



The Corporation of
The Township of Tarbutt
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Originally Approved by Council August 2003

Original version prepared in 2003 by:
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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 2003 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 removal of 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 is 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 575, 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 Department. There is also a Community Hall, which is available for rent and typically hosts many local functions, located on a rural property roughly 5 km from the Township Office. The Hall is located on 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, hall rentals ceased to avoid community spread, and it was the exclusive use of a church congregation during that time period.

Rentals of the hall have since resumed with intensified housekeeping services being provided both before and after each use.

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.

In 2023, a consulting firm was engaged to assess the need for upgrades at the Community Hall. Ontario Building Code compliance issues were identified during the assessment, as well as accessibility items that require attention. Funding applications will be sought to complete this work in 2024.

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.

A more formal assessment of the Community Hall and grounds was conducted in 2023 by an architectural firm, who made recommendations regarding improvements for AODA and Building Code compliance. These items will be addressed in the 2024 annual budget if contractors can be secured.

New accessible parking signage was purchased and installed at the Community Hall in June 2023 directly in front of the main entrance.

Barrier Identification Methodology

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology is 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 was completed by August 29th, 2003 and added to this document prior to acceptance of this plan in September 2003. Regular review of this document has taken place annually and been brought to Council for approval.

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 washroom – 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 Accessible signs installed where necessary to indicate location of Entrance. There should be signs indicating means of egress. CORRECTED
Methods of communicating to residents.	Communication	The municipal website is used as the main conduit of Public Notice. The website was reconfigured to meet AODA Information and Communication Standards. CORRECTED
Doors in buildings having knobs vs. handles (all buildings).	Architectural	Replace knobs with handles where required. CORRECTED
Fire exit at Community Hall is not ramped for accessible exiting.	Architectural	A wooden ramp was constructed at the rear of the Hall. COMPLETE
No designated accessible parking at Community Hall.	Architectural	New signage installed in summer of 2023. CORRECTED

Tax Bills are not designed to accommodate a vision-impaired person.	Communication	The Ministry of Finance dictates the form, wording and required information that must be printed on Tax Bills. These requirements may not meet AODA standards. Alternate formats may be considered if compliant with the Municipal Act. AVAILABLE ON REQUEST
There is no handrail to support the ramp at the main entrance of the community hall.	Physical	Have a handrail installed to allow persons walking up and down ramp to have a handhold. CORRECTED
Chairs at Hall and Office are low for persons with difficulty getting up.	Physical	Purchased chairs that are higher to accommodate those finding regular chairs to low. CORRECTED
Sound system and visual supports for public meetings at the Hall.	Communication	Microphone, speaker and ceiling mounted projector are available for use at public meetings. COMPLETE
Hand towel dispensers in Washrooms were too high, could not be accessed if seated.	Physical	New towel dispenser installed low enough for children and mobility challenged persons to reach. CORRECTED
Attendance in Fire Hall does not allow for full participation of those with mobility issues.	Architectural	The Fire Hall is not open to the public; not a gathering place. Meetings occur in accessible spaces such as the Council Chambers and Community Hall. 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. PROPOSED

Barriers Addressed

Proper and adequate signage has been installed at the municipal office and Community Hall for exits and 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, with one fully accessible gender neutral washroom. **COMPLETE**

Barriers addressed in 2020 and 2021

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.

The Township applied for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) funding in 2021 to create an Active Transportation Hub. The application was successful and projects began in 2022.

Barriers resolved for 2022 and 2023

The ICIP funding noted above was used to design and build a wheelchair accessible ramp on the fire exit at the Community Hall. The project included an asphalt path leading from the parking area to the back door of the hall, and to the new ramp constructed 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 with a concrete pad was constructed, which now houses the picnic tables and a bicycle maintenance station. A water bottle filling station was also added to the exterior of the hall for the convenience of those using the picnic shelter.

The concrete landing at the municipal office was severely cracked, creating a crooked surface and a tripping hazard. The concrete pad was removed and replaced in 2023.

Exterior lighting at the Township Office and Roads Garage was insufficient to reach all areas of the parking lot. New LED lighting was installed along the edge of the building, providing better illumination throughout the parking area after dark.

The Township engaged a Consultant in 2023 to conduct an assessment of building code and accessibility issues, resulting in recommendations to upgrade basic features at the Community Hall. If contractors can be secured, this work should be completed in 2024.

Review and Monitoring of the Process

The Township continues to seek recommendations and advice from the Community regarding possible improvements or deficiencies that inhibit barrier free access.

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 in various formats. 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.

Update approved by Council Resolution 2023 - 155 on November 22, 2023.