

**CORPORATION OF THE
VILLAGE OF SOUTH RIVER**

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

May 2025

**Submitted to
Mayor and Council
Village of South River**

**Original prepared by
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**Updated May 2025
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Executive Summary

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 mandated that each Municipality prepare an annual Accessibility Plan.

This plan was prepared by the Accessibility Working Group. The plan describes the measures the municipality has taken in the past, and the measures the municipality will take in the upcoming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. The plan focuses on municipal facilities and services with a view to improving access for the public and employees of the Corporation of the Village of South River.

The municipality has undertaken several initiatives to reduce physical barriers in the community inclusive of reviewing/remedying availability of “Designated Disabled” parking spaces, electronic door mechanisms (Library/Municipal Office Community Centre and Arena), access ramp at Municipal office and elevator at arena. The municipality will continue to pursue additional door mechanisms for its other facilities, reduction of accessibility barriers in the construction of new infrastructure, and inclusion of consideration toward disability barriers in development of municipal policy and regulations.

Administration identified various barriers to persons with disability throughout the development of this plan. Administration recommends the consistent review & identification of barriers denying access to persons with disabilities within the municipal environment with a view to reducing barriers where possible.

I. AIM

The aim of this plan is to set the framework from which the village will identify, prevent and remove (where possible) barriers to persons with disability who utilize the facilities and services of the municipality.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Objective of this Plan is to:

1. Describe the process by which the municipality will identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disability.
2. Review prior initiatives taken toward the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to persons with disability.
3. List the facilities, services, policies and municipal legislation that the municipality will review to identify barriers to persons with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the municipality will take to identify, prevent and remove barriers to persons with disability.
5. Describe how the municipality will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

III. DEFINITIONS

Barrier - A “barrier” is anything that stops a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Some barriers include:

- Physical barriers – e.g., a step at the entrance to a store;
- Architectural barriers – e.g., no elevators in a building of more than one floor;
- Information or communications barriers – e.g., a publication that is not available in large print;
- Attitudinal barriers – e.g., assuming people with a disability cannot perform a certain task when in fact they can;
- Technological barriers such as traffic lights that change too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get through the intersection; and,
- Barriers created by policies or practices – e.g., not offering different ways to complete a test as part of job hiring.

Disability - The following is the same definition as used in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

A “disability” is:

- (a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes, but is not limited to:
 - Diabetes mellitus;
 - Epilepsy;
 - A brain injury;
 - Any degree of paralysis;
 - Amputation;
 - Lack of physical co-ordination;

- Blindness or visual impediment;
 - Deafness or hearing impediment;
 - Muteness or speech impediment; or
 - Physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) A mental disorder; or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Note: For other definitions, please refer to section 2 of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

IV DESCRIPTION OF VILLAGE OF SOUTH RIVER

VISION STATEMENT

The Village of South River will be a safe, healthy, attractive and economically vibrant community that plans for its future in a financially sustainable and economically responsible manner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council of the Village of South River will work collaboratively and supportively with citizens, community groups, visitors, and neighbours from other communities to ensure that the Strategic Vision is achieved.

Our Municipal departments provide reliable, high quality services to South River and its residents. We work hard to maintain a superior quality of life for our residents, providing a high standard of accessible services. **This plan is a commitment from Mayor and Council and provides a roadmap that Council and Administration can build on together,** in partnership with the community to ensure a progressive future for our Municipality.

The Village owns and/or operates a number of facilities, including Municipal Offices, Community Centre, Arena and Fire Hall, Cemetery, and Parks.

V FORMER INITIATIVES – BARRIER REMOVAL

The municipality remains proactive in the initiatives taken to remove accessibility barriers within the community.

Example of Former Initiatives include:

- Accessible public washrooms;
- installation of mechanical doors;
- installation of elevator at arena
- establishment of an Accessible Customer Service policy; and,
- training staff, contractors, policy makers, and volunteers on providing accessible customer service;.
- New sidewalks and trails that meet accessibility standards

VI ANNUAL SITE AUDITS – MUNICIPAL FACILITIES/SERVICES/POLICY(PROCUREMENT)/LEGISLATION

Municipal Staff will conduct site audits of municipally owned buildings and infrastructure for the purpose of identifying barriers that may impose restrictions to persons with disabilities. Additionally, Municipal staff will conduct informal audits of the municipality's services, policies and legislation for the purpose of identifying barriers that may impose restrictions to persons with a disability.

VII BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The Village of South River will endeavour to conduct research, evaluation and the amendment of policy as it pertains to procurement, legislation as it pertains to construction of new facilities, and accessible parking. In addition, barriers of a physical nature imposing restriction of mobility will be researched and evaluated with a view to forwarding recommendation to Council and Staff on measures to remedy/remove identified barriers.

Annual priorities are outlined in Schedule "A". For 2025, the focus will be to ensure the Village is continuing to meet its obligations to comply with the standards.

VIII PLAN EVALUATION – PROGRESS MONITORING

In compliance with the "Ontarian's with Disabilities Act 2001", the Village of South River is committed to maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date Accessibility Plan. The plan will be updated annually for presentation to and approval of Council. Municipal Staff and the Accessibility Working Group are committed to a structured review of barriers that restrict the quality of life of persons with disability and communication of the findings to Council on an annual basis in concert with the annual submission of the Annual Accessibility Plan.

IX Preventative and Emergency Maintenance

1. Maintenance Protocols

Implement **annual preventative maintenance schedules** for accessible elements (ramps, doors, elevators, parking) to ensure compliance with AODA standards.
Conduct **bi-monthly inspections** of public spaces (walkways, ramps, washrooms) to identify and address physical barriers promptly.
Prioritize repairs to accessibility features over non-essential maintenance.

2. Emergency Response

Develop **rapid-response procedures** for accessibility-related emergencies (e.g., elevator failures, ramp damage), with repairs initiated within 24 hours.
Maintain backup accessibility equipment (e.g., portable ramps) for temporary use during emergencies.

Temporary Service Disruption Procedures

1. Notification Requirements

Post disruptions **at physical sites** (e.g., signage at entrances, elevators) and **digitally** (website, social media) immediately upon identification.
Include in notices:

- Reason for disruption
- Expected resolution timeline
- Alternative access arrangements (e.g., temporary ramps, relocated services).

2. Contingency Measures

Designate **alternative accessible pathways** or service areas during construction/repairs.
Train staff to verbally inform visitors of disruptions and assist with rerouting.

Multi-Year Plan Integration

Link maintenance schedules to the **5-year Accessibility Plan review cycle**, with progress reported annually to Council.
Allocate annual budget reserves for emergency accessibility repairs.
Include accessibility audits in municipal **emergency preparedness drills**.

X COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

The Accessibility Plan will be presented to Council on an annual basis for approval of Council. Once approved, the plan will be posted for public review in the Municipal Office and on the Municipal web site www.southriver.ca

SCHEDULE “A”
2025 ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS

Requirement	Steps	Timeline
1. Ensure continued compliance with the Accessible Customer Service policy	(a) Ensure policies, practices and procedures are consistent with principles in the customer service standard (dignity, independence, integration, equality of opportunity) (b) Ensure training is conducted per policy (c) Ensure feedback process is followed (d) Ensure notification is given in the case of temporary disruptions	On-going
2. Conduct compliance audit	(a) Train staff to conduct audit (b) Prepare internal audit schedule (c) Start conducting formal internal audits	On-going
3. Website	meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA	On-going
4. New Construction	(a) Ensure all new and renovated municipal buildings and public spaces meet or exceed regulations (b) ensure proper consultation occurs with people of disabilities during design phase of new construction	On-going
5. Update procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible outdoor spaces	(a) Write a specific policy (b) Ensure appropriate staff are aware of policy (c) train and practice with employees	On -going