

**THE CORPORATION
OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF SEVERN**



**MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2018-2023**

Table of Contents

Section 1: Accessibility Planning – Legislation 3

Section 2: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview 5

Section 3: Statement of Commitment..... 6

Section 4: Definitions 7

Section 5: Goals and Objectives 10

Section 6: Municipal Profile..... 11

Section 7: Accessibility Advisory Committee 12

Section 8: Identifying Barriers 13

Section 9: Consultation Activities 14

Section 10: Review and Monitoring of the Process 15

Section 11: Barriers to be Addressed..... 16

Section 12: Communication of the Plan 17

Section 13: Integrated Accessibility Standards 18

Section 14: Commitment to Comply 22

Section 15: Past Initiatives 23

Section 16: Current Achievements..... 25

Section 17: Conclusion 26

Section 1: Accessibility Planning – Legislation

The Government of Ontario introduced the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2011 (ODA)* with the purpose of improving access and opportunities to people with disabilities. The primary focus of this legislation was to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities can engage in full participation. Annual accessibility plans became a requirement under this legislation in order to ensure that policies, programs and services are reviewed to remove barriers and prevent new barriers from being created. Additionally, the ODA mandated that municipalities with a population over 10,000 must implement Accessibility Advisory Committees with more than half of the committee membership having a disability.

The ODA legislation has been helpful with the identification and removal of barriers throughout the province. However, the government recognized that Ontario was still not fully accessible. As a result, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2011 (AODA)* was passed into law to ensure a barrier free Ontario by 2025. Eventually the ODA legislation will be repealed and the AODA legislation will stand, however the planning requirements are still in effect until it is officially repealed. The Township of Severn is moving forward with the implementation of both pieces of legislation in order for our ratepayers to have equal access and full participation.

The Customer Service Standard – Regulation 429/07 has been passed and the Township of Severn has complied with the mandate of the regulation.

In June of 2011, the Ontario Government passed Regulation 191/11– The Integrated Accessibility Standard. This regulation sets out a variety of general obligations relating to employment, communications and transportation.

The regulation sets out the requirements for each of the three standards as well as general requirements with respect to developing accessibility policies and plans, training employees and volunteers; and considering accessibility when purchasing goods or services.

These requirements will be phase in over the next few years.

The Township of Severn is proud that it has complied with the requirements

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

of the Customer Service Standard and that Council adopted the Customer Service Policy for the Township of Severn. Through the implementation of this new standard, not online in the Township of Severn, but throughout Ontario, accessibility will simply become part of the everyday service delivery.

Section 2: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Overview

The process of accessibility planning is one that is never complete. Staff, Council and the Accessibility Advisory Committee is involved in discussions regarding accessibility year-round. The Township of Severn Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides the opportunity to demonstrate our current achievements and establish an implementation framework and future priority initiatives.

Objectives identified within the plan are both long and short term; many are ongoing actions or could require implementation over several years. The current focus of the Accessibility Plan is dedicated to implementing the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11.

Like other municipalities in Ontario, an Accessibility Plan is prepared to address any issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the life of the community.

Ultimately, the Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove, and prevent all barriers that may impede residents and visitors from accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the Township of Severn. Accessibility planning will no longer be an after thought but instead will become ingrained in the normal operating policies and procedures.

Section 3: Statement of Commitment

The Township of Severn is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act.

Section 4: Definitions

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD shall name or describe the persons or organizations to which it applies and may apply only to a person or organization that:

- a) Provides goods, services or facilities to the public;
- b) Employs persons in Ontario;
- c) Offers accommodation to the public;
- d) Owns or occupies a building, structure or premises that is open to the public; or
- e) Is engaged in a prescribed business, activity or undertaking or meets such other requirements as may be prescribed.

An Accessibility Standard shall set out measures, policies, practices or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises or such other things as may be prescribed.

BARRIER, is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Some barriers include:

- Physical barriers, for example a step at the entrance to a building;
- Architectural barriers, for example no elevators in a building with more than one floor;
- Information or communications barriers, for example a publication that is not available in large print;
- Attitudinal barriers, for example assuming persons with a disability cannot perform a certain task when in fact

they can;

- Technological barriers, for example a traffic light that changes too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get through the intersection;
- Barrier created by policies or practices, for example not offering different ways to complete a test as part of job hiring.

DISABILITY, is any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

- diabetes mellitus,
- epilepsy,
- a brain injury,
- any degree of paralysis,
- amputation,
- lack of physical co-ordination,
- blindness or visual impediment,
- deafness or hearing impediment,
- muteness or speech impediment,
- physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a 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

ORGANIZATION, shall mean any organization in the public or private sectors and includes:

- a) A Ministry of the Government of Ontario, and any board commission, authority or other agency of the Government of Ontario;
- b) Any agency, board, commission, authority, corporation or other entity established under the Act;
- c) A municipality, an association, a partnership and a trade union; or
- d) Any other prescribed type of entity under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Section 5: Goals and Objectives

The accessibility plan will describe measures that the Township of Severn has taken in the past, and the measures that the Township will take in the future to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the municipality, including staff.

The objectives for the provision of services to persons with disabilities are designed to provide accountability and measurability.

1. Identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Review the facilities, programs, policies and practices of the Township, and identify barriers to people with disabilities in the coming year.
4. Describe the measures the Municipality together with the Accessibility Committee, will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities, by establishing short-term and long-term goals and review our existing practices.
5. Make the public more knowledgeable of our needs and the needs of those with disabilities.
6. Describe how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Section 6: Municipal Profile

The Township of Severn was incorporated on January 1, 1994 encompassing the former Township of Matchedash, Township of Orillia, Village of Coldwater, and portions of the Townships of Tay and Medonte.

Severn Township is situated adjacent to the City of Orillia and Lake Couchiching to the east, the Severn River to the north, Georgian Bay to the south, and Highway 400 to the west, this recreational setting allows for numerous year-round activities. Severn Township is dedicated to fostering a high-quality rural lifestyle through our commitment to enhancing public safety, preserving the natural environment and seeking opportunities for economic prosperity.

The Township's population is approximately 12,000 people, with a large number of our residents being seasonal. There are four public schools located in the Township which house children from grades Kindergarten to grade eight. The Township has three community halls – Lake St. George Community Centre and Washago Community Centre, which are leased and operated by private groups. The Coldwater and District Community Centre houses a community hall and arena and are operated by the Municipality. Other township facilities include four fire stations, administration centre, and two public works yards, and the Coldwater Memorial Public Library.

Council is dedicated to fostering a lifestyle and quality of services to all members of the community with disabilities. Also, Council commits itself to the continual improvement of access to all municipality owned facilities, premises, and services for all those disabilities.

Section 7: Accessibility Advisory Committee

Improving accessibility is a shared responsibility. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 requires that the provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations review their policies, programs and services through the development of annual Municipal Accessibility Plans.

The Accessibility Committee was established by By-law. The Committee meets on a bi-annual basis, or at the call of the Chair.

The Committee is dedicated to conduct research on barriers to persons with disabilities for access to facilities, policies, practices, by-laws, and services offered by the Township of Severn. The Committee will promote public awareness and sensitivity to accessibility issues, to identify and document relevant accessibility issues and concerns with respect to all municipal run facilities.

The Committee will provide advice to Council each year regarding the preparation, implementation, effectiveness and requirements of the Municipal Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Standards.

The Accessibility Committee Secretary for the Municipal Accessibility Committee can be reached at the Township of Severn Administration Office, 705-325-2315.

Section 8: Identifying Barriers

Over the past years the Accessibility Advisory Committee, together with staff have conducted audits by visiting municipal facilities to identify barriers. These audits provided recommendations, cost estimates and phasing for enhanced accessibility to municipal facilities. For the purposes of the Accessibility Plan, the following methodology was used:

Barrier Type	Example
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter.
Attitudinal	A receptionist who ignores a customer in a wheelchair.
Communicational	A website that is not accessible to people who are blind. A person who talks loudly when addressing a person who is deaf.
Physical	A doorknob that cannot be operated by a person with limited upper body mobility and strength.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.
Technological	A paper tray on a laser printer that requires two strong hands to open.

Section 9: Consultation Activities

Input on this plan has been received from staff and the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Members of the public are welcome to comment on this Multi-Year Plan at any time and may forward their comments to info@severn.ca

Section 10: Review and Monitoring of the Process

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

The plan will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis in order to identify and monitor the progress of which the Municipality is moving in order to remove all barriers under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The plan will be updated at least once every five years in consultation with the ACC and presented to Council for approval.

Section 11: Barriers to be Addressed

The following Barriers are to be addressed:

- In 2020, the Township of Severn will be having an Accessibility Audit of all its facilities in preparation of the 2025 all inclusive Ontario.

Section 12: Communication of the Plan

Copies of this plan will be made available upon request from the Township Administration Office and on the Township website at www.severn.ca

Should Braille copies of the plan be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the Canadian Institute for the Blind, with respect to translation, if required.

Section 13: Integrated Accessibility Standards

This regulation establishes the accessibility standards for Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation.

This regulation applies to every designated public sector organization, which includes the Township of Severn and to every other person or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

As a large designated public sector organization having more than 50 employees, the Township shall comply with the date specific to this classification.

1. General:

- Accessibility Policies

Every obligated organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves accessibility through meeting its requirements under the standards of the regulation. There is a requirement to include a statement of organizational commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and further that these policies will be made available publicly and in an accessible format upon request. Deadline for compliance: January 1, 2013.

- Accessibility Plans

Every obligated organization shall:

- Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meets its requirements under the regulation.
- Post the plan on organization's website and make it available in an accessible format upon request.
- Review and update the plan at least every five years in consultation with the AAC and persons with disabilities.
- Prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures

taken to implement the plan and post the status report on their website and make it available in an accessible format upon request. Deadline for compliance: January 1, 2013

- Procuring/Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

Every obligated organization shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring/acquiring goods, services or facilities, where it is not practical to do so and if determined not practical shall provide an explanation upon request. Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2013.

- Training

Every obligated organization shall provide training on the requirements of accessibility standards referred to in this regulation to all employees, volunteers, individuals who participate in developing organizational policies or who provide goods and services on behalf of the organization.

Training will be appropriate to the duties of the individual and will be delivered as soon as practical and whenever changes to policies are made.

Further the organization will maintain printed records of training provided including dates and names of trainees. Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2014

2. Standards:

- Information and Communication Standard

The Information and Communication Standard includes communications between two or more individuals where information is sent or received in text audio, digital or image formats.

- Feedback

Every obligated organization that received or sends feedback shall ensure that processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing/arranging for the provision of accessible formats/supports upon request. Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2014.

- Accessible Formats/Supports

Every obligated organization, upon request, shall provide/arrange for the provision of accessible formats/supports in a timely manner and at no additional costs beyond regular costs. The person making the request will be consulted with to determine the suitability of format; however the final decision rests with the organization. The public shall be notified of the availability of accessible formats. Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2015.

- Emergency Plans/Public Safety Information

If an obligated organization prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and that information is made available to the public then that information must be available in an accessible format as soon as possible upon request. Deadline for compliance: January 1, 2012.

- Website and Web Content

The municipality shall make its internet website and content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 initially at Level A and Level AA. Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2014 for new websites and content – Level A and January 1, 2021 for all websites and content – Level AA.

- Employment Standard

The Employment Standard applies to those organizations that have paid employees – it does not apply to volunteers or non-paid individuals.

The standard requires that employers do the following:

- Recruitment:

During the recruitment process, the Township shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities.

- Selection Process:

Notify job applicants, who are selected to participate in the selection

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

process for a job that accommodations are available upon request pertaining to the materials/processes to be used.

If the applicant requests an accommodation, then the employer shall consult with the applicant and provide for a suitable accommodation with the ultimate decision resting with the employer.

- Offers of Employment:

Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

- Informing Employees:

Notify its employees of its policies used to support employees with disabilities including job accommodations.

Notify new employees as soon as possible as to their policies with respect to accessibility and provide information to all employees when changes are made to their accessibility policies.

- Communication Supports for Employees:

When an employee with disability requests it, the Township will consult with the employee then provide the information needed to perform their job plus any other information that is available to other employees in accessible formats/communication support that is suitable, with the ultimate decision resting with the municipality.

- Accommodation Plans and Return to Work Plan for Employees:

Accommodation plans will be in accordance with the Human Resources Policies.

Section 14: Commitment to Comply

The Township of Severn is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements.

Section 15: Past Initiatives

Facility	Action(s) Taken
Administration Building	<p>The building built in 1990 was built with barrier free washrooms, wheelchair accessible Council Chambers and building space.</p> <p>Additional disabled parking space was provided, with designated signage and space painting.</p> <p>Installation of Automatic Doors.</p> <p>Counter Heights adjusted to accommodate those patrons who require a lower counter height.</p> <p>Installation of Additional Audible Fire Alarm Sirens.</p>
Public Works Yards	<p>Major renovations were completed in 1995 to both Public Works Yards and provide barrier free accessibility.</p>
Coldwater Community Centre	<p>Major renovations allowed for the installation of an elevator, wheelchair ramps, and barrier free washrooms on the upper floor area.</p>

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Facility	Action(s) Taken
Lake St. George Community Centre	Major Renovations in 2010, included the installation of Accessible washrooms, barrier free doors and a wheelchair ramp.
Washago Centennial Park	Renovations included the installation of barrier free washrooms.
Washago Community Hall	Major renovations in 2009, included the installation of Accessible washrooms, barrier free doors and a wheelchair ramp.

General:

Township of Severn Parking By-law was amended to include a new fee structure with a minimum fine of \$300.00 for use of a handicapped parking space without a valid permit.

Section 16: Current Achievements

Area Addressed	Action(s) Taken
Customer Service Standard	All Staff, Committee Members and Council trained Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Accessible Customer Services Training provided to all staff and volunteers. Developed a Customer Service Policy and Procedures.
Employment Standard	Developed information package regarding Individualized Emergency Response Information.
Information and Communication Standard	Municipal Emergency Plan is posted on the Website for Accessible Viewing. Launch of Compliant Township Website November 2012

Section 17: Conclusion

The ODA requires communities to prepare an annual accessibility plan. While this document is reviewed and prepared annually, the Township of Severn has made accessible progress in its buildings and service delivery over the years. As the community continues to grow and develop, the Township of Severn will respond to the needs of the aging and disabled populations. This plan establishes a benchmark and strategy to becoming a barrier free community.