

2009
CORPORATION
OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING

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Accessibility Plan

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CONTENTS OF PLAN

Executive Summary	3
Aim	3
Objectives	3
Description of the Municipality of Neebing	4
Council Commitment to accessibility planning	4
Recent barrier removal initiatives	4
Barrier Identification methodologies	5
Barriers identified	5
Barriers to be addressed in 2005	6
Review and monitoring of the process	6
Communication of the plan	6

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 prepare an annual accessibility plan.

This is the seventh year plan (2009) prepared by the accessibility working group of the MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING. The report describes the measures the Municipality has taken in the past and the measures the Municipality will take during the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff and members of the community at large.

This year the Municipality committed itself to the continual improvement of access to municipal facilities.

The working group identified a couple of barriers to people with disabilities. The Municipality Administrative Office is fully wheelchair accessible with the exception of automatic door openers. Over the next years, the working group recommends focusing on those barriers which deny access to the municipal office on a day-to-day basis.

AIM

This report describes one measure that the Municipality of Neebing has taken for the 2008 year and the measures that the Municipality will take for the 2009 year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Municipality, including staff.

OBJECTIVES

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the Municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.

4. Describe the measures the Board will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describe how the Municipality will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING

The Municipality of Neebing is located in Northwestern Ontario in the District of Thunder Bay. It is comprised of five Townships, being Blake, Crooks, Pardee, Pearson and Scoble. The Municipality is bordered on the north by the City of Thunder Bay, and on the west by the Municipalities of Gilles and O'Connor, and on the northwest by the Municipality of Oliver Paipouge, on the south by the Canada/Us Border and on the east by Lake Superior.

The Municipality has a population of approximately 2184 persons (from the 2006 census information). There are limited services in the Municipality.

The Municipality has a Community Hall that is utilized by many Service groups and the public at large. The Administration Complex houses the Municipal Office and the Neebing Emergency Services Department training complex and offices. There are a total of 6 Fire halls within the Municipality.

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

The Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Neebing 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 Clerk to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

RECENT BARRIER - REMOVAL INITIATIVES

Informal site audit of the municipally owned buildings.

In 2002 Staff was asked to complete a survey of the municipally owned buildings and in particular to assess any barriers that may exist. They were given the task to find solutions to removing those barriers in order to comply with the current legislation under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

There have been a limited number of barriers identified in the Municipal Administration Office, the Blake Hall and the Fire Halls. Those will be discussed further in this document under Barriers Identified.

BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES

In order to identify barriers the following methodology was used:

Methodology Description Status

The Administration staff reviewed the buildings for inefficiencies.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

Over the next several years, Council will have to decide which barriers should be addressed each year keeping in mind budget restraints and feasibility.

- Hallways etc. were all one colour, which is difficult for those with poor vision impairments.
- Foyer at Front Door too restrictive with no automatic Door Openers.
- Telephones are not designed for sight or hearing impaired.
- Have the doorway repaired so that access would be possible, install automatic door openers at both the Municipal Complex and the Blake Hall
- Door at Blake Hall is too heavy and awkward.
- Specify a handicap parking spot at Blake Hall.
- Install springs as the way to keep doors opened.
- Objects are stored in hallways - move into another location in the building.
- No handicap signage on buildings - OBC states that there is to be Accessibility Signs installed where necessary to indicate location of entrance. There should be signs indicating means of egress as well.
- Tax Bills are designed so that a sight impaired person would not be able to read them Because of the legislative requirements by the Province on the wording etc. on the bills they will have to look at the requirements in order to also be in compliance with the Act.

- The Neebing Newsletter and notices to the public which are in print form will have to be looked at for the print size and the accessibility to those with sight impairments.

BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2009

The first barrier that was addressed in 2004 was making the Administrative Office wheelchair accessible by ramp and signage. The heavy doors will have to be budgeted in the future as it would involve modifying the entrance doors.

The Second barrier addressed in 2004 was better access signage at both the main office and the Blake Hall.

The Third barrier addressed in 2005 was the assignment of handicap only parking areas (including signage) at both the Municipal Complex and the Blake Hall.

The next barrier addressed in 2005 was the repainting of door and wall trim to create contrast in order to aid the visually impaired.

The next barrier addressed in 2005 was the assigning of a single handicap washroom located beside the entrance to the main office counter. This will still require work on formalizing the equipment and clearances to meet the new codes.

The barrier addressed in 2006 was the reassigning handicap washroom issue above and installation of two handicap washroom stalls one each located in the men's and ladies washrooms. The previous choice was too small.

The other barrier addressed in 2006 was the ordering of a retrofit to the front counter for receiving payments from a person in a wheelchair.

In 2009, automatic door openers will be installed on both of the vestibule doors at the Municipal Complex to ensure ingress and egress are made more accessible to those in wheelchairs or handicapped in any capacity.

Review and monitoring of the process is ongoing.

Council is committed to following through with this plan. This plan will be created annually thus 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 will be posted at the Municipal Complex 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.