

## **The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie**

### **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**Agenda, March 18, 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**

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. Member introductions

#### **2. Chair's comments**

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

3.1. February 11, 2026

**4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

**5. New Business**

5.1. AAC letters of support

5.1.1. Rick Hansen Barrier Buster Grant

5.1.2. Enabling Accessibility - Workplace Accessibility Grant

**6. Old Business**

6.1. MYAP approved at Council February 23, 2026

6.2. Accessible Document Training - Request to use reserve account;  
Council March 23, 2026

6.3. APS Repair update

6.4. AAC Funding Decision Tools update:

6.4.1. AAC Funding Application

6.4.2. AAC Decision Assessment Guide

6.4.3. AAC Project Decision

**7. Barrier Removal Updates**

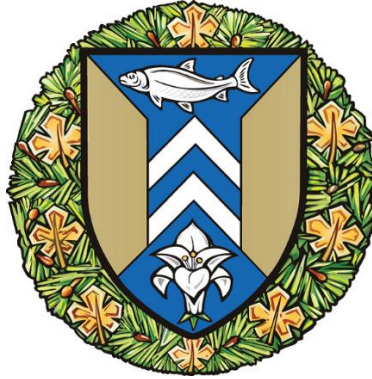
7.1. None

**8. Site Plan Sub-Committee Report**

8.1. None

**9. Adjournment**

Next meeting April 15, 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, February 11, 2026**

Meetings may be viewed on the [City's YouTube Channel](#)

Present: Carol Magnan, Don McConnell, Derrick Lavallee, Craig Kohler, Leslie Sawchyn (Interpreter)

Absent: Councilor Sandra Hollingsworth, Dan Perri, Diana Gerhart, Kerri Tuckett, Wayne Scharfenberg.

Officials: Diane Morrell, Peter Tonazzo, Councilor Lisa Vezeau-Allen, 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.

#### **2. Chair's Comments**

2.1. March meeting date changed to March 18<sup>th</sup>

#### **3. Approval of Minutes – January 21, 2026**

Moved by: Craig Kohler  
Seconded by: Derrick Lavallee  
All in favor.

#### **4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

4.1. None

#### **5. New Business**

5.1. Barrier removal funding decision tools.

5.1.1 There are three tools – Barrier Removal Funding Application, AAC Decision Assessment Guide, AAC Project Decision Matrix.

5.1.1.1 Barrier Removal funding application is for Staff.

5.1.2 Any Committee member may join Site Plan Sub-Committee meetings.

5.1.3 Lisa Vezeau-Allen and Craig Kohler to join Site Plan Sub-Committee to review applications

5.1.4 There may be need to make minor modifications to the forms

5.1.5 Process to review individually, then bring notes, thoughts, opinions to the Sub-Committee.

#### **6. Old Business**

6.1. None

#### **7. Barrier Removal Updates**

7.1. None

#### **8. Site Plan Sub-Committee Report**

#### **9. Adjournment**

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



# SAULT STE. MARIE

March 2, 2026

Re: Letter of support for application Rick Hansen RBC Barrier Buster Grants Program

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To whom it may concern,

As Chairperson for the Accessibility Advisory Committee for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, I am pleased to confirm our support for the proposed Manzo Park Pool accessibility improvements. Our Committee's work is guided by the four core principles of **dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity**. The accessibility improvements outlined in the grant application are supportive of the City of Sault Ste Marie's commitment to prevent, identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

This project will make the Manzo Park Pool much more accessible for persons with various disabilities. Last year, the new Manzo Park splash-pad was opened which included several features which are fully inclusive for children with disabilities. However, the existing pool was constructed in the early 1980s and has very limited accessibility. The planned updates include a ramp into the pool with railings and threshold ramps, a wider accessible path of travel around the pool, accessible tables with shade structures, and a water wheelchair. When this project is complete, the pool will be accessible for neighbourhood residents to participate in a variety of physical activities with family and friends.

As outlined in the City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, we strive to become a more accessible and inclusive community by continually working to remove barriers as we fulfill our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and implementation of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Approval of our requested Rick Hansen RBC grant will greatly assist with fulfilling this objective.

Regards,

Don McConnell  
Chairperson, Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Diane Morrell  
Accessibility Coordinator  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie



# SAULT STE. MARIE

March 2, 2026

Re: Letter of support for application Enabling Accessibility Fund – Workplace Accessibility

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To whom it may concern,

As Chairperson for the Accessibility Advisory Committee for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, I am pleased to confirm our support for the proposed upgrades as outlined in our Enabling Accessibility Fund grant request relating to workplace improvements. Our Committee's work is guided by the four core principles of **dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity**.

The proposed improvements include several accessible bathroom upgrades, the addition of a universal washroom, updated paths of travel, meeting room accessibility updates and the removal of other barriers to improve the working environment for both current and future employees. These improvements are consistent with and supportive of the City of Sault Ste Marie's commitment to prevent, identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

As outlined in the City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, we strive to become a more accessible and inclusive community by continually working to remove barriers as we fulfill our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and implementation of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Approval of our requested Enabling Accessibility Fund grant will assist with fulfilling this objective for employees with a disability and the public.

Regards,

Don McConnell  
Chairperson, Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Diane Morrell  
Accessibility Coordinator  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie



# SAULT STE. MARIE

March 2, 2026

Re: Letter of support for application Rick Hansen RBC Barrier Buster Grants Program

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To whom it may concern,

As Chairperson for the Accessibility Advisory Committee for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, I am pleased to confirm our support for the proposed YMCA pool accessibility improvements. Our Committee's work is guided by the four core principles of **dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity**.

The planned updates include the installation of an accessible, non-slip pool flooring/matting and the purchase of an E-VAC evacuation chair for emergency egress from the basement. These improvements are consistent with and supportive of our commitment to prevent, identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

As outlined in the City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, we strive to become a more accessible and inclusive community by continually working with our community partners to remove barriers and fulfill our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and implementation of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Approval of the requested Rick Hansen RBC grant will greatly assist with fulfilling this objective.

Regards,

Don McConnell  
Chairperson, Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

Diane Morrell  
Accessibility Coordinator  
Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie



# **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.**

Diane Morrell

Accessibility Coordinator

[accessibility@cityssm.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@cityssm.on.ca)

705-541-7310

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## ACCESSIBILITY PLAN APPROVAL

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Approved By: City Council

Approval Date: February 23, 2026

Effective Date: February 23, 2026

## MESSAGE FROM THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

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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

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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

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### **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:

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

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### 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](mailto:d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca) or [accessibility@cityssm.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@cityssm.on.ca)

**Phone:** 705-541-7310

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

# AAC Barrier Removal Funding Assessment Guide

Project Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Location: Click or tap here to enter text.

Assessor's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

## Instructions:

Committee members are expected to review all applications using this guide, prior to attending Sub-Committee decision meetings and come prepared to share their perspectives. When evaluating projects, members should consider the impact on people with **all types of disabilities**, rather than focusing on a single disability or just their own personal experiences.

Assign a rating of 1–3 for each category based on definitions and examples provided. Higher scores indicate stronger support for the project.

1 = Low

2 = Moderate

3 = High

## 1. Safety Concerns:

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.

**Ask yourself:** Does the barrier increase the risk of injury, confusion, or prevent people with disabilities from safely using, accessing, or evacuating an area, service, or program?

### Low Safety Concern – Score 1

The barrier has little or no effect on accessibility. People with disabilities can generally use the service, space, or program safely and independently.

**Examples include:**

- Minor slope that may be uncomfortable but not hazardous
- Slightly uneven floor that does not pose a tripping risk
- Small signage mounted slightly low
- Small but legible text when used with assistive technology
- Minor delays in captions or missing non-critical accessibility features

**Moderate Safety Concerns – Score 2**

The barrier creates noticeable safety challenges for some users and may require assistance, caution, or alternative approaches.

**Examples include:**

- Door hardware that is difficult to reach or operate
- Ramp that is steeper than recommended and requires assistance
- Poorly readable documents or PDFs not compatible with screen readers
- Online forms not fully usable by keyboard
- Poor lighting in secondary areas
- Staff unaware of accessible communication options

**High Safety Concerns – Score 3**

The barrier significantly increases safety risk or prevents safe, independent use for many people with disabilities.

**Examples include:**

- Heavy non-automatic doors
- Narrow or cluttered routes
- Critical information not available in accessible formats
- Communication services (e.g., sign language interpretation, real-time captioning) not provided for community safety information
- Emergency exits or evacuation routes not accessible to all users

## 2. Frequency of Use:

The frequency with which a space, service, or program is used affects the overall impact of accessibility barriers. For example, a community center or event venue that is used frequently by a wide range of residents, will have a higher impact than a facility that may be visited only occasionally, such as the Civic Centre.

**Ask yourself:** How frequently is this space, service, or program likely to be used by people with disabilities?

### **Low Frequency – Score 1**

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

#### **Examples include, but not limited to:**

- A seldom-used storage room or archives
- Rarely accessed administrative offices
- A website page that receives very few visits
- Documents in archives rarely requested or needed

### **Moderate Frequency – Score 2**

The space, service, or equipment, is used regularly, but not daily. Barriers affect users on an ongoing but moderate basis.

#### **Examples include:**

- 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
- Public library accessed a few times per year by community members

### **High Frequency – Score 3**

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

**Examples include:**

- Community centres attended multiple times per week
- Transit facilities used daily by many
- Online services or portals accessed daily by residents
- Training programs attended weekly by staff or clients
- Frequently viewed digital media without full captions or accessible features
- Core online portals, scheduling systems, or public service apps
- Essential services or programs critical to daily participation

### **3. Practicality and Feasibility:**

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, and can be carried out without being overly complicated.

**Ask yourself:** How realistic, appropriate, and achievable is this proposed solution, given available resources, expertise, and evidence?

#### **Low Practicality and Feasibility – Score 1**

The project is difficult or unrealistic to implement. Major obstacles to problem solve logistical challenges making success difficult.

**Examples include:**

- A service or program that cannot be adapted without significant operational disruption
- Installation of door openers at a facility that has little to no accessibility otherwise
- Renovation to include an accessible bathroom on the second floor, with no elevator access
- Project is reliant on staff expertise where staff turnover is frequent

- Small-scale accessibility improvements are possible, but a full solution is unlikely

### **Moderate Practicality and Feasibility – Score 2**

The idea is achievable with moderate effort, resources, or adjustments. Some planning or coordination may be required, but success is possible.

#### **Examples include:**

- Installing handrails or automatic doors within existing budgets
- Adding audible and visual way-finding cues in large buildings
- Adding tactile signage to all public bathrooms, systematically
- Installing automatic door operators where electrical capacity exists
- Adding assistive listening systems in meeting rooms or service counters
- Adding visual contrast treatments in high-use areas

### **High Practicality and Feasibility – Score 3**

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

#### **Examples include:**

- Adding high-contrast signage or tactile indicators
- Installing automatic door openers in accessible areas
- Providing closed captions for all recurring digital media
- Replacing knobs with lever-style door handles
- Implementing plain language training for staff

## **4. Cost Effectiveness:**

Costs associated with removing or reducing barriers can vary greatly depending on the type and scope of the improvement. Understanding the relative cost in relation to the impact of the barrier removal, helps prioritize improvements that achieve the greatest accessibility impact with available budgets.

**Ask yourself:** How costly is this solution or project and does the estimated cost in relation to the overall accessibility impact of the project?

### **High Cost – Score 1**

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

#### **Examples include:**

- Large-scale technology upgrades or retrofits
- Purchasing specialized equipment for facilities
- Comprehensive accessibility training programs for staff
- Construction/reconstruction of an accessible entrance
- Renovation of accessible bathrooms in a facility
- Accessibility improvements to multiple rooms

### **Moderate Cost – Score 2**

The solution requires a moderate investment, generally between generally between \$10,000 and \$40,000.

#### **Examples include:**

- Consultant or Engineering designs
- Adding ramps or automatic doors to several areas
- Creating accessible instructional materials for programs or services

### **Low Cost – Score 3**

The solution is relatively inexpensive, under \$10,000.

#### **Examples include:**

- Document remediation software purchase
- Online training course for staff learn how to use software accessibility tools
- Purchase and installation of Tactile and Braille signage for some key locations

## 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.

**Ask yourself:** Does the project go beyond minimum requirements to actively include diverse perspectives or incorporate creative or forward-thinking approaches to accessibility?

### **Low Inclusiveness / Innovation – Score 1**

The project meets minimum accessibility standards but has little to no innovative elements or ideas.

#### **Examples include:**

- A new wayfinding app includes basic accessibility and has no additional features specifically for people with vision loss
- Single accessible parking spot with no accessible path of travel

### **Moderate Inclusiveness / Innovation – Score 2**

The project meets and, in some areas, exceeds minimum accessibility requirements and provide an enhanced level of accessibility.

#### **Examples include:**

- Addition of technology for wayfinding inside of public buildings
- Staff training to employ plain language communication in public materials
- Clear wayfinding and logical layouts in both digital and physical environments

### **High Inclusiveness / Innovation – Score 3**

The project sets a new benchmark for accessibility and inclusion, going well beyond the minimum requirements that improve accessibility in meaningful ways.

**Examples include:**

- Designing spaces and tools that are accessible to all users regardless of ability or disability
- Implementation of tactile bathroom maps to accompany traditional tactile and Braille signage for bathrooms
- Implementing digital tools that are inherently accessible to all users without adaptation
- Using emerging technology such as AI captioning, AI transcription and translation, and real-time AI ASL avatars

**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 1

If no, score 0

**7. Preventive Maintenance Plan**

Does the project include a preventive maintenance plan?

If yes, score 1

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, and do these considerations add to the overall accessibility of the project?

If yes, score 1

If no, score 0

# AAC 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 \$85,000.

### 2. Eligibility

Projects must demonstrate a clear accessibility benefit, removing an existing barrier. Additional consideration may be given if the project is aligned with the **City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) goals and actions, 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 that request a contribution of more than \$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 Accessibility Funding Application to the Accessibility Coordinator.
- 2026 applications may be submitted on a rolling basis.
- 2027 applications have a deadline of end of day January 31, for review by AAC.

### 2. Application Review Process

- Accessibility Coordinator will review application for completeness and eligibility.
- Incomplete or ineligible applications will be returned with feedback.

- **Accessibility Project Review Sub-Committee** reviews all applications and provides a summary Barrier Removal Decision summary to the AAC in Feb or March for final approval at AAC meeting.
- Decision on funding commitment will be sent to applicant.

### 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 1–3,
- Higher scores indicate stronger support for the project.
- 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 Coordinator reports outcomes at the next AAC meeting.
- 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 (this may a 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: AAC Scoring Summary

Safety Concerns: Choose an item.

Frequency of Use: Choose an item.

Practicality/Feasibility of the Project: Choose an item.

Cost Effectiveness: Choose an item.

Inclusiveness & Innovation: Choose an item.

Alignment with MYAP, Policies or Assessment: Choose an item.

Preventive Maintenance Plan: Choose an item.

Other Considerations (if applicable): Choose an item.

**Total Score:**

# AAC Project Comparison

## **Project is Very High Cost - \$40,000 to \$85,000**

- With high overall use or impact
- With moderate overall use or impact
- With low overall use or impact

## **Project is High Cost \$10,000 to \$40,000**

- With high overall use or impact
- With moderate overall use or impact
- With low overall use or impact

## **Project is Moderate Cost under \$10,000**

- With high overall use or impact
- With moderate overall use or impact
- With low overall use or impact

## AAC Project Decision Comparison

Cost and Impact	High use/impact score of 12-18 points	Moderate use/impact score of 6-12 points	Low use/impact score under 6 points
High Cost \$40,000 to \$85,000	High cost and high impact score	High cost and moderate impact score	High cost with low impact score
Moderate Cost \$10,000 to \$40,000	Moderate cost and high impact score	Moderate cost and moderate impact score	Moderate cost with low impact score
Low Cost under \$10,000	Low cost and high impact score	Low cost and moderate impact score	Low cost with low impact score