

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Schedule “A” to By-law 2019-051, Neebing Accessibility Policy 2019-2023 approved December 18, 2019. Reviewed and reapproved February 2, 2022 and July 19, 2023.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to fulfil the Requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (S.O. 2005, c. 11, as amended) and regulations passed pursuant to the Act. Further, implementation of this Policy will assist the Province in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

Scope

This policy applies to

1. All employees and volunteers
2. All members of Council
3. All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities to the Corporation

Objectives

The Corporation, including staff and Council, together with our dedicated volunteers, is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence, and to fulfilling its obligations under the Act. The Corporation believes in, and supports, integration and equal opportunity.

This policy outlines the steps the Corporation has taken, and is taking to meet those requirements, and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Province of Ontario has set a target date of 2025 by which time Ontario will be fully accessible for people with disabilities. As such, it has established standards in five areas of daily life: customer service, employment, information/communications, transportation, and design of public spaces.

Governing Principles and Expectations

The Council is committed to accessibility for all residents of, and visitors to, the Corporation’s properties and facilities.

Council, staff, volunteers and Suppliers must all work to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Related Policies

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2014-2018; Hiring Policies; Codes of Conduct; Election Accessibility Plan.

Definitions

Where used in this policy with their initial letters capitalized, the words in this section of the policy are intended to have the meanings as indicated. Definitions apply to all tenses and numbers of the words used.

1. "Act" means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (S.O. 2005, c. 11, as amended). The term includes all regulations passed pursuant to that legislation.
2. "Clerk" means the person who holds the role of the municipal clerk, regardless of that person's job title, under the Municipal Act, 2001 (S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended).
3. "Corporation" means The Corporation of the Municipality of Neebing.
4. "Council" means the elected council of the Corporation in accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001 (S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended) and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (S.O. 1996, c.32, Schedule, as amended).
5. "Suppliers" means persons who provide goods, services, or facilities to the Corporation.

Interpretation Rules

The rules set out in this section apply to the interpretation of the text of this Policy.

1. In this Policy, unless the context requires otherwise, the words used in the singular number include the plural and the words used in the plural include the singular number.
2. In this Policy, the words "include", "includes" and "included" are not intended to limit the phrases that precede or follow them.
3. Whenever this Policy references other by-laws or Provincial or Federal statutes, the reference is to that legislation (including any regulations passed under that legislation), as amended from time to time, including successor legislation.
4. The headings and text divisions used in this Policy are for ease of reference and are not to be used as aids to interpretation of the text.
5. Should any section, clause or provision of this Policy be held by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Policy shall not be affected by the ruling.

Policies/Procedures set out

Part One: Past Achievements in Removing and Preventing Barriers

Customer Service:

Council, all staff, and volunteers are trained, as required by the Act, to be sensitive to, and accommodate, the needs of customers with accessibility challenges. The Corporation remains compliant with the “customer service standard” set out in the Act.

Service animals and assistive partners or other accommodation aids are welcomed for any-and-all customer service interactions between the Corporation and individuals.

Customer feedback on the accessibility of the Corporation’s services is encouraged. Feedback can be provided verbally, in writing, electronically, or otherwise, as circumstances dictate.

The Chief Building Official’s Code of Conduct was amended in 2014 to contain a requirement to consider accessibility in plans for public buildings.

The Corporation’s Emergency Response Plan, originally adopted in 1990, and annually reviewed and updated, includes procedures for accommodation of the disabled during an emergency.

The Corporation passed an Election Accessibility Plan on May 1, 2014. It was updated for the 2018 election. It is reviewed and updated prior to any municipal election, by-election or similar process (i.e. posing a question to the electorate).

Information and Communications:

Information relating to the Corporation’s accessibility policies and available services is published on the website, and posted at the Municipal Office. Accessible formats are free upon request to the Clerk.

The Corporation maintains a list of resource providers for “translation” and/or “conversion” of information into various accessibility formats. This list is reviewed every 6 months for currency.

The Corporation, when requested to do so, provides supporting resolutions and/or correspondence to businesses and public entities applying for grant funding for the purposes of accessibility renovations.

Employment:

All advertisements for employment with the Corporation include wording encouraging

applications from potential employers of all abilities. Hiring policies are compliant with the Human Rights Code, and the Corporation is fully cognizant of its obligations to encourage, accommodate and support employees of all abilities.

Workplace policies include return-to-work accommodation policies after injury or illness.

Transportation:

The Corporation does not offer any public transportation services.

Design of Public Spaces:

Both Blake Hall and the Municipal Office are fully accessible, with appropriate ramps and barrier-free entrance doors for the main office/hall as well as for washroom facilities.

Service animals and assistive partners or other accommodation aids are welcomed in all of the Corporation's facilities.

All new outdoor facility washrooms (porta-potties) have been, and continue to be installed as barrier-free. As they become worn, all such facilities will eventually be replaced with barrier-free models.

The Municipality will conduct a public consultation process which involves specific barrier-free design considerations prior to finalizing the design of future public play-spaces.

The Corporation's Official Plan was reviewed at public open houses and public meetings throughout 2016-2017, and submitted to the Province for review/approval in December 2017. The revisions include policies to encourage accessible housing, unique plans for accessibility to heritage buildings; consideration of accessibility for approvals of new commercial businesses; consideration of accessibility for institutional uses; and consideration of accessibility for public open spaces and recreation facilities.

Gazebos erected in 2017 at the Margaret Street boat launch park and at the Municipal Office, and in 2018 at the Cloud Lake boat launch park, were designed and installed to be barrier-free.

Part Two: Strategies and Actions

Customer Service:

The Corporation is replacing its web service host with one that can meet accessibility standards

for anyone accessing the website www.neebing.org. A fully accessible website will be implemented in 2019.

The entry ramp to the Municipal Office was improved – to eliminate a “bump” – in 2019. The flooring in the vestibule was renovated in 2019 to remove the “wow” in the floor.

Service animals and assistive partners or other accommodation aids are welcomed for any-and-all customer service interactions between the Corporation and individuals.

All new outdoor facility washrooms (porta-potties) will be installed as barrier-free. As they become worn, all such facilities will be replaced with barrier-free models. Full replacement is anticipated on or before 2021.

Accessibility-related signage and notices were reviewed and updated in 2019.

Information and Communications:

Electronic media information for customers will be fully accessible before 2021, including the Corporation’s website and any social media applications utilized by the Corporation.

The Corporation engaged a web consultant in 2019. Work is underway in the design and implementation of a barrier-free website. It is anticipated to be fully functional in spring of 2020.

Employment:

Annual accessibility reviews are completed for all worksites in connection with the annual health & safety facility review.

Transportation:

In the event that public transportation services are delivered in the future by the Corporation, accessibility considerations will be undertaken

Design of Public Spaces:

As they become worn, all outdoor facility washrooms (porta-potties) will eventually be replaced with barrier-free models. This is anticipated to be completed by 2021.

A fully accessible playground structure (designed as a fire truck) was installed at Alf Olsen Memorial Park in the summer of 2019. All future playgrounds will have barrier-free elements.

Regular inspection and maintenance of all public facilities is ongoing. If and inspection

determines an item is no longer functioning as intended, then accessible elements will be replaced with accessible element of similar function. When an accessible element is unavailable due to maintenance, repair, or supply, then every effort will be made to install an accessible temporary item of similar function. If the provision of a temporary element is not possible, then notice will be provided as to when the element is expected to be returned to service, and where applicable, instructions will be provided on how to access the service in an alternate fashion.

Part Three: Training

Training on this Policy, as well as obligations under the Act, is undertaken annually with employees and during councillor orientation sessions after each Municipal election. Council receives an annual report on the Policy.

This Policy is provided to all Suppliers and is posted on the Municipality's website.

Part Four: Resources

For more information on this policy, please contact the Clerk at:

Neebing Municipal Office
4766 Highway 61
Neebing, Ontario P7L 0B5
Phone: 807-474-5331
Fax: 807-474-5332
Email: clerk@neebing.org

Accessible formats of this policy are free on request. Please contact the Clerk.

The Corporation maintains a research file at the office (File Number 13-A02-00002-2015) which contains resource and research materials relating to the Act.

The Corporation of the Municipality of Neebing Statement of Commitment and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023

Schedule “B” to By-law 2019-052 Neebing’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2019-2023)



Statement of Commitment

The Corporation of the Municipality of Neebing is committed to meeting its requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the regulations passed under that legislation. Staff and Council, together with our dedicated volunteers, are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. Over the lifetime of this plan, we will continue the work already begun to meet the needs of people with disabilities by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility to municipal services.

The Province of Ontario has set a target date of 2025 by which time Ontario will be fully accessible for people with disabilities. As such, it has established standards in five areas of daily life: customer service, employment, information/communications, transportation and design of public spaces.

Legislated Requirements

The Corporation of the Municipality of Neebing, having fewer than 50 employees, is a “small organization” as that term is defined in the legislation.

We are a community with a population of less than 10,000, and as such, we are not required to have an accessibility advisory committee – however – Council welcomes input from all people, at all times.

Multi-Year Plan

The appendix to this Statement of Commitment comprises the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for Neebing from 2019 through 2023.

Resources

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 (as amended) is available at the e-laws Ontario website.

Ontario Regulations 429/07 and 191/11, passed under that legislation, are also available at the e-laws Ontario website.

Part One: Policies

What We Have Done

Adopt a comprehensive municipal accessibility policy and review it annually.

The policy was developed and approved in 2010, as required. It has been regularly reviewed and updated since then.

What We Need to Do

Continue to review and monitor the policy, consulting with community members as and when needed.

Update the Municipality's procurement policies to implement accessibility considerations.

Workplan

Formal reporting to Council, annually, in December, to review the policy.

Request for public input in September and October issues of Neebing News, and on Website.

Timeframe

Annually throughout the term of this multi-year plan.

Part Two: Accessible Information & Communications (including Emergency Information)

What We Have Done

We have resourced the service providers who can provide services to translate municipal information into accessible formats when required and requested.

The Municipality created a website some years ago.

What We Need to Do

Continue to monitor the list of service providers and keep it accurate and up to date so that, when a request is made for information in an accessible format, it can be promptly responded to.

The website needs to be altered to a format that is compatible with accessibility tools for use by persons with disabilities on or before 2021. This was “in progress” as at the time this multi-year plan was approved.

Workplan

6-month “checkups” on the lists of vendors maintained in the accessibility binder.

Complete the project to transition to a fully accessible website, meeting the requirements of legislation.

Transfer existing/historic (and new) web content for compatibility.

Timeframe

Every six months during the term of this multi-year plan.

Project is slated for completion in Spring 2020.

Part Three: Employment

What We Have Done

Employment policies include requirements to comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code, including a prohibition against discrimination against applicants with disabilities.

Workplace related policies include accommodation for persons with disabilities, including accommodation for return-to-work after absence due to debilitating health issues or injuries.

What We Need to Do

Continue to advertise for available positions in accessible formats.

Continue to provide accommodation, where necessary, for interview processes.

Continue to work with current employees on an as-needed basis.

Workplan

There is no work plan for this item.

Timeframe

Throughout the term of this multi-year plan.

Part Four: Design of Public Spaces

What We Have Done

Renovations to the Municipal Office to the Blake Hall (recreation centre) for accessibility.

Both sites are now accessible.

What We Need to Do

Annual accessibility site reviews.

Consider accessibility adaptations to outdoor public spaces.

Workplan

1. Annual Review
2. Install accessible playground at one public park.
3. Report on requirements and costs for additional accessible play structures for children at other parks.

Timeframe

1. Annually throughout term.
2. 2019

3. 2020 - 2023

Part Five: Transportation

What We have Done

Needing does not offer public transportation services, and as such, has no mandated targets for accessibility in that regard.

What We Need to Do

Recognize that – when and if public transportation services are instituted, accessibility requirements must be mandated and implemented.

Workplan

There is no work plan for this item.

Timeframe

Throughout the life of this multi-year plan.

Part Six: Culture/Recreation

What We Have Done

Needing entered a partnership with B. K. Parent, author of the “Sommerhjem Journeys” book series (involving creatures called “Neebings”) to promote the books locally.

What We Need to Do

Provide the books in an audio format.

Workplan

Working with Ms. Parent, create audio versions of the Sommerhjem Journeys books, where financially and otherwise feasible.

Timeframe

Throughout the life of this multi-year plan.