

Rural Municipality of Armstrong



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

PART 1. Baseline Report

a. Overview of Programs and Services

The RM of Armstrong is 1,864.96 km² and is home to a number of small hamlets and villages – Inwood, Narcisse, Chatfield, Silver, Rembrandt, Meleb, Fraserwood, Malonton, and Komarno, offering a mix of urban and quiet country lifestyles within. The RM of Armstrong provides municipal services to approximately 1,792 citizens within its boundaries. Core Services include street and road maintenance, municipal drainage maintenance and development, fire protection (Inwood and Fraserwood Fire Departments), land administration, two transfer stations and one disposal site for waste and recycling. The municipality is responsible for communicating with residents about the programs and services it provides and responding to inquiries. As the municipality is a public entity, existing to service all residents, the removal of accessibility barriers, is an important consideration for the municipality.

b. Accessibility Achievements

- Municipal Office
 - is wheelchair accessible through the back door with outside signage indicating such.
 - rear entry is equipped with a buzzer to alert staff and a lever style door handle
 - office interior has been redesigned for space and mobility. The desk has low counters for seated visitors and is wheelchair accessible for both public and staff, and also has high counters for standing visitors.
 - hallway doorway has been widened.
 - dedicated staff and customer service representatives are available to greet, direct and offer the public assistance. The staff is empowered to accommodate all visitors. This includes physically writing out cheques and filling out forms on people's behalf, explaining processes and enlarging documentation.
 - outdoor drop off box on the office front door is available for depositing payments, letters, inquiries etc.
 - women's washroom in the municipal office has a grab bar.
 - municipal office front door knob is lever style upon entry.

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- signage is posted: service animals welcome, how can we help service can be provided in different ways, help is available for the visually impaired, large print documents available.
- The Municipal website has been updated to include a multitude of information such as Online Forms, By-Laws, Policies, Applications, Tax Information, Employment/Bid Opportunities etc. The website content has been updated so the content is more easily focused on and easier to understand/navigate including quick access links. There is also no moving pictures or content
- At the waste disposal site and waste transfer stations dedicated staff are available to greet, direct and offer the public assistance by physically assisting people with waste and recycling at the waste sites.
- a variety of methods are used to communicate municipal services and programs to the public. This includes advertising in the local papers, direct mail, hanging posters in public areas within the municipality, website posts and thru All-net Connect.
- Payments for taxes can be made at most banks through Telepay or set up as a payee for online banking at Sunova or Noventis Credit Unions through Central 1. We also accept payments by e-transfer.
- free Public Wifi / Internet is available in the Inwood Community Park.

c. Accessibility Barriers

- Rear (South Entry) while wheelchair accessible to municipal office still requires:
 - video camera to visually alert staff to a customer, in the event the person(s) is unable to use the buzzer,
 - automatic entry button.
 - Drop Box for Payments or inquiries at the back door, for those using the wheelchair ramp.
 - Ramp needs upgrades/repairs
- Front (North Entry) still requires
 - designated parking spaces for person(s) with disabilities
 - Sidewalk lacking curb cuts for wheelchair entry onto the sidewalk.
 - Front Door of municipal office does not open to the interior to allow for ease of entrance for persons with mobility devices.
 - Front Entrance Stairs replaced with ramp, drop box not at ground level
- Building Entrance(s) should have automated buttons for visitor entry.
- Washrooms are not accessible for persons with mobility issues and need the following changes; with one having an automated door function
 - Women's washroom

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- interior wall removed
- Additional grab bars
- Accessible vanity
- Accessible touch free taps
- Lever style door knob
- Doorway width increase
- Men's washroom
 - Wall between urinal and toilet removed
 - Grab bars
 - Accessible vanity
 - Accessible touch free taps
 - Lever style door knob
 - Doorway width increase
- Office Kitchen is not accessible; requires the following upgrades
 - Doorway widened
 - Accessible sink
 - Adjustable countertop height
 - Sanitize tools relocated (Paper towel, Soaps etc.)
 - Fridge relocated or Left Hinge Style
 - Ease of Access Drawers & Storage
- Website; while updated and improving is not fully accessible as it does not have an audio option, online fillable forms with submit application button, provide text explanations for visual and video assets, the use of artificial intelligence that can decode images for screen reading software, option to customize the content to large print or change color, script, spacing etc.
- Communication Limitation
 - large portions of the municipality have limited and/or poor reception to no cell phone service,
 - internet options are limited and often poor quality.
- Online tax payments for all bank institutions is not available.
- Garbage & Recycling curbside/lane pick up is not available
- Public Building(s) signage at various locations does not include Brail, or Large Format

PART 2. Accessibility Plan

a. Statement of Commitment

- The RM of Armstrong is committed to providing equal services to all citizens and visitors regardless of their abilities. We strive to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility and to meet the requirements of the “Accessibility for Manitobans Act”

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b. Policies

- The RM of Armstrong will review all programs, services and new initiative(s) to ensure accessibility
- The RM of Armstrong will make information available in an accessible format or provide communication supports to people with disabilities in a way that considers their disability
- The RM of Armstrong will review and update the Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers annually.
- The RM of Armstrong will review this Accessibility Plan every two years; to ensure continued compliance with the Accessibility Act.

c. Actions

ACTION 1 – Establish Accessibility Working Group
Initiatives / Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Coordinator will be identified as the CAO of the Rural Municipality of Armstrong • An Accessibility Committee of municipal staff will be created to identify accessibility barriers for people using municipal services, facilities and programs. The committee will be responsible for creating an accessibility plan that identifies and addresses barriers.
Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each area that serves the public is represented on the Accessibility Committee • The Accessibility Committee has detailed work plans with multi-year timelines. • The Accessibility Committee participates in the development, implementation and updating the Accessibility Plan. • RM of Armstrong residents with accessibility issues are able to access municipal services, facilities and programs while maintaining their independence.

ACTION 2
– Offer and Provide Information in an Assessable Format on request
Initiatives / Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Committee to develop a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services • Accessibility Coordinator to communicate process to all staff.

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- Communications to promote the availability of alternative formats on request, by including the active offer on all new documents.

Expected Outcomes

- Staff are aware of alternative formats and how to make them available to the public.
- All documents created onward advertise the availability of alternate formats.

ACTION 3 – Staff Awareness and Training

Initiatives / Actions

- The Accessibility Committee will research available accessibility training resources. This includes online research such as training videos.
- A training plan will be created assist municipal staff to recognize specific accessibility barriers and take the necessary steps to accommodate. This includes accommodations for:
 - **Attitudinal Barriers**, such as speaking directly to the individual with the disability and not the support person and not assuming that people with speech impairments do not understand what is being said or have nothing to say.
 - **Informational and Communication Barriers**, such as making eye contact, speaking slowly to accommodate lip reading, and using plain language
 - **Technological Barriers**, such as offering online information in paper format and ensuring the website is accessible.
 - **Systemic Barriers**, such as accepting job applications online and in-person.
 - **Physical Barriers**, such as good information and navigational signage in facilities and accessible paths to meeting rooms and events.
- Initial training of staff will be prioritized based on position and level of public interaction.
- All municipal staff will receive accessibility training. The scope of training will be specific to individual positions and level of public interaction.

Expected Outcomes

- All members of RM staff will be more conscious and aware of accessibility barriers and recognize accessibility issues more readily. Staff understands accessibility and supports implementation of the plan.
- Information on progress on implementing the Rural Municipality of Armstrong's Accessibility Plan is available to staff. Staff will feel confident when confronted with accessibility issues having been provided with training and tools to assist.

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ACTION 4 – Monitor Progress
Initiatives / Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility coordinator, with the assistance of the Accessibility Committee, to track progress on challenges, and requests to accommodations with budgetary implications.• Accessibility coordinator to report regularly to Council regarding RM of Armstrong accessibility issues, challenges and successes.• Future plans and budgets to be integrated into operational plans. Budget will vary and be allocated according to the needs of the program.
Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council is aware of process on The Accessibility for Manitobans Act compliance and considers future plans.• Accessibility Plan is posted on website and available in alternate formats.

Accessibility Coordinator:

CAO, Corlie Larsen

Accessibility Working Group Members:

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