

# The Corporation of the **Township of La Vallee**

## **Accessibility Plan 2018-2022**

**Submitted to:**

**Reeve and Council**  
of the  
Township of La Vallee

**Updated by:**

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## INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 1.9 million people in Ontario who have disabilities and this number is expected to increase as the population ages due to the increased incidence of disability associated with aging. People with disabilities face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, work and school as well as in parks, recreational facilities, streets, theatres, stores and restaurants – and even in municipal premises.

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* was implemented to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities and to permit them to become involved in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers which prevent their full participation in the life and society of the Province. To this end, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* mandates that each municipality annually prepare an accessibility plan.

It is the goal of this plan to:

- describe measures which have been taken in the past to address accessibility issues for people with disabilities who use municipal premises or facilities
- set out the steps which the Township intends to take during the term of this plan to identify and remove current barriers to people with disabilities which exist in municipal premises
- prevent the creation of further barriers to people with disabilities in municipal premises

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of the Township of La Vallee Accessibility Plan:

Any reference to **“people with disabilities”** shall be deemed to include elected officers, staff and members of the community at large.

A **“barrier”** is defined as anything which prevents a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Barriers include:

- physical barriers (steps at entranceways which prevent wheelchair access)
- architectural barriers (no elevators in buildings of more than one floor)
- information or communications barriers (publications not available in large print)
- attitudinal barriers (discouraging people with disabilities from participating in programs or activities)
- technological barriers (traffic lights that change too quickly for a person with a disability to get through the intersection)
- barriers created by policies or practices (providing important information solely by verbal means – ie. radio – which people with hearing impairment cannot hear clearly)

A **“disability”** is defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement cause by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- a mental disorder
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

## **AIM**

This plan describes the measures that The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee will take during the five-year period from 2018-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff and elected officials. This is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This plan:

1. Describes the method by which The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews efforts undertaken in by The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee during the preceding year(s) to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. Lists barriers to people with disabilities which were identified in the most recent assessment of municipal premises owned by The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee.
4. Describes possible solutions or remedies to identified barriers and specify the measures The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Lists the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
6. Describes how this accessibility plan will be made available to the public.

## **COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING**

Council for The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee is committed to the ongoing improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities, as well as to the provision of quality services to all members of the community including persons with disabilities.

To this end, Council has authorized the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer to prepare an accessibility plan that will enable the Council to meet these commitments.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LA VALLEE**

The Township of La Vallee is a small rural township located in the center of the southern boundary of the Rainy River District in Northwestern Ontario. La Vallee has an approximate area of 225.3 square kilometres and is comprised of three geographical townships, namely, Woodyatt, Devlin, and Burriss.

The Township of La Vallee is bordered to the north by the unorganized Township of Dance, to the west by the municipal Township of Emo, to the east by the municipal Township of Alberton and to the south by the Rainy River, which serves as an international waterway and boundary between Canada and the United States.

The Township of La Vallee has a population of approximately 1000 people, according to Statistics Canada. Crossroads School, currently serves approximately 225 children from junior kindergarten to grade eight.

The La Vallee Municipal Office is situated at 56 Church Road, in the Village of Devlin. The Municipal Roads Department building is attached to the Municipal Office. The La Vallee Volunteer Fire Department Fire Hall is located on Main Street in the Village of Devlin. The Crossroads Skating Rink site is located on Highway 613 North at Crossroads School. The Ball Diamond is located on the Kings Highway 11-71 in the Village of Devlin.

## **TOWNSHIP SERVICES**

Services provided by The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee are minimal. Services available to the public at the La Vallee Municipal Office include functions such as Council meetings, payment of taxes, issuing fire permits, information regarding compliance with municipal by-laws, sale of cemetery plots, road maintenance etc.

The municipality employs a small staff to conduct the day-to-day business of the Township. One full-time CAO/Clerk-Treasurer and one part-time administrative assistant are employed to address concerns of the public, answer questions, provide support to Council and officers, collect taxes and perform office duties. The municipality currently employs one Road Superintendent and one Equipment Operator. Fire-fighting services are provided by the La Vallee Volunteer Fire Department.

The Crossroads Skating Rink and Ball Diamond are available year-round for public recreational use although no regularly scheduled recreation programs are operated by the municipality.

## **INFORMAL SITE AUDIT OF MUNICIPALLY-OWNED BUILDINGS**

During 2017, municipal staff completed a survey of all municipally owned buildings and structures to assess any barriers that may exist and to identify potential solutions to removing those barriers in order to ensure that the Township is in compliance with current legislation under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. Barriers which were identified in municipal buildings are discussed further in this document under the section entitled "Barriers Identified".

### **BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODS**

In order to identify barriers, the following methodology was used in 2017:

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Survey by Staff & Feedback requested from persons with disabilities	A survey to be conducted each year to help identify any barriers which may exist at any municipal premises including electronic communication	The 2017 survey has been completed.

### **BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES UNDERTAKEN IN PRIOR YEARS**

- The Municipal Office parking lot has a designated space for handicapped parking and a concrete sidewalk from the parking space to the building.
- A Door bell has been placed at front door and walkway has been sloped at the front door to allow for wheelchair access.
- The Community Hall has been made wheel chair accessible and a family handicapped accessible washroom has been installed.
- The public is able to communicate with the Municipal Office via e-mail as well as by telephone, fax or personal communication.
- The Ball Diamond has had handicapped accessible washrooms installed.
- Font size in newsletters has been increased to allow for easier reading by all residents.
- Council adopted an Accessible Customer Service Policy under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and staff and Council of the day undertook training in that regard.
- Municipal by-laws and policies passed or adopted in 2012 were reviewed and it was determined that none have created or perpetuated barriers to people with disabilities.
- Office staff undertook accessibility training to remain up to date on accessibility requirements legislated by the Province.

**BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES AND MEASURES  
UNDERTAKEN DURING 2013-2017**

- The Township will provide to employees updated information about its policies to support employees with disabilities on request.
- The Township will provide information in an accessible format or with communication supports to employees with disabilities on request.
- As required, the Township will prepare individualized workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities.
- The Township will give consideration to accessibility when planning or constructing new recreational trails that it intends to maintain, including installation of access ramps. The Township has no existing recreational trails.
- The Township will give consideration to accessibility in constructing or redeveloping existing outdoor public use eating areas and play spaces that it intends to maintain such that same will comply with the requirements of Sections 80(17), 80(19), 80(20a) and 80(20b) of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.
- The Township public spaces will have accessible elements in place as required under the *Design of Public Spaces Standard* of the *IASR*.
- Handicap Accessible playground equipment has been installed at the Ball Park.
- Microsoft Office 10 was purchased and is used for the text portions of the Township's website.

**BARRIERS IDENTIFIED**

No new barriers were identified in the 2017 survey of municipal premises. Previously identified barriers are listed below. Over time as repairs and replacement of assets is required, Council will have to decide which barriers will be addressed and when, subject to consideration of budget constraints and feasibility.

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for removal or Prevention of Barrier</b>
Bathroom in Municipal Office does not have easy opening Knobs, handles or grab bar	Physical and Architectural	Install easy opening handles, taps, grab bar and widen door (if possible) for wheelchair access



Exterior doors and the interior door to the Municipal Office are heavy and may pose difficulty for some	Physical and Architectural	Install automatic door openers and doors that are compliant with the Fire Code
Locked entrance door to the garage not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	No change proposed as garage is not open to the public
Upstairs Room at Municipal Office is not handicapped Accessible	Architectural	Lift or elevator could be installed.
Training room and washroom in the VFD Fire Hall are not wheelchair accessible	Architectural	Could be widened if and when renovations are done to the building
Tax bills may have print size too small for a sight-impaired person to read	Communication	Request Province and software (ie. developers to review tax bill requirements so same can be in compliance with the Act. Not within municipal control.
Lack of funding	Financial	No Provincial grants available to offset high cost of renovations. Municipal budget already severely strained due to provincial down-loading and provincially mandated requirements.

### **BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED**

The following barriers will be addressed during the 2018-2022 calendar years, budget permitting:

- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration during the planning stages of new municipal projects and of renovation of existing structures.
- Accessibility issues shall be taken into consideration in the development of new municipal by-laws, practices and procedures.
- Initiatives and measures previously undertaken during the 2013-2017 period will continue.
- The Township will provide public written notice of the availability of accommodations during future employee recruitment processes.

- Conversion of information on the Township's website to accessible format (s) will continue.
- Consideration will be given to making the Township's new or redeveloped public spaces accessible, including any recreational trails that may be created, outdoor public use eating areas, service counters, waiting areas with fixed seating, and maintenance of the Township's public spaces.
- The Township will make publicly available information, including forms, accessible upon request, in a format which does not create cost impact to the Township and within a reasonable period of time.

### **FACILITIES, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND SERVICES TO BE REVIEWED in 2018-2022**

All physical and electronic municipal premises and facilities and all participatory or recreational programs provided by the Township or any of its committees will be reviewed annually to identify whether barriers to people with disabilities exist with regard to same and to identify means of eliminating or reducing such barriers.

Input from residents will be considered in identifying barriers in municipal premises and identifying possible solutions to reduce or eliminate same.

### **REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS**

Council has committed The Corporation of the Township of La Vallee to follow through with the initiatives outlined in this plan.

It is Council's direction that municipal facilities shall continue to be reviewed annually and that this plan be recreated every five years as contemplated by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified from year to year, to have a clear understanding of the steps which the Township proposes to take to remove or address identified barriers, and to monitor the progress the Township makes in barrier identification, removal and prevention.

### **REVISIONS DURING TERM OF PLAN**

In order to ensure that the Council which is in office during the term to which this Accessibility Plan applies has direct input as to what steps shall be taken to address identified barriers, Council for the Township of La Vallee hereby directs that it shall be the policy of this Township that, following a municipal election, the newly elected Council shall:

- review the current plan during its first year in office;
- identify the steps which shall be taken during the balance of the term of this plan following its election to office;
- amend the plan accordingly; and
- adopt the revised plan.

In addition, at the direction of Council, this plan may be updated at a time before the regular five-year update where Council deems same to be expedient due to changing circumstances or impacts in the Township.

### **COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN TO THE PUBLIC**

This plan will be available in paper form for public review at the La Vallee Municipal Office as well as electronically on the Township's website, [www.lavallee.ca](http://www.lavallee.ca). The Plan will also be provided in an accessible format, upon request. The Township will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the plan is made available for the perusal and review of all persons. Any and all communication will be made accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

An Annual Status Report will be posted on the municipal website informing the public of the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies in the plan and comply with the regulations.