



**Accessibility Plan
for the
Town of Fort Frances**

September 2017

This publication is available on the Town of Fort Frances Website at

www.fortfrances.ca

and in accessible formats upon request by calling:
807-274-5323 ext. 1220

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) is to benefit all Ontarians by recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario by:

- Developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- Providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations of AODA require municipalities to:

- Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation;
- Post the accessibility plan on their website, if any, and provide the plan in an accessible format upon request; and
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.

A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

The plan describes how the Town of Fort Frances (“the Town”) has and will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who use our facilities and services.

The Town is committed to improving access to its facilities, programs, policies, practices, and services for staff, customers, members of the community with disabilities and the public, and will work to reduce barriers in the community. To achieve this goal, Town Council has adopted an Official Community Plan which commits to a ‘Safe, Healthy, and Accessible Community’.

The Town will strive for compliance with the AODA by implementing the standards; which include: accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and the built environment.

1. **AIM**

This plan describes the measures that the Town of Fort Frances has taken since 2013 and actions that it will take in the future to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities, including staff and the public.

2. **OBJECTIVES**

The accessibility plan will:

- a. Describe the process by which the Town will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities;
- b. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities;
- c. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices, or services that the Town will review in the coming year to identify barriers for people with disabilities;
- d. Describe the measures the Town will take in the coming year to remove barriers to people with disabilities; and
- e. Describe how the Town will make this disability plan available to the public.

3. **COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING**

The Town of Fort Frances is committed to:

- a. Establishing an Accessibility Working Group;
- b. Reviewing its progress against goals set in the multi-year accessibility plan;
- c. Inviting feedback from people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plan;
- d. Ensuring Town policies and procedures are consistent with principles of accessibility; and
- e. Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for staff, customers, members of the community with disabilities, and the general public.

Mayor and Council have authorized the Accessibility Working Group to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Town of Fort Frances to meet its commitment to improving accessibility to all municipally-owned facilities, premises, and services for people with disabilities.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

The Town of Fort Frances is located in Northwestern Ontario, located approximately 350 kilometres west of Thunder Bay. The Town is bordered on the north by the unorganized Township of Miscampbell, on the west by the Township of Alberton, on the south by the United States separated by the Rainy River, and on the east by Couchiching First Nations. The Town has a population of approximately 7420, based on the 2016 Census.

The municipality has a number of associations and groups that provide support and assistance to people with disabilities and its aging population. The Town offers to the public: a public recreation centre for senior citizens, a community theatre for the performing arts, a public library and technology centre, a public works department, a museum, a daycare and early childhood centre, a sports centre, an airport, a police station, a fire department, outdoor walking paths, tennis courts, and a marina.

5. ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The accessibility working group was formally approved by Council in June 2009 and consists of the following members:

Two Division Managers (Operations and Facilities and Community Services), the Human Resources Manager, the Chief Building Official, the Clerk, and the Chief Administrative Officer (will act an ex-officio member of the group).

6. RECENT BARRIER – REMOVAL INITIATIVES

For Barrier removal initiatives prior to 2013, please refer to prior-year accessibility plans.

The Public Works department installed 21 sidewalk drops between 2013 and 2016. In addition, 37 sidewalk drops were installed while completing construction during that time. This is an ongoing initiative and will continue on an annual basis. Since 2016, these improvements now include tactile indicator pads.

7. STATUS REPORT ON BARRIER REMOVALS

For completed implementation projects prior to 2013, please refer to prior-year accessibility plans.

Location	Barrier	Year Completed Unless Otherwise Stated
Curbs	Curb drops are installed on an ongoing basis based on priority areas.	Ongoing
By-Laws, Policies, Procedures	New documents are created in more accessible formats, including larger font and with optical character recognition in digital formats. Text / font reader is available at the technology centre and documents are available in accessible formats upon request.	Ongoing
Civic Centre	Installed: front pathways in the courtyard with high-contrast edging; new slip-resistant flooring in areas accessible to the public, including front door entryways and doors to Council Chambers; new grippers on stairways; new matting for cleaning boots and shoes; new magnetic locks and panic hardware on front entry doors; and exterior doorways were made accessible with sloped entries.	2017
Museum	Installed a wheelchair accessible ramp and improved accessibility of washroom.	2017
Waterfront	Wheelchair-accessible memorial benches along waterfront.	2016
Memorial Sports Centre	A family change room was created that facilitates people with disabilities who are supported by a worker of a gender different from their own. There is not yet a washroom or shower available in this regard.	2016
Enlarged Street Signs	Enlarged street signs for Downtown area.	2016
Website	Corporate website updated made more accessible.	2015
East End Hall	An outdoor ramp and two accessible washrooms were added to the East End Hall.	2015
Zoning By-Law	Zoning by-law addresses all aspects of accessibility in the planning process.	2014
Official Community Plan	Official community plan addresses all aspects of accessibility in the planning process.	2011
Street Lights	LED street lights have been installed.	2014
Children's Complex	Public Washroom in lobby does not meet Ontario Building Code requirements.	Outstanding, unsuccessful grant application to modify public washroom

8. PREVENTING NEW BARRIERS

All Town programs, policies, practices, and services will consider and implement the principles of accessibility. The Town will strive to create an environment that is accessible to all people, regardless of age or ability. Through its accessibility planning process, the Town will ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

9. BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES

- a. A review by Division managers of their specific areas will be conducted on an annual basis and brought forward to the working group and through budget process;
- b. A Public Survey was conducted in 2009;
- c. Review of issues brought forward by the public through the Barrier Identification Form that is on our website under the accessibility link and the responses to a general ad placed in the local newspaper;
- d. Work in conjunction with legislative requirements;
- e. Investigate the possibility of including the input of community partners, relevant stakeholders and members of the public.

10. BARRIERS IDENTIFIED IN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Barriers will be identified by engaging relevant stakeholders to obtain feedback from persons with disabilities, and to engage the public through the Town's website by providing an option for accessibility plan input and feedback.

11. BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED

- a. The Town will work towards the implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards as outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan is posted on the Town of Fort Frances' website and is available in accessible formats on request
- b. Installation of curb drops and surface sidewalk discontinuities will continue on an ongoing basis

12. ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Town of Fort Frances offers three accessible transit options:

- a. On-demand accessible taxi services are licensed by the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances and owned and operated by North Air Taxi Services
- b. Dial-a-ride is a program. The Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances provides a subsidy to operate a dial-a-ride program within the community. The Corporation contracts this service with North Air Services.
- c. Handi-Van services. The Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances owns and maintains 2 Handi-Vans which are dedicated to providing specialized transportation. This service is contracted to Riverside Health Care Facilities.

As survey was conducted in June / July of 2013 which generated 13 responses. 6 responses indicated that they were satisfied with the level of service in Fort Frances. 1 response did not comment and 6 responses said that they were unsatisfied with the service. The accessibility working group reviewed the survey data at that time, and decided that the level of service available met the needs of the public.

13. REVIEW AND MONITORING PROCESS

The working group will continue to work under the direction of Mayor and Council and in partnership with the community to review and implement the Town's accessibility plan. Concerns related to accessibility will be received and monitored by the Human Resources Manager, the Manager of Community Services, and the Manager of Operations and Facilities

The working group will meet twice a year to review progress.

14. COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

The Town of Fort Frances Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Town website at www.fortfrances.ca and hardcopies will be available upon request, including in accessible formats. To make a request, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator (Human Resources Manager) at 807-274-5323 ext. 1220.