



Township of Ryerson
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2021

Schedule A to By-law # 60 - 21

December 21, 2021

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1.0 MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN THIS PLAN

MUNICIPALITY: Township of Ryerson

ADDRESS: 28 Midlothian Road
Burk's Falls, Ontario
POA 1C0

KEY CONTACT: Judy Kosowan, CAO/Clerk/Treasurer
PHONE: (705)382-3232
FAX: (705)382-3286
EMAIL: clerk@ryersontownship.ca

POPULATION: 648 (StatsCan 2016)

2.0 TOWNSHIP OF RYERSON PROFILE

The Corporation of the Township of Ryerson is a rural municipality located in the southeastern portion of the District of Parry Sound, west of Highway 11. The township is bordered on the north and west by the Municipality of Magnetawan, on the east by the Township of Armour and the south border is shared with the Township of McMurrich/Monteith and the Township of Perry. Secondary Highway 520 runs through the northeast quadrant of the township, while the remainder of the municipality is accessed by 116 kilometres of township maintained roads. The beautiful Magnetawan River winds its way through the heart of Ryerson Township. There are several picturesque lakes including Doe, Bartlett, Cecebe, Midlothian, Ahmic and Horn Lake, which are located in the township. The municipality provides public access to the area lakes and change room/privy facilities are located at Doe Lake, Bartlett Lake and Ahmic Lake. The Township of Ryerson is truly rural in nature, with no defined villages or settlement areas. All existing development is on private water and sewer systems. Ryerson Township has co-operative working arrangements with both the Village of Burks Falls and the Township of Armour, in sharing the provision of landfill, recycling, arena, library and fire protection services. Municipally owned facilities include: the Township Offices and Garage located at 28 Midlothian road (at the corner of hwy. 520 and Midlothian road) and the Wiseman's Corners School located at 112 Midlothian Road, which is rented to the Burks Falls and District Historical Society and houses a museum.

3.0 OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES PARTICIPATING IN THIS PLAN

There is only one organization actively involved in the municipality at this time, which is the Burks Falls and District Historical Society that operates a museum in a municipal building.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Target Group: The general public and municipal staff/volunteers/Council
- 4.2 Summary of Information Collected through Consultation: Council and staff of the Township of Ryerson, on an ongoing basis, identify, and prevent future barriers to people with disabilities when certain policies are implemented and when issues and concerns arise. The Township is not required to have an accessibility advisory committee, however consultation with people with disabilities provides an opportunity to provide feedback and helps us stay aware of the needs of people with disabilities.
- 4.3 Plan Development Working Group: Staff members constitute the working group with review and input from the Municipal Council of the Township of Ryerson. This plan has been compiled using their personal experiences and experiences shared with them from the residents of the township. The Corporation of the Township of Ryerson is committed to providing quality programs and services that are accessible to all persons served by the municipality.

5.0 AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

Copies of this Plan and the Accessible Customer Service Policy are available from the Township Office or on the website.

Inquiries can be directed to the Township Office:

Phone: 705 382-3232
Fax: 705 382-3286
E-mail: clerk@ryersontownship.ca
Mail: 28 Midlothian Road Burks
Falls, Ontario
POA 1C0

6.0 INITIATIVE

Council and staff of the Township of Ryerson have reviewed the current status of all buildings owned and operated by the municipality and the general policies and procedures of the municipality in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. This is an on-going procedure to continue to monitor facilities and procedures to prevent future barriers to people with disabilities. The Township of Ryerson has an adopted Official Plan and has included information regarding accessibility. The working group has contacted residents with mobility and visual disabilities and internally with employees and members of the municipal council with hearing impairment visual impairment and also mobility challenges. In the past, the regional disability committee in Parry Sound was contacted and no input was received. Any future issues raised will be incorporated by the

township into the review of buildings and policies. During this planning process, council and staff will consider barriers for people with disabilities.

7.0 OPERATIONAL REVIEW

7.1 Township of Ryerson Municipal Offices and Garage 28 Midlothian Road, Burk's Falls, Ontario P0A 1C0

The building consists of a council room, municipal office, kitchen/storage, washroom and the road department garage. The office building/council room are on ground level. The parking lot is paved and there is a sidewalk for public access to the front and side entrance doors to the office/council room portion of the building. Two designated handicap parking spots were installed in 2011. In addition, many parking spaces are available for easy access to and from vehicles and the building. There is no automatic door opener on the side door of the council room. An automatic door opener was installed on the front office door in January 2018.

The Township of Ryerson is a very small rural municipality with few public buildings. Over the years staff have courteously provided goods and services to all the public, providing individual assistance to those with disabilities when the need arises.

Identified issues:

- Lack of marked parking spaces designated for handicapped usage – corrected in 2011
- Door threshold may make access difficult – corrected in 2012
- The condition of the concrete sidewalk could make access difficult – corrected in 2012 Sidewalk condition will be evaluated in 2022
- Lack of an automatic door could make access challenging – corrected in 2018
- In the past, Council meetings were held in a small room using voice and limited written materials, presenting a challenge for persons with disabilities. Since Spring of 2020 Council meetings are now held in a hybrid model of in-person and electronic using the Zoom platform. Although there are technical challenges to electronic meetings due to lack of high-speed broadband, the meeting format does alleviate some of the challenges for persons with disabilities, as individuals no longer have to attend meetings in person.
- The municipal web site does not offer assistive devices – Website has been updated to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards in 2021

Opportunities for improvements:

- In 2012 two previously identified issues were resolved: signage was installed for two handicap parking spaces; the concrete sidewalk at the municipal building was rebuilt providing for smoother, easier access

- In 2018 a previously identified issue was resolved: an automatic door opener was installed at the front entrance to the office. The public have identified that the automatic door is still awkward to use. If funding becomes available other options for an automatic door could be pursued.
- Municipal council may consider:
 - An addition on the council room to allow for ease of movement with assistive devices (canes, walkers, wheelchairs etc.); contingent on the availability of funding assistance for this proposal.
 - Incorporate technology in the council room to improve quality of the audio and video for electronic meetings.
 - Explore further technology options that may be available to improve accessibility to hybrid meetings and the web site

7.2 Wiseman Corners School operating as Burk's Falls and District Museum
112 Midlothian Road, Burk's Falls, Ontario P0A 1C0

The Township of Ryerson has partnered with the Burk's Falls and District Historical Society to operate a Heritage Centre/Museum. The site consists of the Wiseman Corners School that is now housing museum artifacts. There is also a garage shed that houses more artifacts and another display which is a section of a swing bridge. The Heritage Centre is open in the summer when students are hired and is only open part time in the spring and fall, when volunteers from the Burk's Falls and District Historical Society are available.

The Heritage Centre entrance door is accessible by a concrete ramp and a handrail for easy access. The garage shed is on ground level with a dirt floor.

Identified issues:

- There is no handicapped parking assigned.
- There is no automatic door opener, however staff is available to help anyone in need of assistance.
- The grounds around the museum are in a natural state which could make it difficult for those with disabilities to move around.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Install a handicapped parking spot
- The municipal council could consider applying for funding and/or use revenue available for park purposes to upgrade the heritage centre grounds by providing delineated paths around the yard in crushed granite or concrete to allow for easier access

8.0 MULTI-YEAR PLAN 2014-2021 and Beyond

2022 -2024

- The Township will continue to monitor and make improvements where necessary to the policies and actions outlined in this Plan.
- The Township will continue to consult with persons with disabilities.
- The Township will continue to allocate resources as needed.
- The Township will include accessibility considerations in planning documents

From previous years:

2014-2021

This 2014 – 2021 Accessibility Plan outlines the policies and actions that the Township of Ryerson currently has, and will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Township of Ryerson is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The Township of Ryerson is committed to providing the customers and clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

The Township of Ryerson provides training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's Accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training is provided in a way that best suits the duties of the employees, volunteers and other staff members.

The Multi-Year Plan is based on the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2021. It contains standards in the following five areas:

1. Customer Service
2. Information and Communications
3. Employment
4. Transportation
5. Built Environment

Timeline and Deliverables

Outcomes:

- People with disabilities will have access to accessible services
- People with disabilities will have access to alternate formats and communication supports
- A barrier-free recruitment process
- Greater accessibility in Township owned facilities

Approach:

- Develop policies and procedures
- Incorporate accessibility into planning processes
- Train staff
- Engage the public in feedback
- Work to remove barriers to employment
- Continue to make facilities accessible
- Ensure there is access to information and communications

2003 – 2014

- Accessibility policies and plans developed and maintained (AODA) O. Reg. 191/11 (Section 3 & 4)
- Procurement of goods and services or facilities (O. Reg. 191/11 Section 5): Refer to Procurement By-law 59-14 Section 3.1 Accessibility
- Self-Serve kiosk (O. Reg. 191/11) Section 6) is not practicable in this small rural municipality with limited facilities and services
- On-going staff training
- New web sites and web content in an accessible format (O. Reg. 191/11 Section 14): addressed on an ongoing basis concurrent with changes to technology

2015 - 2016

- Customer Service: on-going training as required; maintenance of policies and plans; continue to review feedback processes; continue to provide and improve accessible formats and communication supports
- Information and Communications: work towards compliance with web content accessibility guidelines; develop a training strategy to ensure staff have the knowledge and tools to create accessible materials
- Ensure documents available in an alternate format upon request
- Employment: understand employer obligations to provide employment accommodations; identify and remove barriers in the workplace

- Transportation: The majority of the Transportation Standard does not apply to the Township of Ryerson because the Township does not have a public transit system and does not issue taxi licences at this time
- Built Environment: Provincial requirements are being developed

2017 – 2021

- Built Environment: comply with Provincial requirements; The Township of Ryerson will meet accessibility standards for design of public spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces
- Information and Communication Standard: Will meet accessible websites and content requirements: In late 2020, staff issued an RFP for a website design consultant, to build a new website in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. We also reached out to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility for an extension of the January 1, 2021 deadline, which was granted and pushed back to April 30, 2021. A fully compliant website went live on April 9, 2021.
- The Accessibility Plan is on the website and noted in the semi-annual municipal newsletter.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Township of Ryerson is committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing future barriers to allow people with disabilities full participation in our community. The Township of Ryerson encourages input from all residents.

The financial impact of the AODA legislation is significant on municipal taxpayers, especially in this small, rural municipality with limited financial resources. It is the intent of Ryerson Township to support the implementation of these most important regulations and would certainly take advantage of any Provincial initiatives in the provision of financial assistance to meet the requirements of the AODA.

For more information see:

SCHEDULE B: Customer Service Policy

SCHEDULE C: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy