



SAULT STE. MARIE

Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026-2030

**This document and all documents referenced within are
available in accessible formats upon request.**

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN APPROVAL

Approved By: City Council

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MESSAGE FROM THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is pleased to support the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026 – 2030. The Committee and the City's Accessibility Coordinator have worked closely with municipal employees to identify and advocate for the removal of barriers in municipal facilities. Implementation of the City's new Multi Year Accessibility Plan will help to ensure that all residents, including people with disabilities and our older citizens, can fully participate in services and programs at municipal facilities. Together, we can create a better quality of life for everyone.

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Don McConnell,

Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie acknowledges, with respect, that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, known as Bawaating. Bawaating is the home of Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, and the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of disability in Canada

According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) by Statistics Canada, approximately 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older—about 8 million individuals—reported having at least one disability. This represents a 5% increase from 2017, when the rate was reported at 22%. [Statistics Canada](#)

Ontario-specific data is limited, however national trends show a steady rise in disability prevalence, largely due to increased reports of mental health-related disabilities among youth and working-age adults.

Canadian stats by general disability types:

Disability	Percentage of population	Number of Individuals
Developmental disabilities	1.5%	456,630 people
Dexterity disabilities	5.0%	1.5 million people
Flexibility disabilities	10.9%	3.2 million people
Hearing disabilities	5.6 %	1.6 million people
Learning disabilities	5.6%	1.6 million people
Memory disabilities	4.9%	1.5 million people
Mental Health disabilities	10.4%	3.1 million people
Mobility disabilities	10.6%	3.1 million people
Pain-Related disabilities	16.7%	4.9 million people
Vision disabilities	7.4%	2.2 million people

People with mobility disabilities are often more visibly identifiable, however the majority of disabilities are not visible. Many people live with **hidden** or **invisible** disabilities that may not be immediately apparent but can significantly affect daily life. It is also important to recognize that disabilities can overlap, and individuals may experience more than one disability at the same time. For example, people with pain-related disabilities may also have limitations related to flexibility or dexterity.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie is guided by the four core principles of:

Dignity,

Independence,

Integration, and,

Equality of Opportunity.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is committed to fostering an inclusive, accessible community for all residents, visitors, and employees. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects the City's ongoing efforts to identify, remove, and prevent barriers across all municipal facilities, services, programs, and public spaces.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility, and the City recognizes that continuous improvement requires collaboration, innovation, and engagement with the community. We welcome feedback from residents, visitors, and organizations on how we can further enhance accessibility and inclusion in our services and facilities.

ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION IN ONTARIO

Ontario passed into law the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(ODA 2001\)](#), followed by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA 2005\)](#), and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR 2011\)](#), establishing accessibility standards for obligated organizations. The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) guarantees freedom from discrimination and promotes respect for dignity and equality.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S MANDATE, MISSION, AND VISION

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meets monthly to provide input on municipal projects, site plan applications, and City programs and activities. The Committee is composed of a majority of community members with lived experience of disability, whose input, education, and expertise are highly valued by the City. The Committee advises Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and other matters for which Council may seek its advice.

Mandate:

The Committee advises Council on promoting and advancing a barrier-free Sault Ste. Marie for people of all abilities, with the Accessibility Coordinator supporting City Departments in advancing the Committee's mandate.

Mission:

The Committee works to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to ensure full participation in community life for people of all abilities.

Vision:

A Sault Ste. Marie that is fully accessible, inclusive, and barrier-free for all residents and visitors.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE OF THE MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (MYAP)

The **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan** outlines the City of Sault Ste. Marie's goals and actions, to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. It serves as a roadmap for continuous improvement, guiding how accessibility is achieved across all City services, programs, facilities, and public spaces.

The **Accessibility Policies** provide the framework that supports this work. They establish the standards and expectations that guide City employees in delivering accessible and equitable service to residents, visitors, and employees.

Together, the **Accessibility Plan** and the **Accessibility Policies** create a unified approach to accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that accessibility is embedded in both daily operations and long-term planning across all areas of municipal service.

The **MYAP** is applicable to all departments that report directly to City Council through the Chief Administrative Officer, and include:

Corporate Services

- City Clerk
- Finance
- Information Technology

Community Development and Enterprise Services

- Community Services
- Fire Services
- Planning and Enterprise Services
- Economic Development
- Tourism
 - Local Immigration Partnership
 - Future SSM
- Transit Services

Legal Department

- Legal, including Provincial Offences
- Human Resources

Public Works and Engineering Services

- Public Works
- Engineering

The City's MYAP does not apply to the following entities because they do not report directly to City Council through the Chief Administrative Officer:

Algoma Public Health

Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority

District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board

Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre

Sault Ste. Marie Police Services

Sault Ste. Marie Public Library

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Each department is responsible for identifying and addressing barriers within its own facilities, programs, and services. Departments will include accessibility improvements in their annual budgets to fund barrier removal and prevention initiatives.

The Barrier Removal Budget managed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee is intended for new accessibility projects and is not intended to be used for routine maintenance, operational needs, or replacement of worn-out accessibility items.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility, and all departments play a key role in creating an inclusive environment.

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (MYAP)

1. GENERAL

1.1. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND POLICIES

This plan is guided by the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#), which requires the City to develop, implement, and maintain [Accessibility Policies](#) that outline how the City will achieve accessibility and meet the requirements that inform the actions in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

GOAL:

Ensure effective barrier identification, prevention and removal through the Accessibility Policies and the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Update and implement the City's Accessibility Policies to ensure accessibility for all City-owned and operated facilities, services, and programs.
- ii. **Monitoring:** This plan shall be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure it remains relevant to changing needs and priorities.
- iii. **Consult:** Engage the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and people with disabilities through various means.
- iv. **Oversight:** Establish a corporate working group to oversee MYAP implementation with departments
- v. **Administration:** Accessibility Coordinator to lead MYAP implementation with support from departments for tasks including:
 - a. Review of the goals and actions in the Accessibility Plan.
 - b. Review of Accessibility Policies to ensure effectiveness.
 - c. Review of customer feedback to inform systemic barrier removal activities.

- vi. **Guides and Tools:** Develop and maintain accessibility guides and tools to support continued barrier removal.
- vii. **Accountability:** Provide an annual Status Update and biennial Compliance Report, with input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to City Council with updates posted on the City website.

1.2. PROCUREMENT

GOAL:

Ensure accessibility is considered at every stage of procurement.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Guides and Tools:** Develop and implement guidelines, templates, and sample language to integrate accessibility in procurement.
- ii. **Consult:** Establish a consultation process with the Accessibility Coordinator to review accessibility requirements in procurement.
- iii. **Develop:** Develop procurement processes to facilitate accessible outcomes.

1.3. TRAINING

GOAL:

Ensure all employees, volunteers, and contractors receive required training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code as well as additional role-specific training where applicable.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** All employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors, will receive training in the accessibility standards, the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. City employees will also be required to review the City's Accessibility Policies.
- ii. **Employment Standards:** All new employees receive training in Employment Standards and workplace supports during the onboarding process.
- iii. **Accessible Documents:** All employees who create public-facing documents will receive training in creating accessible and conversion ready documents.
- iv. **Accessible Customer Service:** All employees who provide customer service will receive customer service training.
- v. **Role Specific:** Explore training for employees who are responsible for accessibility features in the built environment, regarding how people with disabilities navigate and interact with their environment.
- vi. **Other Training Opportunities:** Provide additional learning opportunities for employees, such as awareness events, guest speakers, and experiential learning to build knowledge and skills in accessibility and inclusion.

2. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

2.1. ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

GOAL:

Ensure the customer feedback process is accessible by providing accessible options for receiving and responding to feedback, and by providing accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Develop and implement updated Accessibility Policies that includes information and communications requirements.
- ii. **Accessible Customer Service:** Train employees to provide accessible customer service, which includes interacting with and receiving feedback from people with disabilities.
- iii. **Communications Strategy:** Develop and implement a communications strategy to inform the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- iv. **Feedback:** Explore and implement an effective tracking, reporting and responding system for accessible customer feedback.

2.2. ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS

GOAL:

Provide accessible formats and communication supports in a timely manner and at no additional cost than for other formats.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports:** Provide training for employees on creating accessible, conversion-ready documents and providing communication supports.
- ii. **Innovative Technology:** Explore various technology solutions to enhance communications.

2.3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, PLANS AND PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION

GOAL:

Ensure emergency procedures, plans, and public safety information is available in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessible Documents:** Make emergency procedures, plans and public safety information available in accessible formats, or with communication supports, upon request.

- ii. **Provide ASL:** Provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services for public emergency information, whenever possible.

3. ACCESSIBLE WEBSITES AND WEB CONTENT

GOAL:

Ensure City websites and web content meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards and exceed them where feasible.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Include web accessibility requirements in the City's Accessibility Policies.
- ii. **Accessibility Policies:** Require all third-party websites and content procured by the City to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.
- iii. **Guides and Tools:** Create an accessible content style guide
- iv. **Consult:** The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted on a regular basis regarding website accessibility audits.
- v. **Accessible Documents:** Train employees to create accessible and conversion-ready documents and web content.
- vi. **Accessible Processes:** Integrate accessibility checks into content publishing workflows.
- vii. **Maintenance:** Continuous improvement and maintenance of the City website to provide an accessible online customer service experience including accessibility audits of all website content to ensure WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance.

4. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

GOAL:

Ensure employees have equitable access to supports and opportunities throughout their employment lifecycle.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Annual review of the City's Accessibility Policies to ensure effectiveness.
- ii. **Training:** All new employees receive training in the Employment Standards within the onboarding process including:
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Selection Process
 - c. Notice to Successful Applicants
 - d. Informing Employees of Supports
 - e. Workplace Emergency Response Information
 - f. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

- g. Return to Work Process
- h. Redeployment
- iii. **Accessible Processes:** The Return-to-Work Coordinator is available to provide required supports for employees with disabilities.

5. TRANSPORTATION

5.1. PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES

GOAL:

Provide accessible public transportation that meets the needs of the community.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Annual review of Accessibility Policies which include Transportation Services, to ensure continued compliance with accessibility standards.
- ii. **Consult:** Continue ongoing engagement with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public, and persons with disabilities on public transit services on the prevention and removal of barriers.
- iii. **Accessible Bus Stops and Shelters:** Proactively improve the accessibility of all bus stops and shelters and establish accessible design standards for new and replacement infrastructure, in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public, and persons with disabilities.
- iv. **Parabus:** Explore opportunities to update and enhance Parabus service.
- v. **Navigation Technology:** Explore and implement emerging and best practice navigation technology to support accessible navigation.
- vi. **Statistical Analysis:** Utilize statistics from various sources, to determine opportunities for efficiencies and improved services.
- vii. **Training:** In addition to the training for all City employees, Transit has additional training requirements for equipment and safety. Transit will continue to provide the Travel Training Program for new passengers with disabilities.

5.2. VEHICLES FOR HIRE SERVICES

GOAL:

Ensure reliable accessible on-demand Vehicles for Hire, are available and equitable for persons with disabilities.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Review and update By-law 2011-161 Taxis & Ridesharing, to reflect current accessibility needs.
- ii. **Consult:** Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public, persons with disabilities, and vehicles for hire service providers to develop and

implement strategies to enhance accessible services and to determine the proportion of accessible vehicles for hire.

- iii. **Innovative Solutions:** Explore innovative solutions with licensed vehicles for hire to enhance and sustain accessible service.
- iv. **Accessible Customer Service:** Explore and implement a feedback process specifically for vehicles for hire to ensure equitable service for persons with disabilities throughout the customer service experience.
- v. **Training:** Ensure that third party contractors that provide vehicle for hire services receive accessibility and OHRC training.

6. PUBLIC SPACES AND FACILITIES

GOAL:

Create public spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and designed to meet the diverse needs of all community members.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessibility Policies:** Update Accessibility Policies to ensure that accessibility requirements are included in all new construction, redevelopment, and major maintenance of public spaces, including:
 - a. Recreational trails and beach access routes
 - b. Outdoor public eating areas
 - c. Outdoor play spaces
 - d. Exterior paths of travel (e.g., sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas)
 - e. Accessible parking facilities
 - f. Service counters, fixed queuing guides, and waiting areas
 - g. Accessible Pedestrian Signals
- ii. **Consult:** Engage the Accessibility Advisory Committee, people with disabilities, and interested parties early in the design and planning stages of all projects, including those under the Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPS).
- iii. **Review Site Plans for Accessibility:** Incorporate accessibility design criteria into the City's Site Plan review process to identify and address potential barriers early.
- iv. **Facility and Infrastructure Reviews:** Regularly inspect City-owned facilities, parks, and services to identify and address barriers through ongoing maintenance and capital improvements, incorporating public feedback where possible.
- v. **Preventative Maintenance:** Develop and implement procedures for ongoing preventive maintenance of all accessible features to ensure reliable usability.

- vi. **Accessible Pedestrian Signals:** Continue to explore and implement solutions to increase accessible pedestrian safety, such as increasing the number and usability of Accessible Pedestrian Signals.
- vii. **Prioritization:** Develop and implement a methodology to prioritize infrastructure and facility upgrades

7. ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

GOAL:

Provide excellent, accessible customer service that meets the needs of all members of the public, including people with disabilities.

ACTIONS:

- i. **Accessible Customer Service:** Provide accessible customer service training for all customer service employees including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Interacting and communicating effectively with people who have various types of disabilities.
 - b. Supporting individuals who use assistive devices, service animals, or support persons.
 - c. Using assistive equipment or devices provided by the City
 - d. Responding appropriately when a person with a disability encounters difficulty accessing services or facilities.
- ii. **Accessible Customer Service:** Develop and implement a communications strategy to inform the public about the availability of accessible customer service, including accessible formats and communication supports.
- iii. **Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions:** Develop and implement a procedure for employees to effectively provide public notice of temporary service disruptions when accessibility equipment or features are not functional.

8. PRIORITIES

While all of the actions contained in this Plan are essential to achieve a fully inclusive Sault Ste. Marie, the following are priority action items:

- i. **Training:** Provide training and experiential learning for City employees.
- ii. **Accessible Washrooms:** Identify, prioritize and update Municipal facilities to ensure the adequate provision of fully accessible, universal washroom facilities that are designed utilizing current best practices, with various features such as adult change tables, where feasible.
- iii. **Accessible Programming Opportunities:** Develop and provide recreational and community programs that are inclusive for people with diverse disabilities.
- iv. **Facility Accessible Design Standards:** Explore options for creating, updating or adopting a new Facility Accessible Design Standard (FADs), including

developing the required processes and procedures to ensure that new or renovated city facilities adhere to the design standards.

9. PROVIDING FEEDBACK:

Your input helps to create a City that is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to everyone.

To provide feedback, comments, suggestions or questions regarding accessibility, please contact:

Diane Morrell, Accessibility Coordinator

Email: d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca or accessibility@cityssm.on.ca

Phone: 705-541-7310

In Person: Ronald A. Irwin Civic Centre, 99 Foster Drive