



SAULT STE. MARIE TRANSIT

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016 – 2020

Sault Ste. Marie Transit

www.cityssm.on.ca

705-759-5438

Sault Ste. Marie Transit Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The following document is Sault Ste. Marie Transit's Accessibility Plan for 2016-2020. Although it is a stand-alone document, it should also be considered an integral part of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Annual Accessibility Plan and Multi-Year Plan.

1. Introduction

Sault Ste. Marie Transit expects that demand for its services will continue to grow and that in conjunction with this growth there will be increasing demand for improved accessibility. These demands will be driven by both customer expectations and the requirement to comply with existing and emerging legislation. In particular, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) will require that system accessibility be achieved within specified timelines.

On Friday, June 3, 2011, the Ontario government enacted the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This regulation addresses the key areas of Accessible Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, and Transportation. The Transportation area specifically impacts the Transit industry, and will guide all accessibility improvements for Sault Ste. Marie Transit in the future.

If Sault Ste. Marie Transit is to offer itself as a viable means of transportation to the residents of Sault Ste. Marie, all residents should have access. Fully accessible buses are a major step in this direction, however, full system accessibility means much more. It includes service levels, facility access, walkways, bus stops, landing pads, shelters, signage, access to information as well as increased service availability. For many residents, Sault Ste. Marie Transit is the only means of travel to and from work, school, medical appointments, to run errands, attend cultural and recreational events, and to participate in social activities. All residents will directly benefit as the accessibility of transit services is improved. In addition, improved accessibility will lead to increased use of Sault Ste. Marie Conventional Transit, contributing to ridership growth.

Sault Ste. Marie Transit is committed to:

- Continual improvement of access to public transportation premises, facilities and services for customers, as well as employees with disabilities
- Inclusion of people with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility plan
- Provision of high quality accessible services to all customers and employees
- Optimizing use of public investment by making Sault Ste. Marie Transit's conventional services more accessible thereby encouraging Parabus customers to use conventional transit whenever possible

2. Internal Accessibility Planning Coordinators

Sault Ste. Marie Transit has appointed the staff position of Transit Manager or designate as the Plan's Coordinator. Sault Ste. Marie Transit Services will serve as a resource group to the Transportation Sub-Committee and be responsible for all administrative duties.

Sault Ste. Marie Transit Services has a working group which includes:

- Don Scott, Transit Manager (705-759-5438)
- Sam Piraino, Area Coordinator- Transit/Parking Operations (705-759-5435)
- Brad Miller, Training Supervisor (705-759-5841)
- Bob Camirand, Maintenance Supervisor (705-759-5840)

This group will work collectively to ensure that all aspects of new planning for the Transit Services Division and Parking are compliant with new legislation policies for all citizens.

3. Sault Ste. Marie Transit's Profile

Conventional Services – 2016 Service Profile

Type of Service	Fixed Route
Service Area	Sault Ste. Marie Urban Service Area
Hours of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday to Friday 5:45 am to 12:15 am • ½ Hour service until 6:15 pm, then hourly • Saturday 6:15 am to 12:15 am hourly service • Sunday 7:15 am to 7:15 pm hourly service
2015 Annual Ridership	1 877 639 passenger trips
Annual Revenue Service Hours	84 153
2015 Annual Kilometers	1 827 986 km
Number of Routes	11
Types of Services	Conventional service, Community Bus Service, and Charters
Fleet Composition	28 conventional buses

Fare Structure

Cash Fare	\$2.50
Adult Monthly Pass	\$60.00
Youth Monthly Pass (Ages 13-18)	\$25.00
Senior Monthly Pass (60 Years +)	\$50.00
Semester Pass (Sault College & Algoma University Students Only)	\$160.00
Multi-Ride Passes (20)	\$40.00
Senior Punch Passes (60 Years +)	\$7.80 – 6 Rides \$15.60 – 12 Rides

Specialized Services – 2016 Service Profile

Type of Service	Curb to curb, shared ride, prebooked
Service Area	Sault Ste. Marie urban service area
Hours of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday to Friday 7:45am* to 12:00am • Saturdays 8:45am* to 12:00am • Sundays 8:15am* to 7:15pm *Flexibility to accommodate earlier trips on request
Types of Services	Dedicated bus Contracted taxi Charter bus
Fleet Composition	10 ramp equipped buses
Registrants	2 835 (1 117 ambulatory, 1 718 non-ambulatory)
2015 Annual Passenger Trips	42 419
2015 Annual Attendant/ Companion Trips	4 371
2015 Annual Service Hours	17 073

4. Measures Sault Ste. Marie Transit Has Taken in Previous Years to Remove Accessibility Barriers

Planning

Sault Ste. Marie drafted its first accessibility plan in 2004. The first plans were one year plans, until 2011 when it became a requirement that we have multi-year plans. The first multi-year plan was all-inclusive and spanned a five-year range from 2011-2016. Since that time we have been updating and revising this plan. Each update involves a review of barriers addressed in previous years, identification of remaining barriers to accessibility, development of a prioritized plan to address these barriers, and consultation with primary stakeholders.

Barriers Addressed in Previous Years

The following are some of the steps which have been taken to identify and remove barriers to people with disabilities:

- **Fares for Support Persons** – Sault Ste. Marie Transit has created an “Attendant Card” that an eligible passenger carries with them to show the bus operator, thus allowing their support person to ride at no charge
- **Visitors** – Sault Ste. Marie Transit allows visitors to use the Parabus system for a short period of time (up to 7 days) without following the full registration process
- **Training** – Sault Ste. Marie Transit, in conjunction with other City staff, will provide training on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the Integrated Standard and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities for:
 - All Employees
 - All persons who participate in developing the organization’s policies
 - All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization
- In addition, Sault Ste. Marie Transit has been conducting employee accessibility training on:
 - The safe use of accessibility equipment
 - Acceptable modifications to procedures where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on a vehicle fails
 - Emergency preparedness and response procedures that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities

5. Identification of Access Barriers to Sault Ste. Marie Transit for People with Disabilities

Sault Ste. Marie Transit recognizes that its infrastructure – including its bus stops, bus shelters, and vehicles – may present barriers to some people with disabilities. A table detailing barriers is attached at the end of this document.

The availability of resources is a major factor in determining the pace of progress in reducing or eliminating the barriers identified in consultation with people with disabilities. Resource constraints will mean that not all barriers can be addressed at once and as a result, prioritization of initiatives is required. While we remain focused on what remains to be done it is also important to recognize how far we have come in a relatively short period of time.

6. Identify, Prioritize and Develop a Plan to Remove and Prevent Accessibility Barriers in 2016

Sault Ste. Marie Transit is committed to the following actions on an annual basis:

- Annual public consultation with people with disabilities to seek their advice on which barriers, and which remedial actions should have priority for the coming year
- Making provision in our capital and operating budgets to seek funding to address the highest priority barriers
- Taking advantage of opportunities to secure funding to extend or accelerate the removal of priority barriers
- Consulting with the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), the Transportation Sub-Committee, as well as other stakeholder groups, with respect to addressing barriers to accessibility

Actions Planned for 2016

Sault Ste. Marie Transit will be ensuring that it complies with all regulations in the AODA IASR Transportation Standard by the stated compliance dates. The list below highlights some of the actions planned in 2016 which will make Sault Ste. Marie Transit services more accessible:

- Continue customer service training of all new operators
- Strive for 100% low floor accessibility
- Increased specialized service:
 - Seven hours per day have been added Monday to Friday
 - Five hours per day have been added Saturday and Sunday
 - Five trips per day added to Taxi Service

Accomplishments

Sault Ste. Marie Transit has:

- established a process to manage, evaluate and respond to customer feedback
- held, and will continue to hold, one public meeting annually to involve persons with disabilities to review the Transit Accessibility plan as well as to provide feedback
- developed a process for estimating demand for specialized transportation services
- developed steps to reduce wait times for Parabus Service
- developed policies and procedures for dealing with accessibility equipment failures in both conventional transit buses and Parabuses
- established a process to provide information to affected passengers of service delays
- consulted and planned for accessible bus stops and shelters in the community with Sault Ste. Marie's AAC (Accessibility Advisory Committee)

Barrier Removal Projects 2016

- **\$170,000** - 2 New Parabuses
- **\$500,000** - 1 New Nova Bus
- **TBD** - Arden Transfer Location Upgrade
- **TBD** - Kohler & Queen Shelter Upgrade
- **\$60,000** - External Boarding Announcement System
- **\$30,000** - Barrier Removal at Bus Stops
- **\$5,000** - Tactile maps for CNIB Learning

Barrier Removal Projects 2017

- **\$350,000** - 4 New Parabuses
- **\$175,000** - 1 New Community Bus
- **TBD** - Eligibility Application Process Review
- **\$30,000** - Barrier Removal at Bus Stops

Barrier Removal Projects 2018

- **\$1,000,000** - 2 New Nova Buses
- **\$160,000** - Conventional Transit Review
- **\$30,000** - Barrier Removal at Bus Stops

Barrier Removal Projects 2019

- **\$500,000** - 1 New Nova Bus
- **\$85,000** - 1 New Parabus
- **TBD** - Bus Shelter Upgrades

Barrier Removal Projects 2020

- **\$500,000** - 1 New Nova Bus
- **\$85,000** - 1 New Parabus
- **TBD** - Bus Shelter Upgrades

***Please note that all barrier removal projects are dependent on funding**

7. Consultations on the Content of this Accessibility Plan

In preparation of this plan, Sault Ste. Marie Transit has conducted the following consultation activities:

- Consultation with the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Transportation Accessibility Sub-Committee to ensure input is received from citizens of Sault Ste. Marie with disabilities
- Consultation with Sault Ste. Marie Transit operating and support staff to ensure that those responsible for delivery of accessible service provide input
- Consultation with the public through an annual open house meeting format

8. Communicating the Plan to the Public

Sault Ste. Marie Transit will communicate the accessibility plan to the public through the following actions:

- The Plan will be posted at our administrative office at 111 Huron Street and at City Hall at 99 Foster Drive. Copies will also be available at these locations.
- 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
- The Plan will be published in the Transit section of the City's website at www.saultstemarie.ca

9. Ongoing Review and Monitoring of the Plan

Sault Ste. Marie Transit will monitor progress through the annual review.

Our accessibility plan coordinators will prepare an annual accessibility plan review. The review will list the objectives of the prior year's Accessibility Plan, actions taken to address them, and the results obtained.

This report will be a key document for consultation with persons with disabilities about the content of the accessibility plan for the coming year.

The review will be produced early enough in the year to enable consultations to be conducted, and recommendations formulated and costed in time for the preparation of Sault Ste. Marie Transit's budget for the next year.

Identification of Barriers to Access Sault Ste. Marie Transit for People with Disabilities

BARRIER	STRATEGY/ACTION
Fleet Barriers	
<p>Conventional buses: Ramps are not always functioning on low floor buses. Manual deployment is not always possible.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit has procedures for the cycling of ramps as part of the bus operator circle check. This program confirms functionality prior to the bus entering service each day. Operating procedures include a requirement to immediately notify a supervisor of any ramp deployment issues that may arise through the course of the day.</p>
Barriers at Shelters & Stops	
<p>Approaches: Delay in clearing snow and ice from bus stops and shelters.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie's Public Works & Transportation Department clears the snow from our stops and shelters. The time frame for each stop varies with the amount of snow we receive per snow event. Some bus stops are cleaned at night and others during the day. Snow removal does not commence until 5cm of snow has fallen.</p>
<p>Landing Pads: Boarding and alighting from buses is more difficult because many of the stops do not have a proper concrete landing pad. Such pads must also provide accessible connection to adjacent sidewalk.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit continues to make improvements at stops and shelters. Accessibility improvements were made at 10 locations in 2014. Six locations have been identified with barriers and will be addressed in 2015.</p>
<p>Shelters: A passenger may have to wait for a bus for as long as a half hour or more. During inclement weather, the absence of shelter at the bus stop can be a barrier to using Sault Ste. Marie Transit.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit installs shelters on an annual basis. All existing shelters will be audited to ensure full accessibility. Two shelters were replaced in 2014, and one new shelter installed as part of the shelter program. In 2015, a further two will be replaced.</p>

Customer Information	
<p>Legibility of Printed Material: Bulletins, schedules and system maps may be difficult for some people to read.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit continues to revise all printed material as it is produced.</p>
<p>Driver Training: Conventional transit bus operators have not been trained to accommodate all disabilities, or may need periodic refresher training.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit continues to provide complete driver including accessibility equipment and features, as well as customer service training, to all new hires.</p>
Policy Barriers	
<p>Parabus Eligibility Process: Some people with disabilities cannot use regular transit but are not eligible to use Parabus because of the current eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>Province-wide industry standard to be presented to MTO in March of 2017.</p>
<p>Service Hours: Parabus did not operate during the same hours of operation as conventional Transit.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie Transit will accept bookings during the same service hours as conventional transit operates, as requested through the on-road supervisor (Inspector).</p>
<p>Parabus Bookings: Medical, educational and employment bookings were made one week in advance (7 days) and all other outings could only be made one day in advance, which made recreational outings nearly impossible.</p>	<p>In June 2014, Sault Ste. Marie Transit eliminated all priority for bookings, and will now allow all types of bookings to be made 14 days in advance.</p>