

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Municipality of
Emerson-Franklin



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Municipality of Emerson Franklin

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Date

This Document is available in a variety of accessible formats upon request. To make a request, contact the Accessibility Coordinator, at the information provided above.

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Executive Summary

Disability affects the lives of many Manitobans. According to Statistics Canada, in 2012 nearly one in six Manitobans has a disability. This number will continue to grow as our population ages.

On December 5th, 2013, The *Accessibility for Manitoban Act (AMA)* was passed to provide a clear, proactive to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.

The Accessibility Standards to be developed over the next several years will address barriers and set requirements in five key areas

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication
3. Transportation
4. Employment
5. Built Environment

The Customer Service Accessibility Standard came into effect November 1, 2015 and municipalities have until November 1, 2017 to comply. Accessibility Plans must be updated every two years. The updated plan is relevant and applicable for the years 2024 and 2025.

Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of Emerson Franklin is committed to ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to promote the rights of all persons and to build and create an inclusive and accessible working environment. We are committed to doing so in a manner that respects the dignity, individuality, independence and value of persons with disabilities. We will do this by meeting requirements of the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*.

Overview

The Municipality of Emerson Franklin serves the communities of Emerson, Dominion City, Rosa, Roseau River, Tolstoi, Woodmore, Ridgeville, Green Ridge and Arnaud. The Municipality of Emerson was incorporated January 1st, 2015, when the former Rural Municipality of Franklin amalgamated with the Town of Emerson.

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A. Overview of Municipal Facilities and Services

Municipal Office Dominion City, MB: Customer Service & Front Line Staff
Public Meetings, Finances, Tax and Utility Collection, Council meeting held twice a month, open to the public for general business.

Town Hall Emerson, MB: Customer Services & Front Line Staff
Municipal Satellite office.

Library – Emerson, MB: Library servicing entire Municipality of Emerson Franklin, Internet and Computer usage, open to the public for general business

Website/Facebook/Newsletter – Daily posting of information, public notices, employment opportunities, Newsletter sent in local newspaper monthly

Public Works Department – Dominion City and Emerson: Services include: general road maintenance, clearing snow, water and sewer, waste and recycle collection, maintenance of all public grounds and buildings. Waste Transfer Station – Located at PR201 and Road 22E, open to the public for waste and recycle materials.

Dominion City Fire Department – Dominion City, MB: EMR and Fire Services, local and regional, education and training

Emerson Fire Department – Emerson, MB: EMR and Fire Services, local and regional, education and training

Emerson Skating Rink – Emerson, MB: Hockey and skating lessons, shiny, hockey games, special events

Emerson Campground and Pool – Emerson, MB: Pool offers swimming lessons, public swimming, canteen services, campground, park, picnic shelter for special events

Recreation and Wellness Programs – Senior Meal Program, Coordinator for Programs and Activities, Tenant Resource Coordinator, Recreation Programming and Activities for youth and people of all ages.

B. Accessibility Achievements

- Municipal Office in Dominion City, automated opening doors for both exterior and interior entrance. Wide Hallways, no stairs, accessible washrooms to enabling patrons in wheelchairs, parents with strollers, service animals easy access for customer services and meeting place.
- Satellite Office in Emerson-Automated Doors & Intercom at Entrance Installed for public to request assistance with customer services, paying bills, accessing library services etc (stairs are a built environment barrier in the Historic Building)

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- Any documents and pictures added to website are accessible to screen readers, to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with disabilities.(Using JPEG vs PDF format)
- Variety of methods of communication. Advertising in local newspaper, daily social media posting including our website, facebook, monthly newsletter sent to each resident. Website links can be used by a screen reader. Any documents posted is available in different formats and can be printed at one of our offices
- Two Municipal offices open to serve the public, with an office in Emerson and Dominion City residents within the municipality can make inquires, payments at either office of choice. Dedicated receptionist is available to greet, direct and offer public assistance.
- Multiple ways for general public to get into contact with employees, i.e. by mail, email, phone,in person.
- Ramps, accessibility entrance and washrooms at recreation and community facilities for public events and activities. Swimming pools have wheelchair lift or zero entry for accessibility.
- Age Friendly Grant Application Submitted December 2023 for upgrades to pathways and Main street Park Areas under Action 1.
- Placemaking and Way Finding Plans are currently underway that focus on Age Friendly and Accessibility Initiatives and Actions.

C. **Accessibility Barriers:** Based on recent Accessibility Survey results, the following are areas of concern for the general public within the municipality:

1. Physical And Architectural Barriers
 - No ramps/Elevator at Emerson Town Hall
 - Wheelchairs difficult to transport over cracked or uneven sidewalks, difficult to access sidewalk because of curbs
 - Uneven ground, unsuitable materials for walkway/paths in community parks, playgrounds for accessible network to access recreational/natural assets.
2. Technology
 - Some older people don't have computers or internet
 - Don't always have access to information posted
 - Asking clients to use online forms to register or not knowing where to obtain forms
3. Information and communication barriers
 - Print too small to read

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- Assuming when preparing information for public, that visual impaired persons won't have a problem reading
 - Advertisement not clear or easily understood
4. Attitudinal Barriers
- Although none was noted on recent survey we realize how this could be a barrier. Possible Barriers are but not limited to:
- Assuming that a person with a speech impairment cannot understand
 - Thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions
 - Avoiding a person with a disability for fear of saying the wrong word or offending them
5. Systemic Barriers
- Emerson Satellite Office, building is not accessible for wheelchairs resulting in some people receiving unequal access for Provincial Court, Customer Services and Public Library.

D. Policies

Customer Services

- The Municipality of Emerson Franklin permits persons with disabilities to use their personal assistive device while on the Municipality's premises
- The Municipality of Emerson Franklin will provide information, in an accessible format on request, or with communication supports that consider a person's specific needs.
- The Municipality of Emerson Franklin welcomes onto its premises service animals and support persons upon whom persons with disabilities rely.
- The Municipality will notify persons with disabilities promptly in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities. This notice will be provided in accessible formats and posted in public areas.
- The Municipality of Emerson Franklin will provide training to all its employees and volunteers regarding the provisions and ways to ensure accessible programs, goods, services and workplace.
- The Municipality of Emerson Franklin encourages feedback regarding how it provides programs, goods and services to persons with disabilities

Standard for Employment

We provide individual emergency response information to keep employees with disabilities safe.

We have asked employees who require assistance during an emergency for permission to share information with individuals who have agreed to help.

We offer reasonable accommodations when recruiting new employees.

We inform applicants about workplace accommodation policies and practices when making an offer of employment.

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Our management considers workplace accommodations to remove a barrier affecting an employee's performance.

We consider workplace accommodations to remove a barrier that may affect an employee's opportunities for training and advancement.

We develop and implement individual accommodation plans for employees that request them.

We let employees know about our policies and practices, including updates. We offer this information in accessible formats and with communication supports upon request.

We follow a return to work policy for employees who have been off work due to a disability, and we have a process to determine reasonable workplace accommodations.

We train management and staff with human resource responsibilities about accessible employment and related legislation.

The Municipality of Emerson Franklin is committed to ensuring that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with and promote the core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Any Municipal policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.

E. Actions

Action 1 – Customer Service ~ Physical and Architectural Barriers	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
<p>Wheelchairs and strollers, difficult to transport over cracked or uneven sidewalks. Difficult to access sidewalk because of curbs</p> <p>Continue to make Grant Applications for Accessible Walk/Pathways</p>	<p>Sidewalk Renewal included in long term capital plan. Prioritize portion of sidewalk/accessible curbs in each year financial plan(ongoing)</p> <p>To enhance & improve walk/pathways within Parks & Playground Areas and community connectivity for accessibility.(ongoing) RM Staff</p>

Action 2 – Customer Service ~ Technology Barriers	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not everyone always has access to information posted on computers, internet or social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Residents with multiple forms or information. Posting regularly on website/Facebook, adding inserts in Southeast Journal, including meeting minutes, newsletter, tenders. (ongoing)(Communications Officer) Have multiple ways of obtaining information, printing from website, or

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking clients to use online forms to register or not knowing where to obtain forms 	<p>obtaining from offices. Staff to provide assistance if required. (ongoing)(Communications Officer)</p>
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Action 3 – Customer Service ~ Information and Communication Barriers	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print too small to read, Assuming when preparing information for public, that visual impaired persons won't have a problem reading. <p>Communications to promote the availability of alternate formats on request (include on notices, publications etc)</p>	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing alternate formats which may include, but not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disability. (Word Format) for efficient conversion to alternate formats. (ongoing) <p>Staff Are aware of alternate formats and how to make them available to the public.(2022)- Communications Officer</p>

Action 4 – Customer Service ~ Attitudinal Barriers	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuming that a person with speech impairment cannot understand, thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions. Avoiding a person with a disability for fear of saying the wrong word or offending them 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Municipality will provide training to all of its employees and volunteers regarding ways to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities. Respectful terms when referencing persons with disabilities. -Communications Officer to develop checklists for Municipal Employees.

Action 5 – Consultation Process	
<p>Initiatives/Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Survey to engage the community for feedback on the accessibility plan and actions 	<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To obtain suggestions to improve accessibility and help identify priorities.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute in a variety of ways(in person, social media,website and news letter)• Involve people with disabilities including family members and caregivers	
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F Consultation

The Municipality shall consult the community and persons disabled by barriers or representatives from organizations of persons disabled by barriers.

Consultation shall take place every time an update to the Accessibility Plan is made.

The Consultation shall take place as follows:

The Municipality shall continue to review process and activities to determine which ones suit the Municipality and client base. Some activities include in-person events(through Recreation and Senior Services Events and networking), roundtable discussions and surveys. Make an addition to the municipal website to incorporate ongoing consultation and communications.

In Person events shall be held in locations without physical barriers, and a variety of options to obtain feedback shall be provided(over the phone, email)

Municipal Staff and Council shall reach out and engage directly with people with disabilities, family members and caregivers to provide information on the accessibility plan and to collect feedback.

The Municipality's Accessibility Plan is posted on the Municipal Website and is available to the public in printed form upon request.