

Accessibility Plan

The Corporation
of the
Township of St. Joseph

2010

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* is to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and provides for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in life in the Province.

Like all municipalities in the province, the Township of St. Joseph will meet the requirements of the ODA and prepare and implement an annual Accessibility Plan. The Township of St. Joseph supports the ODA and will meet its obligations under the Act, however it also recognizes that accessibility plans must reflect a balance of stakeholder priorities and the municipality's ability to achieve incremental changes within the Township's overall priorities and budgeted resources. Through accessibility planning, the Township will over time progressively identify and remove barriers that may exist in the community.

The accessibility plan for the Township of St. Joseph was originally prepared in 2003 and is updated annually. This plan describes the measures the Township has taken to identify barriers that may exist in its by-laws, services, policies, procedures, programs and facilities in order to determine barriers that need to be removed and the measures taken to remove such barriers to date.

The Township has committed itself to identifying the barriers within the municipality and working toward continual improvement of access to facilities and services within the community. As barriers to people with disabilities are identified, the Township will continue to work toward their removal and prevention.

A working group established to assist Council and staff in the identification of barriers to people with disabilities also provides recommendations on the removal and prevention of such barriers.

Aim

This Plan describes the measures taken and to be taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services in the community, including employees.

Objective

This Plan:

1. Describes the process by which the Township of St. Joseph 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 year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describes the measures the Township will take in the coming year(s) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

5. Describes how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Description of the Township of St. Joseph

The Township of St. Joseph is one of four municipalities on St. Joseph Island. This municipality is described as primarily rural and recreational in nature and encompasses the hamlet of Richards Landing. It is bordered by the Townships of Jocelyn and Hilton and the Village of Hilton Beach.

The Township has a current permanent population of 1122 and also serves a large seasonal population. The Township's population has consistently shown slow but steady growth. The Township includes the hamlet of Richards Landing which serves as the primary business/service centre for the local community. The combination of small town services and rural areas enables residents to enjoy the many benefits of urban services as well as open spaces of country living.

The local school, hospital, post offices, bank, libraries etc. serve not only the residents of this municipality but also residents of neighbouring communities.

Council commitment to accessibility planning

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of St. Joseph is committed to:

- the continual improvement of access to all public facilities, premises and services for all individuals with disabilities
- the provision of quality service to all members of the community with disabilities

Current legislation requires that each municipality prepare and maintain an accessibility plan that will enable Council to meet these commitments.

Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

In 1999, the municipality's original town hall was renovated with the intent that the structure be barrier free. In addition to ground level access, the bathrooms were constructed in a barrier free design.

In 2002, the sidewalk in the Richards Landing Town Centre was modified to permit wheelchair access to a provincially operated retail outlet.

In 2003, a new marina services building was constructed at the Richards Landing Municipal Marina. This building was constructed with the intent that it be barrier free and provide for ground level access to all public interior areas, however as a result of preparation of this plan additional modifications were recommended to further improve accessibility to that facility. Also in 2003, signage was installed to more clearly identify disabled parking spaces in the Richards Landing Town Centre area.

In 2004, the municipality continued working toward improved accessibility by providing a handicap access ramp to the marina services building and installing a power assisted entrance door at the Trefry Centre building from which seniors services are provided.

In 2005 directional signage for handicap access and access ramp handrail installed at Town Hall. Rise in sidewalk at LCBO and steps at Children's Library were also painted with yellow stripe to highlight possible tripping hazards.

In 2006, access ramp/walkway installed at Recreation Centre/Rink building.

In 2007, concrete access ramp installed at Township Administration Building.

In 2008, power assist entrance door installed at Township Administration Building and handicap parking spaces at Municipal Marina clearly marked.

In 2009, accessible customer service policies and procedures adopted.

The municipality's Official Plan has also been replaced with a new up to date Official Plan. Policies respecting accessibility are included in that new Official Plan.

While physical/architectural accessibility improvements has been the primary focus in this community to date, it is recognized that we must also consider other disabilities (vision, hearing etc.). It is planned to work toward improvements in those areas in the coming years.

Site Audit of the municipally owned buildings

Site audits were originally carried out in 2003/2004. Council and staff and Seniors/Disabled Services Advisory Committee members were asked to complete a survey to assess all municipally owned buildings for existing barriers. Solutions were identified for removal of such barriers to comply with the current legislation under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act. This is an ongoing initiative.

Barriers identified to date are included in this report as an addendum, with proposed solutions identified and the status of proposed completion.

Barrier Identification Methodology

In order to identify barriers the following methodology is being used:

Methodology:

Survey of staff and Council and the Seniors/Disabled Services Advisory Committee. Public input from ratepayers is also invited.

The survey is reviewed and identified barriers listed together with recommended strategy for removal or prevention.

The status of identified barriers is reviewed and updated annually.

Review and monitoring of the process

Council is committed to following through with this plan. It will be updated annually to allow Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and ensure the Township is effectively and conscientiously removing barriers as outlined under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available on the web site with copies obtainable at the Municipal Office. Where feasible, steps will be taken to make it available to those with disabilities in a format that will provide easy review. Should a copy in Braille be requested, efforts will be made to accommodate by having staff contact CNIB to inquire if it could be translated.

Conclusion

Barriers for people with disabilities take many forms. There are physical, architectural or technological barriers, communication and information barriers, and attitude barriers.

The Township recognizes that the identification and removal of barriers for people with disabilities will benefit everyone. For example, while curb cuts, wider doorways and automatic doors may help people in wheel chairs, they also help parents with strollers; and while clearer signs with large letters may be designed to meet the needs of the visually impaired, they make information more accessible for everyone.

The Township of St. Joseph is already involved in the identification and removal of barriers, particularly physical barriers and will continue to plan for the identification of all types of barriers. In future, the Township will work within its resources and other priorities to remove and prevent those barriers.

Appendix I:

Identified Barriers to People with Disabilities

Barrier Identified	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Status
Marina Services Building entrance not level with parking area.	Physical	Construct access ramp	Completed - 2004
Trefry Centre entrance door is heavy and difficult to manoeuvre for wheel chairs	Architectural	Install power assisted entrance door	Completed - 2004
Lack of signage for handicap entrance at rear of Town Hall	Communication	Install directional signage at front entrance for handicap entrance at rear	Completed - 2005
Railing at rear of Town Hall too short due to incline from entrance to street	Architectural	Designate handicap parking/drop off area adjacent to existing ramp which has hand rail	Completed - 2005
Children's Library steps cause tripping hazard for visually impaired	Architectural	Paint yellow strip on steps	Completed - 2005
Rise in sidewalk on Richards Street in front of LCBO store creates tripping hazard for visually impaired	Architectural	Paint yellow stripe(s) to highlight area	Completed - 2005
Rink/Recreation Building not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	Construct ramp and walkway from parking lot to building	Completed - 2006
Patio at Marina Services Building Restaurant is not wheelchair accessible	Physical	Construct access ramp	Completed - 2007
Township Administration Building entrance not level with parking area - one step	Physical	Construct access ramp	Completed - 2007
Township Administration Building entrance door heavy	Architectural	Install power assisted entrance door	Completed - 2008
Handicap parking spaces at Marina not clearly defined	Communication	Repaint handicap parking spaces and install signage	Completed - 2008
Accessible Customer Service Policy	Communication	Develop accessible customer service policy and procedures	Completed - 2009
No designated handicap parking space at Township Administration Building	Communication	Designate handicap parking space(s) adjacent to building and install signage	Proposed for 2010
No accessible playground equipment	Physical	Install accessible playground equipment at Tranter Memorial Park	Proposed for 2010
Municipal Newsletter difficult to read for visually impaired.	Communication	Offer to print in larger font size upon request	Proposed for 2010

Administration Building washrooms not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	Install wheelchair accessible washroom.	Timing not determined
Municipal Office door difficult to manoeuvre for wheel chair users	Architectural	Install power assisted door	Timing not determined
Municipal Office reception area too small and counter too high for wheel chair users	Architectural	Redesign reception area and service counter	Timing not determined
Gravel parking area at Township Administration Building makes access difficult for wheel chairs	Physical	Pave parking area adjacent to building entrance.	Timing not determined
Doors on municipal buildings have knobs rather than levers – difficult to grip	Architectural	Replace knobs with lever type handles	Timing not determined
Children's Library not handicap accessible	Physical	Investigate option for handicap access to rear of building (over private land).	Timing not determined
Public Library washroom not wheelchair accessible	Physical	Renovate Library interior to provide wheelchair accessible washroom	Timing not determined
Public Library entrance door difficult to manoeuvre for wheel chair users	Architectural	Install power assisted door	Timing not determined
Handrail of Town Hall steps does not extend all the way from building to street	Architectural	Extend handrail	Timing not determined
Street name signage difficult to read for visually impaired	Communication	Replace street name signs with signs with larger print	Timing not determined
Building/facility signage difficult to read for visually impaired	Communication	Replace signage on/in community buildings/facilities with larger print, larger symbols and/or braille	Timing not determined
Lack of enforcement of handicap parking restrictions	Communication	Improve signage and enforce handicap parking restrictions	Timing not determined