The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Agenda, February 11, 2026, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Link to Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 836 2497 2816

Passcode: 280622

One tap mobile Canada +12042727920,,83624972816#

Canada Toll-free 855 703 8985

YouTube livestream link

1. **Meeting called to order – Land Acknowledgement**
2. **Chair's comments**
   2.1. March meeting date changed to March 18th
3. **Approval of Minutes**
   3.1. AAC Minutes, January 21, 2026
4. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
5. **New Business**
   5.1. Barrier removal funding decision tools
6. **Old Business**

6.1. None

7. Barrier Removal Updates

7.1. None

8. Site Plan Sub-Committee Report

8.1. None

9. Adjournment

Next meeting date March 18, 2026. In-person and via Zoom, 2:00 to 4:00 pm

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes, January 21, 2026

Meetings may be viewed on the City's YouTube Channel

Present: Diana Gerhart, Kerri Tuckett, Carol Magnan, Don McConnell, Derrick Lavallee, Craig Kohler, Wayne Scharfenberg, Leslie Sawchyn (Interpreter)

Absent: Councilor Lisa Vezeau-Allen

Officials: Diane Morrell, Peter Tonazzo, Dan Perri, Councilor Sandra Hollingsworth, Samir Thapa

1. Meeting called to order

1.1. Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge, with respect, that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and known as Bawating. Bawating is the home of Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation and the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council.

1.2. Elections

There are 3 positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Site Plan Chairperson)

1.2.1. Don McConnell – Chairperson; elected majority vote

1.2.2. Derrick Lavallee – Vice Chairperson; acclaimed

1.2.3. Carol Magnan – Site Plan Chairperson; acclaimed

2. **Chair's Comments**

2.1. None

3. **Approval of Minutes – December 03, 2025**

Moved by: Derrick Lavallee
Seconded by: Wayne Scharfenberg
All in favor.

4. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

4.1. None

5. **New Business**

5.1. Presentation - Google Earth Mapping - Jonathan Kircal Intermediate Planner, Planning Division - Community Development & Enterprise Services

5.1.1. Any suggestions, inquiries please contact Diane at d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca / Jonathan Kircal at j.kircal@cityssm.on.ca

5.2. Presentation - Strategic Plan - Brent Lamming, Deputy CAO – Community Development & Enterprise Services

5.2.1. Any suggestions, inquiries please contact Diane at d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca and it will direct to the appropriate contact.

5.3. Annual Accessibility Status Report

5.3.1. Comment to add other parks to report

6. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

6.1. None

7. **Old Business**

7.1. Resolution to approve the MYAP (Multi Year Accessibility Plan) from December 2025 meeting:

7.1.1. Be it resolved that the AAC recommends that Council approve the implementation of the MYAP.

Moved by: Derrick Lavallee
Seconded by: Diana Gerhart
All in favor
Carried.

7.1.2. If the MYAP is significantly changed after staff review, the Accessibility Advisory Committee requests the plan be presented to the committee for their review.

7.2. Accessible Pedestrian Signals - Checklist Update

7.2.1. Inspection started in mid-September 2025 they were performed by in-house electrical staff and they were completed near late November 2025. Proactive inspections took place. All the deficiencies noted in the inspection have been addressed by staff.

7.2.2. Please contact Public Works at the main line 705-759-5201 for work orders.

7.3. VRI (Video Remote Interpreting) trial expansion update

7.3.1. Council approved additional sites at the Bay Street Active Living Centre, and the Northern Community Centre. Launch event is on February 02, 2026, Bay Street ALC at 10:30 AM, light refreshments available.

8. Barrier Removal Updates

8.1. VPR update

8.1.1. The Committee has had a $20,000 commitment for continuation of VPR. Funding will continue for this year and the program operations will be reviewed by staff and community partners with commitments to VPR.

9. Site Plan Sub-Committee Report

9.1. Site Plan Sub-Committee Report, attached

9.1.1. No comments on site plans.

Resolved that the report of the Site Plan Sub-Committee Report be approved as presented.
Carried

10. Adjournment

Next meeting February 11, 2026 In-person and via Zoom, 2:00 to 4:00 pm

Accessibility Advisory Committee
Barrier Removal Funding Application

City SSM, Internal Departments Application

1. Purpose

The Small Accessibility Funding Program supports new, small-scale projects that improve accessibility, remove barriers, and enhance inclusion for residents, visitors, and staff with disabilities. Funding is available for City of Sault Ste. Marie projects with total eligible costs under $50,000.

2. Eligibility

Projects must demonstrate a clear accessibility benefit, removing an existing barrier. Additional consideration will be given if the project is aligned with the ***City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP), Accessibility Policies*** **or** ***Facility and Parks Accessibility Assessment.***

3. Eligible Expenses

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- New minor capital improvements
- New accessible technology or equipment
- Any item that removes barriers to full participation of people with disabilities.

4. Ineligible Expenses

- Projects exceeding $85,000,
- Repair or replacement of existing accessible infrastructure or equipment,
- Projects not primarily focused on accessibility,
- Retroactive funding for completed projects.

Part A: Internal Review and Approval Process

1. Internal Application Submission

- Department completes and submits the AAC Accessibility Funding Application,
- For 2026, applications may be submitted on a rolling basis.
- For 2027 please submit applications by end of day May 1 for review by AAC.

2. Application Review Process

- Staff review for: Completeness - Eligibility - Availability of funding,

- Incomplete or ineligible applications will be returned with feedback.
- Site Plan Sub-Committee reviews all applications and provides Barrier Removal Decision Matrix to AAC for final approval at May AAC meeting.
- Decision on funding sent to departments

3. Accessibility Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed on the following criteria:

1. Safety Concerns,
2. Frequency of use,
3. Practicality and Feasibility,
4. Cost to remove the barrier
5. Inclusiveness & Innovation (beyond minimum standards)
6. Alignment with *City's MYAP, Accessibility Policies or Facility and Parks Accessibility Assessment,*
7. Inclusion of preventive maintenance plan
8. Other Considerations (if applicable)

4. Scoring and Prioritization

- A rating will be assigned on each category above, on a scale of 1–5,
- 1 means Low / Very Low,
- 5 means High / Very High,
- Higher scores indicate stronger support for the project. You may use the notes space to provide context for your score (optional),
- Departments will be notified of approval, denial or deferral.

5. Project Implementation

- Department implements the approved project,
- Any changes affecting accessibility outcomes require prior approval of the AAC and Accessibility Coordinator.

6. Reporting and Close-Out

- Department submits a brief internal completion report in the form of an email to the Accessibility Coordinator,
- Accessibility completion will become part of reportable KPI's.

Part B: Internal Application Form

City of Sault Ste. Marie — Internal Use Only

1. Department Information

- Department:Click or tap here to enter text.
- Project Lead:Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Project Information

- Project Title:Click or tap here to enter text.
- Project Location (City facility/site):Click or tap here to enter text.
- Planned Start Date:Click or tap here to enter text.
- Planned End Date:Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Project Description

Provide a brief description of the project which includes barrier removal/accessibility activities: Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Accessibility Impact

Describe who will benefit and how e.g., people with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or other disabilities; public and/or staff (if you know and if applicable):

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Alignment

Does the project align with ***MYAP, Accessibility Policies or Facility and Parks Accessibility Assessment or another identified barrier (may be staff identified barrier)***:
Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Funding Summary

- Total cost of project: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Requested amount:Click or tap here to enter text.
- Other funding contributions (if applicable):Click or tap here to enter text.

Part C: Accessibility Advisory Committee Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Score	Comments
Safety Concerns:		
Frequency of Use:		
Practicality/Feasibility of the Project:		
Cost-Effectiveness:		
Inclusiveness& Innovation:		
Alignment with MYAP, Policies or Assessment:		
Preventive Maintenance Plan:		
Other Considerations (if applicable):		
Total Score		

AAC Barrier Removal Funding Assessment Guide

City SSM, Internal Departments

Project Name:
Location:
Assessor:

Instructions:

Assign a rating of 1–5 for each category based on definitions and examples provided.
1 means Low / Very Low
5 means High / Very High
Higher scores indicate stronger support for the project. You may use the notes space to provide context for your score (optional).

1. Safety Concerns:

To what extent does this barrier contribute to safety concerns for people with disabilities?
NOTE: Safety means how much the barrier increases risk of injury or harm. This section focuses on impact on safety, not general accessibility.
Safety concerns can vary widely depending on the type of disability but generally include conditions that may increase the risk of trips, falls, collisions, or delayed response during emergencies. Poor lighting, unclear signage, uneven walking surfaces, or inaccessible exits can create unsafe conditions for many people. Environmental factors such as glare, noise, crowding, or lack of visual or auditory cues may also heighten safety risks, particularly for people with sensory, vision or mobility disabilities, or older adults with multiple disabilities. Consider whether the barrier increases the risk of injury, confusion, or prevents people with disabilities from safely using, accessing, or evacuating an area, service, or program.

1. **Very Low Safety / Negligible Safety Concerns**
   The barrier has little or no effect on accessibility. People with disabilities

can fully use the service, space, or program without difficulty.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Minor inconvenience like a small sign mounted slightly low
- Slightly uneven floor that does not pose a tripping hazard
- Device voice control requires one extra step
- Staff occasionally use complex terms but clarify quickly
- Minor delays in video captions or transcripts
- Emails or documents with slightly inconsistent formatting but readable

2. **Low Safety Concerns**

   The barrier has a minor effect on accessibility. It may require slight adjustments but does not significantly limit participation.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - A pathway with a gentle slope that may be difficult for some mobility device users
   - Text on a printed form that is small but legible with assistive technology
   - Videos with captions that are slightly delayed
   - Online forms missing a minor accessibility feature
   - Adaptive software that requires minor updates

3. **Moderate Safety Concerns**

   The barrier creates noticeable limitations for some users. It can slow access or require assistance, causing frustration or extra effort.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Door handles that are hard to reach for people who use a wheelchair
   - A ramp is steeper than it should be, requiring assistance
   - Printed information available only in one font size
   - PDFs not readable by screen readers
   - Online forms not fully usable by keyboard
   - Staff unaware of accessible communication options
   - Assistive technology not fully compatible with systems being used

4. **High Safety Concerns**

   The barrier significantly restricts accessibility. Many users are affected, and some may not be able to access the service, space, or program without help.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Heavy non-automatic doors
   - Poor lighting in key areas
   - Narrow or cluttered routes
   - Accessible features missing altogether
   - Websites missing alternative text or captions
   - Critical instructions or signage only available in complex language
   - Outdated or missing assistive software
   - No staff training on accessibility or accommodation

5. **Very High Safety / Complete Barrier**

   The barrier effectively prevents access or participation for most users with disabilities. People are excluded or unable to use the service, space, or program.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Inaccessible entrance with no alternative route
   - Critical information not available in accessible formats
   - Online services are incompatible with assistive technology
   - No captions or transcripts for essential media
   - No accessibility policies or digital standards in place
   - Emergency exits or evacuation procedures not accessible to all users
   - Communication services (e.g., sign language interpretation, real-time captioning) not provided for community safety information

2. Frequency of Use:

How frequently is this space, service, or program used by people with disabilities?

The frequency with which a space, service, or program is used affects the overall impact of accessibility barriers. For example, a community centre

or event venue that is used frequently by a wide range of residents, including people with disabilities, will have a higher impact than a facility that may be visited only occasionally, such as a Civic Centre. Consider how often people with disabilities interact with or rely on the facility, service, or program.

1. **Very Low Frequency**

   The space, service, equipment, or program is rarely used by people with disabilities. Accessibility barriers have minimal impact because usage is very infrequent.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - A seldom-used storage room or archive
   - A seasonal event or annual program
   - Rarely accessed administrative offices
   - A website page that receives very few visits
   - Specialized online training used by only a handful of staff
   - Documents or forms rarely requested or needed

2. **Low Frequency**

   The space, service, or equipment, is used occasionally by people with disabilities. Barriers affect only a small number of interactions.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - City hall offices visited a few times per year
   - Recreational programs or classes that meet infrequently
   - A community service office open a few days per week
   - A rarely updated website or portal used by a small group
   - Documents distributed occasionally with minor accessibility issues
   - Training sessions offered only once or twice a year

3. **Moderate Frequency**

The space, service, or equipment is used regularly but not daily. Barriers affect users with some consistency.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Public library accessed multiple times per year by community members
- Monthly recreation programs or community meetings
- Digital portals accessed weekly by staff or residents
- Frequently requested documents, forms, or training materials
- Online forums or community boards accessed several times a month

4. **High Frequency**

   The space, service, or equipment is used often by people with disabilities. Accessibility barriers have a notable impact due to frequent interactions.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Community centres attended multiple times per week
   - Transit stations used daily by many
   - Online services or portals accessed daily by employees or residents
   - Training programs attended weekly by staff or clients
   - Frequently viewed digital media without full captions or accessible features
   - Documents or procedures used regularly in programs or services

5. **Very High Frequency**

   The space, service, or equipment, is used daily or nearly daily by many people with disabilities. Barriers have a very high impact due to constant use.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Main community hubs, transit hubs, or healthcare facilities
   - Core online portals, scheduling systems, or public service apps
   - Daily operational documents or communication materials
   - Frequently used training platforms, forms, or websites

- Regularly accessed videos or multimedia for instruction or engagement
- Essential services or programs critical to daily participation

3. Practicality and Feasibility:

How realistic, appropriate, and achievable is this proposed solution, given available resources, expertise, and evidence?
Practicality and Feasibility refers to how realistic and achievable a proposed accessibility solution is. It looks at whether the idea makes sense, provides good value for the effort and cost, and can be carried out without being overly complicated or expensive. For example, improving signs, adding lighting, or installing automatic doors are usually realistic and doable projects. In contrast, rebuilding an entire facility may be a great long-term goal but not something that can easily be done right now. Consider whether the idea is reasonable and can be effectively implemented with available resources.

1. **Very Low Practicality and Feasibility**

   The project is very difficult or unrealistic to implement. Major obstacles—financial, structural, or technical—make success unlikely.
   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - A project that requires major structural changes far beyond available budget
   - Technology that does not exist or is unavailable
   - A service or program that cannot be adapted without significant operational disruption
   - Online platform requiring a complete rebuild without current expertise

2. **Low Practicality and Feasibility**

   The idea could only succeed with substantial additional resources, redesign, or long-term planning. Considerable uncertainty remains.
   Examples include, but not limited to:

- Limited funding available, with some elements requiring extra support
- A website or app needing multiple accessibility fixes that staff cannot complete
- Service processes that require major coordination and planning
- Partial staff expertise, requiring extensive training
- Small-scale accessibility improvements are possible, but full solution is unlikely

3. **Moderate Practicality and Feasibility**

   The idea is achievable with moderate effort, resources, or adjustments. Some planning or coordination will be required, but success is possible.
   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Partial funding is available; moderate technical or logistical challenges exist; implementation may require staged or incremental rollout.
   - Installing handrails or automatic doors within existing budgets
   - Adjusting website navigation for screen reader compatibility
   - Offering sign language interpretation for regular meetings
   - Updating frequently used forms for accessibility without major cost
   - Adding clear instructions or visual aids to online and offline services

4. **High Practicality and Feasibility**

   The idea is realistic, well-supported by evidence, and can be implemented using current resources and planning.
   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Fits within existing budget and staff capacity; minimal structural changes are needed; supported by best practices or previous successful examples.

5. **Very High Practicality and Feasibility**

The idea is both easily implemented and highly likely to succeed. It makes logical sense, is low-cost or resource-efficient, and has a strong likelihood of positive outcomes.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Uses existing infrastructure; requires minimal staff effort; supported by strong evidence or expert opinion; proven successful in similar contexts.
- Adding high-contrast signage or tactile indicators
- Installing automatic door openers in accessible areas
- Providing closed captions for all recurring digital media
- Making small policy or procedural changes that immediately improve access

4. Cost Effectiveness:

How costly is this solution or project?

Costs associated with removing or reducing barriers can vary greatly depending on the type and scope of the improvement. For example, improved signage, colour contrast, or lighting adjustments, may have minimal costs, while others, such as installing elevators, reconstructing entrances, or redesigning facilities, can involve substantial expenses. Understanding the relative cost helps prioritize improvements that achieve the greatest accessibility impact with available budgets. Consider the estimated financial resources required to implement the project which may include equipment, retrofits, or renovations.

1. **Very High Cost**

The solution requires significant funds; between $40,000 and $85,000

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Construction/reconstruction of an accessible entrance
- Significant renovation for several accessible bathrooms in a facility
- Specialized equipment purchase for multiple departments
- Building renovations involving removal of structural walls
- Accessibility improvements to multiple rooms

2. **High Cost**

   The solution requires significant funds, generally between $20,000 and $40,000.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Large-scale technology upgrades or retrofits
   - Purchasing specialized equipment for several departments or facilities
   - Comprehensive accessibility training programs for staff

3. **Moderate Cost**

   The solution requires a moderate investment, generally between $5,000 and $20,000.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Consultant/Engineering designs
   - Upgrading a few rooms with accessibility features
   - Adding ramps or automatic doors
   - Partial technology improvements for websites or digital content
   - Creating accessible instructional materials for programs or services
   - Installing visual alarms in one building

4. **Low Cost**

   The solution is relatively inexpensive, generally between $500 and $5,000.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Installing handrails or grab bars
   - Installing signage improvements or tactile markers
   - Remediating a small number of documents
   - Staff training in basic accessibility practices
   - Adding high-contrast labels or markings to doors or pathways
   - Updating existing forms or digital files to improve readability

5. **Very Low Cost**

The solution requires funding under $500.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Single software purchase
- Single grab bar purchase
- Online training course to use accessibility tools (i.e., Writing effective alternative text)
- Purchase and installation of Braille and Tactile signage for a single location

5. Inclusiveness & Innovation (Beyond Minimum Standards):

How inclusive or innovative is this project or solution in improving accessibility beyond minimum standards?

Inclusiveness and innovation assess how well a project goes beyond minimum accessibility requirements to create environments that are welcoming, flexible, and equitable for everyone. Innovative solutions may involve new technology, or creative design. Projects that integrate universal accessibility principles and exceed standards demonstrate leadership and commitment to inclusion. Consider whether the project goes beyond minimum requirements, actively includes diverse perspectives, and incorporates creative or forward-thinking approaches to accessibility.

1. **Very Low Inclusiveness / Innovation**

   The project meets minimum standards and shows no innovation or additional inclusive design elements.

   Examples include, but not limited to:

   - Basic compliance with no user consultation
   - Accessible formats provided only on request
   - Website passes checks but is hard to use
   - Single accessible parking spot with no accessible path of travel
   - Documents lack basic accessibility and alternate formats
   - No involvement of people with disabilities in planning

2. **Low Inclusiveness / Innovation**

The project meets minimum accessibility standards but has some innovative elements or ideas.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- A new wayfinding app includes basic accessibility and has no additional features for specifically people with vision loss
- Providing captions for videos but no transcripts
- Accessibility templates used inconsistently
- Policy mentions accessibility but lacks follow-through
- Installing a single assistive device without staff training or public notice
- Collecting accessibility feedback but not acting on achievable items
- Conducting staff training only once and not integrating it into practice

3. **Moderate Inclusiveness / Innovation**

The project meets and, in some areas, exceeds minimum accessibility requirements. The project includes elements of emerging or creative technology that has the potential to provide an enhanced level of accessibility.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Addition of technology for wayfinding inside of public buildings
- Including people with disabilities in consultation or testing for new services
- Implementing accessible document templates across departments
- Updating digital tools to support screen readers, captions, and alternative text
- Providing plain language communication in public materials
- Clear wayfinding and logical layouts in both digital and physical environments
- Training staff in inclusive customer service and communication strategies

4. **High Inclusiveness / Innovation**

The project goes beyond compliance, actively seeks input from diverse users, and incorporates innovative solutions that improve accessibility in meaningful ways.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Co-designing projects with people with lived experience of disability
- Ensuring all new digital tools meet WCAG 2.0 AA or higher standards by default
- Piloting accessible technologies (e.g., navigation apps, voice interfaces, adaptive kiosks)
- Building accessibility testing and review into all projects
- Embedding accessibility into hiring, training, and procurement policies
- Offering a variety of accessible service options (phone, email, in-person)

5. **Very High Inclusiveness / Innovation**

The project sets a new benchmark for accessibility and inclusion, going well beyond the minimum requirements.

Examples include, but not limited to:

- Designing spaces and tools that are accessible to all users
- Co-developing projects with people with disabilities from start to finish
- Using emerging tech like real-time captions or adaptive systems
- Designing spaces, services, or digital tools that are inherently accessible to all users without adaptation
- Using emerging technology (e.g., AI captioning, real-time sign language avatars, or haptic feedback systems)
- Integrating accessibility into performance metrics

6. Alignment with City's MYAP, Accessibility Policies, or Facility and Parks Accessibility Reviews:

Does the project align with the City's MYAP, Accessibility Policies or Facility and Parks Accessibility reviews?

If yes, score 5

If no, score 0

7. Preventive Maintenance Plan

Does the project include a preventive maintenance plan?

If yes, score 5

If no, score 0

8. Other Considerations (if applicable):

Are there any other considerations that this project should receive that has not already been covered?

If yes, score 5

If no, score 0

AAC Project Decision Matrix

Cost/Impact	1 High impact or used daily/almost daily	3 Moderate impact or used moderately	5 Low impact or used rarely
Very High Cost $40,000 to $85,000			i.e., Large project with limited use/impact
High Cost $20,000 to $40,000			
Moderate Cost $5000 to $20,000			
Low Cost $500 to $5000			
Very Low Cost Under $500	i.e., Accessibility feature that is frequently used by many people		