

# **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

**2016 – 2020**



## **Introduction:**

Municipal governments play an important role in the planning and development of communities: in our streets, parks, libraries, meeting places, programs, services, public buildings and elections. The Province of Ontario recognized that accessibility is a shared responsibility and passed the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) on December 14, 2001 to require provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations to review their policies, programs and services.

In June 2005, the Province of Ontario furthered its commitment to accessibility by expanding previous legislation to include the private sector with the goal to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities in five important areas of their lives within specified time limits:

- customer service
- transportation
- information and communications
- design of public places
- employment

The multi-year plan sets out strategies to identify and remove barriers to accessibility as required by the AODA.

## **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 CAO/Treasurer to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

## **Multi-Year Strategies**

### **2016**

Development and completion of the outdoor active living park and accessible trail at Clear Lake was made possible through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities fund.

### **2017**

The municipality purchased a new special transit bus under the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund. With the increasing need for the Care Van Transit service in Espanola the new bus can accommodate an 8 passenger maximum with 4 of those being wheel chair passengers.

### **2018**

A new Fire Hall was built meeting requirements of the AODA as they apply to the Ontario Building Code.

Under the Enabling Accessibilities in Communities grant the Municipality was able to extend our accessible trail which included leveling, grading and paving the trail as well as levelling and grading a path to the beach for the installation of mobi matting to create safe and accessible passage to the Clear Lake Park outdoor fitness park and beach area.

2018 Municipal Elections were conducted using the Vote by Mail alternate voting method to ensure all residents eligible to vote had access to do so. . On voting day the the Recreation Complex was used for those who chose to cast their ballot personally, The Complex is considered to be the barrier free facility of choice within the community

### **2019**

The Municipality entered in to an Agreement with Sandbox Solutions for website redevelopment which includes AODA compliance. This project to be completed in 2020.

### **2020**

Staff continues to review Accessibility requirements in order to meet 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 needs within the community and implement as permitted.

## **2010-2015 Key Accomplishments**

### **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.

The public washroom doors at the Regional Recreation Complex were removed to allow easier access for those with any type of disability.

A new Specialized Transit Bus was purchased in 2010, allowing residents and visitors with disabilities to access via special transit service businesses and facilities within town limits.

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.

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 the traffic bylaw permitted 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**

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

## **2013**

Policies were developed for Accessible Employment Standards within the municipality.

## **2014**

2014 Municipal Election were conducted using the Vote by Mail alternate voting method to ensure all residents eligible to vote had access to do so. On voting day the the Recreation Complex was used for those who chose to cast their ballot personally, The Complex is considered to be the barrier free facility of choice within the community.

## **2015**

The municipal office underwent major renovations to make the building fully accessible; this included installation of a LULA and construction of a barrier free public washroom, barrier free front service counter and barrier free main building entrance.

## **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.