

The Corporation of the Township of Alberton



Accessibility Plan

2023 - 2028

Adopted: December 14, 2023

Submitted to:

Mayor and Council
of the
Township of Alberton

Submitted by:

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CAO/Clerk-Treasurer

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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 the five-year period from 2023 to 2028 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 Township of Alberton is committed to the ongoing improvement of access to all its municipally-owned facilities, premises and services, as well as the accessible provision of its municipal services, to and for all persons including those with disabilities.

To this end, Council has authorized the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer 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 969 people, according to the 2016 Census conducted by Statistics Canada. The Township has no local school or community center.

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 south of the Municipal Office is the Alberton Volunteer Fire Department Fire Hall. The Municipal Roads Department grader garage building and shed are located north of the Municipal Office on a separate parcel of land at the end of Church Road. A second garage located at 128 Hill Road is used for both Roads Department and Millennium Park grounds maintenance and operations. The Alberton Millennium Park and 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, administrative, clerical and finance/taxation services, Chief Building Official services including the issuance of building permits, issuance of fire permits, and land use planning matters including processing of consent applications as well as applications for amendment of the Township's Official Plan and Zoning By-Law.

The municipality employs a small staff to conduct the day-to-day business of the Township. The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer and one administrative assistant are employed to address concerns of the public and provide assistance and information, provide support to Council and municipal officers, handle clerical and finance matters including processing and collection of taxes, perform office duties and process land use planning applications. The municipality shares a Chief Building Official joint employee with three other area municipalities. Fire-fighting services are provided by the Alberton Volunteer Fire Department, with the Fire Chief providing part-time services under a contract to the Township. Roads are overseen by a casual Road Supervisor employee. Road maintenance services are provided primarily through the use of contractors.

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

INFORMAL SITE AUDIT OF MUNICIPALLY-OWNED BUILDINGS

During 2023, municipal staff completed a review 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 2023:

Methodology	Description	Status
Review by Staff	A review to be conducted each year to help identify any barriers which may exist at any municipal premises including electronic premises	The 2023 informal evaluation was 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, to attend Council and other meetings or to attend events held at the premises. Both the ramp and the step access 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. 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.

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- 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, was launched to enhance and improve accessibility to Township information remotely. 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 on request.
 - 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* includes a provision that the municipality will have regard to accessibility matters when procuring goods, services or works.
 - Council adopted a Customer Service Policy under the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and staff and Council of the day undertook training in that regard.
 - Various roads within the Township have been hard-surfaced, which allows for easier use of same by personal motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation.
 - The method of voting used in the 2006, 2010 and 2014 municipal elections was vote-by-mail in order to improve accessibility and ease of voting. The use of the method resulted in an approximately 30% greater voter turn-out than did the traditional polls method used in 2003 and earlier.
 - 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.
 - The municipal office and fire hall parking lot was paved to provide consistent condition and ease of access.
 - Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted in 2012 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
 - Office staff undertook accessibility training in December 2018, 2019 and new staff in 2023 to remain up to date on accessibility requirements legislated by the Province.



BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES UNDERTAKEN DURING 2018 – 2022

- Capital projects had consideration to accessibility. For example, the use of 7/8ths granular for road resurfacing was changed to 5/8ths in part to ensure a smoother road surface for pedestrians, cyclists and other personal modes of transportation.
- The Township will provide to employees updated information about its policies to support employees with disabilities.
- The Township will provide information in an accessible format or with communication supports to employees with disabilities.
- As required, the Township will prepare individualized workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities.
- The Township will give consideration to accessibility when planning or constructing new recreational trails that it intends to maintain, including installation of access ramps. The Township has no existing recreational trails or beach access routes.
- The Township will give consideration to accessibility in constructing or redeveloping existing outdoor public use eating areas and play spaces that it intends to maintain such that same will comply with the requirements of Sections 80(17), 80(19), 80(20a) and 80(20b) of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.
- The Township public spaces will have accessible elements in place as required under the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* of the *IASR*.
- Microsoft Office Suite was purchased and is used for the text portions of the Township's website.
- The majority of the components of community events held by the Recreation Committee were accessible to all people.
- The side entrance to the municipal office building had a concrete platform installed to alleviate a potential barrier at the entrance.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

No new barriers were identified in the 2023 survey of municipal premises.

Previously identified barriers are listed below. Over time as repairs and replacement of assets is required, Council will have to decide which barriers will be addressed and when, subject to consideration of budget constraints and feasibility.

Barrier	Type of Barrier	Strategy for removal or Prevention of Barrier
Municipal Office basement is not accessible to persons with mobility-related disabilities.	Architectural	Elevator or lift could be installed if and when building renovations are undertaken
Exterior doors and the interior door to the Municipal Office basement are heavy and may pose difficulty for some.	Architectural	Install automatic door openers and doors that are compliant with the Fire Code
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	Staff will accommodate enlargement of document for ease of use
Training room and washroom in the VFD Fire Hall are not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	Could be widened if and when renovations are done to the building
Lack of funding	Financial	No Provincial grants available to offset high cost of renovations. Municipal budget already severely strained due to provincial downloading and provincially mandated requirements.



BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The following barriers will be addressed during the 2023 - 2028 calendar years, budget permitting:

- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration during the planning stages of new municipal projects and of renovation of existing structures.
- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration in the development of new municipal by-laws, practices and procedures.
- Initiatives and measures previously undertaken during the 2018 - 2022 period will continue.
- The Township will provide public written notice of the availability of accommodations during future employee recruitment processes.
- Conversion of information on the Township's website to accessible format(s) will continue.
- Consideration will be given to making the Township's new or redeveloped public spaces accessible, including any recreational trails and access routes that may be created, outdoor public use eating areas, exterior paths of travel, on and off-street parking lots, service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas with fixed seating, and maintenance of the Township's public spaces.
- The Township's will make publicly available information, including forms, accessible upon request, in a format which does not create cost impact to the Township and within a reasonable period of time.

FACILITIES, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND SERVICES TO BE REVIEWED IN 2023 – 2028

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 annually to identify whether barriers to people with disabilities exist and to identify means of eliminating or reducing such barriers.

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



REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS

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

It is Council's direction that municipal facilities shall continue to be reviewed annually and that this plan be recreated every five years 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 Councils in office during the term to which this Accessibility Plan applies have direct input into what steps will be taken to address identified barriers, it shall be the policy of the Township that, following a municipal election, a newly elected Council shall:

- review the current plan during its first six months in office;
- 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.

In addition, at the direction of Council, this plan may be updated at a time before the regular five-year update where Council deems same to be expedient due to changing circumstances or impacts in the Township.

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN TO THE PUBLIC

This plan will be available in paper form for public review at the Albertyn Municipal Office as well as electronically on the Township's website, www.albertyn.ca. The Township will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the plan is made available for the perusal and review of all persons.



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ALBERTON
BY-LAW NO. 36/23

Being a by-law to adopt the 2023 – 2028 Municipal Accessibility Plan

WHEREAS Section 4 (1)(a) of Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards, enacted under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 as amended, requires that municipalities shall establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers; and

AND WHEREAS the Corporation of the Township of Alberton is committed to providing, to the greatest extent possible, municipal policies, services, programs and facilities that are accessible to residents, ratepayers and visitors of all abilities;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Alberton enacts that:

1. The Township of Alberton's *2023-2028 Municipal Accessibility Plan*, forming part of the By-law and attached hereto as Schedule "A", is hereby adopted.
2. This By-Law shall come into force and take effect upon third reading thereof.

READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 14th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2023.

A blue ink signature of the Mayor, written in a cursive style.

Mayor

A blue ink signature of the Clerk, written in a cursive style.

Clerk