

November 2004 – November 2005

**CORPORATION  
OF THE  
TOWN OF RAINY RIVER**



**November 2004**

*Submitted to:*  
Mayor and Council  
Town of Rainy River

*Submitted by:*  
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## Executive Summary

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The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province. To this end the ODA mandates that each Municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan.

This is the second year plan (2004) prepared by the accessibility working group of the Town of Rainy River. The report describes the measures the Town has taken in the past and the measures the Town will take during the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Town, including staff and members of the community at large. As the population of the Municipality is made up of a large number of seniors, a priority will be to remove barriers for this portion of the population

The working group identified a number of barriers to people with disabilities. The areas which the Town will concentrate its efforts in the upcoming year to provide a better access to residents along the sidewalks within the business section and work on developing a more informative web site.

## **Aim**

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This report describes measures that the Town of Rainy River has taken for the 2004 year and the measures that the Town will take in 2005 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who utilize the facilities and services of the Township, including staff.

## **Objectives**

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This report:

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

## **Description of the Town of Rainy River**

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The Town of Rainy River is located in Northwestern Ontario. The Town is bordered on the north and northeast by the Township of Dawson, on the south by the United States separated by the Rainy River and on the west by the U.S. Border crossing and the City of Baudette, Minnesota.

The Town of Rainy River has a population of approximately 981 persons (based on the 2001 census information). Approximately 26% of the Town's population is over the age of 65. Located within the municipality is the Riverside Healthcare Facility including a clinic and long-term care facility. There are also two senior/single living centres. The apartments consist of 15 one bedroom apartments and a second building with 41 one bedroom apartments. A public elementary school housing children from grades junior

kindergarten to grade eight for approximately 150 students and 15 staff members. Also located in town is a public High School which houses students from grades nine to twelve for approximately 135 students and 25 staff members.

The Town has a Recreation Centre that is utilized by many service groups and the public at large for weddings etc.... The Town Office is located in the historical CN Station and is shared by the Rainy River Activity Depot, which offers many activities for seniors. The Town Office is also adjacent to a museum facility, and Farmers Market. The Public Works Garage and Volunteer Fire Department are both housed in a separate facility approximately two blocks from the Town Office. The Municipality also owns the Rainy River Health Centre, Rainy River Curling Rink facility, and the Water Treatment Plant.

### **Council Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

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The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Rainy River is committed to:

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

### **Recent Barrier – Removal Initiatives**

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During the construction of the Rainy River Health Centre ramps were incorporated into its design to allow for the access of those in wheel chairs or who have difficulty with stairs.

The Rainy River Community Centre/Recreation Complex recently completed a variety of renovations which included the installation of an elevator from ground level to both the main level and upper level of the building.

In 1995 the Town of Rainy River implemented a Handi-Capped parking By-Law. Designated handi-capped parking places were established at various locations within the business section of the community.

The Rainy River Curling Club has also installed ramps on the interior ground floor and exterior of the building to allow unobstructed access to the facility.

## Informal Site Audit of the Municipally Owned Buildings

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In August of 2003 a survey was developed and circulated to all departments of the municipality as a means to assess municipally owned buildings and assess any barriers that may exist and with that any solutions to removing those barriers in order to comply with the current legislation under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act. Unfortunately, no responses have been received.

Staff performed an informal audit of all buildings owned by the Municipality. Barriers of varying degrees have been identified in all Municipal buildings. These barriers will be discussed further in this document under “Barriers Identified”.

## Barrier Identification Methodologies

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In order to identify barriers the following methodology was used:

| Methodology  | Description  | Status   |
|--|--|--|
| 2003 - Survey to Staff and Council                   | A survey was given to all members of staff and Council to help identify any barriers at the Municipal Office, Public Works Department, Fire Hall, Recreation Centre, Water Treatment Plant, Waterfront, Heritage Square, Rainy River Activity Depot, Rainy River Curling Rink and Health Centre. | The survey has been completed and a summary has been prepared.                                 |
| October 2004 – advertising campaign for submissions. | An ad is placed in local papers asking residents to submit any accessibility concerns that they may have with barriers in our community or municipal buildings and to submit their concerns in writing to the Town Office prior to November 2, 2004.   | Letter received from Dr. Singleton regarding accessibility concerns at the Rainy River Clinic. |

## Barriers Identified

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Those who completed the initial survey identified the barriers listed below. Over the next several years, Council will have to decide which barriers should be addressed each year keeping in mind budget restraints and feasibility.

| Barrier  | Type of Barrier | Strategy for Removal or Prevention   | Working Toward 2005   |
|--|-----------------|--|---|
| <i>Municipal Office</i>  |                 |  |   |
| Exterior   | Architectural   | Ramp in front main office of has been installed and decking barriers repaired (uneven planks) as of the end of July 2004.<br><br>Door ways are not wide enough.<br><br>No designated handicapped parking spaces. | Council will need to decide how they will proceed with the widening of doorways.<br><br>A work order has been issued to post signs designating handicap parking spaces. |
| Interior   | Architectural   | Threshold of exterior doors to high. The main door is difficult to open.   | This matter will be looked into.  |
| Washrooms  | Architectural   | Light switch too high. Sink to high, toilet too high. Mirror is too high.  | CBO Frank Berg will look into this issue. Will need to lower the mirror.  |
| Tax Bills are designed so that a sight impaired person would not be able to read | Communication   | Because of the legislative requirements by the Province on the wording, etc., on the bills they will have to look at the requirements in order to also be in compliance with the Act.                            |   |
| <i>Rainy River Activity Depot</i>  |                 |  |   |

|                                       |               |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--|---|
| Ramp                                  | Physical      | No hand rails along ramp.  | This will be looked into.   |
| Exterior                              | Architectural | Doors are difficult to open. Threshold at doorway too high.  | Designations for handicap parking have been made and signs posted.                          |
| Washrooms                             |               | Shared with Municipal Office.  | Plans have been formulated to make adjustments to mirrors, sinks, etc...                    |
| <b><i>Heritage Square (Train)</i></b> |               |  |   |
| Entrance                              | Architectural | Building is only accessible by stairs. No washroom facilities on site.   |   |
| <b><i>Farmer's Market</i></b>         |               |  |   |
| <b><i>Health Centre</i></b>           |               |  |   |
| Entrance                              | Architectural | Doors heavy and difficult to open.   | Will look into cost and availability of mechanical door openers.                            |
| Interior                              | Architectural | Only access to lower level is via stairway.<br><br>Washroom does not meet ODA standards.   | Work has already commenced to bring washrooms into compliance.                              |
| <b><i>Curling Rink</i></b>            |               |  |   |
| Exterior Access                       | Architectural | No handrail along ramp. Door is heavy and hard to open.  | Plans have been made to work with the Curling Club Committee to solve accessibility issues. |
| Interior                              | Architectural | No access to second floor other than stairs.   |   |
| Washrooms                             | Architectural | Do not meet the requirements of ODA. Not enough space, sink too high, mirror too high, soap dispenser okay, but paper towels out of reach. There is no washroom which is |   |



|   |   |  |  |
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|   |   | equipped for wheelchair bound individuals  |  |
| <b>Recreation Centre/Complex</b>              |   |  |  |
| Washrooms                                     | Physical  | Bathroom size needs to be looked at – not quite the right dimensions<br>Soap and towel dispensers are too high from the ground.  |  |
|   | Architectural   | Ramp to ice surface does not reach ice surface.  |  |
| <b>Public Works Garage</b>                    |   |  |  |
| Exterior Access                               | Physical, Architectural and Information/ Communications | Although a ramp does not exist, this building is located at ground level - a handicap person could still enter the building.<br><br>There are no designations for handicap parking spaces or the proper signage in place.<br><br>Building doors meet required widths and threshold heights but would require an adjustment to the handle height. |  |
| Doors and bathrooms do not meet ODA standards | Architectural   | The bathroom meets the appropriate size requirements but would require adjustments to door opening width, handle style and light switch height.<br><br>The toilet itself would require only a minor adjustment for easier access to flushing controls.<br><br>The sink does not meet any of the ODA regulations                                  |  |

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|   |  | and would require adjustments to be made.<br><br>Soap and towel dispensers would need to be lowered to accommodate wheelchair accessibility.<br><br>Toilet paper dispenser, grab bars and mirrors would need to be adjusted in all regulated areas. |   |
| <b><i>Fire Hall</i></b>                   |  |   |   |
| Washrooms                                 | Architectural                              | Not handicapped accessible, too small, no handles or grab bars, light switch too high, sink and toilet do not comply.   | These areas have been renovated and accessibility issues have been resolved. No further action will need to be taken in 2005. |
| <b><i>Water Treatment Plant</i></b>       |  |   |   |
| Exterior                                  | Physical                                   | No designation for handicapped parking spaces.  |   |
|   | Architectural                              | Only accessible via stairs – no ramp  |   |
| Washroom Facilities                       | Architectural                              | Washroom does not meet any of the requirements under the ODA.   |   |
| <b><i>Waterfront Service Building</i></b> |  |   |   |
| Exterior Access                           | Physical and Informational/ Communications | Designate handicap parking spaces and post appropriate signage.<br><br>Door handles will need to be lowered to accommodate ODA regulations.<br><br>Bathroom door handle is currently in the deadbolt style – it will be replaced                    |   |

|   |                            |  |  |
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|   |                            | <p>by a level style handle.</p> <p>Light switches will be lowered to no higher than 3' 11'' and moved to a location nearer to the door.</p> <p>Clearance beneath the sink will need to be adjusted as it is currently only 2' 1''. The pipes will also require the proper insulation.</p> <p>Soap and towel dispensers are not currently wheelchair accessible and will be lowered to the appropriate locations and heights.</p> <p>Toilet paper dispensers will also require a change in position and height.</p> <p>Mirrors will be adjusted to the proper heights and inclines.</p> <p>A cup dispenser will need to be installed.</p> |  |
| <b><i>Waterfront Washroom/ Shower Facility</i></b>        |                            |  |  |
| Exterior/Interior Access for Men's and Women's washrooms. | Architectural and Physical | <p>Ramps will need to be constructed, as per the requirements of the ODA, in order to assure wheelchair access to these washrooms.</p> <p>The Interior/Exterior paths of travel will need to be altered to meet ODA requirements.</p>  |  |

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|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | <p>Exterior and stall doors which do not meet width regulations of 2' 8" will be replaced.</p> <p>Interior door handles not in the level style or pull handles on the inside will be replaced.</p> <p>Light switches currently placed at 4' will be lowered to no higher than the required 3' 11".</p> <p>Sink clearance will be altered to match the required 2' 5" high at the front gate.</p> <p>Will ensure that pipes under sink are insulated and lever style faucet handles installed.</p> <p>Soap and towel dispensers while operable with one hand will be lowered to a more accessible height.</p> <p>Toilet paper dispensers will be adjusted to the proper heights and positions.</p> <p>Adjustments will be made to mirrors to comply with required heights and inclines.</p> <p>A cup dispenser will need to be installed.</p> <p>Accommodation will need to be made in order to create the proper number of handicapped parking</p> |  |
|--|--|--|--|



|                              |                                  |   |   |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
|                              |                                  | spaces.   |   |
|                              | Informational/<br>Communications | The proper handicap signage will also need to be posted.  |   |
| <b><i>Community Wide</i></b> |                                  |   |   |
| Curb Height                  | Physical                         | The curbs within the business section of the community are too high to maneuver with any wheeled device and pose a hazard to seniors. | The Council has designated this as a priority project for 2005. |
| Sidewalk Conditions          |                                  | Generally in poor condition.  | Council has developed a plan to work towards compliance.        |

### **Barriers to be Addressed in 2005**

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Of the barriers listed above, curbs within the business section have been identified as a priority project. To remove this barrier it will be necessary to have the curbs cut at the various intersections within the community. This will be considered in the 2005 budget.

The Municipality has also contacted the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and ordered a magnification sheet to allow residents who are visually impaired to read documentation at the Office.

### **Review and Monitoring of the Process**

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Council is committed to following through with this plan. This plan will be created annually thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction to which the Town is moving to remove all barriers under the Ontario's Access to Information Act.

### **Communication of the Plan**

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This plan will be available at the Municipal Office. Every attempt will be taken to ensure availability to those with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy in

braille be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the CNIB to inquire if it could be translated.