

**Adopted by By-Law #02/11**

# **The Corporation of the Township of Alberton**



## **Annual Municipal Accessibility Plan**

**January, 2011**

**Submitted to:**

Reeve and Council  
of the  
Township of Alberton

**Submitted by:**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

There are approximately 1.9 million people in Ontario who have disabilities and this number is expected to increase as the population ages due to the increased incidence of disability associated with aging. People with disabilities face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, work and school as well as in parks, recreational facilities, streets, theatres, stores and restaurants – and even in municipal premises.

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* was implemented to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and to permit them to become involved in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers which prevent their full participation in the life and society of the Province. To this end, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* mandates that each municipality annually prepare an accessibility plan.

It is the goal of this plan to:

- describe measures which have been taken in the past to address accessibility issues for people with disabilities who use municipal premises or facilities
- set out the steps which the Township intends to take during the term of this plan to identify and remove current barriers to people with disabilities which exist in municipal premises
- prevent the creation of further barriers to people with disabilities in municipal premises

## **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of the Township of Alberton Accessibility Plan:

Any reference to “**people with disabilities**” shall be deemed to include elected officers, staff and members of the community at large.

A “**barrier**” is defined as anything which prevents a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Barriers include:

- physical barriers (steps at entranceways which prevent wheelchair access)
- architectural barriers (no elevators in buildings of more than one floor)
- information or communications barriers (publications not available in large print)
- attitudinal barriers (discouraging people with disabilities from participating in programs or activities)
- technological barriers (traffic lights that change too quickly for a person with a disability to get through the intersection)
- barriers created by policies or practices (providing important information solely by verbal means – ie. radio – which people with hearing impairment cannot hear clearly)

A “**disability**” is defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability or 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*.

## **AIM**

This plan describes the measures that The Corporation of the Township of Alberton will take during 2011 term to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff and elected officials.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This plan:

1. Describes the method by which The Corporation of the Township of Alberton will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts undertaken by The Corporation of the Township of Alberton during the preceding year(s) to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists barriers to people with disabilities which were identified in the most recent assessment of municipal premises owned by The Corporation of the Township of Alberton.
4. Describes possible solutions or remedies to identified barriers and specify the measures The Corporation of the Township of Alberton will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services The Corporation of the Township of Alberton will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
6. Describes how this accessibility plan will be made available to the public.

## **COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING**

Council for The Corporation of the Township of Alberton is committed to the ongoing improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all

those with disabilities, as well as to the provision of quality services to all members of the community including persons with disabilities.

To this end, Council has authorized the Clerk-Treasurer/CAO to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ALBERTON**

The Township of Alberton is a small rural township located in the center of the southern boundary of the Rainy River District in Northwestern Ontario. Alberton has an approximate area of 115.30 square kilometres and is comprised of two geographical townships, namely Crozier and Roddick.

The Township of Alberton is bordered to the north by the unorganized Township of Miscampbell, to the west by the municipal Township of LaVallee, to the east by the Town of Fort Frances and to the south by the Rainy River, which serves as an international waterway and boundary between Canada and the United States.

The Township of Alberton has a population of approximately 958 people, according to the 2006 Census conducted by Statistics Canada. Alberton Central School closed in June of 2004.

The Alberton Municipal Office is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of Kings Highway 11-71 and secondary Highway 611 South. Located immediately adjacent to the Municipal Office is the Alberton Volunteer Fire Department Fire Hall. The Municipal Roads Department buildings (grader garage and tractor garage) are located north of the Municipal Office on a separate parcel of land at the end of Church Road. The Alberton Millennium Skating Rink site is located east of the intersection of Hill and Hall Roads.

### **TOWNSHIP SERVICES**

Services provided by The Corporation of the Township of Alberton are minimal. Services available to the public at the Alberton Municipal Office include functions such as Council meetings, payment of taxes, issuance of building permits, fire permits and dog licenses, provision information regarding compliance with municipal by-laws, etc.

The municipality employs a small staff to conduct the day-to-day business of the Township. One full-time administrator and one part-time administrative assistant are

employed to address concerns of the public, answer questions, provide support to Council and officers, collect taxes and perform office duties. The municipality current contracts for Chief Building Official services. Fire-fighting services are provided by the Alberton Volunteer Fire Department. Roads are overseen by the Alberton Roads Committee and road maintenance services are provided under contract.

The Millennium Skating Rink and Park Facility is available year-round for public recreational use although no regularly scheduled recreation programs are operated by the municipality.

### **INFORMAL SITE AUDIT OF MUNICIPALLY-OWNED BUILDINGS**

During 2010, municipal staff completed a survey of all municipally owned buildings and structures to assess any barriers that may exist and to identify potential solutions to removing those barriers in order to ensure that the Township is in compliance with current legislation under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. Barriers which were identified in municipal buildings are discussed further in this document under the section entitled "Barriers Identified".

### **BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODS**

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology was used in 2009:

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Survey by Staff	A survey to be conducted each year to help identify any barriers which may exist at any municipal premises including electronic premises	The 2010 survey has been completed.

### **BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES UNDERTAKEN IN PRIOR YEARS**

- The Municipal Office parking lot has a designated space for handicapped parking and a concrete sidewalk from the parking space to the building.
- The Municipal Office, including Council Chambers, is accessible via a ramp which permits wheelchair and other access so people with disabilities are able to enter the premises to conduct business with staff or to attend Council and other meetings.

Both the ramp and the step accesses are equipped with railings for balance, stability and safety purposes.

- The main floor of the Municipal Office is equipped with one wheelchair accessible washroom for municipal use, which is available to the public on request. Easy-grip handles were installed on the door to the wheelchair accessible washroom on the main floor instead of regular doorknobs to permit ease of use for persons with disabilities.
- The public is able to communicate with the Municipal Office via e-mail as well as by telephone, fax or personal communication.
- The main area of the VFD Fire Hall is wheelchair accessible.
- A ramp with a railing was constructed at the Millennium Skating Rink to provide safe access to and from the rink shack building.
- A website for The Corporation of the Township of Alberton, namely [www.alberton.ca](http://www.alberton.ca), was launched to allow for greater accessibility to Township information. The website is maintained by staff and is updated at least monthly. A copy of the current Municipal Accessibility Plan is available to the public on the website as well as in paper form.
- A ramp was constructed and installed to the Millennium Rink surface to permit access to the sports surface during the spring, summer and fall seasons.
- The size of the fonts used in the Township Community Newsletter have been increased to make the newsletter easier for all residents to read.
- Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted since the year 2000 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
- The Township's Procurement Policy, which was developed and adopted in 2004, includes a requirement that the municipality shall have regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities when procuring goods, services or works.
- Council adopted a Customer Service Policy under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and staff and policy makers have undertaken training as required therein.



- Kehl and Domanski Roads were surfaced, which allows for easier use of same by personal motorized vehicles.
- The method of voting used in the 2010 municipal election was vote-by-mail in order to improve accessibility and ease of voting.

**BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES  
UNDERTAKEN DURING PAST YEAR (2010)**

- Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted in 2010 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
- The Township's Procurement Policy, which was developed and adopted in 2004, includes a requirement that the municipality shall have regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities when procuring goods, services or works.
- Accessible design was incorporated into plans for approved projects, including completion of renovations of the Alberton Volunteer Fire Department Fire Hall and of the Millennium Rink and Park rink shack.

**BARRIERS IDENTIFIED**

No new barriers were identified in the 2010 survey of municipal premises. Previously identified barriers are listed below. Over the next several years, Council will have to decide which barriers should be addressed each year, bearing in mind budget constraints and feasibility.

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for removal or Prevention of Barrier</b>
Municipal Office basement is not handicapped accessible	Architectural	Elevator or lift could be installed if and when building renovations are undertaken

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Exterior doors and door to Municipal Office basement are heavy and may pose difficulty for some	Architectural	Install automatic door openers
Locked entrance door to the grader garage not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	No change proposed as garage is not open to the public
Tax bills may have print that is too small for a sight-impaired person to read	Communication	Province has taken no action to revise format, not within municipal control
Training room and washroom in the VFD Fire Hall are not wheelchair accessible renovations	Architectural	Could be widened if and when renovations are done to the building but not part of 2009-10
Lack of funding	Financial	No Provincial grants available to offset the high cost of renovations. Municipal budget already severely strained due to provincial downloading and provincially mandated requirements.

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### **BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2011**

The following barriers will be addressed during the 2011 calendar year, budget permitting:

- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration during the planning stages of any new municipal projects.
- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration in the development of any new municipal by-laws.

### **FACILITIES, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND SERVICES TO BE REVIEWED IN 2011**

All physical and electronic municipal premises and facilities and all participatory or recreational programs provided by the Township or any of its committees will be reviewed by the end of August, 2011 to identify whether barriers to people with disabilities exist with regard to same.

Input from residents will be considered in identifying barriers in municipal premises and possible solutions to same.

### **REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS**

Council has committed The Corporation of the Township of Albertain to following through with the initiatives outlined in this plan.

It is Council's direction that municipal facilities shall be reviewed and this plan recreated annually as contemplated by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified from year to year, to have a clear understanding of the steps which the Township proposes to take to remove or address identified barriers, and to monitor the progress the Township makes in barrier identification, removal and prevention.

### **REVISIONS DURING TERM OF PLAN**

In order to ensure that the Council which is in office during the term to which this Accessibility Plan applies has direct input as to what steps shall be taken to address identified barriers, Council for the Township of Alberton hereby directs that it shall be the policy of this Township that, following a municipal election, the newly elected Council shall:

- review the current plan;
- identify the steps which shall be taken during the balance of the term of this plan following its election to office;
- amend the plan accordingly; and
- adopt the revised plan.

### **COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN TO THE PUBLIC**

This plan will be available in paper form for public review at the Alberton Municipal Office as well as electronically on the Township's website, [www.alberton.ca](http://www.alberton.ca). The Township will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the plan is made available for the perusal and review of all persons.