

Department: Council and Bylaws	Policy Number: C12-01328
Subject: 5 Year Accessibility Plan	Effective Date: 2010
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Purpose:

Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 mandates that each Municipality prepare a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation;

Executive Summary

The Municipality has committed itself to the continual improvement of access to municipal facilities including the electronic (world wide web) premises as well as the actual physical premises.

Aim

This Plan describes the measures that the Municipality has taken and will take for the years 2010 to 2015 which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation.

Description of the Town of Espanola

The Town of Espanola is located in Northeastern Ontario. The municipality is bordered on the north, north east by the Township of Baldwin, the west by the Township of Sables Spanish River and the south by Whitefish Falls.

The Town of Espanola has a population of approximately 5300 persons (from the 2011 Statistics Canada information). There is a nursing home, which houses 30 residents and has 10 staff members. There is also a public school which houses children from grades kindergarten to grade 7 inclusive with the same being done in a Separate School. Also, we have a secondary school, which houses students from grade 9 – 12 inclusive. There is a French secondary school housed with the English Public secondary school.

The Municipality has a Regional Recreation Centre for our residents as well as all other neighboring municipalities. Within the Municipality we have the Police Service, Public Works and a Community College.

Council commitment to accessibility planning

The Council of the Town of Espanola is committed to:

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

The Council has authorized the Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

Barrier Removal Initiatives

2010

In 2010 it was recognized that a means to share information for interrupted services was required. Policies and forms were created and adopted by Council to ensure this information can be shared in a timely fashion. These interruptions can be posted on the Community Channel, Facebook, Municipal Website and LED sign.

Also in 2010, the public washroom entrance doors at the Regional Recreation Complex were removed to allow easier access for those with any type of disability.

The municipality applied for Enabling Accessibility Funding in 2010 for renovations to the municipal building. Unfortunately, funding was denied.

The municipality purchased a new Care Van in 2010, allowing residents and visitors with disabilities to access via special transit service businesses and facilities within town limits.

The 2010 Municipal Elections were held at the Regional Recreation Complex; this facility is recognized as being an accessible voting location by the Province of Ontario.

When requested, court proceedings are held in the Main Level Boardroom at the Town Hall due to the court room being located on the second floor without elevator access. This process has been done in the past and will continue into future years until elevator access is available.

Policies for Accessible Customer Service and Special Transit services were developed.

2011

In 2011, the Regional Recreation Complex purchased a new mobile aquatic chair to augment the accessibility of the salt water pool.

An amendment to Schedule "N" of the traffic bylaw allowed for an additional Handicapped Parking at the Regional Recreation Complex and Public Library.

Staff implemented changes to the Municipal Website in 2011, allowing for easier navigation as well as incorporating a new font (Verdana) that is recognized as an accessible font by Accessibility Experts.

In December of 2011, Council adopted a resolution supporting the development of a barrier free/accessible park.

2012

Sketch drawings were received from Perry & Perry Architects with options to address the accessibility issues within the municipal office, Firehall and Public Works Departments. Currently, the municipality is still exploring other options.

The municipality applied for funding under the CIIF program for to renovate existing Municipal/Court Bldg incl. Courtroom/Council Chambers to accommodate barrier-free access to lower & 2nd floor which would have included an elevator and barrier free washrooms and front doors. The application was denied.

The municipality applied for funding once again under the Enabling Accessibility Fund – Small Project Component to install barrier free doors to the municipal office. The application was denied.

Bylaw No. 2466/12 was adopted, providing tax interest relief for low-income persons with disabilities.

2013

The municipality chose to move to Vote by Mail method of alternate voting for the 2014 municipal elections. This method allows for all residents to cast their votes by mail, virtually eliminating any accessible issues that voters may have.

Policies were developed for Accessible Employment Standards within the municipality.

2014

Staff will review Accessibility requirements and implement these needs.

It has been recognized that an Accessibility Committee will need to be established to assist in ensuring the municipality is providing services in a suitable accessible format and to help determine any issues that have not been identified at this time. Staff will bring forth a recommendation to Council to create this Committee. The Committee will provide recommendations to Council.

As they become available, funding applications will be submitted to both Federal and Provincial levels of government to help address the accessibility issues that the municipality is faced with; issues such as accessible entrance doors at the municipal office and installation of an elevator at the municipal office to allow access to court functions and accessible washrooms.

The municipality will continue to identify any opportunities to enhance accessibility requirements within the community.

Ongoing training to all summer students and new hires has taken place.

Municipal Elections

On October 27, 2014 the Municipal Elections were held. The municipality chose to use the Vote by Mail method to help aid in removing any accessible barriers to the electors. In addition to the Vote by Mail Method, electors wishing to physically bring in their ballots were given the opportunity to do so at the Recreation Complex on voting day. The Recreation Complex is considered to be the barrier free facility of choice within the community.

The Corporation will continue to apply for funding to help offset the costs associated with enabling our community to become fully accessible.

2015

Staff will review Accessibility requirements and implement these needs.

The municipality will continue to apply for federal and provincial funding to address ongoing accessibility issues.

The municipality will continue to identify any opportunities to enhance accessibility requirements within the community.

Completion of Municipal Office Renovations

The municipal office received a LULA, which now allows accessible access to both the top and lower level of the municipal building.

The front service counter has been renovated to be fully accessible.

The front doors entering the municipal offices have been removed to allow for easier access. As well as the washrooms located on the lower level were renovated to become fully accessible.

Review and monitoring the process

This plan will be reviewed not less than once every five years, allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Municipality is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Communication of the Plan

This plan is available on the municipal website, as well as at the municipal office and will be available in an accessible format upon request.

This is a living document that can be changed and modified as accessibility issues arise and progress is made.