



The Corporation of
The Township of Tarbutt
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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Prepared by:
Glenn Martin
Clerk – Treasurer
Co-ordinator Accessibility Working Group

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* 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 life in the Province. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards so that all Ontarians will benefit from accessible services, programs and employment. To this end, the AODA mandates that all levels of government, private sector businesses and non-profits must comply, and municipalities are required to prepare an annual Accessibility Plan.

The Township of Tarbutt is an Organization under the AODA definitions.

Municipal staff first prepared the Accessibility Plan in 2003. The report describes the measures the Township has taken in the past and the measures the Township will take during the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Township, including staff and members of the community at large.

The Township works continuously to identify the barriers within the municipality and works toward continual improvement of access to municipal facilities including the electronic municipal web page (www.tarbutt.ca), as well as actual physical premises.

The working group identified a number of barriers to people with disabilities, both visible and invisible. The most significant findings at the time of implementation were that the Township's Municipal Administration Office was not fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities and there is a need to improve the fire exit from the Community Hall. Over the next several years the working group recommended focusing on those barriers which prevent access to the Municipal Office on a day to day basis, as well as providing better access to information and addressing other concerns identified by the group.

Aim

This report describes the first step in establishing a plan and identifies measures to be taken each year to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff.

Objective of this Report:

1. Describes the process which The Township of Tarbutt will use to identify and remove barriers, and anything which prevents the full participation of people with disabilities.
2. Review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the Township will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the Township will take in the coming year (s) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describe how the Township will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Description of The Township of Tarbutt

The Township of Tarbutt would be described as essentially rural, agricultural, residential and recreational in nature. The Township is bordered on the west by The Township of Laird and on the east by The Township of Johnson, and is 25 minutes east of Sault Ste. Marie. Trans Canada Highway 17 runs through Tarbutt.

The Township has a permanent population of 540, doubling with seasonal residents in the summer months. The Township office is attached to the Public Works Garage and located next to the Tarbutt Township Volunteer Fire Hall. There is also a Township Community Hall, which typically hosts many local functions and is located on a rural property which borders the Trans Canada Trail. Local schools, hospital, post offices, bank, libraries, Seniors Centres, affordable housing, etc. are located in neighbouring municipalities.

The Township's community hall is host to several community functions and a variety of different types of events. During COVID, rentals at the hall have ceased to avoid community spread, and it is currently the exclusive use of a church congregation.

Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Council of the Corporation of The Township of Tarbutt is committed to:

- the continual improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for those with disabilities;
- the provision of quality service to all members of the community with disabilities.

The legislation requires that each municipality prepare and maintain an Accessibility Plan. Council has authorized the Clerk to prepare an Accessibility Plan that will enable Council to meet these commitments.

Barrier Removal Initiatives

In 1999, the Community Hall had extensive remodelling to make the main entrance safe and fully accessible and to make the washrooms fully accessible to wheelchairs and other mobility assistive devices. The Municipal office and Council Chambers were designed with ground level access with doorways constructed in such a manner that mobility device access is not interrupted.

Wheelchair accessibility has been the focus due to our mobile population, and there has been very little demand or request for other types of accessible services. Provision has been made to provide documents in large formats, and staff continually strive to meet the needs of any person with any type of disability.

In 2015 Council approved the construction of a new Municipal Office and a relocation of the Council Chambers, along with the installation of a new fully accessible washroom. Automatic doors were installed to allow full access to all parts of the Municipal Office and Council Chambers including fire exits. The office was designed to be access friendly for ratepayers and employees.

Informal Site Audit of the Municipally Owned Buildings

An informal audit was conducted in August 2003 where Council, staff and members of the community were asked to assess all municipally owned buildings for existing barriers. Solutions were identified to remove such barriers to comply with the current legislation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Barriers included in this report under '*Barriers Identified*', with the solution identified and a projected *time frame* for completion.

Barrier Identification Methodology

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology will be used:

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
A review of the community facilities followed by discussions of findings by the group.	A review was done by staff, Council and selected members of the community to help identify any barriers at the Municipal Office, Public Works Garage, Fire Hall, Township Hall, and parks/playground facilities.	The review will be completed by August 29th, 2003 and added to this document prior to acceptance of this plan in September 2003. Regular review of this document will take place annually.

Barriers Identified

Those who completed the survey identified the barriers listed below.

<i>Barrier Identified</i>	<i>Type of Barrier</i>	<i>Strategy for Removal or prevention</i>
The grade between entrance and gravelled portion of drive at Municipal office is not even.	Architectural	Have entrance repaired so access would be possible. Provide gravel to remove the change in elevation. CORRECTED
Municipal bathrooms are not accessible.	Physical	Re-model washrooms to meet with OBC. If required to be accessible. CORRECTED
Women's and Men's Bathroom – toilets are not high enough to meet accessibility requirement at the Community Hall.	Physical	Replace toilets with higher, extended height toilets CORRECTED
No accessibility signage on building at Municipal office and/or at the Community Hall.	Communication	OBC states that there are to be Accessibility signs installed where necessary to indicate location of Entrance. There should be signs indicating means of egress. CORRECTED
Ways of communication to residents.	Communication	The municipal website is used for notices to the public, which will be in printed form. Our website will have to be reviewed for print size and the compatibility for those with sight impairments. CORRECTED
Doors in buildings having knobs vs. handles (all buildings).	Architectural	Replace knobs with handles where required. CORRECTED
Fire exit at Community Hall is	Architectural	Add wooden ramp to Fire Exit at

not ramped for accessible exiting.		rear of Hall. Included in ICIP grant in 2021/22.
No designated accessible parking at Community Hall.	Architectural	Designate spot and add signage. CORRECTED
Tax Bills are not designed to accommodate a vision-impaired person.	Communication	Because of the legislative requirements by the Province on the wording of the Tax Bills we will have to look at the requirements in order to also be in compliance with the Municipal Act. AVAILABLE ON REQUEST
There is no handrail on wall of Hall on the ramp part of the hall entrance.	Physical	Have a handrail installed to allow persons walking up and down ramp to have a handhold. REDESIGN, CORRECTED
Chairs at Hall and Office are low for persons with difficulty getting up.	Physical	Purchase a few chairs that are higher to accommodate those finding regular chairs to low. SOME CHAIRS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED CORRECTED
Sound system for meetings.	Communication	Have a microphone and speaker available to be used at public meetings. COMPLETE
Hand towels in Washrooms.	Physical	Have towel dispenser or at least one placed low enough for children and mobility challenged persons to reach. CORRECTED
Attendance in Fire Hall.	Architectural	Plan to meet with persons at a different location such as Council Chambers or other accessible space. OVERHEAD DOORS EXIST, COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND OFFICE ARE FULLY ACCESSIBLE
Communication with persons requiring sign language.	Communication	Have a person identified to provide sign language interpretation. COMPLETE
Port Findlay Cemetery (Responsibility of the Cemetery Board)	Physical	Resurfacing paths or providing walkways would improve access to parts of the cemetery. Board proposing for 2022/23

Barriers Addressed

The first barrier to be addressed would be to provide adequate signage at the municipal office and Community Hall for accessible parking. **DONE**

Barriers Addressed between 2015 and 2018

Construction of new Administration Office with all doors being automated, ground level, ramp access, relocation and design of Council Chambers, fully accessible co-ed washroom. **COMPLETE**

Barriers addressed in 2020

The municipal office welcomes and encourages visitors with service animals and support persons to accompany anyone who requires our services in person. A support person may be required to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services, and a working animal may provide necessary comfort to an individual. The Township Office is a working animal friendly environment.

Priorities for 2021 and 2022

An exit ramp on the fire exit at the at Community Hall is part of a provincially funded project received in 2021, and which will be completed in 2022. The award will result in the construction of an asphalt path leading from the parking area to the back door of the hall, and the construction of a new wooden ramp for the fire exit at the rear of the building.

Accessible picnic tables were purchased and installed at the Women's Institute Park and at the Community Hall property. A picnic shelter is currently under construction and will be fully accessible.

The concrete landing at the municipal office is cracked and may create a tripping hazard. Scheduled for replacement 2022/23.

Council and staff will undergo recent AODA training in 2021 to provide knowledge about accessibility and how it impacts people living with various challenges, visible and invisible.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

Council is committed to following through with this plan, which will be updated annually to allow Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction in which the Township is moving to remove all barriers under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Communication of the Plan

This plan will be available on the Township's website as well as at the office. Every effort will be made to make it available to those with visual, audible or other disabilities for perusal and review. Should a copy of this plan be requested in Braille, Council will accommodate by contacting the local CNIB for a referral to a translator, which will be provided at the Township's expense.

Updated and approved by Council Resolution 2021 - 193 on December 15, 2021.