

Accessibility Plan

SEPTEMBER 2008 – SEPTEMBER 2009

THE CORPORATION
OF THE
CITY OF ELLIOT LAKE



September 2008

*Submitted to: Mayor and Members of Council
City of Elliot Lake*

*Submitted by: Accessibility Advisory Committee
Chairperson: Councillor Collett*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 is to recognize the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by,

- (a) developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- (b) providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards.

This is the sixth plan, for the year 2008-2009 prepared by the Accessibility Advisory Committee of the City of Elliot Lake. The report describes the measures the City has taken in the past, and the measures that the Committee will take during the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the City, including staff and members of the community at large.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee, with the help of the department heads of the Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake, other organizations within the community, and most importantly, the general public directly and through the media, identify and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

AIM

This report describes what measures that the City has taken in the past, and the measures the City of Elliot Lake will take for the years 2008-9 to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the City, including staff.

OBJECTIVES

This report:

1. Describes the process by which the City of Elliot Lake will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Reviews earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
3. List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services the City will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the Committee will take in the coming year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Describe how the City will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY OF ELLIOT LAKE

The City of Elliot Lake is located in Northern Ontario on Highway 108 approximately 20 minutes north of the Trans-Canada Highway # 17. The city has a population of approximately 11,549 persons (2006 Federal Census (Stats Can) population report) and home to two secondary schools, French and English, four elementary schools, and one intermediate school (grades six to eight).

The City has a hospital, a nursing home, a long term care facility, as well as private assisted living homes supporting our predominantly senior community. As well there is a well-developed downtown area with a mall and various shops lining the streets. Located in the downtown area are the City Hall, Police, Fire, and Ambulance buildings and a new community clinic. There are a number of Senior Citizen clubs/organizations that fill the cultural and social needs of the senior population. Elliot Lake has beautiful scenery and many activities for outdoors as well as indoors for both young and old.

The City of Elliot Lake has an established public transit transportation service which provides daily service on an hourly basis with the exception of Sundays and statutory holidays. The service is delivered through a modern fleet comprised totally of low-floor handicapped accessible buses. In addition to the regular transit service the City of Elliot Lake also offers para-transit service weekdays from 8 AM to 4 PM.

AAC COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

The Accessibility Advisory Committee of the City of Elliot Lake is committed to:

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

Together with the various staff of the Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake, the Accessibility Advisory Committee can create a plan that will make these goals a reality for the Elliot Lake community.

RECENT BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES

The Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to investigate the possibility of obtaining closed captioning service for City Council meetings. At this time, the necessary equipment and personnel is unavailable.

Fire Alarm Systems are required in public places, such as City Hall, where the alarms are auditory. St. Joseph Manor, a new facility, has strobe or flashing fire alarms; Huron Lodge have 2nd stage strobe fire alarms as well. The retrofit and ongoing inspections would be expensive, however the Committee may research the possibilities of upgrading at municipal public facilities.

The issues of speeding and the safety of pedestrians using the crosswalks and in general, access issues in the lower plaza parking area #1 appear to be improved to a great extent.

Special attention was given during the City's annual pavement marking activities to ensure that crosswalks and other pedestrian crossing places are well marked.

The City has now provided the public the convenience of paying tax and water bills on line.

The Committee is looking at ways to encourage the public to recognize and assist persons with disabilities. Public announcements that could appear on our website or on the City Page in the Standard were suggested.

The City's website has undergone a major design change and update with improvements in many aspects. The new site is more user-friendly and contains more information. The Council agenda, minutes, regulatory by-laws and City policies of interest to the public are available on the website in a timely manner. Public Notices are available and kept up to date. Standing committee agendas and minutes are also posted on the website. On-line access to a wealth of information about the City of Elliot Lake and City Hall business is updated on a daily basis.

INFORMAL SITE AUDIT OF THE MUNICIPALLY OWNED BUILDINGS

The members of the Committee shall undertake a tour of municipal facilities on an annual basis in order to assess accessibility issues future years to make their own assessments.

BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES

The Accessibility Working Group will meet quarterly or at the call of the Chair, to review the progress of the Accessibility Plan.

In order to identify barriers in municipally owned facilities, the committee shall ensure that a minimum of two members conduct a tour of municipal facilities on an annual basis in order to identify accessibility issues. These matters will be discussed with the appropriate facility managers and / or department heads to determine how these matters may be addressed.

These matters may be addressed on a priority basis keeping in mind the budget restraints and feasibility.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

Barrier	Type of Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED AND REMOVED in 2008

A second Crossing was added at the Ontario Avenue and Hillside Drive North traffic Lights. This crossing located adjacent to the Fireside Inn, eliminates the need for pedestrians to cross Ontario Avenue.

A controlled crossing has been added at the Hillside Drive South intersection at Highway 108 which has traffic lights. This allows medical scooters to access the grocery store on Mountain Road utilizing traffic signals.

The City has purchased a new para-transit (Handilift) bus, providing a more reliable service to physically disabled persons in the community.

Cross Walks with flashing lights in the City have been enhanced with fresh pavement markings and additional striking across the entire walkway, making the cross walks more noticeable and therefore, safer.

Ten new bus shelters were purchased to facilitate use of the transit system. The buses do have low-floor access.

The City has a brand new Community Clinic for the Family Health Team in the Central Commercial area where improvements were made to enhance accessibility to handicap parking spaces and proximity to the transit system.

The City continues to invest in physician recruitment.

The City Continued efforts to raise awareness on the safe use of Personal Mobility Devices (Electric Wheelchairs) on our public highways (City streets).

BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2009

During 2009 the Committee will focus on meeting Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The Customer Service standards must be complied with by January 1, 2010.

Listed below are the requirements under the Customer Service Standards:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.

2. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access your goods and use your services and about any other measures your organization offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
3. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
6. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
7. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
8. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
9. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
10. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
11. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.

Continue to work with community groups and Council in order to ensure all new construction of public facilities and services are accessible.

Continued efforts to raise awareness on the safe use of Personal Mobility Devices (Electric Wheelchairs) on our public highways (City streets).

The Committee is looking at ways to encourage the public to recognize and assist persons with disabilities. The City Page (Page 2 of the local newspaper) would be an excellent place to raise awareness on the issues faced by disabled persons.

Fire Alarm Systems are required in public places, such as City Hall, where the alarms are auditory. St. Joseph Manor, a new facility, has strobe or flashing fire alarms; Huron Lodge have 2nd stage strobe fire alarms as well. The retrofit and ongoing inspections would be expensive, however the Committee may research the possibilities of upgrading at municipal public facilities.

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS

On an annual basis, the City Administration will be contacted and encouraged to identify any barriers to handicapped persons on city-owned property.

The Members continue to encourage the public's input.

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan will be adopted at the televised Council meeting. Notification to the public concerning availability of the Plan will be posted on the City Hall Bulletin Board and on the City website - www.cityofelliottlake.com.