

2010 Accessibility Plan



MUNICIPALITY  **OF ASSIGINACK**

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Municipal Accessibility Plan Report under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

January 2010 – December 2010

Submitted to:
Reeve and Council
Corporation of the Township of Assiginack

Submitted by:
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Coordinator, Accessibility Working Group

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Executive Summary

Under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA), all municipalities have an obligation to prepare an annual accessibility plan. The Township of Assiginack enthusiastically supports the principles of the Act, which is to work towards the prevention, identification and removal of barriers that restrict opportunities for people with disabilities. To this end, the Township Accessibility Working Group has actively prepared and implemented revised yearly accessibility plans and has now prepared the 2010 Annual Accessibility Plan. This Accessibility Plan continues to provide for persons with disabilities and their full participation in the life of the province through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers within Township facilities and services.

One focus for this year's plan relates to the provision of customer service to people with disabilities. In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was enacted to further qualify the ODA and serve as a framework relating to accessibility standards in several key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Built Environment
- Employment
- Transportation

The goal of these accessibility standards is to ensure all Ontarians with disabilities have full and equal access to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment and building structures by January 1, 2025. The standards are being established in stages by regulation, developed by provincial committees comprised of people with disabilities, representatives of the private, public and not-for-profit sectors and the Government of Ontario.

Ontario Regulation 429/07, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, is the first regulation to come into force and will take effect for public sector organizations on January 1, 2010. By this date, all public sector organizations must establish and maintain customer service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities. The regulation covers such areas as policies on use of service animals, assistive devices and support persons relating to facility access; processes for notifying the public of service disruptions; staff training in accessible customer services, and; systems for receiving and responding to feedback about the way services are provided to people with disabilities.

This report describes the measures the Township of Assiginack has taken in the past and the measures the Township will take during the next year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Township; including staff and members of the community at large.

In the upcoming year the Township will commit itself to the continual improvement of access to Municipal facilities including the electronic premises as well as the Township's physical premises.

The Working Group identified a number of barriers to people with disabilities. The most significant findings were that all Township buildings are not fully wheelchair accessible, mostly due to inadequate automatic door openers; and, inadequate handicapped parking within the hamlet of Manitowaning. Over the next several years, the Working Group recommends focusing on the removal of these barriers to allow easier access to public buildings and facilities.

MUNICIPALITY



OF ASSIGINACK

Aim

This report describes the measures that the Township of Assiginack had taken for the 2009 year and the measures that it hopes to take for the 2010 year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township.

Objectives

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the Township of Assiginack will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services the Township will review in the coming years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describes the measures the Township will take in the next year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Township will make the Accessibility Plan available to the public.

Description of the Township of Assiginack

The Township of Assiginack is located on Manitoulin Island in Northeastern Ontario. The Township encompasses a land area of 227.44 square kilometres and is bordered on the north by the Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands (NEMI), the northeast by Manitowaning Bay, the east by the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, the southeast by South Bay, and the west by the Township of Tehkummah, the Municipality of Central Manitoulin and Lake Manitou.

The Township has a population of approximately 914 persons (from the 2006 census information). Located within the Township is a public school which houses approximately 130 kindergarten to grade eight students and 12 staff members.

The Township has a Community Recreation Centre (Arena) which is used by service groups and the public at large for a variety of purposes including summer and winter sporting activities and events, annual fairs and festivals, weddings, etc.

Located within the Township is a full service marina, museum complex, medical clinic, municipal public works garage, fire hall, municipal office complex (which includes a library and community access program), post office, bank, information centre and many parks, swimming beaches and boat launches. As well, there is an 18-hole championship golf course, a curling club, a United church, an Anglican church (the oldest in northern Ontario) and a theatre training centre.

Consultation Activities

Target Group(s)

The target groups for this Municipal Accessibility Plan are persons with mobility impairment, persons with physical disabilities, persons who are deaf or blind, persons with hearing or sight impairments, seniors, supportive stakeholder groups and the general public.

Activities and Convener

Visual inspections were conducted by the Plan Coordinator. Notes were made on the barriers that would affect everyday activities for those individuals that have disabilities.

After inspections were completed, the Plan Coordinator made a report outlining some of the concerns found (or not found) through the inspection process.

Activity Time Period

- Plan Coordinator conducted visual inspections during the fourth quarter of 2009.
- Original draft of report completed on December 11, 2009.
- Plan posted for concerned members of the public and disabled persons on December 11, 2009.
- Final plan submitted to Municipal Council and approved February 17, 2010.

Summary of Information Collected through Consultations.

After consulting with different groups and members of the public it has been brought to the Township's attention that the main concerns regarding accessibility come from the public facilities operated within the town of Manitowaning. Manitowaning is an historic community and is also the oldest settlement on Manitoulin Island. Some of the earliest buildings in the town were converted to a museum heritage complex / tourist attraction; depicting a physical representation of typical rural lifestyles from the past. This poses a problem when it comes to accessibility of physically disabled persons.

Consultations with the public also showed us that there is a need and a demand for improved / additional handicapped parking and a revised Parking By-law to enforce parking infractions.

Other findings included;

- A lack of grass and weed trimming along sidewalks causing overgrowth to the point that some are impassable to wheelchairs and walkers.
- All municipal buildings have heavy access doors and are not equipped with automatic door openers.
- There are no handicapped washrooms in the Assiginack Community Centre.

- Bay Street Marina is not accessible to physically disabled persons.

As well, there were some positive findings. The library carries both large print and audio books for individuals with impaired vision. All municipally operated buildings have easy wheelchair access through proper ramp systems (with the exception of the upper levels of some facilities).

Plan Development Working Group

The body coordinating the Accessibility Plan for the Township of Assiginack is listed below. To reach the Plan Coordinator or any members of the group please contact the Township Office at (705) 859-3196 or 1 (800) 540-0179.

Coordinator

Rob Maguire, EDO

Members:

Alton Hobbs, Clerk - Administrator

Ron Cooper, Public Works Superintendent

Allan Elliott, Fire Chief

Barrier Identification

BARRIER	BARRIER TYPE	STRATEGIES FOR REMOVAL OR PREVENTION
1.0 Manitowaning Marina		
1.1 No ramp access from ground to launch docks.	Physical	Post signs to see Marina staff for assistance.
1.2 Ramps to docks are too steep for wheelchair access.	Physical	We have installed longer ramps and dock lighting; however, we will post signs to see Marina staff for assistance.
1.3 Space limitations within Marina Office to allow easy accessibility for wheelchairs.	Architectural	It is our philosophy that the Marina Office is a Management Office with service provision outside.
1.4 Entrance doors to washrooms are heavy and	Physical	Install lower access buttons.

have no lower access buttons.		
2.0 Assiginack Community Centre (Arena)		
2.1 No lower access buttons on entrance doors.	Physical	Install lower access buttons on entrance doors to be completed by June 2010.
2.2 No upper level wheelchair access.	Architectural	Install elevator or chairlift if maintained as a public space – under review.
2.3 No wheelchair accessible washrooms.	Architectural	Redesign and upgrade public washroom facilities to incorporate wheelchair access to be completed by June 2010.
3.0 Municipal Office and Library		
3.1 No lower access buttons on entrances.	Physical	Install lower access buttons.
3.2 Not enough designated handicapped parking spaces.	Policy	Entire street side in front of Office & Medical Clinic will be designated as handicapped parking by Sept 1, 2010.
3.3 Municipal website is not reading software applicable.	Informational / Technological	Created an Accessibility component with instructions to increase fonts for easier viewing (completed). Will investigate reading software options.
4.0 Post Office and Bank		
4.1 No lower access buttons at entrances.	Physical	Install lower access buttons on entrance doors.
4.2 Although a sign is visible, the designated handicapped parking has not been painted.	Physical	Paint handicapped parking area with reflective paint.
5.0 Assiginack Museum		
5.1 No lower access buttons at the main front entrance.	Physical	Install lower access buttons at main front entrance.
5.2 Out buildings are not	Architectural	Buildings are of authentic

wheelchair accessible.		historical significance. As such, we will research and pursue audio visual options.
6.0 Fire Hall and Public Works Garage		
6.1 Washrooms are limited in space and do not have hand railings.	Architectural	* Item 6.1 to be removed from list as referenced below
6.2 Only stair access to upper level.	Architectural	Designated as private office with no public access. In the event of required public meetings, alternate accessible public facilities can be made available.
7.0 Community Streets		
7.1 Very few designated handicapped parking spaces.	Policy	Designate additional handicapped parking spaces as required.
7.2 Existing handicapped parking spaces are not marked clearly.	Informational	To be reviewed annually and corrected as required.
7.3 Sidewalks are not wedged for easy access.	Physical	Cut sidewalks and new access points completed including Queen St., Arthur St., Spragge St., and Michael's Bay Rd.
7.4 Community Sidewalk condition.	Physical	Existing community sidewalk network to be reviewed.
8.0 Standards for Customer Service.		
8.1 Lack of training for front line staff at all Municipal facilities.	Informational	Provide training and familiarity of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (OReg 429/07) to all front line staff. As a follow-up, all front line staff will be tested.
9.0 Burns Wharf Theatre.	Informational / Physical	Seasonal facility to be reviewed and inspected in the spring of 2010. Burns Wharf Theatre Committee

		will be apprised of the Act and its requirements.
10.0 Municipal Parks High Falls Picnic Area Manitowaning Heritage Park Assiginack Fairgrounds McLean's Park	Informational / Physical	Will investigate and implement signage relative to Accessibility issues.
11.0 Manitoulin East Municipal Airport	Informational	All volunteers and staff will be apprised of the Act and its requirements.
12.0 Municipal Boat Launches	Informational / Physical	Will investigate and implement signage relative to Accessibility issues.
13.0 Assiginack Landfill Site	Informational / Physical	Will investigate and implement signage relative to Accessibility issues.
14.0 Tourist Information Booth	Informational / Architectural	Seasonal facility to be reviewed and inspected in the spring of 2010. All volunteers and summer staff will be apprised of the Act and its requirements.
15.0 Hilly Grove Cemetery	Physical	All administrative functions are dealt with through the Municipal Office. It is generally accepted that any persons with disabilities would be accompanied by an aid.

*Rationale for omitting 6.1 - Fire Hall and Public Works Garage - Washrooms are limited in space and do not have hand railings: It is acknowledged that this item is specific to staff and registered persons and is not open to the public and as such has been removed from the Barrier Identification list.

Operational Review

Rational for Planned Review

Planned reviews will be set every twelve months. Rationales for the planned reviews are; scope of activity to overcome the barrier, resources that are needed to cover the cost to overcome the barrier, and in the case of physical structures, design of the building and acknowledging that some facilities have architectural design barriers.

The Accessibility Working Group utilizes the following approach to identifying barriers on an ongoing basis:

- Research previously identified barriers.
- Brain storm / solicit staff contributions and external resources in all service areas of known and suspected barriers.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

Municipal Council is committed to following through with each one-year plan. Being that the plan will be reviewed annually, Council, staff and the public will be able to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Township is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

In the Barrier Identification Process, the Accessibility Working Group focuses on the following areas to determine which barriers it will work to remove or prevent each year:

- Physical Facilities.
- Site Planning.
- Service and Program Delivery to Staff.
- Service and Program Delivery to the Public.
- Procurement Policies and Practices.
- Interviewing, Hiring, Promotion, and Other Human Resources Policies and Practices.
- Technologies.
- Information and Communication Infrastructures.
- Customer Service for People with Disabilities.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available on the Municipal Website as well as at the Municipal Office. The Township will make every attempt to make the plan available to those with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy in Braille be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the CNIB to inquire if it could be translated.

Targets and Actions

Actions

For the initial twelve month period the focus of the Township of Assiginack will be to ensure that a revised Parking By-law is developed; to identify more handicapped parking spaces within the town of Manitowaning; to clearly mark the existing handicapped spaces; to improve the Township Website for easier viewing and reading; and, to install automatic door openers at the Medical Building, Municipal Office and the Post Office / Bank Building.

Resources Necessary to Undertake Action

Not only will financial resources be required but also the cooperation and understanding of Council, Staff, the Public Works Department and the By-law Enforcement Officer.

Summary of Actions to be Completed Within Twelve Months

ACTION	RESOURCES	COSTS	TARGET
1. Parking By-law revisions.	Staff time and Council meetings.	Staff time.	To be completed by December 2010.
2. Identification of additional handicapped parking spaces.	Staff and Council.	Staff time.	To be completed by June 2010.
3. Mark existing handicapped parking spaces.	Public Works Department.	Minimal monetary costs for paint and man hours.	To be completed by May 2010.
4. Improve website for reading ease.	Economic Development Officer, Web Master.	N/A – part of ongoing website updates & improvements.	Completed - provided Accessibility instructions for easier reading.
5. Install automatic door openers.	Staff and Installation Experts.	To be incorporated into the 2010 budget.	To be completed by December 2010.
6. Compliance - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.	Province of Ontario Compliance Manual (OReg 429/07).	Staff time.	January 1, 2010.

