



RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA BEACH

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – 2024-2025

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General Features of the Rural Municipality of Victoria Beach (“RMVB”)

The RMVB is one of three designated resort municipalities within the Province of Manitoba. The majority of taxpayers are seasonal cottagers or part time residents having their permanent address outside the RMVB. According to the 2021 Census, there are approximately 700 permanent residents in the RMVB and there are just over 1,840 dwellings.

Besides the taxpayers and their families, people come to the RMVB as guests of the residents (seasonal or permanent), as renters or day visitors.

An important and unique feature of the RMVB is the 1933 provincial statute which authorizes Council to regulate motor vehicle traffic within the municipality. This statute authorizes the Council to pass a by-law to establish and designate a vehicle restricted area (“VRA”) and a vehicle restricted period. The By-Law states that this annual designation is in effect from 11:59 p.m. on the Thursday closest to the 23rd of June until 6 a.m. on the Monday of the Labour Day weekend in September. During that period, only vehicles with authorized permits are allowed to drive in the VRA. The remainder of the RMVB has no vehicle restrictions. Approximately half of the residences are within the VRA. Amenities such as a seasonal general store, a seasonal bakery, a seasonal restaurant, the Federal Government pier and marina, the yacht club, golf course, tennis courts, the seasonal doctor and the majority of the swimming beaches are situated within the VRA.

A final feature that makes the RMVB unique is the fact the RMVB municipal office is located in Winnipeg and not in the municipality itself.

All of these features are important in understanding the barriers facing persons living with disabilities who reside in and visit the RMVB.

Statement of Commitment

The RMVB is committed to ensuring that all citizens, guests and casual visitors have equal access to all of our goods, services and facilities regardless of their abilities. We are committed to having an environment that is welcoming, supportive and respectful of the dignity and independence of people with a variety of abilities. We are committed to supporting diversity and to reducing any barriers that may interfere with full participation in community life. Finally, we are committed to meeting the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

Facilities Within the RMVB

To identify and eliminate barriers it is important to recognize the following aspects of the community.

1. RMVB/public facilities:

- a. The municipal office and administrative staff are located outside the municipality, in the city of Winnipeg
- b. Public Works building is located in the municipality, outside the VRA.
- c. The public 9-hole golf course is located in the municipality, inside the VRA.
- d. The summer information office is located in the municipality, at the entrance to the VRA. This office is staffed only during the vehicle restricted period.
- e. The Fire Hall and Police office are located in the municipality, outside the VRA.
- f. The seasonal doctor's office/clinic is located in the municipality, inside the VRA.
- g. Public beaches are located inside and outside the VRA.
- h. Vincent Memorial Bandstand is located within the VRA.
- i. Washrooms are located on the Village Green, within the VRA.

2. Facilities owned, but not operated by the RMVB:

- a. The Moonlight Inn: Seasonal restaurant located within the VRA that is owned by the RMVB, leased to an independent operator.

- b. The Bakery: Seasonal bakery located within the VRA that is owned by the RMVB, leased to an independent operator.
 - c. The General Store: Seasonal store located within the VRA that is owned by the RMVB, leased to an independent operator.
 - d. The VB Parking lot: Owned by the RMVB, leased to an independent operator.
 - e. The cemetery: Located outside the VRA and operated by a not-for-profit community group.
3. Public facilities not owned or operated by the RMVB:
- a. The Victoria Beach Club: A community organization within the VRA that owns and operates a summer clubhouse, runs summer activities and events, publishes the summer newspaper “The Victoria Beach Herald”, and maintains and manages outdoor tennis courts, a children’s playground, library and Recreation Director’s cottage located within the VRA.
 - b. The Victoria Beach Yacht Club: This facility is a private sailing club owned and operated by the VB Yacht Club within the VRA.
 - c. The Victoria Beach Small Craft Harbour and Pier: This facility is owned by the Federal Government of Canada and operated by an independent corporation (Victoria Beach Harbour Authority). Located within the VRA.
 - d. The Beaches Community Centre: This year-round public facility is owned and operated by a not-for-profit corporation. Located outside the VRA.
 - e. The East Beaches Social Scene: This year-round facility is owned and operated by Senior Scene Inc., a not-for-profit corporation of seniors of the region. The Social Scene also houses the East Beaches Resource Centre (a non-profit organization created to support seniors and people with disabilities living in the community) and the Allard Regional Library, Victoria Beach Branch. Located outside the VRA.
 - f. St Michael’s Church (within the VRA) and Faith Bible Camp (outside the VRA), are owned and operated by not-for profit community groups.
4. Privately owned business:
- a. Saffies Store: A year-round general store privately owned and operated at Albert Beach, located outside the VRA

All of the above provide goods/and or services to residents and visitors of the RMVB.

Consultation Process

To produce the Accessibility Plan, the Accessibility Committee sought information, advice and direction from two major sources. First was a number of contacts with various agencies supporting Manitobans with disabilities. These included the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Manitoba Possible, the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities, The Arthritis Society, the Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Accessibility Office (“MAO”) and others. The second consultations occurred between members of our committee and community members with a variety of abilities. Over half of our committee consists of persons living with disabilities or caregivers of persons with disabilities.

A Terms of Reference document has been written and approved by the Committee and Council and is to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Policies

In order to meet the commitments to the community and *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and to ensure a continued commitment, the RMVB has established through resolution, four policies.

1. The RMVB will provide all employees and elected officials with information and training with respect to accessibility issues and the Accessibility Plan.
2. The RMVB will regularly review all policies, programs, services, facilities and new initiatives to ensure barriers that have been removed do not recur and any new barrier that might arise is removed.
3. The RMVB will make all relevant information available to people in the RMVB in various formats to ensure wide dissemination of the information. The RMVB will ensure that all new developmental plans and capital projects, including renovations will meet the spirit and words of our Statement of Commitment within the Accessibility Plan and within all approved Accessibility Standards.

4. The RMVB will ensure consultation with the Accessibility Committee on all new development plans and capital projects.

Understanding Barriers to Accessibility

Persons with disabilities face accessibility barriers in all aspects of society. There are many different types of barriers. Barriers can be visible, invisible, physical, attitudinal, technological, information and communication barriers. Provided below are examples of five types of barriers that a person with a disability may encounter.

1. Architectural/Physical - This barrier may result from the design of the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways or width of hallways that are too narrow for a person with a wheelchair, electric scooter or walker, poor lighting for people with vision loss, counters that are too high or doorknobs that are difficult for people with arthritis to grasp
2. Attitudinal/Social - This barrier occurs when bias and stereotypes about persons with disabilities impede their full participation in all aspects of society such as thinking that because a person's disability is not visible they do not have a genuine disability and therefore do not require an accommodation
3. Information or Communications - This barrier make it difficult for people to receive or send information. A person with vision loss may not be able to read printed materials, read signs, locate landmarks, or see a hazard or a person with an intellectual disability may not understand information that is not expressed in plain language
4. Technology - This barrier occurs when technology cannot be modified to support an assistive device. For example an internet website or a webpage that does not support screen-reading software or does not provide alternative text for images
5. Systemic Policy or Practice - This barrier can result from an organization's policies, practices and procedures if they restrict persons with disabilities or the lack of awareness of existing laws regulations that require programs and activities be accessible to people with disabilities.

Progressive Measures Completed

This list highlights initiatives to eliminate or reduce barriers to persons living with disabilities that have been completed.

- A. New building construction and existing building renovations are designed to be barrier free and planned in consultation with the Accessibility Committee.
- B. Public Works building and Pier Point Privy have been built with attention to accessibility issues.
- C. Many accessible parking spaces are available at the seasonal parking lot.
- D. Taxi service is available during the vehicle restricted period.
- E. Vehicle permits for persons with medical conditions that do not allow them to safely enter or exit a taxi and for persons with specialized adapted vehicles are available.
- F. Service at the Summer Information Office is available without individuals leaving their vehicles. Office has doorbell installed at a level accessible from a mobility device to assist persons with mobility issues to summon staff for information.
- G. Motorized mobility scooters are available for rent at the Summer Information Office during the vehicle restricted period.
- H. An electric charging station and mobility device storage in a covered pole shed is available at the parking lot.
- I. Accessible washrooms are available at:
 - a. The Parking Lot during the vehicle restricted period,
 - b. The Public Works building when dealing with the Building Inspector
- J. Wheelchair/mobility scooter ramps have been installed at the Bakery, Store and Golf Course.
- K. New Stairs with metal railings have been installed at Clubhouse 2 beach access.
- L. Yellow visibility strips have been installed on the stairs at the Bakery and the Store
- M. Mobility mats are available to access the beach at Pitt Road in Albert Beach.
- N. All staff and councillors are required to take Accessible Customer Service Training
- O. Public awareness and education campaigns have been conducted through articles in the Victoria Beach Herald and in meetings with Cottage Owners Associations.

Work Plan

As budgetary considerations and timelines allow, we will continue to identify and remove barriers. The following projects are on-going or being considered and are expected to be completed within the following time frames:

Ongoing projects:

- Provide training to all employees and elected officials.
- Provide education sessions to the general public about the importance of addressing accessibility issues and the obligations of the RMVB under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.
- Maintain existing accessibility infrastructure such as ramps, visibility strips on stairs, washrooms, etc.
- Keep vegetation trimmed back from intersections so that street signs are more visible

Projects to be completed within the next two years:

- Complete the construction of the accessible washroom at Pitt Road in Albert Beach
- Complete the construction of the accessible washroom at the Village Green.
- Add metal hand railings to at least four sets of stairs accessing the beach
- Install at least sixteen benches on public land along the avenues with the priority routes being from Bayview to the Village Green and the Parking Lot to the Village Green
- Work with the VB Trails Association to install benches on the trails network
- Install mobility mats at Pier Point to allow wheelchair/mobility scooter access to Clubhouse Beach.
- Evaluate the RMVB IT infrastructure to ensure it complies with the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication and upgrade as necessary
- Refresh the visibility strips at the Store and Bakery.
- Examine new office space on Portage Avenue to identify any accessibility barriers and upgrade as necessary
- Create an accessible beach at the south end of Club House Beach

Longer Term Projects:

- Install metal hand railings to all stairs accessing the beaches.
- Install benches at regular intervals along the avenues.
- Upgrade the accessible washrooms at Pitt Road and Pier Point to include hand washing facilities
- Institute a wayfinding system, available in digital and print formats, that will make it easier people with memory loss or anxiety conditions, and for visitors and renters to navigate their way on the avenues

Appendix A

Further information:

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, <http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/>

Introducing Accessibility for Manitobans Act,
https://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/pdf/introducing_accessibility_for_manitobans_act.pdf

The Province of Manitoba Customer Service Standard Regulation,
<http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/customer-service-standard.html>

Introducing Manitoba's Accessibility for Customer Service,
http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/pdf/DIO_CSS_brochure.pdf

Accessibility Standard for Employment,
<https://accessibilitymb.ca/employment-standards.html>

Accessibility News
<https://accessibilitymb.ca/newsletter.html>

RM of Victoria Beach
www.rmofvictoriabeach.ca