

Adopted by By-Law # 233

The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods



Annual Municipal Accessibility Plan

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Submitted to:

Mayor and Council
of the
Township of Lake of the Woods

Submitted by:

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INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 1.9 million people in Ontario who have disabilities and this number is expected to increase as the population ages due to the increased incidence of disability associated with aging. People with disabilities face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, work and school as well as in parks, recreational facilities, streets, theatres, stores and restaurants – and even in municipal premises.

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* was implemented to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and to permit them to become involved in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers which prevent their full participation in the life and society of the Province. To this end, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* mandates that each municipality annually prepare an accessibility plan.

It is the goal of this plan to:

- describe measures which have been taken in the past to address accessibility issues for people with disabilities who use municipal premises or facilities
- set out the steps which the Township intends to take during the term of this plan to identify and remove current barriers to people with disabilities which exist in municipal premises
- prevent the creation of further barriers to people with disabilities in municipal premises

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of the Township of Lake of the Woods Accessibility Plan:

Any reference to "**people with disabilities**" shall be deemed to include elected officers, staff and members of the community at large.

A "**barrier**" is defined as anything which prevents a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Barriers include:

- physical barriers (steps at entranceways which prevent wheelchair access)
- architectural barriers (no elevators in buildings of more than one floor)
- information or communications barriers (publications not available in large print)
- attitudinal barriers (discouraging people with disabilities from participating in programs or activities)
- technological barriers (traffic lights that change too quickly for a person with a disability to get through the intersection)
- barriers created by policies or practices (providing important information solely by verbal means – ie. radio – which people with hearing impairment cannot hear clearly)

A "**disability**" is defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability or 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*.

AIM

This plan describes the measures that The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods will take during 2010 and beyond to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff and elected officials.

OBJECTIVES

This plan:

1. Describes the method by which The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts undertaken in by The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods during the preceding year(s) to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists barriers to people with disabilities which were identified in the most recent assessment of municipal premises owned by The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods.
4. Describes possible solutions or remedies to identified barriers and specify the measures The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
6. Describes how this accessibility plan will be made available to the public.

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

Council for The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods is committed to the ongoing improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities, as well as to the provision of quality services to all members of the community including persons with disabilities.

To this end, Council has authorized the Clerk-Treasurer to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF THE WOODS

Lake of the Woods Township is located adjacent to the Lake of the Woods north of Hwy #11 on Hwy #621. The Township of Lake of the Woods has within its boundaries the Villages of Bergland and Morson. The Township of Lake of the Woods borders Sioux

Narrows Nestor Falls Municipality, Morley Township and the unincorporated areas of Spohn Township to the west and Pratt Township and Sutherland Township to the south. Big Grassy & Big Island First Nations are in the area of the township as well. The Township of Lake of the Woods has within its borders a large portion of the Lake of the Woods.

The Township of Lake of the Woods has a population of approximately 308 people, according to the 2006 Census conducted by Statistics Canada. McCrosson Tovell School is located the Village of Bergland.

The Lake of the Woods Municipal Office is situated at 211 4th Street in the Town of Rainy River. The Bergland cemetery is located on Cemetery Rd in the village of Bergland. The Morson cemetery is located on Old Hwy near the Minahico area, the Morson fire hall, garage and heliport is located at 9101 Hwy #621 in Morson, Morson community hall is located at 21 Dalseg Dr, Bergland fire hall and municipal garage building, is located at 7705B Hwy #600, Bergland community hall and sport field are located at 7705A Hwy 600.

TOWNSHIP SERVICES

Services provided by the township at the municipal office are minimal. The Township with its one administrative staff member provides services on a day-to-day basis to the public at the Lake of the Woods Municipal Office. These services include functions such as, payment of taxes, issuing building permits, issuing fire permits, maintenance of municipal roads and drainage records, information regarding compliance with municipal by-laws, etc.

The municipality employs a full-time Road Superintendent/equipment operator, a part-time Plow truck/laborer and other part-time laborers/casual employees as needed for the maintenance of our roads. We use local contractors to provide our janitorial services in the community halls and for cemetery and parks grounds maintenance.

The municipal recreational park in Bergland, in addition to the community hall has an outdoor rink and a ball diamond. The municipality does not offer municipal programs but the facilities are available to the public for use, such as fastball and outdoor ice rink use. The Lake of the Woods Recreation Committee offer a few community events and activities during the year. Bergland community hall has a ramp access. The sports field and rink are accessible at ground level by gravel and or dirt pathways. The Morson Hall is available to the public for rentals, meetings, craft shows etc and has a ramp for access.

The two municipal cemetery sites have no buildings. These sites are accessible by gravel road & grass walkways.

The two municipal land fill sites have no buildings. These sites are accessible by gravel road and the dump area is a ramp with a level area to dump from.

The Gov't Dock is level wood plank covered with a sloped walkway to floating docks. The boat launch area next to Gov't Dock and the Bergland boat launch have a floating dock next to each of them.

The municipality is developing a waterfront park. A service building for toilet and change rooms purpose will be built with non barrier entrances to ensure access for all members of the public. Access at the park is by gravel road and/or pathways.

The municipality operates no public transportation, recreation programs, library services, or museums.

INFORMAL SITE AUDIT OF MUNICIPALLY-OWNED BUILDINGS

During 2009, municipal staff completed a survey of all municipally owned buildings and structures to assess any barriers that may exist and to identify potential solutions to removing those barriers in order to ensure that the Township is in compliance with current legislation under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. Barriers which were identified in municipal buildings are discussed further in this document under the section entitled "Barriers Identified".

BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODS

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology was used in 2009:

Methodology	Description	Status
Survey by Staff	A survey to be conducted each year to help identify any barriers which may exist at any municipal premises including electronic premises	The 2009 survey has been completed.

BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES UNDERTAKEN IN PRIOR YEARS

- The Municipal Office is located on 4th Street Rainy River and has a concrete sidewalk entrance from the street to the building and the curb has a cut away section to allow wheelchair and other access so people with disabilities are able to enter the premises to conduct business with staff. There is no public washroom at this facility.
- The municipal halls which have only one story are equipped with wheelchair ramp access and the washrooms are handicap accessible. The Bergland Hall has a second story which is not normally accessible to the public.

- The public is able to communicate with the Municipal Office via e-mail as well as by telephone, fax or personal communication.
- The main area of the fire halls and municipal garages is wheelchair accessible. The 2nd story office of the Road Superintendent is not wheelchair accessible.
- A website for The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods, namely www.lakeofthewoods.ca, was launched to allow for greater accessibility to Township information. The website is maintained on a contract basis and is updated at least monthly. A copy of the current Municipal Accessibility Plan is available to the public on the website as well as in paper form.
- Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted since 2003 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
- Tender documents include a requirement that the contractor shall comply with all legislation and this would include having regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Council adopted a Customer Service Policy under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and staff and policy makers have undertaken training as required therein.

**BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES
UNDERTAKEN DURING PAST YEAR (2009)**

- Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted in 2009 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
- Tender documents include a requirement that the contractor shall comply with all legislation and this would include having regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Various municipal roads were improved, which allows for easier use of same by personal motorized vehicle.
- The Township continues to improve its road and other infrastructure to mitigate damages from severe weather conditions, such as the floods in 2001 and 2002. This will ensure access during and after such weather events.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

No new barriers were identified in the 2009 survey of municipal premises. Previously identified barriers are listed below. Over the next several years, Council will have to decide which barriers should be addressed each year, bearing in mind budget constraints and feasibility.

Barrier	Type of Barrier	Strategy for removal or Prevention of Barrier
Exterior doors to municipal buildings	Architectural	Install easy grip door handles
Locked entrance door to municipal garages not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	No change proposed as the garages are not normally open to the public.
Locked entrance door to municipal fire halls not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	No change proposed as the fire halls are not normally open to the public.
Tax bills may have print that is too small for a sight-impaired person to read	Communication	Province has taken no action to revise format, not with municipal control
Lack of funding	Financial	No provincial grants available to offset high cost of renovations. The municipal budget is severely constrained due to provincial downloading and mandated requirements.
Limited access to the boat launch facility	Architectural	Financial constraints do not permit a remedy at this time.

BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2010 AND BEYOND

The following barriers will be addressed during the 2010 and beyond calendar year, budget permitting:

- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration during the planning stages of any new municipal projects.
- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration in the development of any new municipal by-laws.
- The method of voting to be used in the 2010 and subsequent municipal elections will be vote-by-mail in order to improve accessibility and ease of voting.

FACILITIES, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND SERVICES TO BE REVIEWED IN 2010 AND BEYOND

All physical and electronic municipal premises and facilities and all participatory or recreational programs provided by the Township or any of its committees will be reviewed by the end of December, 2010 and each subsequent year to identify whether barriers to people with disabilities exist with regard to same.

Input from residents will be considered in identifying barriers in municipal premises and possible solutions to same.

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS

Council has committed The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods to following through with the initiatives outlined in this plan.

It is Council's direction that municipal facilities shall be reviewed and this plan reviewed annually as contemplated by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified from year to year, to have a clear understanding of the steps which the Township proposes to take to remove or address identified barriers, and to monitor the progress the Township makes in barrier identification, removal and prevention.

Annual reviews will be conducted by Clerk-Treasurer. The Clerk-Treasurer is authorized to make minor amendments to update dates and other statistical information. Major amendments and or updates will require adoption of a new plan by council resolution or by-law. Annual reviews will be acknowledged by a council resolution, usually in January of each year.

REVISIONS OF PLAN

In order to ensure that the Council which is in office during the term to which this Accessibility Plan applies has direct input as to what steps shall be taken to address identified barriers, Council for the Township of Lake of the Woods hereby directs that it shall be the policy of this Township that, following a municipal election, the newly elected Council shall:

- review the current plan;
- identify the steps which shall be taken during the balance of the term of this plan following its election to office;
- amend the plan accordingly; and

- adopt the revised plan.

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN TO THE PUBLIC

This plan will be available in paper form for public review at the Lake of the Woods Municipal Office as well as electronically on the Township's website, www.lakeofthewoods.ca. The Township will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the plan is made available for the perusal and review of all persons.