creates a huge problem as these types of services do not appear to be present in many instances and those that exist currently are insufficient for the needs of the residents. The infrastructure of many rural services are identified as being centrally located or located outside of Dufferin County this creates a barrier for people with disabilities. Without

accessible transportation within and outside of Dufferin County people are not getting what they need to experience a high quality of life in many areas including health, service/supports, and social/recreational programs.

- Income disparity and its impact was another finding of this research. Based on the reduced income for most people with disabilities the correlation between basic needs and the financial ability to meet those needs is clear. Limited income often below the poverty line affects the health, well-being and quality of life of people with disabilities. The outcome of this is low quality housing, which takes much of a person's income and leaves a lack of funds to meet other basic needs. Reduced options and a substantial wage disparity, is a serious issue for people with disabilities in Dufferin County.

## 1.5 Definitions

For the purpose of the concrete understanding of this section of the report the term disability will be defined as in Bill 125 Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment or physical reliance on a guide 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 Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ("handicap").<sup>(3)</sup>

To further understanding of the application of the information the term barrier has also been drawn from Bill 125 Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Barrier means, anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participation in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.<sup>(4)</sup>

## 2 Population

The population in Dufferin County was 51,873 residents as of 2001.<sup>(5)</sup> Statistics Canada identifies that 13.5 % of the population of Canada has a disability, there is no hard data to reflect the exact number of people with disabilities in Dufferin.<sup>(6)</sup> The

breakdown in Chart 2.a below is based on National statistics on disability population data and those standards then applied to Dufferin County statistics.

**Chart 2.a**

Population of People with Disabilities in Dufferin County

| Dufferin County  | 2001   | % of Growth (96-01) | People w/ Disabilities | 2008   | %of Growth (01-08) | People w/ Disabilities |
|------------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------|--------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Total Population | 51,873 | 13.6%               | 7,003                  | 59,364 | 14%                | 8,014                  |

Source: People of Dufferin: A Resilient Community<sup>(7)</sup>

As the population of this area increases, based on historical trends the increase in the population experiencing a disability will also grow, as outlined in chart 2.a with the assumption that the percentage of people with a disability will remain stable. Further these numbers will be reflective of current trends:

- Children with disabilities are living longer, healthier lives into adulthood<sup>(8)</sup>
- Growth in Wellington-Dufferin is projected to grow to over 45,000 residents between 1996 - 2001.<sup>(9)</sup> The expectation of the increase in the elderly who are living longer and have a higher likelihood to experience a disability will also increase.<sup>(10)</sup>
- It is projected that by the year 2020, 20% of the population will experience some form of disability. As these numbers continue to increase, the more prevalent disability issues will become.<sup>(11)</sup>

**3 Transportation**

As a rural community, transportation is a major issue for all people in the community without a vehicle of their own. This is especially true for the disabled who are not able to drive or may require specialized transportation. Within Dufferin County, 92.02%<sup>(12)</sup> of residents have their own vehicle without this mode of transportation; there are limited options available:

- Taxi service is only available in the urban centers of Orangeville and Shelburne<sup>(13)</sup> These services are not wheelchair accessible at this time.
- There is public transit in Orangeville only and it is wheelchair accessible; however, this service’s hours are limited to Monday to Friday 7:20 am – 6:20 pm, Saturday 9 am – 6 pm and Sunday and holidays there is no service.<sup>(14)</sup>
- As identified previously in the scan the rate of commuters in Dufferin County is 32% of women and 46% of men.<sup>(13)</sup> These high numbers indicate the need to leave the home community to access gainful employment. For people with a disability this experience would be very similar however, without their own vehicle or a personal contact for transportation support this may not be possible. The only public transit to urban centers outside of Dufferin County is the GO-Bus Service. This allows residents of Orangeville to access employment outside of town

without owning their own vehicle. This service at this time is not wheelchair accessible so access to urban centers outside of Dufferin is not available to them.<sup>(14)</sup>

#### **4 Education**

Within the County of Dufferin there are two School Boards represented at the Grammar School level kindergarten to grade 8, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board. At the Secondary School level the Upper Grand District School Board is the only option within the county although children can be bussed to separate Secondary Schools in neighboring Peel Region.

The Upper Grand District School Board has an inclusion policy for students with disabilities, which applies to elementary and secondary schools. It includes individual planning, with the first placement in regular classes with support of an Educational Assistant, a child is transferred to a Special Education Program only after it is identified that the students needs are not being met in the regular classroom. This board also provides a range of support services to students with disabilities.<sup>(15)</sup>

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board also has an inclusion program for students based individually on each students needs. This program facilitates education based either in a regular classroom with varying levels of resource support or within a Special Education Class. There are also a wide range of support services available to students with disabilities attending school in this board<sup>(16)</sup>

Both of the boards represented in Dufferin County have made efforts to increase accessibility within their schools and other buildings/facilities. These efforts are reflected in their policies. Both boards have developed plans to comply with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Bill 125.<sup>(17)</sup>

#### **5 Employment**

Employment rates for people with disabilities have historically been lower than that of the able bodied. At this time, there is no statistical data available to reflect these numbers within Dufferin County. There is a clear pattern which reflects that people with disabilities on average across Ontario earn on average \$2.00 less per hour than people without disabilities.<sup>(18)</sup> Chart 5.a reflects this disparity in 1998.

##### **Chart 5.a**

Division of average pay rates between People with and People without Disabilities.

| <b>1998</b>                 | <b>Pay Rates</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| People with Disabilities    | \$13.86          |
| People without Disabilities | \$15.80          |

Source: Canadian Council on Disability Information Sheet, No.4, 2002, p. .<sup>(19)</sup>

##### **Chart 5.b**

Employment Services Available in Dufferin County for People with Disabilities

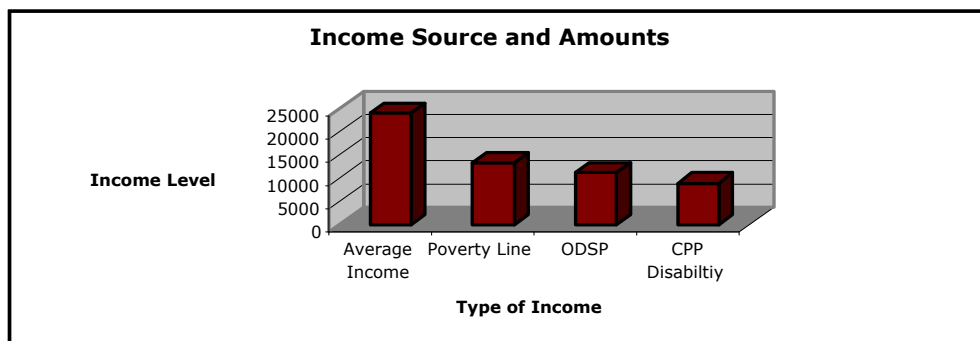
| Service Name             | Population Served   |
|--------------------------|---|
| ODSP Employment Supports | Eligibility for ODSP Employment Supports is based on the presence of a physical or mental disability that is expected to last a year or more and, as a result, makes it hard for you to find or keep a job. |
| CLD Employment Supports  | Persons who have developmental disabilities   |

**6 Earnings**

As reflected in the previous earnings information the average income for a single resident of Dufferin County was \$24, 048 annually in 2001. <sup>(24)</sup> For people with disabilities that are employed full-time their statistics would reflected within the general population range however with pay rate disparity the likelihood is that their earnings would be somewhat lower. Based on the information regarding wage disparity, the overall earnings of the general population do not accurately reflect the reality of earnings for people with disabilities, especially those receiving income supports. Chart 6.1, outlines the average income for people with disabilities on income supports in Dufferin County. On the Ontario Disability Support Program, a single person can receive a maximum of \$11, 160.00 per year.<sup>(25)</sup> People on Canadian Pension Plan Disability benefit averages \$8,989.00 per year.<sup>(26)</sup>

**Chart 6.a.**

Income sources and amounts for Dufferin County.



As is reflected in Chart 6.a the average income for people who receive income supports with a disability receiving CPP or ODSP is substantially lower than the average citizen. According to the Canadian Governments 2002 standards, people receiving these supports

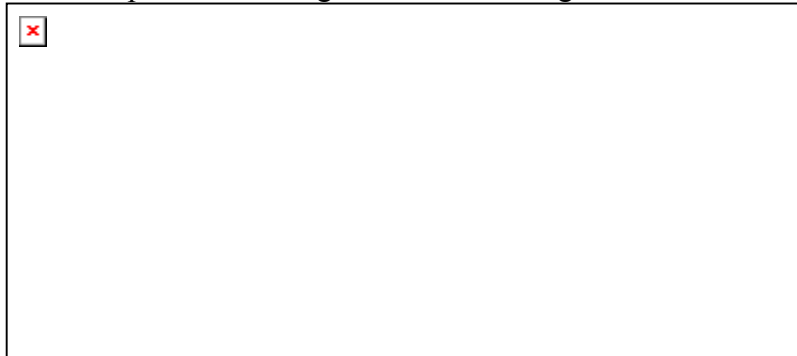
are living below the poverty line for a single person, which is \$13,311.00 per year in a rural community such as Dufferin.<sup>(27)</sup> These figures are based on a cost of living that is 2 years old and so it is assumed that this disparity would be even greater in 2004.

## 7 Housing

As identified previously housing is a major issue in Dufferin County for the general population that has a lower income. As reflected this places many people with disabilities on income supports in a precarious situation with limited fixed income and high rates of rental accommodations especially for single dwelling units. The average rent for a single person dwelling is \$748.00.<sup>(28)</sup> When income supports provides \$930.00 per month with only \$516.00 allocated for accommodation there is a serious strain on the persons income. With these numbers the average person, receiving ODSP supports pays approximately 80 % of their income on accommodation. For people receiving CPP Disability, based on the average amount given they would be paying out approximately 99% of their income on housing. Dufferin Housing Corporation provides 225 subsidized units in Dufferin County. Once in the housing system tenets pay on a geared to income system based on 30% of their income.<sup>(29)</sup> Due to the limited number of units available this subsidized systems benefits are limited as they not able to meet all of the need in the community. Further, there are only 15 fully accessible units available with many other units having differing levels of modification to reduce barriers.<sup>(30)</sup>

### Chart 7.a

Percentage of income spent on housing based on differing income sources.



## 8 Health

Health in general for people with disabilities is subject to the same challenges as people without disabilities. There are some additional factors to be considered when discussing disability issues in Dufferin County. With the physician shortage and the transportation challenges addressed previously traveling to see a doctor is difficult, specifically specialists outside of the county.<sup>(31)</sup> As a smaller community, the availability of a full range of specialized care such as pediatrics and psychiatry is limited. For those experiencing mental health difficulties there are no acute care beds. Patients must travel to neighboring Wellington county to receive service from Homewood Health Centre.

<sup>(33)</sup>The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will cover the cost of some

transportation for medical appointments through their Mandatory Special Necessities Benefit; however there are limits and conditions to these funds, which may not always be met and are not available to anyone that does not receive supports through ODSP.<sup>(34)</sup>

## 9 Community Support Services

All services in the community are available to people with disabilities however there are a number of services in Dufferin County, which exist with the sole purpose of providing support to people with disabilities. Some are very broad in their mandates others have very specific service criteria based on a population within the disability community.

**Chart 9.a**

Listing of Disability Services in Dufferin County and Services offered.

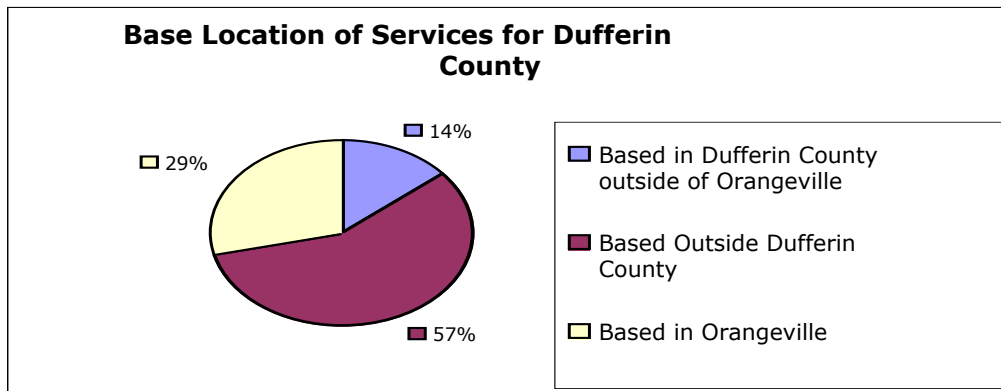
| <b>Service Provider</b>            | <b>Services Offered</b>   | <b>Population Served</b>  | <b>Service Locations</b>                                      |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Dufferin Child and Family Services | Children's Services<br>-Mental health family counseling, acute crisis support<br>-Early Childhood development prgm.<br>-Parent Relief & Special Services at Home (transfer agency)<br>-Medically Fragile Technologically Dependant Day Respite Program<br>-Case Management Adult Services<br>-Case Management -Parent Relief & Special Services at Home (transfer agency) | -Children with mental health issues<br>-Children who have or at risk of developmental delay<br>-Children w/ physical disabilities (eligibility varies with different programs)<br>-Adults with a primary diagnosis of developmental handicap<br>-Some supports require people to be living at home as a prerequisite. | Based in Orangeville<br><br>Satellite to the rest of Dufferin |
| Canadian Hearing Society           | General Social Services and Employment Counseling<br>Ontario Interpreter Services<br>Sign Language Services<br>Technical Devices<br>Mental Health and Wellness Program  | Ages: 16 year(s) and up, and deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons, their family, employers and interested individuals.  | Based in Mississauga.<br><br>Outreach to Dufferin County      |
| Community                          | Information, education,   | -Over 16 years of   | Based in  |

|                                |   |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Mental Health Association      | referral and support services.  | age<br>-Experiencing a significant mental health issue  | Guelph. Office in Orangeville.                                 |
| Community Mental Health Clinic | Services include assessment, treatment, support coordination, crisis support based at Headwaters Health Care Centre, court liaison/diversion program.   | -Are 16 years +<br>-Have a serious mental health issue<br>-Need to see a psychiatrist<br>-Would benefit from ongoing counseling and clinical intervention<br>-Also have problems with learning or addictions<br>-Require support/assistance with a family member or friend coping with mental illness | Based in Orangeville.  |
| Community Living Dufferin      | <p>Children's Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Children and Youth Summer Opportunities</li> <li>-Pre-School Resource Program</li> <li>-Rolling Hills Children's Place</li> <li>-Rolling Hills School</li> <li>-Community Behavioural Services</li> </ul> <p>Adult Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community Outreach</li> <li>-Employment Plus (Supported Work Program)</li> <li>-Options, Learning &amp; Leisure Program</li> <li>-Community Behavioural Services</li> <li>-Group Homes &amp; Supported Independent Living</li> <li>-Family Home Program</li> </ul> | -Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities.   | Based in Orangeville, Outreach to the rest of Dufferin County. |
| Dufferin                       | -Transportation   | Older Adults and  | Based in   |

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| County Community Support Services         | -Adult Day Programs<br>-Home Help<br>-Home Maintenance<br>-Meals on Wheels   | Adults with Disabilities  | Shelburne, satellite office in Orangeville.   |
| Community Care Access Centre              | Information on and referral to community health services, services for the elderly, people with disabilities and those who are seriously ill, to help them stay in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible. Specialty service areas include palliative care, pediatrics, community mental health services, application/admission to, and information on long-term care facilities | Elderly, people with disabilities and those who are seriously ill,  | Based in Guelph. Outreach to Dufferin County.   |
| Canadian National Institute for the Blind | -Counseling and Referral<br>-Rehabilitation Teaching<br>-Orientation & Mobility - Training<br>-Sight Enhancement (Vision Rehabilitation)<br>-Career Development & Employment<br>-Technical Aids<br>-Library Services   | People who are blind or visually impaired.  | Based in Owen Sound.<br><br>Outreach to Dufferin County.  |
| Kerry's Place                             | -Residential & SIL<br>-Leisure & Recreation<br>-Summer Camp  | -Support Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.   | Based in Mono Township satellite programs in Orangeville and outreach to the rest of Dufferin County. |
| Ontario Disability Support Program        | -Income Supports<br>-Employment Supports   | People with Disabilities 18 years of age or older Qualify financially, and have a substantial physical or mental impairment that is | Based in Guelph. Outreach to Dufferin County.   |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  |   | continuous or recurrent and is expected to last one year or more. |   |
| Canadian Pension Plan Disability             | Income Supports   | People with Disabilities  |   |
| MAPS (Mutual Aid with Psychiatric Survivors) | Self help/mutual aid group.   | Psychiatric Survivors   | Based in Orangeville                            |
| Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT)     | Multi-disciplinary team of mental health professionals who provide client centered individualized treatment, support and rehabilitation | People with severe and persistent mental health issues            | Fergus office serves people in Dufferin County. |

**Chart 9.b**  
 Location of Service Providers

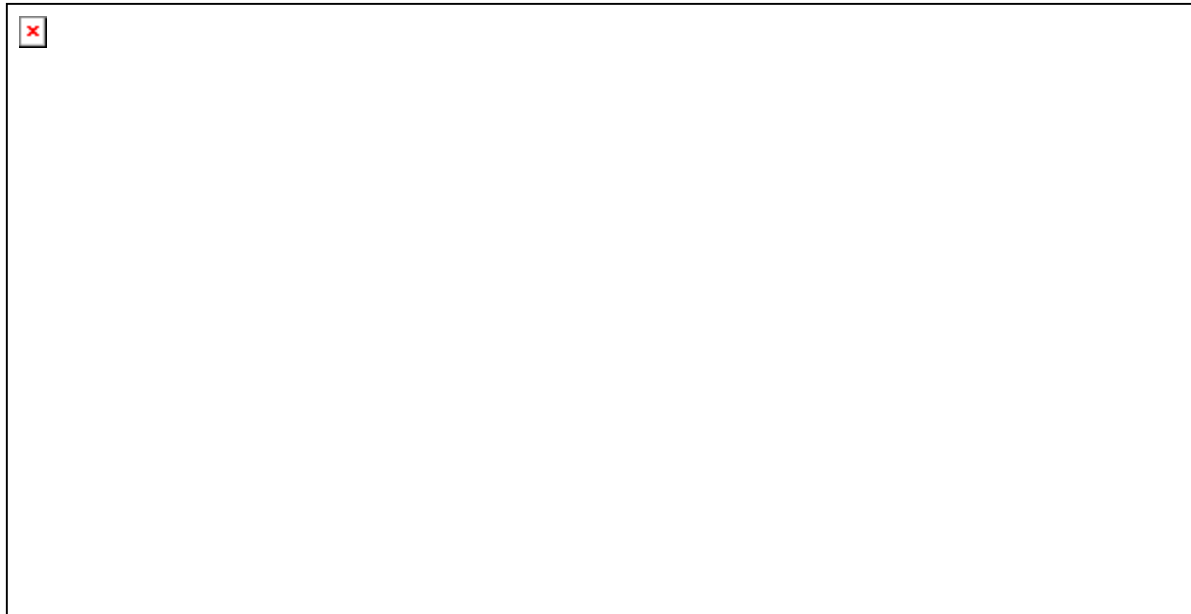


**10.0 Accessibility within Dufferin County**

Within Dufferin County, there are three Accessibility Committees, The County of Dufferin established in 2002, The Town of Orangeville established 2001 and The Town of Shelburne established 2002. All three committees work under the provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Legislation, Bill 125. The purpose and scope of these committees are very similar. The overall goal is to make their community more accessible through the production of an annual accessibility plan, removal of currently existing barriers, prevention of new barriers and public awareness. With the overall purpose being very similar the limitations of each is also the same, these committees only have control over the municipal aspects of the area that they represent. Figure 10a below

is a graph of the percentage of the level of accessibility met in Dufferin County under each identified area. The standards for this evaluation follow the chart.

### Chart 10.a



The following is a breakdown of the standards and measures used to establish if an area is accessible.

- Doorways are at least 0.9m wide, and have an automatic door opener
- Elevator/chairlift is in place where needed and has Braille buttons and controls are 1.4m high as a maximum.
- Bathrooms have accessible stalls; transfer space within the stalls and the door to stalls open outward. Pull bars are present, sink is open underneath and between 0.7 and 1m in height.
- Handicap parking is present, clearly marked, spaces are 3.5m wide, are not on an incline and there are no obstacles between space and location to be accessed.
- Counters are approximately 0.7m in height.
- Control/Service Devices, handles/switches are 1.4m maximum in height, public pay phones are 1.3m in height, interact pads are mobile/reachable.
- Object placement provides at least 0.9m between objects/shelves/displays
- Emergency Devices include the presences of large print signs, visual & auditory alarms
- Curb cuts are they present at all locations identified.

In order for any of the above, to be considered accessible the following standards must be present:

- Functionality – disabled person should be able to use a structure with the same effectiveness as an able-bodied person
- Autonomy – people with disabilities should not have to rely on others to use the structure
- Safety – access should not put a person's life at risk<sup>(35)</sup>

After a study of 19 locations spread across Dufferin County both public and private sectors the level of attempted accessibility is quite high however when assessed under the above listed conditions the autonomy of access solutions provided create the greatest challenge to the development of a truly accessible county. A further observation is that both public and private sectors are working to make their new buildings accessible and have been quite effective in their efforts. The greater challenge present is in locations in older buildings, many have attempted to retrofit for access however, this is not always possible and when possible the functionality, autonomy and safety are often compromised. There are also those locations that are not accessible and that no attempts have been made to improve this aspect of their business/service.

Locations within Dufferin County which were evaluated include:

- Orangeville, Grand Valley and Shelburne
- 9 private sector locations
- 10 public sector locations

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