

**THE CORPORATION  
OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF SEVERN**



**MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**2012**



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*This Plan can be made available in alternative formats upon request.*



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	1
Subject:	Accessibility Planning - Legislation

The Government of Ontario introduced the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2011 (ODA)* with the purpose of improving access and opportunities to people with disabilities. The primary focus of this legislation was to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities can engage in full participation. Annual accessibility plans became a requirement under this legislation in order to ensure that policies, programs and services reviewed to remove barriers and prevent new barriers from being created. Additionally, the ODA mandated that municipalities with a population over 10,000 must implement Accessibility Advisory Committees with more than half of the committee membership having a disability.

The ODA legislation has been helpful with the identification and removal of barriers throughout the province. However, the government recognized that Ontario was still not fully accessible. As a result, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2011 (AODA)* was passed into law to ensure a barrier free Ontario by 2025. Eventually the ODA legislation will be repealed and the AODA legislation will stand, however the planning requirements are still in effect until it is officially repealed. The Township of Severn is moving forward with the implementation of both pieces of legislation in order for our ratepayers to have equal access and full participation.

The Customer Service Standard – Regulation 429/07 has been passed and the Township of Severn has complied with the mandate of the regulation.

In June of 2011, the Ontario Government passed Regulation 191/11 – The Integrated Accessibility Standard. This regulation sets out a variety of general obligations relating to employment, communications and transportation.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	1
Subject:	Accessibility Planning - Legislation

The regulation sets out the requirements for each of the three standards as well general requirements with respect to developing accessibility policies and plans, training employees and volunteers; and considering accessibility when purchasing goods or services. These requirements will be phase in over the next few years.

The Township of Severn is proud that it has complied with the requirements of the Customer Service Standard and that Council adopted the Customer Service Policy for the Township of Severn. Through the implementation of this new standard, not only in the Township of Severn, but throughout Ontario, accessibility will simply become part of the everyday service delivery.

The Township of Severn makes the commitment to provide to its residents municipal facilities and services that are accessible to those that have disabilities.

Like other municipalities in Ontario, an Accessibility Plan is prepared to address any issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the life of the community. Ultimately, the Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede residents and visitors from accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the Township of Severn. Accessibility planning will no longer be an afterthought but instead will become ingrained in the normal operating policies and procedures.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	2
Subject:	Definitions

**ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD**, shall name or describe the persons or organizations to which it applies and may apply only to a person or organization that:

- (a) provides goods, services or facilities to the public;
- (b) employs persons in Ontario;
- (c) offers accommodation to the public;
- (d) owns or occupies a building, structure or premises that is open to the public; or
- (e) is engaged in a prescribed business, activity or undertaking or meets such other requirements as may be prescribed.

An Accessibility Standard shall set out measures, policies, practices or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises or such other things as may be prescribed.

**BARRIER**, is 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, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Some barriers include:

- Physical barriers, for example a step at the entrance to a building;
- Architectural barriers, for example no elevators in a building with more than one floor;
- Information or communications barriers, for example a publication that is not available in large print;
- Attitudinal barriers, for example assuming persons with a disability cannot perform a certain task when in fact they can;



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	2
Subject:	Definitions

- Technological barriers, for example a traffic light that changes too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get through the intersection;
- Barrier created by policies or practices, for example not offering different ways to complete a test as part of job hiring.

**DISABILITY**, is 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,
- physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder,
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	2
Subject:	Definitions

**ORGANIZATION**, shall mean any organization in the public or private sectors and includes:

- (a) A Ministry of the Government of Ontario, and any board, commission, authority or other agency of the Government of Ontario;
- (b) Any agency, board, commission, authority, corporation or other entity established under the Act;
- (c) A municipality, an association, a partnership and a trade union; or
- (d) Any other prescribed type of entity under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	3
Subject:	Goals and Objectives

The accessibility plan will describe measures that the Township of Severn has taken in the past, and the measures that the Township will take in the future to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the municipality, including staff.

The objectives for the provision of services to persons with disabilities are designed to provide accountability and measurability.

1. Identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Review the facilities, programs, policies and practices of the Township, and identify barriers to people with disabilities in the coming year.
4. Describe the measures the Municipality together with the Accessibility Committee, will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities, by establishing short-term and long-term goals and review our existing practices.
5. Make the public more knowledgeable of our needs and the needs of those with disabilities.
6. Describe how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	4
Subject:	Depiction of the Township of Severn

The Township of Severn was consolidated and incorporated on January 1, 1994 encompassing the former Township of Matchedash, Township of Orillia, Village of Coldwater, and portions of the Townships of Tay and Medonte.

The Township of Severn is situated adjacent to the City of Orillia and Lake Couchiching to the east, the Severn River to the north, Georgian Bay to the south, and Highway 400 to the west, this recreational setting allows for numerous year round activities. Severn Township is dedicated to fostering a high quality rural lifestyle through our commitment to enhancing public safety, preserving the natural environment and seeking opportunities for economic prosperity.

The Township's population is approximately 12,000 persons, with a large number of our residents being seasonal. There are four public schools located in the Township which houses children from grades Kindergarten to grade eight. The Township has three community halls – Lake St. George Community Centre and Washago Community Centre, which are leased and operated by private groups. The Coldwater and District Community Centre houses a community hall and arena and are operated by the Municipality. Other township facilities include four fire stations, administration centre, and two public works yards, and the Coldwater Memorial Public Library. Council is dedicated to fostering a lifestyle and quality of services to all members of the community with disabilities. Also, Council commits itself to the continual improvement of access to all municipality owned facilities, premises and services for all those disabilities.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	5
Subject:	Municipal Accessibility Committee

Improving accessibility is a shared responsibility. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 requires that the provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations review their policies, programs and services through the development of annual Municipal Accessibility Plans.

The Accessibility Committee was established by By-law. The Committee meets on an annual basis, or at the call of the Chair.

The Committee is dedicated to conduct research on barriers to persons with disabilities for access to facilities, policies, practices, by-laws, and services offered by the Township of Severn. The Committee will promote public awareness and sensitivity to accessibility issues, to identify and document relevant accessibility issues and concerns with respect to all municipal run facilities. The Committee will provide advice to Council each year regarding the preparation, implementation, effectiveness and requirements of the Municipal Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Standards.

The Accessibility Committee Secretary for the Municipal Accessibility Committee and can be reached at the Township of Severn Administration Office, 705-325-2315.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	6
Subject:	Duty of Council

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 provides that Council shall seek advice from the Committee on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building structure of premises, or part of a building, structure or premises. Further, the Act provides:

- (a) that the Council purchases, constructs or significantly renovates;
- (b) for which the Council the enters into a new lease; or
- (c) that a person provides a municipal capital facilities under an agreement entered into with the Council in accordance with Section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001;
- (d) establishes, policies, practices and procedures;
- (e) Establishment of polices for use of service animals and support persons, notice of temporary disruptions;
- (f) Provide training for staff; and
- (g) Provide for a feedback process.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	7
Subject:	Identifying Barriers

For the purposes of the Accessibility Plan, the following shall assist the Township with identifying barriers on the following criteria:

### **Barriers**

### **Examples**

Architectural

Hallways or doors too narrow, where passage is impeded. This may be a result of building design.

Attitudinal

Staff who speak slowly or loudly to someone with a hearing impairment. This may be a result of a person that does not know how to communicate with a person with disabilities, or persons who display discriminatory behaviours.

Communication/ Technological

Public Notices published in small, hard to define print or poor webpage design. Which makes it difficult for people to receive or send information.

Physical

Buildings with doors that do not open automatically. May be a result of design.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	7
Subject:	Identifying Barriers

Procedural

New business ventures that do not provide adequate parking or access to their service or facility. This may be a result from the organizations policies, practices and/or protocols if they restrict persons with disabilities.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	8
Subject:	Past Initiatives

### Administration Building

- Built in 1990, the administration building was built barrier free in accordance with the Building Code which includes barrier free washrooms, wheel-chair accessible Council Chambers and building.
- An additional disabled parking space was provided at the Township Administration Office, with designated signage and space painting.
- Installation of Automatic Doors at the Administration Office will provide an improved and enhanced entrance for customers with disabilities when visiting the Administration Office.
- Counter heights were adjusted to accommodate those patrons that require a lower counter height.
- Installation of Audible Fire Alarm System.

### Public Work Yards

- Major renovations were completed in 1995 to both work yards. Both yards provide accessibility to persons in wheel chairs, if required by the public. However, these buildings are not generally accessed by the public.

### Fire Stations

- This is also true with the Fire Stations, although the general public does not have access to these buildings.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section: 8

Subject: Past Initiatives

### Coldwater Community Centre

- In 1994, the Centre was retrofitted, thus allowing the installation of an elevator, wheel chair ramps, and barrier free washrooms in the upper floor area.
- In 2010, the Coldwater Community Centre downstairs washrooms were re-designed to include Accessible Washrooms.

### Lake St. George Community Centre

- In 2010, the Lake St. George Community Centre had a retrofit project, the included the installation of Accessible washrooms, Barrier Free Doors and a Wheel Chair Ramp.

### Washago Centennial Park

- Washroom facilities at the Washago Centennial Park were made wheelchair accessible and can be made available during special events.

### Washago Community Centre

- In 2008, the Washago Community Centre renovations were completed thus providing the community with a new barrier free community centre.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	8
Subject:	Past Initiatives

### General

- The Township's Parking By-law has been amended to include the new fee schedule with a minimum fine of \$300.00 for use of a disabled parking space without a valid permit.
- Customer Service Training has been provided to all staff, Council and members of local boards, in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	9
Subject:	Barriers Identified

The following barriers have been identified during a site audits. Council need to determine which barriers should be addressed each year, keeping in mind budget restraints and feasibility.

<b>BARRIER</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIER</b>	<b>REMOVAL OR PREVENTION OF BARRIER</b>
Webpage	Visual	Upgrades to webpage to ensure larger fonts for ease of reading
Handouts and Documents	Visual	Upgrade small printed documents and handouts. (ie. Tax bills, inserts etc.
Coldwater Library	Architectural	Upgrade ramp, door, washrooms, and parking to include barrier free access.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	10
Subject:	Barriers to be Addressed

The following barriers are recommended to Council for addressing in 2012:

- Website Re-design and to compile with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WGADG 2.0) at level AA;
- Coldwater Library Wheelchair Ramp and Accessible Washrooms



## Municipal Accessibility Plan

Section:	11
Subject:	Customer Service Standard

Ontario Regulation 429/07 established accessibility standards for customer service and it applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

Then Township of Severn has approved and adopted the Accessible Services Policy.

The Accessible Customer Service Policy is intended to fulfill the policy requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and addresses:

- (a) the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities including the use of assistive devices;
- (b) the use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- (c) the use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- (d) providing notice of temporary disruptions in goods and services usually used by persons with disabilities to access Township goods and services;
- (e) training;
- (f) customer feedback and complaints regarding the accessibility of township goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- (g) notice of the availability of the documents required by this regulation.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	12
Subject:	Review and Monitoring of the Process

The Township of Severn is committed to the continual improvement of access to all municipality owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities and the provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

The plan will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis in order to identify and monitor barriers identified and the direction in which the Municipality is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Over the next several years, Department Heads, together with Council will make decisions on which barriers are to be addressed each year, these recommendations will be based and subject to budget restraints and feasibility.

The Municipal Accessibility Plan shall be adopted by Council.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	13
Subject:	Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available on the web site as well as at the Township Administration Office; we will make it available to all persons for their review and perusal. Should Braille copies of the plan be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the Canadian Institute for the Blind, with respect to translation, if required.



## **Municipal Accessibility Plan**

Section:	14
Subject:	Conclusion

The ODA requires communities to prepare an annual accessibility plan. While this document is reviewed and prepared annual, the Township of Severn has made accessible progress in its buildings and service delivery over the years. As the community continues to grow and develop, the Township of Severn will respond to the needs of the aging and disabled populations. This plan establishes a benchmark and strategy to becoming a barrier free community.