

**THE CORPORATION  
OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF SEVERN**



**MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN  
2008/2009**



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*This Plan can be made available in alternative formats*

## **Executive Summary**

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The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers. A requirement of the ODA mandates municipalities to prepare an Accessibility Plan.

This plan will outline the measures that the Municipality has taken in the past, and the measures that they will take in the coming year to help reduce and eliminate barriers within the boundaries of the Township of Severn so that persons with disabilities who use municipal facilities and services of the municipality can do so in an efficient manner. The Accessibility Committee appreciates the ongoing commitment and support of Council. The Committee is cognizant of Council's need to effectively manage financial resources for the benefits of all the segments of the municipality.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) received Royal Assent in June of 2005. This new Act reinforces the ODA requiring development and enforcement of accessibility standards and compliance by all organizations in the public and private sectors on a phased in basis over the next 20 years. The standards are to address the full range of disabilities, including physical, sensory, mental health development and learning. With the newest legislation at our finger tips – the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation 429/07, the Township of Severn will be striving to implement the customer service standards for next year. 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.

## **Aim**

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The 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.

## **Mission Statement**

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Our Mission is to:

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.

## **Depiction of the Township of Severn**

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 11,000 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 is operated by the Municipality. Other township facilities include four fire stations, administration centre, and two public works yards. 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 Committee**



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.

Michelle Prophet-Healy is the Co-ordinator for the Municipal Accessibility Committee and can be reached at the Township of Severn Administration Office.

## **Identifying Barriers**

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

### **Barriers**

### **Examples**

Physical

Buildings with doors that do not open automatically.

Architectural

Hallways or doors too narrow, where passage is impeded.

Communication

Public Notices published in small, hard to define print.

Procedural

New business ventures that do not provide adequate parking or access to their service or facility.

Attitudinal

Staff who speak slowly or loudly to someone with a hearing impairment.

Technological

Website not designed for visually impaired.

## **Barrier Initiatives**

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**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.**

**Public Work Yards and Fire Stations – Major renovations were completed in 1995 to both work yards. Both yards provide accessibility to persons in wheel chairs, if required by the public. This is also true with the Fire Stations, although the general public does not have access to these buildings.**

**Coldwater Community Centre – The centre was retrofitted in 1994, thus allowing the installation of an elevator, wheel chair ramps etc.**

**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.**

**An additional disabled parking space was provided at the Township Administration Office, with designated signage and space painting.**

**Also, the installation of Automatic Doors at the Administration Office will provide an improved and enhanced entrance for customers with disabilities when visiting the Administration Office.**

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

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

## **Barriers Identified**

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The following barriers have been identified during an informal site audit. 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
Fire Alarm System at Administration Office	Architectural	Upgrade system for hearing impaired, enhance with visual alarms
Handouts and Documents	Visual	Upgrade small printed documents and handouts. (ie. Tax bills, inserts etc.

## **Barriers to be completed in 2009**

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Suggestions for Council to address in 2009 are:

- Front Counter Height will be completed during the Addition/Renovation Process at the Township Administration Building.
- Barrier Free Washrooms to be completed at the Coldwater Community Centre in 2009.
- Customer Service Standard Training for all staff.

These items have been budgeted for in 2009.

## **Review and Monitoring of the Process**

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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. Council is committed to following this plan. 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, 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.

## **Communication of Plan**

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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.

## **Conclusion**

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The ODA requires communities to prepare an annual accessibility plan. While this document is reviewed and prepared annual, the Township of Severn has made good accessibility 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.