

# **TOWNSHIP OF EAST FERRIS**

## **MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

2004

SUBMITTED TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL  
September 28, 2004

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The preparation of a Municipal Accessibility Plan is a requirement for local governments in Ontario under the provisions of the Ontario with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) of the Province of Ontario. Municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare annual accessibility plans and to make these plans available to the public.

This initial Accessibility Plan sets out the framework for the Township of East Ferris to meet its obligations under the ODA and to ensure that our plan reflects local needs, concerns and priorities related to the improvement of opportunities for people with disabilities.

This plan examines all aspects of municipal operations, including by-laws, practices, facilities, programs and services and will identify steps to be taken over time to remove identified barriers and prevent any new ones.

## **2. MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN THIS PLAN**

Municipality: Corporation of the Township of East Ferris  
Address: P.O. Box 85,  
390 Highway 94,  
Corbeil, Ontario.  
P0H 1K0  
Contacts: William Vrebosch, Mayor  
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Website: [www.eastferris.ca](http://www.eastferris.ca)

### **3. MUNICIPAL HIGHLIGHTS**

The Township of East Ferris is predominantly a rural community located South of the City of North Bay but includes three hamlets, namely Astorville, Corbeil and Derland. The rural settlement is characterized by the predominance of shoreline residential development on Lake Nosbonsing and Trout Lake respectively, and development along the network of Township roads and two provincial highways (17 and 94).

The hamlet areas are focal points for urban residential uses as well as commercial and institutional uses which have developed in a mixed land use pattern with no definable commercial core. Most of the municipal buildings such as municipal offices, public works garage, firehalls, library and recreation centres as well as institutional uses such as schools and churches are situated in the hamlets of Astorville and Corbeil. Nipissing Manor which is a large nursing home situated along Highway 94 between the hamlets of Corbeil and Derland is the largest employer in the municipality.

### **4. POPULATION**

The municipality has experienced a population growth over the period of 1981 - 1996 of 24.5 % (3,323 to 4,139) and this rate of growth exceeded that of the City of North Bay as well as for the District of Nipissing as a whole. This growth rate, however, has slowed dramatically over the past few years and the present census information indicates our population in the year 2003 to be 4,249 residents.

The dynamics of the population have changed indicative of the general aging of the population e.g. the proportion of seniors has increased and the proportion of youth has declined slightly while the working age population has increased significantly. This is indicative of a trend towards smaller household sizes. The larger than average seniors population reflects a trend towards choice residential properties in the Township being attractive to seniors.

## **5. CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES**

In preparation of a municipal accessibility plan, each municipality is required to consult with people with disabilities for advise and recommendations.

### **Target Group**

The groups to be targeted are the general public, seniors and disabled persons.

### **Activities**

In order to prepare the Accessibility Plan it is necessary that we consult with those people most affected. Seniors and disabled people are the stakeholders in the preparation of this plan and will be canvassed in order to determine the types of barriers which exist and the recommendations proposed to eliminate these barriers. In addition each municipal department manager will review their method of operation and their facilities and make recommendations for the preparation of an action plan to deal with the removal of any barriers which may exist.

### **Time period activity occurred**

During the month of January the plan working group attempted to consult with the targeted groups for input into the proposed accessibility plan. A presentation and questionnaire was given to the East Ferris Golden Age Club on January 14<sup>th</sup> with 19 members attending. A questionnaire was circulated to all the people with known disabilities in the municipality, including Nipissing Manor Ltd. and a public notice was placed in the local newspaper advising of a public meeting to be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. Notices of the public meeting was also circulated to all the various agencies and organizations in the district who are actively involved with accessibility issues requesting their contribution to our plan.

### **Summary of Information Collected through Consultation**

We received no response from the various organizations and agencies and no member of the public attended the public meeting. A total of 6 questionnaires were returned to the municipal office from the presentation made to the East Ferris Golden Age Club. In addition, a report was presented by the municipal building inspector with respect to investigations and inspections conducted on all municipal facilities. The following concerns with accessibility were identified from the comments received:

Better snow removal is required for municipal facilities.

Handicap parking needs to be improved at the Corbeil Park Hall with enforcement and an access lane for emergency vehicles maintained.

All buildings should be provided with ramps and automatic doors to improve accessibility.

Transportation services such as the para bus should be made more available with more flexible hours to provide access for seniors to shopping and medical supplies.

More clinics and information programs should be made available to seniors dealing with health care and fitness.

Services such as lawn cutting, snow shoveling and yard work should be made available for seniors.  
 Better communication is required for programs and services available to the public.

**6. PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

<b>Chair:</b> Robert Point Councillor Phone: (705) 752-3470	<b>Secretary:</b> Raymond Champagne Director of Planning and Development Phone: (705) 752-2740
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<b>Co-chair:</b> Donald Champagne Deputy Mayor Phone: (705) 752-2964	<b>Committee member:</b> Paul Gervais Chief Building Official/By-law Enforcement Phone: (705) 752-2740
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**7. INITIATIVES CONDUCTED & OPERATIONAL REVIEW**

This is the first accessibility plan prepared on behalf of the municipality. Previous accessibility issues or concerns were presented to Council and dealt with as directed by Council. New construction activities were dealt with by the Building Department for conformance with the Ontario Building Code. The working group provided questionnaires to identified individuals with disabilities, provided notice of a public meeting in the local newspaper and by correspondence to various agencies and organizations which are involved with disabled groups in this area, conducted inspections on all municipal facilities and interviewed the various department managers for information or concerns related to accessibility.

**8. BARRIERS IDENTIFIED**

The working group has prepared a series of recommended actions and time frames for removal of barriers:

<b>Barrier &amp; Type</b>	<b>Strategy for removal/prevention</b>	<b>Timeline Short 0 - 1 yr. Med. 1 - 3 yrs. Long 3 - 5 yrs.</b>
Shortage of senior's housing in the municipality - Policy / Practice	Complete a housing review to determine need and investigate funding opportunities available for the provision of senior's housing.	Medium term
Lack of awareness of groups and agencies providing services for seniors and disabled persons -	Prepare a list of agencies, contacts and services they provide for our residents and include this information on the municipal web site.	Medium term

Communication		
Lack of disabled parking for municipal facilities - Mobility	Provide a parking by-law designating sufficient parking spaces for all municipal facilities and provide for enforcement to ensure compliance.	Short term
Lack of awareness of disability issues and participation by disabled persons - Communication	Post Municipal Accessibility Plan on the Web site and invite the public, persons with disabilities and groups and agencies to the annual review meetings.	Short term
Improper doors & no barrier free washrooms at the East Ferris Community Centre - Mobility, Facility/Design	Install automatic doors and make washrooms accessible for persons with disabilities.	Long term
Inadequate doors & no barrier free washrooms at the Public Works Garage - Mobility, Facility/Design	Make one washroom accessible for persons with disabilities and gender free and ensure one access to building is made accessible for wheelchair access.	Long term
Lack of proper signage for all municipal buildings - Communications	Investigate the use of international signage system for all municipal facilities.	Short term
Lack of understanding of accessibility issues in Building Code administration - Facility/Design	Promote accessibility issues in Building Code administration and design all municipal facilities and alterations for accessibility.	Medium term
Lack of proper access and washroom facilities at public parks and beaches - Facility/Design	Make all municipal parks and beaches accessible for persons with disabilities.	Long term

This working group will meet annually to review the accessibility plan as well as any project status to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan and of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 are being accomplished.

## **9. DECISION MAKING REVIEW**

This accessibility plan will go to Council for adoption and for implementation.

## **10. MONITORING PROGRESS & ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLANS**

This working group will act as both the technical advisor to Council and as a liaison to the special needs community. They will meet annually to review the accessibility plan as well as monitor project status to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan and of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 are being accomplished.

## 11. SUMMARY

The preparation of a Municipal Accessibility Plan is a requirement for local governments in Ontario under the provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). Council is responsible for the adoption and implementation of this plan and to ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities with respect to this act. This accessibility plan is structured to be updated as new barriers are addressed and as preventative measures are put in place. Further consultation with the public and with the groups and agencies dealing with accessibility issues will ensure the goals and objectives of this plan are achieved and that barriers to accessibility are removed.

While there was very little input from the public or from the agencies or persons with disabilities in the preparation of this plan, the plan is an active working document and the municipality should continue to strive to have greater input into their annual plan reviews. The Golden Age Club has an active contingent of seniors who were helpful in identifying some of the barriers which are being addressed in this plan.

The working group recommends a series of action plans to deal with the concerns or barriers identified and a time frame within which corrective measures should be targeted. In addition, the working group also recommends that any future building, renovations and construction activities on municipal properties take into consideration accessibility concerns.

Several approaches to the communication of the Municipal Accessibility Plan are recommended as follows:

- A copy of the plan be made available at the public library.
- A copy of the plan be made available at the municipal offices.
- A copy of the plan be posted on the Website ([www.eastferris.ca](http://www.eastferris.ca))

Any comments on this plan are welcomed and should be addressed to the municipal offices in Corbeil to the attention of Council.



## 12. TRANSPORTATION FOR THE DISABLED IN EAST FERRIS

One of the concerns identified in the 2003 report was transportation for the disabled in the Township. For those without their own vehicles, there only appears to be few options for those with special needs such as a vehicle equipped to transport people while in their wheelchair. These options are;

Nipissing Manor        752-1100  
Contact                    U-Mee Graham

Nipissing Manor operates a bus designed to carry passengers who are physically disabled. This para-bus holds up to 20 persons without wheelchairs. 1 wheelchair will take up the space of 4 seats, therefore, the para-bus will hold up to 5 wheelchairs.

Use of the para-bus is for use by Nipissing Manor residents. Nipissing Manor is not interested in operating or competing with taxi companies and will not respond to requests for a single person looking for transportation.

Every other Friday, Nipissing Manor operates the "Trans-Reach" program. The para-bus will pick passengers at their homes (in Corbeil, Astorville or Callander) in the morning, take passengers to a shopping mall and a grocery store and drop passengers off at home for \$5.00. Users are encouraged to call ahead to book a seat as this is run on a first come, first serve basis. If enough interest is shown it may run more often.

U-Need-a-Cab        497-7777

U-Need-a-Cab operates a van converted for transporting persons in a wheelchair. The taxi is a 2002 Dodge Grand Caravan Sport. It is not marked as a disabled vehicle and looks much like any other taxi on the road. The taxi is safety inspected every 30 days. The taxi will carry 1 or 2 wheelchairs (dependant on the size of the wheelchairs) and up to 3 seated passengers (with 1 wheelchair).

The same driver operates the taxi full-time. The driver is trained to administer CPR and first aid.

The taxi is operated 7 days a week. The taxi is metered and the fee charged for its use is the same fee as that charged for a regular taxi which is \$1.58/km plus \$3.30 drop-off rate.

Users are encouraged to book ahead for important appointments such as doctor appointments etc...as the taxi is in demand although it is sometimes available on short notice.. For weekend use, passengers can probably call on the Friday

