

The Corporation of the Township of Bonfield Accessibility Plan

September 2008 - August 2009

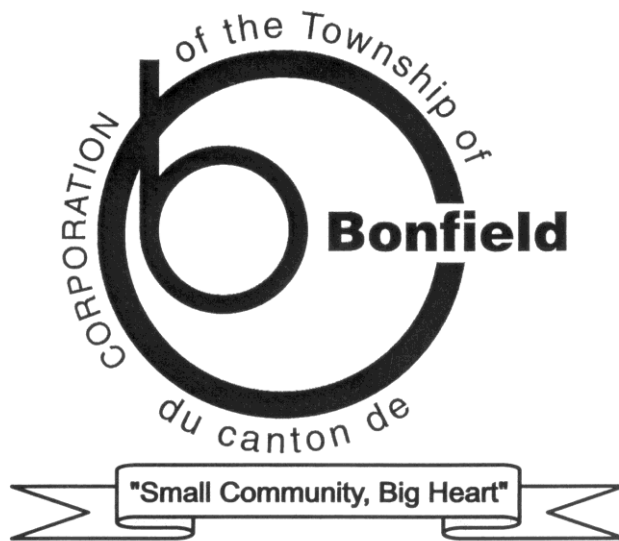


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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province.

The ODA is Canada's most far-reaching and comprehensive legislation for people with disabilities. The sections of the ODA affecting municipalities were proclaimed on September 30, 2002, and require every municipality in Ontario to prepare an annual accessibility plan. These plans will provide a road map for all of us as we strive to make Ontario a more accessible province for the 1.9 million people with disabilities.

The ODA establishes the obligation to consult with people with disabilities as defined in the preparation of the municipal accessibility plan. This can be accomplished through an accessibility advisory committee or with people with disabilities in the community. To comply with the ODA legislation, the Township of Bonfield mailed out a brochure to each resident in August 2003 asking for their input and help in identifying accessibility barriers that exist at any municipal building.

To ensure the Township did its part in identifying accessibility barriers, a memo was circulated to the members of Council and Department Heads inviting their comments in identifying accessibility barriers.

This plan was made available to the public on September 30, 2003 at the Municipal Office. A magnifying sheet was obtained to assist the visually impaired. Should a copy in brail be requested, Council will attempt to accommodate by having staff contact the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) for translation.

About the Township of Bonfield

The Corporation of the Township of Bonfield is a vast rural area, consisting of the Hamlets of Rutherglen and Bonfield. The Township is located approximately 27 Km east of the City of North Bay, in the District of Nipissing. The Township was established by an act in Parliament in October of 1886, the former Town of Bonfield was established in 1906 and was amalgamated with the Township in 1975. The Township celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1986.

The Township of Bonfield has a population of 2096 with 1034 households and numerous cottages, according to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. The total land area of the Township is approximately 205 square kilometres. Forestry and farming were the roots of our community, and although today there are still some small farming operations, forestry, logging and tourism are the main employers of the Township.

The Township of Bonfield offers many recreational activities and facilities to its citizens. We have many snowmobile trails that are part of the OFSC trail system, which provide for excellent riding. There are numerous trails in the area that are excellent for hunting, horse back riding, cross country skiing, hiking and ATV's. The Township also has many sporting facilities such as a tennis court, baseball fields, beach volleyball court, playgrounds, outdoor skating rinks, basketball nets, badminton nets, a soccer field and several picnic areas.

The Township of Bonfield is known as a "Small Community with a Big Heart", with a rich history and a clear vision of its future. Through economic growth and development, the Township is committed to providing the community with the resources and infrastructure required to maintain and improve the quality of life that is currently enjoyed by its citizens.

Objectives of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to improve opportunities for both residents and visitors with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Township.

This accessibility plan will include,

- a. The definition of a “disability”.
- b. The measures the Township undertook to consult all residents.
- c. The measures the Township has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
- d. The measures that the Township intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
- e. A review and monitoring process.
- f. How the plan will be accessible to the public.

A. The Definition of a Disability

A disability is defined as a person with,

- a. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. A mental disorder, or
- e. Any injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

B. Measures the Township Took to Consult all Residents

To ensure that people with a disability as defined were consulted in the process of preparing this plan, the Township developed a brochure inviting input from all residents of the Township. The brochure asked questions such as “Are you a person with a disability?” “If yes, please indicate your name and contact phone number for further comments”. These two questions allow people with disabilities the opportunity for direct consultation on the accessibility barriers that exist at municipal buildings.

On August 27th, 2003, this brochure was sent to every household in the Township allowing all residents the opportunity to provide input on accessibility barriers. Perhaps a person with a disability overlooks an accessibility barrier that affects another person with a different disability. Mailing the brochure to all municipal residents allowed for better communication, more involvement, more feedback and more ideas.

Of 810 brochures mailed out, 3 were returned to the Municipal Office. One of the three brochures returned was marked as a person without a disability and there were no comments attached. The other two brochures returned were marked as people with disabilities as defined, one is epileptic, and the other is physically disabled. The two people did include their contact information and were consulted in the identification of barriers.

These are the specific recommendations of the two individuals that were included on the brochure as well as comments made to the Township representative.

1. Automatic doors at the municipal office, library and resource centre entrances should be installed.
2. Make seating available in the municipal office foyer.
3. The service counter at the municipal office should be multi-leveled.
4. The municipal office, library and resource centre should be wheelchair accessible.
5. The public washrooms in the municipal office/library should be wheelchair accessible.
6. Handicap parking at municipal office building in addition to appropriate signage.

C. Measures the Township has taken to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers.

To ensure the Township does its part in identifying accessibility barriers, the same brochure was circulated to all Members of Council and Department Heads for their involvement in identifying accessibility barriers and recommendations thereof. Who would know the municipal buildings better than the employees? This exercise assisted in discovering the barriers within municipal buildings for the potential hiring of persons with disabilities. The barriers identified in this exercise included:

Township Garage:

1. The entrance to the office and lunchroom should be wheelchair accessible.
2. The washroom at the garage should be wheelchair accessible.

Municipal Library:

1. The entrance to the library should be wheelchair accessible.
2. The Washrooms should be wheelchair accessible (same public washrooms as the municipal office).
3. The flooring in the library should be replaced to provide complete mobility throughout the library for all patrons, including those with wheelchairs, walkers, canes and other assisting devices.
4. Handicap parking at the library.

Municipal Office:

1. Office should be wheelchair accessible.
2. Wheelchair accessible washrooms.
3. Handicap parking.

D. Recommendations from Prior Year Accessibility Plans

2003 – 2004

Since this was the first year for this plan, capital-intensive projects must be deferred for consideration in the future years' fiscal budget. Council will budget funds annually in order to be able to undertake the selected projects. In the life of this plan, Council would like to accomplish the following.

1. Review and prioritize all recommendations from residents and staff.

- 2 Investigate sites to determine the needs and develop a cost analysis for those needs.
- 3 Commitment of annual funds and/or reserve contribution to implement the projects identified in this accessibility plan to the upset cost of budgeted funds.

E. Accomplishments from Prior Year Accessibility Plans

2003 – 2004

- 1 Seating was made available in the Municipal Office foyer and personal service is provided when and as required.
- 2 Although the Township incurred the misfortune of a fire at the Public Works Garage on June 11th, 2004, this permitted the reconstruction of this facility to include wheel chair access to the building, its office, kitchen and washroom.
- 3 A resolution of Council passed at the Regular Meeting of May 11th, 2004, accepted the priority for the implementation of identified barriers as follows:
 - a) Automatic Door Openers
 - i. Municipal Office
 - ii. Library
 - b) Ramps/Handicap Parking
 - i. Municipal Office
 - ii. Library
 - c) Wheel Chair accessible washrooms
 - i. Municipal Office/Library
 - d) Annual budget for the purpose of completing the priority items noted above. There was \$500.00 allocated in the 2004 Budget for this purpose and shall be transferred to a Reserve for Accessibility Plan Implementation.

2004 – 2005

- 1 Provisions were made in the 2005 Budget to install a handicap ramp at the Municipal Office.
- 2 The Bonfield Public Library will be submitting an application to the Trillium Foundation in November 2005 for funding the construction of a handicap ramp and automatic door openers at the entrance to the Library.

- 3 A by-law to establish handicap parking for the Municipal Office/Library will be considered in 2005, including proper signage for these locations.
- 4 In light of the above, the priorities for the implementation of identified barriers was amended as follows:
- a) Ramps/Handicap Parking
 - i. Municipal Office
 - ii. Library
 - b) Automatic Door Openers
 - i. Municipal Office
 - ii. Library
 - c) Wheel Chair accessible washrooms
 - i. Municipal Office/Library
- 5 The Accessibility Plan was posted on the Municipal Web Site and placed in the foyer at the Municipal Office. There were no comments or recommendations received for the review of the 2005 – 2006 plan.

2005 - 2006

- 1 A handicap ramp was installed at the Municipal Office.
- 2 The Bonfield Public Library was successful in their application to the Trillium Foundation and proceeded to construct a handicap ramp and automatic door opener at the entrance to the Library. The flooring was also replaced in the library to provide complete mobility throughout the library for all patrons.
- 3 The Accessibility Plan was posted on the Municipal Web Site and placed in the foyer at the Municipal Office.

2006 – 2007

There were no comments, recommendations or changes received from the review of the 2006 – 2007 plan.

2007 - 2008

- 1 The Bonfield Medical Centre was identified as a site that required automatic door openers.
- 2 The following list of outstanding identifiable barriers was circulated to Council on October 23, 2007, for review and further prioritized as noted:
Municipal Office\Library Building:
 - Wheelchair accessible washrooms;
 - Handicap parking;
 - Automatic doors at the Municipal OfficeMedical Centre:
 - Automatic doors at the entrance of the building;
 - Automatic doors at the entrance of the doctor's offices;
- 3 The Township will be taking advantage of upcoming training sessions on Accessibility Standards as they become available.

2008 – 2009

- 1 The Bonfield Medical Centre will be installing an automatic door opener at the entrance of the building with intent to complete the entrance of the doctor's offices by March 31st, 2009.
- 2 Staff is attending training sessions on Accessibility Standards.
- 3 Council will be reviewing the outstanding identifiable barriers as noted in Section 2 of the 2007-2008 report for further prioritizing.

F. Review And Monitoring Process

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Bonfield reviews the plan on an annual basis to measure its progress and priorities. The contents of this plan and recommendations thereof shall be considered in the development in future plans.

G. How this Plan will be Accessible to the Public

The Accessibility Plan will be published on the Municipal Web Site www.bonfieldtownship.com inviting comments and recommendations from the public to be sent to the Clerk at clerk@ebonfield.org. All comments and recommendations will be considered in the annual review.

This plan is also available to the public at the Municipal Office.