

Town of Neepawa

2022 - 2024

Accessibility Plan



Created November 2017

Updated July, 2021/January 2022

*This document is available in an accessible format on request.
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Overview

The Town of Neepawa provides municipal services to approximately 4,609 (2016 census) residents and employs approximately 23 full time permanent staff members. A few core services include water and wastewater, street and sidewalk maintenance, waste and recycling services, land administration, parks, campground and certain recreation facility management. In order to provide these services, the Town operates and maintains a variety of public buildings and facilities. Some facilities are open to the public on a regular basis, while others are limited to employee's access only. With the Town of Neepawa being a public entity, the removal of accessibility barriers is important as we strive to achieve equality of service for every resident and employee.

Statement of Commitment

Under the authority of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* the Town of Neepawa strives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility, which will enhance services standards for all citizens, visitors and employees.

Accessibility Legislation

Passed on December 5, 2013, *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA) (C.C.S.M.c.A1.7) provides the authority in support of the implementation of measures, policies, practices and other requirements necessary to make significant progress towards achieving accessibility in Manitoba by 2023. Under the guidance of the legislation, over the course of the next several years, the following accessibility standards will be developed to address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living.

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment

Compliance & Deadline Requirements:

1. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Deadline for Completion: December 31, 2017

Town of Neepawa Completion: November 24, 2017

Accessibility planning ensures all Manitobans have full access to programs and services designed to meet the public's needs. An Accessibility Plan aims to engage organizational members and community stakeholders in identifying, preventing and removing barriers in policies and practices.

An Accessibility Plan must be updated every two years to review progress, set future priorities and update policies and actions. The update also allows the organization to consider any new or proposed standards introduced by the AMA.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

Deadline for Completion: November 1, 2018.

Town of Neepawa Completion: October 2, 2018 (Policy AD-080)

The first component, adopted in 2015, focuses on setting a standard for Customer Service. This standard requires organizations to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to customer service and where this is not possible, special attention needs to be given to providing equivalent customer service.

Organizations need to:

- Review physical barriers that prevent customers from receiving service;
- Consider the communication needs of individuals and clients;
- Allow service animals & assistive devices (i.e. wheelchairs & walkers, etc.);
- Inform the public about accessibility policies and procedures and if and when accessibility services are not available;
- Invite feedback from individuals, customers and the public;
- Understand *The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)*; provide reasonable accommodation and train staff on accessible customer service.

3. ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT STANDARD (& Workplace Emergency Response)

Deadline for Completion: May 1, 2022

Town of Neepawa Completion: November 3, 2020

- Town of Neepawa Policy AD-100
- Training for applicable employees/managers by April 30, 2022.

Enacted on May 1, 2019, Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Employment is the second standard under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Its purpose is to remove and prevent barriers that affect current and potential members of Manitoba's labour force. The Accessibility Standard for Employment:

- builds on existing requirements of Manitoba's Human Rights Code
- helps organizations hire, support and keep employees
- applies to paid employees who are:
 - full-time
 - part-time
 - apprentices
 - seasonal

Accessibility Committee

An Accessibility Committee was established in 2017 to facilitate the development of an Accessibility Plan for the Town of Neepawa.

The Committee is a working group comprised of various staff members of the Town of Neepawa, with the primary role to demonstrate leadership in recommending innovative approaches and progressive solutions to make Town services, programs, by-laws, policies, and practices more accessible to employees, residents and visitors of the Town of Neepawa.

Consultation Activities

A public open house was held on November 20, 2017 to seek feedback on the accessibility of Town services and present the draft plan. Local organizations that advocate for, or provide services to, as well as persons with disabilities were invited to participate. The results of the open house were used to identify areas of concern to assist in prioritizing actions. On an ongoing basis, the Town will continue to invite feedback from individuals with disabilities and those who serve people with disabilities.

To further the above, a survey was developed and released both on-line and in paper format. The results of which were incorporated into the prioritizing of actions.

Action Plan

The Town of Neepawa will review all programs, services, facilities and new initiatives to ensure accessibility and improve the communication of information to reflect an accessible format for persons with disabilities. The goal is to remove accessibility barriers or provide acceptable service alternatives, and prevent further barriers.

Accessibility Action Items and Achievements

- Created an Accessibility Committee – 2017.
- Created/Update Accessibility Plan – 2017.
- Public Open House Consultation & Survey – 2017.
- Raised awareness regarding accessibility by communicating through our website, newsletters, social media and paper copies being made available – 2017 & ongoing.
- Requested feedback on communication and plan from stakeholders and community – 2018 & ongoing.
- Created a list of Town facilities and corresponding accessibility barriers – 2018 & ongoing.
- Focused on existing barriers that include attitudinal, information/communication, technological, systemic, physical and architectural – 2018 & ongoing.
- Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy – 2018.
- Accessible Customer Service Standard Staff Training – 2018 & ongoing.
- Accessible Employment Standard & Workplace Emergency Response – 2020.
- Age Friendly Webinar – 2020.
- Accessible Parking identified – 2020 & ongoing.
- Accessible Sidewalk renewals – 2020 & ongoing.
- Accessible/Ramped approaches installed – 2020 & ongoing.
- Paving of pathways – 2020 & ongoing.
- Accessible formats available for town communication – 2018 & ongoing.
- Truncated Sidewalk Pad (yellow dimpled squares) for visually impaired – 2021 & ongoing.
- Long-term planning for upgrades to have our Pool and building accessible – 2021 & ongoing.

Methodologies

Review of Current Activities to Identify Barriers

- An ongoing review of current activities and services to identify barriers, with the goal of creating policies and procedures to prevent barriers from being created and viewing the identified ones as opportunities for improvement. Barriers will be addressed on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring Progress and Audit Function

- As a status report of this Plan is required every two (2) years, reviews by the Accessibility Policy Review Committee will occur prior to the annual budget preparation cycle. The purpose of the annual review of the Accessibility Plan will be to evaluate whether or not targets are being met and to adopt a plan to meet current expectations. The Accessibility Policy Review Committee shall meet bi-annually with an annual public meeting held to invite and involve persons with disabilities to review and provide feedback on this plan.

Communication of Plan

- The availability of the Multi-Year Municipal Accessibility Plan was announced publicly by way of announcement at a Town Council Meeting, which is televised. Additionally, the plan is posted on the Town's website and information provided in newsletters/notices. As annual status reports of the plan and technical guidelines are developed, they will appear as updates to the website.

Conclusion/Outcomes

All residents and employees of the Town of Neepawa, regardless of ability, will be treated with dignity and respect. Programs, services and facilities will be regularly evaluated to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. In instances where barriers cannot be removed, the Town is committed to developing innovative solutions to alter the situation or service, ensuring that any accommodation that is made is complimentary of a high-level service standard that provides equal opportunity for all residents.

Further Information

For more information on the Town of Neepawa's Accessibility Plan, please contact: Town of Neepawa by e-mail: info@neepawa.ca or by phone (204) 476-7600.