



# **Accessibility Plan: 2025-2027**

\*This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

## **PART 1: Baseline Report**

### **a. Overview of Programs and Services**

The City of Steinbach provides municipal services to approximately 20,000 citizens in Steinbach. Core services include water and wastewater management, street and sidewalk maintenance, waste and recycling services, land administration, parks and recreation facility management. To provide these services, the City operates and maintains a variety of buildings and facilities which are on both ends of the spectrum in terms of public access. Some facilities are open to the public at all times and others are not. There are also limited times where City employees are required to attend to citizens at their private residences. Lastly, the City is responsible for communicating with residents about the programs and services it provides and responding to inquiries. As the City is a public entity, existing to serve all residents of Steinbach, the removal of accessibility barriers is an important consideration for the City.

### **b. Accessibility Achievements**

- City employees responsible for customer service or accessibility policies receive training on how to serve people with accessibility barriers within the first weeks of employment.
- The City of Steinbach funds an accessible transit service for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Fare rates are kept low through subsidies from local taxation and the government of Manitoba's Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program.
- The City of Steinbach has an Accessibility Committee of at least three members that review all programs, services, policies, procedures, employee training, new initiatives, new facilities and feedback with accessibility

challenges in mind. The goal of this committee is continuous improvement in preventing, reducing and removing accessibility barriers.

- The City of Steinbach has a process in place for receiving, responding to, and documenting feedback concerning accessibility issues.
- Most public City facilities have automated doors and/or lever door handles and are wheelchair accessible.
- In most City facilities, dedicated receptionists and/or customer service representatives are available to greet, direct and offer the public assistance. These employees are empowered to accommodate all visitors. This includes physically writing out cheques and filling out forms on people's behalf, as well as explaining processes.
- City facilities where there is no receptionist or customer service representative have signage to provide direction and identify facility amenities.
- City employees have access to interpreters through the office of Eastman Immigrant Services when required.
- A variety of methods are used to communicate City services and programs to the public. This includes advertising in the local newspaper, radio ads, social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, direct mail and website posts.
- The City's website is designed with accessibility as a main goal. Significant white space, contrasting panels, alternate text for pictures, plain language, and an easy to read, large font is used. Website links are labeled for content identification and the site is compatible with screen reader software. Any documents available on the City's website are also available in paper copy at City Hall by request.

- Computer and internet access are not a requirement for the public to access City services and programs. Computers are available at the Jake Epp Library for people wanting to correspond or access City information online.
- Steinbach Alert Now, the City’s emergency notification service, is a web-based service that provides notification to citizens using text, email and phone call during an emergency. Citizens can either sign up online or they can call or visit City Hall to register for the service. Notifications are offered through TTY for people that are deaf or speech impaired.
- City council meetings are streamed live on YouTube and video recordings are also made available for playback on the City YouTube channel. YouTube provides a closed captioning service for the hearing impaired. This is in addition to paper copies of the meeting minutes which are available online and in person at City Hall.

### c. Accessibility Barriers

City of Steinbach facilities range in terms of physical accessibility depending on age. Newer buildings are more easily accessible than some of the older facilities. Below is a list of known accessibility barriers specific to each City facility:

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Accessibility Barriers</b>
<b>Operations Building</b> 51 Millwork Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrance doors do not have accessible door openers and handles are click and pull style.</li> </ul>
<b>Aquatic Centre</b> 330 Park Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage for changerooms does not have braille.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Hall</b> 477 Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The door for accessible ramp access to the training room does not have an accessible opener.</li> </ul>

Facility	Accessibility Barriers
<p><b>City Hall</b> 225 Reimer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The northern most entrance door facing Reimer Avenue does not have an accessible opener.</li> <li>• Main reception desk does not have accessible height access.</li> </ul>

## **PART 2: Accessibility Plan**

### **a. Statement of Commitment**

The City of Steinbach is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of the people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing and preventing accessibility barriers as is reasonably possible and by meeting the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*. These policies are available on the City of Steinbach website and in public facilities operated by the City of Steinbach.

### **b. Public Consultation**

The City of Steinbach provided a draft copy of this Accessibility Plan to the public during the month of November 2024 for feedback before finalizing and submitting it to the Province of Manitoba. A \$100 gift card draw was offered to entice people to fill out the survey and 39 responses were received. The most notable trend in the feedback received was that 59% of respondents cited concerns about pedestrian infrastructure. Concerns about pedestrian infrastructure included roughness, steep angles, ice & snow, and a desire for sidewalks in some areas that currently don't have any. Other areas of concern

included accessibility of local business properties, general ice & snow clearing in winter, accommodations for visually impaired people, and parking challenges.

The City of Steinbach inspects the condition of sidewalks annually and has a program in place to reduce or eliminate uneven edges. Tactile plates and/ or a small edge where sidewalks meet road surfaces are in place to help visually impaired pedestrians to recognize these transitions. Inclines and declines in sidewalk elevation are set at 6% slope where possible - the current building code standard for ramps is for an 8% slope. Sidewalk replacement projects are prioritized based on the principles found in the City's Asset Management Policy and Strategy for prioritization including budget, taxation and asset condition considerations. Sidewalks in new neighborhoods are installed when warranted and once at least 80% of planned construction has been completed. Sidewalk projects that provide pedestrian access to public amenities such as schools, healthcare facilities, parks, etc. are given priority.

At the time of writing this plan, the City is working with a consulting firm to create an Active Transportation Master Plan which will focus on connectivity of the existing network and will generally guide the City in prioritizing new paths and sidewalks going forward. This project has included public feedback and consultation processes that incorporate public opinion as well.

The Province of Manitoba is drafting a new accessibility standard for public spaces that will likely have some impact on sidewalk design standards. The City plans to review and comply with the new standard when it becomes available.

### **c. Actions Planned for 2025-2027**

- The City of Steinbach Accessibility Committee will continue to meet with the purpose of reviewing City policies, practices, new By-Laws, programs, services, employee training, communications, and feedback with

accessibility concerns in mind. Where possible, the committee will make recommendations to reduce and remove accessibility barriers.

- The Accessibility Committee will obtain an Accessibility consultation/ audit of publicly accessible spaces in older buildings.
- The Accessibility Committee will review future amendments and additions to Manitoba accessibility standards and implement necessary changes to policy and standard practices.
- The City intends to replace the current City website so that it is WAC2.1 compliant.

#### **d. Expected Outcomes for 2025-2027**

1. Steinbach residents with accessibility barriers are able to access City services, facilities and programs while maintaining their independence.
2. City employees are trained to be conscious and aware of accessibility barriers and recognize accessibility challenges.
3. City employees are confident in accommodating an accessibility barrier having been provided with training and the tools to assist.
4. City employees with accessibility barriers are accommodated with reasonable solutions to provide equal opportunities.
5. Senior management considers and incorporates accessibility requirements in their short and long term planning going forward.

## **PART 3: Accessibility Policies**

### **1. Accessible Communication**

The City of Steinbach aims to remove communication barriers through the use of various communication tools and methods for people that self-identify as being disabled by a barrier. This includes welcoming and supporting the use of: alternate information presentation formats or methods, assistive devices, support persons and service animals where possible.

### **2. Accessible Facilities**

The City of Steinbach aims to maintain barrier free access to its public facilities so that they benefit everyone as intended. Public entrance ways, hallways and meeting rooms are maintained with accessibility concerns in mind. Where possible, City employees are available upon request to assist with existing accessibility barriers in older buildings. We welcome and support the use of: assistive devices, support persons and service animals where possible. The City of Steinbach provides notice that accessibility policies including customer service policies are available on the City website or upon request if another format is required – these are provided in a reasonable amount of time and at no cost to the person making the request.

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities for customers disabled by barriers, we will post notices on the premises and on the City of Steinbach website to announce the disruption. We will post notices for inaccessible washrooms, automatic doors and entranceways. Notices will be posted at the entrance to affected public facilities. Notices will include the reason for the disruption, the anticipated

duration of the disruption and alternate ways of accessing goods, services or facilities, if any are available.

### **3. Accessible Employment**

The City of Steinbach is committed to providing an accessible workplace for City employees. Reasonable workplace accommodations and individual-specific emergency response strategies are available to meet the needs of employees. Management seeks to reduce or eliminate accessibility barriers that affect employee performance or opportunities for training and advancement.

### **4. Assistive Devices, Support Persons & Service Animals**

The City of Steinbach allows, welcomes and supports the use of personal assistive devices, support persons and service animals when accessing our goods & services or attending public facilities that are owned and operated by the City. In cases where assistive devices, support persons or service animals present significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, other measures will be taken to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

The City of Steinbach provides advance notice if support persons must pay admission or service fees and the amount payable, if any.

When it is not easy to identify that an animal is a service animal and if appropriate, City employees may ask:

- a. Is the animal assisting you?
- b. What assistance has the animal been trained to provide related to your disability?

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or public facilities:

- a. Explain why the animal is excluded
- b. Discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services access to public facilities

## **5. Accessibility Committee**

The City of Steinbach will maintain an Accessibility Committee of at least three members that reviews all programs, services, policies, procedures, employee training, new initiatives and facilities with accessibility challenges in mind.

## **6. Employee Training**

City employees responsible for customer service or accessibility policies, or who interact with other organizations on behalf of the City receive training on how to serve people with accessibility barriers. Training includes:

- Background and purpose of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.
- Explanation of all policies relating to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.
- How to interact and communicate with people with accessibility barriers including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support people.
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise provided, to help people access goods, services and public facilities. These include automatic doors and wheelchair lifts at the swimming pool.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our goods, services or public facilities.
- City employees will also be informed and trained where necessary when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

In addition to providing training to City employees responsible for customer service or accessibility policies, or who interact with other organizations on behalf of the City - the City of Steinbach also ensures any volunteers who interact with the public or other organizations on its behalf of the City receive the applicable training.

## **7. Feedback**

The City of Steinbach welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Feedback helps us identify barriers and respond to concerns. The City of Steinbach accepts feedback on accessibility issues and complaints in person at any of our public facilities, over the phone, and on our website. All accessibility feedback is reviewed by the City of Steinbach Accessibility Committee. A City employee will respond to issues and complaints within three regular business days. Documentation of feedback, and any related actions taken is available in a manner that is suitable for persons disabled by barriers on request.

## **8. Public Events**

When holding a public event, the City of Steinbach takes reasonable measures to ensure that:

- Notice of the event is given in a manner that is accessible to persons disabled by barriers.
- The event is held in a meeting space that is accessible.
- The physical and communication needs of persons disabled by barriers are met on request.
- Notice is given that persons disabled by barriers may request that relevant supports be provided.

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