

Accessibility Policy

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy for the Implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

1. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA") is a provincial statute with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11 entitled "Integrated Accessibility Standards" (the "Regulation") came into force on July 1, 2011. The AODA requires all public and private sector organizations to meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by the Regulation.

The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to information and communications, employment, transportation, and the design of public spaces for public and private sector organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties.

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Regulation and addresses how The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie (the "City") achieves accessibility through meeting the Regulation's requirements. It provides the overall strategic direction that the City will follow to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers; all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City. The requirements set out in this policy and the Regulation are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the Human Rights Code nor do the standards limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation.

3. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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*.

4. DEFINITIONS

"Accessible Formats" may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities;

"Communication Supports" may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications;

"Communications" means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received;

"Conversion Ready" means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format;

"Information" includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning;

"Internet Website" means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public;

"Kiosk" means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both;

"Mobility Aid" means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability;

"Mobility Assistive Device" means a cane, walker, wheelchair, scooter or similar aid;

"Redeployment" means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated;

"Unconvertible" means

- (a) it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications; and/or

(b) the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available; and

"Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" means the World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0".

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the City established and is committed to implement, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the City's phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Regulation.

The City will report annually on the progress and implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, post the information on the City website and will provide it in alternative formats upon request. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

(b) Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The City will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so. In the event it is not practicable to do so, an explanation will be provided upon request.

By-Law 2021-187 Procurement Policies and Procedures

(c) Self-Service Kiosk

The City shall incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

(d) Training

The City shall ensure that training is provided as required by the Regulation. The content of the training shall include the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of those being trained. Ongoing training shall be provided to new employees as soon as practicable. If any changes are made to this policy or the requirements, training shall be provided. The City shall keep records of the training, including the date on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided. The names of individuals trained shall be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA")*.

6. Information and Communication Standard

The City is committed to meeting the communication needs of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Regulations and will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Upon request, the City shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible forms and communications supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. In determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support, the City shall consult with the person making the request.

7. Feedback

The City has processes in place for receiving and responding to feedback. The City shall ensure that such processes are accessible

to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports upon request.

8. Emergency Information

Where the City prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, the City shall provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

9. Website Accessibility

The City shall make their internet and intranet websites and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 in accordance with the Regulation.

10. Employment Standard

The City is committed to meeting the Employment Standard requirements set out in the Regulation. The Employment Standard applies in respect of employees and does not apply in respect of volunteers and other non-paid individuals.

(a) Recruitment

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

- notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that

accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used;

- if a selected applicant requests an accommodation, consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to a disability; and
- notify successful applicants of the policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

(b) Informing Employees of Supports

The City shall inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

The City shall provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. The City shall provide updated information to its employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

(c) 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 needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- 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.

(d) 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.

If an employee who receives individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, the City shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the City to provide assistance to the employee as soon as practicable after the City becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

The City shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- when an employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- At the request of the employee or any workplace party
- when an employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- when the City reviews its general emergency response policies.

11. Individual Accommodation Plan

The City shall develop and have 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). The process shall include the following elements:

- the manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan;
- the manner in which the City may request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the City's expense, to assist the City in determining if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how to achieve accommodation;
- the manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by a bargaining agent, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent, in the development of the accommodation plan;
- the steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- the frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;
- if an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee; and
- the means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Individual accommodation plans shall:

- if requested, include any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided;
- if requested, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and

- identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

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12. Return to Work

The City shall develop and have in place a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. The process shall outline the steps the City will take to facilitate the return to work of employees absent because their disability required them to be away from work and use documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process.

13. Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment

The City shall take into account the accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans of employees with disabilities when:

- Using performance management processes;
- Providing career development and advancement; and
- Using redeployment.

14. Transportation Standard

The City is committed to meeting the Transportation Standard requirements set out in the Regulation.

(a) Information on Accessibility Equipment

The City shall make available to the public current information on accessibility equipment and features of their vehicles, routes and

services. The City shall, upon request, provide this information in an accessible format.

(b) Bus Stops and Shelters

The City shall ensure that the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities are consulted in the development of accessible design criteria to be considered in the construction, renovation or replacement of bus stops and shelters, including any steps that will be taken to meet the goal of accessible bus stops and shelters.

(c) Taxicabs

The City shall consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community. The City shall identify progress made toward meeting the need for on-demand accessible taxicabs, including any steps to be taken to meet the need.

The Regulation requires municipalities that license taxicabs to ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs are prohibited from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip and from charging a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices. The Regulation also requires municipalities that license taxicabs to ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format. The responsibility for licensing taxicabs rests with the Sault Ste. Marie Police Services Board.

15. Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)

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.

This policy does not apply to construction that is external to the City for which the City has provided a permit.