

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MATACHEWAN

BY-LAW NO. 2006-03

Being a By-law establishing the provisions for an accessibility plan within the Township of Matachewan.

Whereas, Section 2 of the Municipal Act, 2001, R.S.O. 2001, states that a municipality may provide services and other things that it considers necessary or desirable;

And Whereas, Section 49 of the Municipal Act provides for the establishment of a system of disabled parking by a municipality;

And Whereas, Section 11 of the Municipal Accessibility Plan, of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 states that all municipalities in Ontario must have in place an accessibility plan to address accessibility issues for Ontarians with disabilities;

And Whereas, all facilities, by-laws and policies within the Township of Matachewan are currently not 100% useable, practical and functional for those with disabilities;

And Whereas, the Municipal Council of the Township of Matachewan deems it necessary to work towards ensuring that our community is fully accessible to all residents regardless of their abilities;

Now therefore, the Municipal Council of the Corporation of the Township of Matachewan hereby enacts as follows:

That the Township of Matachewan's Accessibility Plan shall form part of this By-Law;

That all portions of any and all regulations, procedures, agreements and/or By-laws that contravene this By-law shall be deemed to be null and void;

And that this By-law shall come into full force and effect upon it's passing.

READ A FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD TIME AND FINALLY ENACTED AND PASSED IN OPEN COUNCIL THIS 16TH DAY OF JANUARY 2006.

Reeve

CAO-Clerk-Treasurer

Municipal Accessibility Plan

2006

The Corporation of the Township of Matachewan



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Executive Summary

- 1) This Plan has been prepared for Council under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).
- 2) The initial assessment of accessibility for the Township indicates that although there have been good starts in several areas, more work needs to be done in many parts of the municipal government.
- 3) The key issues identified fall into four areas of concern: mobility, facility/design, communications and practice/procedures.
- 4) The plan attempts to identify and plan to deal with the concerns or barriers identified.
- 5) Furthermore, the plan sets out priority areas that can be addressed in the short-term but also points out issues that Council may or may not be able to address in the imminent future based on the financial constraints of the municipality.
- 6) Monitoring of plan performance and periodic review of the plan is suggested.
- 7) Several approaches to the communication of the Municipal Accessibility Plan are recommended once it has been approved and endorsed by Council.

1.0 Introduction

This plan is the Township of Matachewan's Municipal Accessibility Plan as required by Section 11 Municipality Accessibility Plan, of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.

The overall goal is to describe measures we have already undertaken as well as those still required to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the facilities, by-laws and policies of the municipality. The goal of the Accessibility Plan is to identify, assess and remove barriers to people with disabilities where economically feasible.

We will review earlier achievements as well as steps that still need to be taken.

We will describe these next steps and will undertake to identify and address barriers in our facilities, programs, by-laws, policies and practices to people with disabilities.

Furthermore, through this plan we will also attempt to become more accessible to minorities, francophones and aboriginal peoples.

2.0 Accessibility Achievements

As part of the Township's commitment to ensure that programs and facilities are available to all citizens, the Township will perform site audits on all of its facilities and ensure that future work and services will take into view the needs of disabled and minority persons. Municipal buildings will be audited and programs to make the buildings accessible will be completed on an economically feasible basis.

Documentation will also be audited to determine its functionality for minorities and for persons with disabilities. Municipal staff has already made queries into having Public Township documentation translated into both official languages.

These audits will be made part of the plan.

3.0 Identifying Barriers

Based on a commitment to service all of its citizens to the best of our ability, the township has identified certain aspects of its operation that will be assessed for possible barriers.

- A) Mobility - The provision of designated Accessible Parking spaces is seen as a good thing, but there are ongoing issues with regard to winter maintenance of such spaces and better-located curb cuts that will accommodate rear and side-loading vehicles.
- B) Facility/Design - Entrance ramping to buildings is viewed to be a necessity for persons with mobility challenges. While some Municipal facilities are satisfactory from an accessibility perspective, the Township needs to do more work at all of its facilities. Other concerns that have been identified include lighting and visual aids for persons with visual impairments, elevators, contemporary standard accessible washrooms in Municipal buildings, audio signals at intersections, contemporary standard ramps and curb cuts, mechanics for barrier-free movement and emphasizing accessibility design considerations in all new private residential construction and Township owned leisure facilities and parks.
- C) Communications - Needs have been identified around making Municipal documents available in alternate formats (large font, Braille, audio messages/versions, on screen in real time or on the Township's website), whether these involve notices of Public Meetings, general public information, By-Laws or Council meeting minutes. Matachewan does not use TTY systems for persons who are deaf, deafened or hearing impaired, nor is there a wide usage of international symbols for directional or information signage.
- D) Practice/Procedure - Special needs sensitivity training may be needed for all municipal staff. The Municipality should continue its efforts to comply with all applicable Human Rights and related legislation and perhaps strive to become a 'model' employer of persons with special needs. Accommodations for persons with disabilities should also be a consideration in the contract services the Municipality uses (such as special consideration of waste disposal needs for persons with special needs).

The identification process will outline possible remedies and evaluate the feasibility of the team implementing the remedies within the economic realities of the municipal budget.

4.0 Buildings

While the municipality has made significant investments by ensuring that the Community Hall, Township Office and Health Centre are accessible there are physical barriers to other municipal buildings, specifically the Water Treatment Plant, Fire Hall and Fitness Facilities.

The municipality plans to evaluate and inspect municipal buildings and facilities in order of priority. The buildings that offer municipal services to residents will be ranked in priority of their services offered.

Township Office	--	accessible
Community Hall	--	accessible
Health Centre	--	accessible
Fitness Centre	--	inaccessible
Water Treatment Plant	--	inaccessible
Fire Hall	--	inaccessible

5.0 Addressing Barriers

The Township will prioritize municipal buildings with regards to the services they offer to the public. All new buildings will be designed with accessibility in mind.

Site audits on all municipal facilities, ensuring that future work and services will take into view the needs of disabled and minority persons, as well as the audit of documentation, will contribute to the future functionality of municipal services for minorities and for persons with disabilities. The implementation process will evaluate the feasibility of Council and staff implementing the remedies within the economic realities of the municipal budget.

6.0 Priorities

- 1) Making the municipality more accessible to persons with special needs.
- 2) The Council will ensure buildings that service the public are made accessible as soon as is economically feasible.
- 3) The Fire Hall and Waterworks will not be prioritized until future years given the nature of those facilities and the significant investment that will be required for the upgrade of such.
- 4) The other facilities will be updated when capital funds become available.
- 5) Municipal documentation, policies, procedures, minutes, etc. will be translated into both official languages, into larger print and into Braille on an as needed basis, if and when funding becomes available to do so.

7.0 Monitoring/Review

In future, Council will monitor and report on the progress of the Plan in terms of identification and removal of barriers and measures taken towards the completion of solutions to identified accessibility issues. It is recommended that the General Government Committee take the lead role in the review of the Plan.

8.0 Communication of Plan

It is recommended that the Township of Matachewan use several alternative formats for the communication of this Plan: Larger font of the print version on an as needed/requested basis and putting a copy of the Council-approved Plan on the Township's website.

Over time, the Township could explore the conversion of this Plan into other formats.