

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – YEAR 5 and YEAR 6
ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 2007/2008 - DECEMBER 2008/2009

CORPORATION

OF THE



TOWNSHIP OF EAR FALLS

September 2007/2008

Submitted to:
Mayor and Council
The Township of Ear Falls

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Executive Summary

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 to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end, the ODA mandates that each **Municipality** prepares an Annual Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) is to provide accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities.

This is the fifth and sixth year plan (2007/2008) prepared by the Accessibility Working Group of the Township of Ear Falls. The report describes the measures the Township has taken in the past and the measures the Township will take during the current 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.

This year the Township committed itself to the continual improvement of access to municipal facilities as well as the actual physical premises and to identify specific solutions that zero in on a range of barriers to information and communications for people with disabilities.

The Accessibility Working Group identified a number of barriers to people with disabilities. The most significant finding was that the Township Municipal Office is not fully wheelchair accessible. Over the next two years, the Accessibility Working Group recommends focusing on this barrier, which denies access to the Municipal Office on a day-to-day basis.

Aim

This report describes one measure that the Township of Ear Falls has taken for the 2006 year and the measures that the Township will take for the 2009 year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff as well as identifying specific solutions that zero in on a range of barriers to information and communication for people with disabilities.

Objectives

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the Township of Ear Falls will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Lists the previous initiatives the Township has already undertaken with respect to removing barriers.
3. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the Township will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities. (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)
4. Describes the measures the Township will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describes how the Township will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.
6. Establish policy, practices and procedures on providing goods and service to people with disabilities.

Description of the Township of Ear Falls

The Township of Ear Falls is located in Northwestern Ontario. The Township is bordered on the north by the Municipality of Red Lake, and on the south by the Village of Vermilion Bay.

The Township has a population of approximately 1155 persons (from the 2006 census information) and located in the Township is the Domtar Sawmill, which is one of the largest employers in the Township along with Ontario Power Generation, who operates two Hydro-Electric Generation Stations in the area. The Sunset Leisure Place located in the Township, houses 22 residents the majority being seniors. There is 1 full-time staff who provides caretaking / repair services. There is

also a Public School which serves children from grades Kindergarten to Grade Eight for 158 students and 23 staff members.

The Township has a Legion Hall which is utilized by many service groups and the public at large for weddings etc. Located in the Plaza is a Senior Citizens Activity Centre which is owned by the organization and offers many activities for seniors. The Township Municipal Office has moved to 1 Shelski Lane. The Township Recreation Centre also provides many activities for the citizens and has an ice surface and a fitness room. A 9-Hole Golf Course also exists to meet the Township's recreational needs.

The Tourist Industry is also a cornerstone of the economy of Ear Falls.

Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning and Customer Service

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Ear Falls is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities.
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

The Council has authorized the Fire Chief to prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

Recent Barrier - Removal Initiatives

The Township of Ear Falls has addressed the following types of barriers in their facilities as noted in the List of Barriers Identified: Physical, Informational and Architectural:

- Vision, Mobility, Hearing, and Understanding

Informal Site Audit of the Municipally Owned Buildings

In January of 2009 the staff and Council were asked to review the survey of the municipally owned buildings and in particular to assess any barriers that may exist and with that any solutions to removing those barriers in order to comply with the

current legislation under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Also the staff and Council were asked to provide feedback on the accessibility standards for customer service.

There have been numerous barriers identified in the Municipal Administration Office, the Library, and the Recreation Centre. Those will be discussed further in this document under Barriers Identified.

Barrier Identification Methodologies

In order to identify barriers the following methodology was used:

| <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Staff Review | The list of the 2007/2008 barriers identified was delivered to Department Heads | Review Completed January 2009 |
| Municipal Officials Review | The list of the 2007/2008 barriers identified was delivered to Mayor and Council | Review Completed January 2009 |
| Disability Organization Review | The list of the 2007/2008 barriers identified was delivered to Disability Organizations in the Community | Review Completed April 2009 |
| Client Review | The list of the 2007/2008 barrier identified disabilities was delivered to clients in the Community | Review Completed April 2009 |

Barriers Identified

Those who completed the survey identified the barriers listed below. Over the next several years, Council will have to decide which barriers should be addressed each year keeping in mind budget restraints and feasibility.

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention | Status |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| No access to Library building by persons using a wheelchair or other mobility aid. | Architectural | Retrofit Funding Required | Addressed in the Plan for 2009. Phase I – Township to apply for funding. |
| Washrooms at Library are not accessible to people with disabilities. | Architectural | Retrofit Funding Required | Addressed in the Plan for 2009. Phase I – Township to apply for funding. |
| Entrance doors at Library are not accessible to people using wheelchairs or other mobility aid. (Automatic Doors) | Architectural | Retrofit Funding Required | Addressed in the Plan for 2009. |
| Counters are not designed to service people with disabilities. (Design Problem) | Architectural | Retrofit Funding Required | Addressed in the Plan for 2009 and Customer Service Standards. |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention | Status |
|---|------------------------|--|--|
| Recreation Centre bleachers, upper level, are inaccessible to those using a wheelchair. Washrooms are similarly inaccessible. | Architectural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting, Engineering Report on feasibility (older building - structure) design and cost. - Chair-lift to the upper level/stairs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be addressed in the Plan for the 2009/2010 Infrastructure Funding. |
| Stairs at the Golf Course do not accommodate those who use mobility aids. Washrooms are inaccessible. | Architectural | Design, cost and installation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan to be addressed in the 2009 Accessibility Grant. - Township to apply for funding. |
| Entrance door and steps to the Municipal Office do not allow easy access for those using mobility aids. | Architectural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove and replace steps. - Install automatic door hardware. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ramp installed at temporary office location. - To be addressed in the Feasibility Study for 2009. |
| Playground equipment at Child Care Centre needs to be updated in order to be used by those with physical disabilities. | Architectural | Design and cost. | Not addressed. Ongoing Site Assessment. |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention | Status |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| Ramps are needed at front entrance to the Day Care to make them wheel - chair accessible. | | | Ramp being redone in front of Day Care in May 2009. |
| Washroom facilities at the Child Care Centre need to be updated to allow improved accessibility. All doors need to be widened. | Architectural | Design and cost. | Not Addressed. Ongoing Site Assessments due to structural design of this area. |
| Disabled Parking Spaces at Plaza are poorly placed and need to be moved to more appropriate locations. (i.e. in front of Copperfin Credit Union and the Ear Falls 2000 Office) | Physical | Relocate to approved location. | Not Addressed. - Plan to be addressed in the Accessibility Grant for 2009. |
| Very little signage at any Township facility relating to services for the disabled. | Informational | Design and cost. | - Needs to be addressed in the Customer Service Standards. |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention | Status |
|---|------------------------|---|---|
| No special equipment for those with visual or hearing disabilities. (i.e. Audio Box for sight impaired, lack of available material for hearing impaired). | Technological | Feasibility Study, design and cost. | - Needs to be addressed in the Customer Service Standards. |
| People using Disabled Parking Spaces without a Permit or misuse of a Permit. | Attitudinal | Improve Communication | Gary Gazankas to address By-Law Enforcement and O.P.P. Addressed on the Community Channel. Reminder notice in the newspaper and tax bill mail outs. |
| Lack of enforcement of Parking Space Violations by Enforcement Officials. | Policy / Practice | Review and Amend By-Law. | By-Law Officer to work with O.P.P. regarding Highway traffic issues. |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention | Status |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| Stairs at the Municipal Office are not accessible for those with physical disabilities. (Temporary location) | Architectural | Accessibility office space available on main floor. | Stairs for staff still needs to be addressed. Temporary solution required. |

Anticipated Timeline for Barriers to be Addressed in 2008

The first barrier that should be addressed is the closing of the Municipal Office due to a serious air quality problem.

Barriers to be Addressed in 2009

The first barrier that will be addressed is making the Municipal Office, located at 1 Shelski Lane, handicap wheelchair accessible where feasible.

The second barrier that should be addressed is new handicap ramps and signage at the Plaza. This will have to be budgeted in 2009 and would be first priority in this exercise.

The third barrier that should be addressed is a new handicap ramp at the Ear Falls Golf Course Clubhouse as well as a handicap accessible washroom within the facility.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

Council is committed to following through with this Plan. This Plan will be reviewed annually thus allowing Council, Staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Township is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Communication of the Plan

This Plan will be available on the Web Site as well as at the Municipal Office and Ear Falls Public Library and we will make every attempt to make it 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.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | To Identify Specific Solution | Status |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Vision</p> <p>Library No provisions in place at the library for those that are blind or vision impaired.</p> <p>Day Care No arrangements for children or adults with vision impairments.</p> | <p>Standard for Customer Service</p> | <p>Braille S/ Computer Program</p> <p>Accessibility for Customer Service CD for Review.</p> <p>Seeing Eye Dog can accompany either a child or adult.</p> <p>Resource teacher can aid children as well as adults.</p> | <p>Funding Required</p> <p>Proposed Action Pending Review</p> <p>Plan within the Day Care Centre would be implemented to accommodate the individuals.</p> |
| <p>Mobility</p> | <p>Standard for Customer Service</p> | <p>Accessibility for Customer Service CD for Review.</p> | <p>Proposed Action Pending Review</p> |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | To Identify Specific Solution | Status |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Hearing</p> <p>Library No provisions in place at the library for those that are hearing impaired.</p> <p>Day Care No programs in place for individuals with a hearing impairment.</p> | <p>Standard for Customer Service</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Telephone system for the Hearing Impaired. - Sign Language Training or Written Messages <p>Accessibility for Customer Service CD for Review.</p> <p>Special Education teacher would set up a plan for children with hearing problems.</p> <p>Communication with adults could be done through written correspondence.</p> | <p>Funding Required</p> <p>Proposed Action Pending Review</p> <p>Ongoing Special Education teacher sets up program plans for children.</p> <p>Supervisor would set plans in action with parents.</p> |

| Barrier | Type of Barrier | To Identify Specific Solution | Status |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Understanding</p> <p>Library</p> <p>No Policy at the Library for dealing with obstacles concerning the various disabilities in communication. Eg. Language Illiteracy</p> <p>Day Care</p> <p>No process in place for corresponding with individuals with impediments.</p> | <p>Standard for Customer Service</p> | <p>Policy to be set in place for procedures in dealing with the various obstacles concerning the various disabilities in communication.</p> <p>Accessibility for Customer Service CD for Review.</p> <p>Simple and straight-forward letters for communication with parents.</p> <p>More one on one meetings with parents to clarify activities.</p> <p>Special Needs teacher would organize a plan to help the children.</p> | <p>Establish a Policy to put in place.</p> <p>Proposed Action Pending Review</p> <p>Plan within the Day Care Centre would be implemented to accommodate the individuals.</p> |

Plan Development Working Group

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