



City of  
**Sault Ste. Marie**

**The Corporation of the City of  
Sault Ste. Marie Multi Year  
Accessibility Plan**

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**2016 to 2020**

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**This Multi Year Accessibility Plan and all documents referenced within will be made available in alternate formats upon request.**

## **Message from the Mayor**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is committed to being an exceptional community where everyone can live, work, play, and participate in civic life to the fullest.

From accessing city buildings to finding information online, we are going to do our utmost to ensure that we meet the differing accessibility needs of our employees, residents and visitors. When barriers come down, everyone benefits.

This Multi Year plan outlines our City's approach to being an accessible and inclusive workplace and community in the years ahead. It describes how we will prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and also fulfill our obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Ensuring equality of opportunity is an on-going job. For the City of Sault Ste. Marie, this plan is the guiding document that will lead us forward. I commend the work of Accessibility Coordinator Nancie Scott, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and everyone who has contributed to its development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Provenzano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "P".

Christian Provenzano, Mayor

## **Message from the Chief Administrative Officer**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is an inclusive community that honours diversity, dignity and respect.

The City's multi-year Accessibility Plan reflects its citizens' values by removing barriers to all employees, residents and visitors while also fulfilling its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act.

By providing equality of opportunity to all, this Plan is a tremendous resource to guide staff forward. Congratulations to Nancie Scott, the Accessibility Committee and everyone who has contributed to this well-developed Plan.



Al Horsman, CAO

## **Corporate Commitment Statement**

The City is committed and guided by the four core principles of **Dignity, Independence, Integration** and **Equality of Opportunity**. The City is committed to providing quality goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve and in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The City is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment and transportation. The City is further committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the AODA and the Human Rights Code.

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie is an inclusive employer. Accommodation is available in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie in its ongoing efforts to prevent, identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities will provide for work-related accommodations for employees with disabilities, upon request.

## **[City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility Policy](#)**

## **Executive Summary**

*Statistics Canada Survey on Disability, 2012 states that 1 in 7 Canadians over the age of 15 reported a disability.<sup>1</sup> The population of the City of Sault Ste. Marie according to the Statistics Canada 2011 Census is 75,141<sup>2</sup>.*

By that assertion 10,734 residents of City of Sault Ste. Marie have a disability.

*In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act to make Ontario accessible by 2025.*

*Accessibility standards have been created as part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.<sup>3</sup>*

In order for everyone to be able to participate, we must eliminate all barriers. Accessibility is about social inclusion. For Ontario to be accessible, everybody has to be able to participate. The City of Sault Ste. Marie works diligently to remove barriers to people with disabilities within our community.

This Multi Year plan focusses on continuing with the removal of barriers that affect movement such as curb cuts, accessible pedestrian signals and public transportation (transit plan). Also we are turning towards barriers in recreation and activities for children and seniors.

The City has an ongoing financial commitment of \$85,000 to remove reported barriers within the community. Barriers are identified through public input sessions that are held annually, input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the barrier removal tool on the City of Sault Ste. Marie website and regular reporting of barriers from citizens to various City of Sault Ste. Marie departments.

The City reports every two years to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario on the status of compliance of Accessibility Standards implementation. The Accessibility Directorate ensures compliance through this reporting process.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least every five years. An annual status report will be prepared and will report on the progress of barrier removal initiatives.

The Accessibility Coordinator is always available to guide staff and community members with regards to Accessibility Legislation and will respond to community members concerns regarding barriers and accessibility.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census

<sup>3</sup> A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation - AccessON

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) requires municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The majority of the committee members shall be persons with disabilities.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie AAC is a committee of council. Members are appointed by City Council every two years, following an application process.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee may advise Council and potentially City agencies, boards and commissions, in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Sault Ste. Marie for citizens of all abilities.

The AAC meets the second Wednesday of the month with the exception of July and August. The meetings are open to the public and the Agenda and Minutes are posted on the City of Sault Ste. Marie's website corporate calendar.

For more information on the AAC visit [Accessibility Advisory Committee \(AAC\)](#)

## **Corporate Accomplishments**

### **Barrier Removal Tool**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie's website Accessibility page has added a link that allows people to report barriers to accessibility. These can be barriers within the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie offices, facilities and/or services. The barriers reported are addressed with the identified City Department and feedback is provided.

[report a barrier](#)

### **Bellevue Park**

The City was successful in its application to the EnAbling Accessibility Fund and received a grant of \$50,000. June 2016 will see the installation of playground equipment for children of all abilities. Partners in this project are:

- Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie - \$10,000
- S.S.M. Autism Foundation - \$5,000
- Community Living Algoma - \$ 5,000

### **On Demand Taxi**

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie was required to consult on and take steps to meet the need for on-demand accessible taxicabs.

The Accessibility office held a Public Input session and received a recommendation from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and then this data was presented to the Police Services Board (PSB). The PSB voted to amend the On Demand Taxicab ByLaw. All on demand taxicab companies are now required to have a wheelchair accessible taxi as a condition of licensing.

[taxi bylaw](#)

### **Parking Lots**

City operated parking lots and facility lots were upgraded to barrier free parking spaces inclusive of an access aisle. The number of barrier free spaces was increased at the JRCC and Essar Centre. These barriers were brought forward by the community as a result of a public input session.

### **Parking Lot Accessible Parking Signage Project**

Accessibility office summer students (2) worked with City Police Service summer students (2) in the summer of 2013 and assessed all parking lots in the City of Sault Ste. Marie for proper accessible Parking Signage. Where improper signage was being used the business/organization owner were given an information sheet outlining requirements, along with local businesses where proper signage could be purchased. A letter was also given to the businesses/organizations stating follow-up would be done by City Police Service with an expectation of completion

## **Public Restroom Map**

Accessibility office summer students (2) in the summer 2014 assessed and researched public restrooms. An interactive Google Map was developed in order that residents and visitors can access public restroom information, such as whether restrooms include barrier free facilities, hours, location and directions. This was determined to be a priority project as accessing appropriate restroom facilities is a significant barrier to people with disabilities.

[public restroom map](#)

## **Vulnerable Persons Registry (VPR) An Initiative in Memory of Lewis Wheelan**

The Accessibility office was involved in the early stages of the VPR development. Following the tragic death of Lewis Wheelan, it was recognized that the most vulnerable in our community were at risk during major emergency situations.

The City supports the VPR with an annual financial commitment. As well, the Accessibility Centre is a registration Centre for citizens wishing to be added to the VPR.

[Vulnerable persons registry](#)

## **Corporate Website**

### **Statement on changes to the website from Information Technology Department:**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie takes accessibility seriously, and strives to meet and exceed accessibility standards wherever possible. The Province of Ontario sets a standard for information and communications to assist organizations, like the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in making their information accessible to the widest audience.

The Province of Ontario uses the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 to set its compliance requirements for websites and their content. WCAG 2.0 includes three levels of compliance, ranging in strictness, with Level A being the least strict, and Level AAA being the strictest.

The Province requires municipalities to deliver content that meets the criteria described by Level A of WCAG 2.0. The City of Sault Ste. Marie constantly reviews its website and its content to ensure this standard is met, and works hard to reach the higher levels of compliance.

## **Curb Cuts**

The Public Works and Transportation Department consults with the Accessibility Coordinator yearly to determine the priorities for curb cut repair. Accessibility office students walk the busier pedestrian areas of the city and report on the curb cuts needing repair. A list is also kept by the Accessibility Coordinator from public feedback received on this barrier.



### **Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)**

APS, formerly known as audible pedestrian signals, advise pedestrians who are visually impaired when they have the right-of-way, and in which direction they may cross at a signalized intersection. Each year priorities are addressed for additional accessible pedestrian signals. Priorities are dictated by a Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre study which assessed traffic and pedestrian use.

### **John Rhodes Community Centre (JRCC) Fire Alarm System**

Through accessing the barrier removal reserves, the fire alarm system was upgraded to include a visual component. This barrier was brought forward by a member of the AAC and through a public input session.

### **Essar Centre**

Two benches were added to the west side parking lot to enable persons with mobility disabilities to sit after exiting the building. This barrier was brought forward through the public input session and by a member of the AAC.

### **Senior Services**

The Senior Citizens' Drop-In Centre and the Steelton Senior Citizens Centre had all public toilets replaced with newer raised toilets. This barrier was identified by the users of both Centres.

All entrances and doors throughout the facilities now have actuators (automatic door openers) allowing for barrier free passage.

### **Bondar Pavilion**

Actuators (automatic door openers) were added to the three accessible restrooms at the site. Grab bars were replaced within the restrooms to the more functional "L" shaped. This barrier was brought forward via the Report a Barrier Tool on the Corporate Website.

### **Access 2 Entertainment**

#### **An Easter Seals of Canada Program**

City of Sault Ste. Marie Community Services Department, in conjunction with the Accessibility Coordinator, are assessing what areas within the community could use this program to benefit people with disabilities.

### **Sledge Skating – John Rhodes Community Centre – Arena**

Sledges were purchased and are maintained by the City of Sault Ste. Marie for the purpose of Public Skating. Sledge Skating times are posted on the City website along with other public skating times. Sledges are also available for use for other user groups upon request.

### **John Rhodes Community Centre Pool**

The JRCC pool has barrier free entry with actuators on all doors. An accessible family change room has a ceiling lift with high/low adult change table as well as an accessible shower station and washroom. The competition pool has a ramp providing for access using one of the three available water wheelchairs. Also available is a portable aquatic lift that will lift directly into the pool without the use of a water chair. It is anticipated that an Otter Bathing Chair will be purchased this year. It will allow caregivers of persons with many different physical disabilities easier access into the pool in the instances where a traditional wheelchair would not be appropriate.

### **Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Centre**

The newly constructed addition of the Heritage Discovery Centre to the Ermatinger Clergue property is barrier free. The facility offers accessible restroom with adult change table.

### **TextNet**

TextNet service enabling community members with speech and hearing disabilities to contact City Departments is now in place in the following locations:

- Civic Centre – 1-877- 688-5528 (switchboard will direct the call to the requested department/Division)
  - CAO's office
  - Mayor's office
  - Community Services Department (CSD)
  - Finance Department
  - Clerks Department
  - Human Resources Department
  - Legal Department
  - Engineering and Planning Department
- Fire/EMS – 1-877-606-6665
- Public Works and Transportation – 1-877-688-5530
- Social Services – Ontario Works – 1-877-688-5582
- Social Services – Housing – 1-877-688-5587
- Transit Services – 1-877-565-5551
- Police Services – in progress – number not assigned

## **Barrier Removal Budget Spending**

### **Barrier Removal Projects 2016**

- **\$20,000** – commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Registry
- **\$10,000** – maintenance fees for the TextNet system
- **\$10,000** – support to improving curb cuts
- **\$10,000** – support of the accessible pedestrian signals
- **\$21,500** – curb cut at JRCC north end accessible parking area and sidewalk replacement –access barrier removal reserves for this project
- **\$ 8,500** – purchase lift for V. Greco outdoor pool
- **\$ 3,000** – JRCC actuator installation upstairs hallway
- **\$ 1,000** – JRCC arena sledge maintenance
- **\$ 1,000** – purchase of water chair for JRCC pool

### **Barrier Removal Projects 2017**

- **\$20,000** – commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Registry
- **\$10,000** – maintenance fees for the TextNet system
- **\$10,000** – support to improving curb cuts
- **\$10,000** – ongoing support of the accessible pedestrian signals
- **\$32,000** – expand paved pathways at Strathclair Sports Complex –access barrier removal reserves to add funds to this project
- **\$ 1,000** – JRCC arena sledge maintenance
- **\$ 2,000** – JRCC pool

### **Barrier Removal Projects 2018**

- **\$20,000** – commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Registry
- **\$10,000** –maintenance fees for the TextNet system
- **\$10,000** –support to improving curb cuts
- **\$10,000** –support of the accessible pedestrian signals
- **\$34,000** –expand on paved pathways at Strathclair field
- **\$ 1,000** – JRCC arena sledge maintenance

## **Barrier Removal Projects 2019**

- **\$20,000** – commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Registry
- **\$10,000** – maintenance fees for the TextNet system
- **\$10,000** – support to improving curb cuts
- **\$10,000** – support of the accessible pedestrian signals
- **\$32,000** –install accessible viewing area at JRCC Arena 2 – access barrier removal reserves to add funds to this project
- **\$ 1,000** – JRCC arena sledge maintenance
- **\$ 2,000** – JRCC pool

## **Barrier Removal Projects 2020**

- **\$20,000** – commitment to the Vulnerable Persons Registry
- **\$10,000** – maintenance fees for the TextNet system
- **\$10,000** – support to improving curb cuts
- **\$10,000** – support of the accessible pedestrian signals
- **\$34,000** – Complete accessible viewing area at JRCC Arena 2
- **\$ 1,000** – JRCC arena sledge maintenance

## **Barrier Removal Reserves**

To be accessed for planned projects as described above. In the event that funds remain in the reserves after the planned projects, The City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility Coordinator with input from City Departments, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public will return to council to approve other barrier removal initiatives.

## **Accessibility Standard Compliance**

### **Accessible Customer Service Standard**

All City of Sault Ste. Marie staff was trained in the Accessible Customer Service Standard in 2010. New staff is trained as part of the Corporate New Employee Orientation Sessions.

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act General – Part 1**

#### **Establishment of accessibility policies**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility policies are available on the Corporate website.

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's statement of commitment on accessibility can be found on the city website.

#### **Accessibility plans**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie maintains a multiyear accessibility plan

#### **Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities**

Goods, services, and construction purchased by the City of Sault Ste. Marie shall be procured with regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities in compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 S.O. 2001, c32; and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11. (INFORMATION MANUAL F-III-11)

#### **Training**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie has developed a web based training program that will be completed by all City employees, volunteers and boards. This training educates on the Accessibility Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities

### **Information and Communication Standards - Part II**

#### **Feedback**

City of Sault Ste. Marie departments that have a process for receiving feedback will, upon request, provide accommodation for persons with disabilities to enable all persons the opportunity to provide feedback

#### **Accessible formats and communication supports**

City of Sault Ste. Marie departments will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. This will be done in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

#### **Emergency procedure, plans, or public safety information**

In City departments where such material exists it will be provided, upon request, in alternate format as soon as is practicable

### **Accessible websites and web content**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's website complies with the requirement of *World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A*

### **Employment Standards – Part III**

#### **Recruitment, assessment, selection process and notice to successful applicants**

The City shall notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.

#### **Informing Employees of Supports**

The City includes a statement in the newsletter that reminds employees that workplace accommodation is provided upon request.

#### **Accessible formats and communication supports for employees**

Upon request by an employee with a disability, the City shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is required in order to perform the employee's job
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

The City shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support

#### **Workplace emergency response information**

The City shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

#### **Documented individual accommodation plans**

The City has developed and has in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with a disability (Early and Safe Return to Work letter).

### **H.R. POLICY 5-18 – GUIDELINES FOR ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Transportation Standard – Part IV**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Transit Division of the Public Works and Transportation Departments reports on the compliance of the transportation standard regulations with the exception of the On Demand Accessible Taxicab regulations outlined below.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Transit Division will prepare a Multi Year Plan for transit regulations

## **Duties of Municipalities – Accessible Taxicabs**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Police Service licenses and monitors the taxicab companies for compliance of the IASR transportation Standard requirements.

- Taxicabs will display their vehicle registration and identification information and make it available in accessible formats when requested
- Taxicabs owners and operators will have vehicle identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab
- Taxicabs owners and operators are prohibited from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities

## **ODA Design or Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) Part IV.1**

The City shall comply with the AODA Design or Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for The Built Environment) when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible Parking;
- Obtaining Services; and
- Maintenance of accessible elements.

## **Future Requirements**

The Ontario Government conducts legislative reviews on each accessibility standard. Each standard is required to be reviewed five years after it becomes law to determine whether it works as intended and to adjust, if required.

2017 – Additional regulations the Transportation Standard outlined in Transit plan.

2021 –All internet and WEB content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than, success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded)

## **Accessibility Resources**

[Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

[Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations](#)

[access forward accessibility standards training](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission - Working together: the Code and the AODA](#)

### **Developed/Submitted by:**

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