

**ELIMINATING BARRIERS:  
MUNICIPALITY OF VAL RITA-HARTY  
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - 2004**



**PRESENTED AND APPROVED  
JULY 14, 2004**



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## **PREAMBLE**

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was enacted by the province to improve possibilities offered to persons with disabilities by identifying, eliminating and preventing barriers to their participation in the life of the province. The ODA also mandates municipalities to prepare and develop accessibility plans on an annual basis. This document, which was approved by Resolution number 135-04 of the council of Val Rita-Harty contains the initial accessibility plan for the Corporation of the Municipality of Val Rita-Harty that describes the strategy and the action that the municipality will undertake in the short term to meet the requirements of the legislation but, especially, to ensure that both residents and visitors of the community will have complete and equal access to all municipal services offered to the public.

## **ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY OF VAL RITA-HARTY**

The municipality of Val Rita-Harty is located in the District of Cochrane in Northeastern Ontario. The municipality of Val Rita-Harty consists of two communities: Val Rita, with a population of 803 and Harty, with a population of 197. It is one of the communities along the Trans-Canada Highway #11 and, as such, it is located at fairly long distances from major urban centres. Toronto is more than 872 kilometres to the south and regional centres such as Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay are more than 638 kilometres away. The community can be reached by road or by train, via the Algoma Central Railway from Sault Ste. Marie.



Val Rita-Harty has a population of 1,000<sup>1</sup>, the majority of whom are Francophone. The population is relatively stable in comparison to other communities in the District of Cochrane, having experienced only a slight decline<sup>2</sup> (0.02%) since the last census.

The municipality of Val Rita-Harty is represented by a municipal council consisting of a reeve and four councillors at large. It offers a range of direct services to residents with 5 permanent employees. The town's administrative services are centred at the Val Rita town hall located at 2, avenue de l'Église. Municipal installations are spread out in the community and include:

1. (1) municipal complex, including the municipal offices, the Caisse Populaire and the post office;
2. (1) community centre operated in conjunction with the Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières;
3. (1) municipal library operated in conjunction with the Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières;
4. (1) maintenance garage and storage area for public works;
5. (2) playgrounds;
6. (2) fire halls;
7. (1) water treatment plant;
8. (1) municipal lodge.

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<sup>1</sup>Data from 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

<sup>2</sup>Data from 2001 Census, Statistics Canada





## **COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS ACCESSIBILITY**

The council of the Municipality of Val Rita-Harty commits to the following:

- the continuous improvement of accessibility for persons with disabilities at all places, installations and services belonging to the municipality;
- the delivery of quality service to all members of the community, particularly persons with disabilities.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THIS PLAN**

The goal of this plan is to ensure, as much as possible, that municipal installations and services are accessible to all members of the community by eliminating and preventing barriers to persons with disabilities.

Thus, the objectives of this report are:

- to describe the process by which the municipality of Val Rita-Harty will identify and, whenever possible, will eliminate barriers that exist in its installations, services, policies and practices and to prevent barriers from developing in the future;
- to prescribe a time frame for this process in both the short and long terms.

## **PREPARATION OF THE PLAN**

This plan was prepared in consultation with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Accessibility Ontario) by referring to the guidelines published by Accessibility Ontario, by reviewing models of municipal accessibility plans and by informal consultation with persons with disabilities in the community.



## TYPES OF POSSIBLE BARRIERS

Under the ODA, the definition of a disability means the following, as the case may be:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes 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,
- ©) 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*<sup>3</sup>

It is estimated that 16.8% of the population of the province has a disability of some kind. It is also known that the possibility of having a disability increases with age. As far as our community is concerned, this represents approximately 85<sup>4</sup> residents with a wide range of handicaps. Clearly, a significant portion of our local population faces barriers that are defined as “Anything that prevents a person with a disability from participating fully in all facets of social life because of the person’s disability.”

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<sup>3</sup>Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, c.32

<sup>4</sup>Based on 2001 census data for a total population of 1,000, Statistics Canada







- agendas and meeting preparation
- cemeteries
- employee relations
- relations with community and organizations
- requests and forms
- accounts payable and receivable
- wages and benefits to employees
- accounting / bookkeeping
- reception and cashier's office
- construction and demolition permits

**Community centre and municipal library**

Physical location: community centre and library: 100 Government Road, Val Rita

Services to citizens: community centre:

- hall rental
- recreational activities

municipal library:

- information
- forms
- loans of documents - print and visual formats
- reference and research
- computer and Internet





- educational activities
- copying documents

**Public works garage**

Physical location: Public works garage: 36 Municipale Street, Val Rita

- municipal roads and bridges
- sidewalks and passages
- signs and road signs
- municipal services: water, sanitary sewers, storm sewers

Services to citizens:

- information
- archives
- inspections
- requests and forms
- engineering and drawings
- snow removal
- cleaning of streets and sidewalks
- repair and maintenance of public utilities

**Playgrounds / skating rink**

Physical location: (1) playground: 2 Descheneaux Street, Val Rita

(1) playground: 320 Government Road, Harty

(1) skating rink: 36 Municipale Street, Val Rita



- Services to citizens:
- seasonal and specialized recreational programs
  - maintenance of grounds
  - maintenance of installations
  - support services to leagues and sports
  - skating program

**(2) Fire halls**

- Physical location:
- (1) at 36 Municipale Street, Val Rita
  - (1) at 2 Couture Avenue, Harty

Services to citizens: not applicable - strictly for firemen's use

**Water treatment plant**

Physical location: - 8 des Aulnes Avenue, Val Rita

Services to citizens: not applicable - under contract to OCWA

**Municipal lodge**

Physical location: - 36 des Grondeurs Road, Val Rita

Services to citizens: not applicable - under contract to Les Grondeurs snowmobile club

**B. MUNICIPAL POLICIES, PRACTICES AND REGULATIONS**

The council makes decisions or adopts policies that affect the community, through resolutions or bylaws. These decisions are applied by staff and become "practice" when standardized and used frequently. Review of decisions and municipal practices of council will be revised by administrative staff and department heads on an annual basis.



## **ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES**

A rank of either 1 or 2 will be assigned to each identified barrier, depending upon its degree of severity as determined by the following criteria.

- extent: 2 = widespread application, potential of affecting many persons
- extent: 1 = limited application, very few persons will be affected

## **ESTABLISHING TIME FRAMES**

As much as possible, the objectives for achievement of various elements of departmental verification and review of municipal policies, practices and regulations are set as follows:

- December 31, 2004: evaluation by administrative staff and department heads of completed verifications
- September 30, 2005: all barriers identified in the accessibility plan as of July 14, 2004 will be eliminated
- December 30, 2005: preparation of plan for second year (if necessary).

## **EVALUATION OF PROPOSED POLICIES, PRACTICES AND REGULATIONS**

The proposed regulations, policies and services will be examined for possible barriers before being adopted and implemented. All new regulations, policies and services will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

- Will the proposed regulation, policy or service have a general or limited impact on citizens?
- Will the proposed regulation, policy or service present a possible barrier, be it physical or architectural, information or communications, attitudinal or technological?



- If applicable, how should the proposed regulation, policy or service be amended and improved to eliminate this barrier?
- If the proposed regulation, policy or service cannot be amended or improved in a satisfactory manner, what are the appropriate alternatives or options?

If the proposed regulation, policy or service cannot be amended or improved to meet the town's expectations under the ODA as well as this accessibility plan and subsequent accessibility plans, then the regulation, policy or service will not be approved by the municipal council of Val Rita-Harty.

### **ONGOING CONSULTATION**

The success of this plan depends upon consultation with persons with disabilities and other persons offering support services in the community on a continuous basis. Municipal administrative staff will perform regular reviews of the progress of the results of annual verifications as well as that of proposed regulations, policies and services that could present possible barriers. In addition to this monitoring function, administrative staff will present a report on barriers that could develop or be present in the community and will make recommendations to council as to their elimination.

### **MONITORING THE PLAN'S PROGRESS**

The progress of annual accessibility plans will be monitored to ensure satisfactory execution of the various elements of the plans, as well as the need to amend or defer guidelines. As part of each annual accessibility plan, a report on the monitoring of the previous year's activities will be included.





## **AVAILABILITY OF THE PUBLIC PLAN**

Hard copies of this plan will be available in print at the town hall of the municipality of Val Rita-Harty and the Val Rita-Harty public library. It will be mentioned in the local bulletin, *I Want To Know*, that copies will be available at the municipal offices and at the municipal library.



**THE FOLLOWING METHOD WAS USED TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE BARRIERS.**

Methodology	Description	Status
Survey of administrative staff, building inspector, fire chief, two(2) families having children with disabilities and members of municipal council	A survey form was given to the persons indicated under "methodology" in order to identify barriers indicated in pages 16 to 22.	The survey was completed by <b>the persons indicated under "methodology"</b> .



## **IDENTIFIED BARRIERS**



### Municipal complex

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Municipal offices</b>	<b>Entrance door</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Install a call bell.</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Caisse Populaire</b>	<b>Entrance door: no access</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Build a ramp and install a call bell.</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Post office</b>	<b>Entrance door: no access</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Build a ramp and install a call bell.</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Council room</b>	<b>No access</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Build a ramp and install a call bell.</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Sidewalk</b>	<b>Not safe for wheelchair or other physical disability</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>To be rebuilt completely</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Parking spaces not identified for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Physical and architectural</b>	<b>Identify two (2) parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities, using universal signs</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal tax bill</b>	<b>Font too small for persons with vision problem</b>	<b>Information and communication</b>	<b>Request a larger font</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	





**Community centre / library**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Main door</b>	<b>No call bell</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Install a call bell</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	



**Public works garage**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Access to office of public works garage</b>	<b>No access</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>1. Modifications at main door 2. Build ramp allowing access to main door</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Parking spaces not identified for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Physical and architectural</b>	<b>Identify one (1) parking space reserved for persons with disabilities, using universal signs</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	



**Val Rita playground**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Accessibility on the ground</b>	<b>Soil too soft at access designed for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Build access with paving stone or concrete</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Parking spaces not identified for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Physical and architectural</b>	<b>Identify two (2) parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities, using universal signs</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	



## Harty playground

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Parking spaces not identified for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Physical and architectural</b>	<b>Identify one (1) parking space reserved for persons with disabilities, using universal signs</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	





### Harty fire hall

<b>Element</b>	<b>Barriers identified</b>	<b>Type of barrier</b>	<b>Strategy to eliminate or to prevent</b>	<b>Rank 1 or 2</b>	<b>Barriers eliminated</b>
<b>Access to fire hall by main entrance</b>	<b>Access not identified</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Modify width of access opening to 36 inches</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Parking spaces not identified for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Physical and architectural</b>	<b>Identify one (1) parking space reserved for persons with disabilities, using universal signs</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Bathroom</b>	<b>No access</b>	<b>Architectural</b>	<b>Modify width of access opening to 36 inches</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Municipal bylaw concerning abuse of parking spaces for persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Parking spaces often used by unauthorized vehicles</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>That the amount of the fine for abuse be increased and that the public be informed</b>	<b>1</b>	



<b>Water treatment plant</b>	<b>not applicable: under contract to OCWA</b>
<b>Municipal lodge</b>	<b>not applicable: under contract to Les Grondeurs snowmobile club</b>
<b>Val Rita fire hall</b>	<b>not applicable: for use by firemen only</b>

