



# **SAULT STE. MARIE**

## **The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Multi Year Accessibility Plan**

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**2022-2025**

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**This Multi Year Accessibility Plan and all documents referenced within will be made available in alternate formats upon request.**

## Message from Mayor Christian Provenzano

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is committed to being an exceptional community where everyone can live, work, play, and participate in civic life to the fullest.

From accessing city buildings to finding information online, we are going to do our utmost to ensure that we meet the differing accessibility needs of our employees, residents and visitors. When barriers come down, everyone benefits.

This Multi Year plan outlines our City's approach to being an accessible and inclusive workplace and community in the years ahead. It describes how we will prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and also fulfill our obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Ensuring equality of opportunity is an on-going job. For the City of Sault Ste. Marie, this plan is the guiding document that will lead us forward. I commend the work of Accessibility Coordinator Nancie Scott, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and everyone who has contributed to its development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Provenzano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Christian Provenzano, Mayor

## Message from CAO Malcolm White

Sault Ste. Marie is an inclusive community that honours diversity, dignity and respect.

Through our Strategic Plan focus areas of Infrastructure, Service Delivery, Community Development and Quality of Life, the City utilizes tools like the multi-year Accessibility Plan to remove barriers to all employees, residents and visitors while also fulfilling its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act.

Congratulations to Nancie Scott, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and everyone who has contributed to this plan.



Malcolm White, CAO

## Corporate Commitment Statement

The City is committed and guided by the four core principles of **Dignity, Independence, Integration** and **Equality of Opportunity**. The City is committed to providing quality goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve and in a manner, that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The City is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment and transportation. The City is further committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the AODA and the Human Rights Code.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is an inclusive employer. Accommodation is available in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie in its ongoing efforts to prevent, identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities will provide for work-related accommodations for employees with disabilities, upon request.

[City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility Policy](#)

## Introduction

Statistics Canada Survey on Disability, 2017 states “An estimated one in five Canadians (or 6.2 million) aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities, according to new findings from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD).<sup>1</sup>”

The population of the City of Sault Ste. Marie according to the Statistics Canada 2016 Census is 73,400.<sup>2</sup>

With 1 in 5 Canadians having a disability, there would be at minimum 14,670 residents of the City of Sault Ste. Marie living with disability. This number is likely considerably more due to our community’s’ aging population.

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to make Ontario accessible by 2025.

Currently, there are five AODA standards: The Information and Communications Standards, The Employment Standards, The Transportation Standards, The Design of Public Spaces Standards, The Customer Service Standards. In addition, two new AODA standards are currently being developed: The Health Care Standards and The Education Standards

These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

With every barrier eliminated, our community becomes more inclusive. Accessibility is about social inclusion and the City of Sault Ste. Marie works diligently to remove barriers to people with disabilities within our community.

The City has an ongoing financial commitment of \$85,000 to remove reported barriers within the community. Barriers are identified through public input sessions\* that are held annually, input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the barrier removal tool on the City of Sault Ste. Marie website and regular reporting of barriers from citizens to various City of Sault Ste. Marie departments.

The City reports every two years to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility on the status of compliance of Accessibility Standards implementation. The Ministry ensures compliance through this reporting process and at times audits organizations to check compliance.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2016

\*no public input sessions have been held 2020 and 2021 due to Covid -19 Pandemic

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The AODA PART VII section 29 requires municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The majority of the committee members shall be persons with disabilities.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie AAC is a committee of council. Members are appointed by City Council every two years, following an application process.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee may advise Council and potentially City agencies, boards and commissions, in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Sault Ste. Marie for citizens of all abilities.

The AAC meets the second Wednesday of the month with the exception of July and August. The meetings are open to the public and the Agenda and Minutes are posted on the City of Sault Ste. Marie's website corporate calendar.

For more information on the AAC visit:

[Accessibility Advisory Committee \(AAC\)](#)

The Accessibility Coordinator is available to guide staff and community members concerning Accessibility Legislation and will respond and assist community members concerns regarding barriers and accessibility.

## **Accessibility Standards Compliance**

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

#### **General – Part 1**

##### **Establishment of accessibility policies**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility policies are available on the corporate website.

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's statement of commitment on accessibility can be found on the city website.

[City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility Policies](#)

##### **Accessibility plans**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie maintains a multiyear accessibility plan

##### **Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities**

Goods, services, and construction purchased by the City of Sault Ste. Marie shall be procured with regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities in compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 S.O. 2001, c32; and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11. (INFORMATION MANUAL F-III-11)

##### **Training**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie all City employees, volunteers and boards. This training educates on the Accessibility Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities

### **Information and Communication Standards – Part II**

##### **Feedback**

City of Sault Ste. Marie departments that have a process for receiving feedback will upon request, provide accommodation for persons with disabilities to enable all persons the opportunity to provide feedback

##### **Accessible formats and communication supports**

City of Sault Ste. Marie departments will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with

disabilities. This will be done in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

**Emergency procedure, plans, or public safety information**

In City departments where such material exists it will be provided, upon request, in alternate format as soon as is practicable

**Accessible websites and web content**

The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's website complies with the requirement of World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA

City staff responsible for creating content for the corporate website attended Creating Accessible Documents training.

**Employment Standards – Part III**

**Recruitment, assessment, selection process and notice to successful applicants**

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

**Informing Employees of Supports**

The City includes a statement in the newsletter that reminds employees that workplace accommodation is provided upon request.

**Accessible formats and communication supports for employees**

Upon request by an employee with a disability, the City shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is required in order to perform the employee's job
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

The City shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support

**Workplace emergency response information**

The City shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.



### **Documented individual accommodation plans**

The City has developed and has in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with a disability (Early and Safe Return to Work letter).

H.R. POLICY 5-18 – GUIDELINES FOR ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

### **Design or Public Spaces Standards – Part IV.1**

The City shall comply with the AODA Design or Public Spaces Standards when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible Parking;
- Obtaining Services; and
- Maintenance of accessible elements.

### **Accessible Customer Service Standard – Part IV.2**

All City of Sault Ste. Marie employees are trained on the Accessible Customer Service Standard

### **Transportation Standard – Part IV**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Transit Division of Community Development and Enterprise Services Department reports on the compliance of the transportation standard regulations with the exception of the On Demand Accessible Taxicab regulations outlined below.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Transit Division will prepare a Multi Year Plan for transit regulations. This plan will be posted on the City of Sault Ste. Marie Website

## **Duties of Municipalities – Accessible Taxicabs**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie Police Service licenses and monitors the taxicab companies for compliance of the IASR transportation Standard requirements.

- Taxicabs will display their vehicle registration and identification information and make it available in accessible formats when requested
- Taxicabs owners and operators will have vehicle identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab
- Taxicabs owners and operators are prohibited from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities
- On demand taxi company owners and brokers with 35 or fewer vehicles shall have a minimum of 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle available for hire 24 hours per day for hire
- On demand taxi company owners and brokers more than 35 vehicles shall have a minimum of 21 wheelchair accessible vehicle available for hire 24 hours per day for hire

[Taxi Bylaw](#)

## **Corporate Accomplishments**

### **Vulnerable Persons Registry (VPR) An Initiative in Memory of Lewis Wheelan**

Following the tragic death of Lewis Wheelan, it was recognized that the most vulnerable in our community were at risk during major emergencies. The Vulnerable Persons Registry (VPR) is a free, voluntary and confidential service aimed at improving the safety of residents living at home who would be at greater risk during emergencies.

The City supports the VPR with an annual financial commitment.

[Vulnerable persons registry](#)

### **Stop Gap Ramp Initiative**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board have partnered to bring the StopGap Foundation's Community Ramp Project to Sault Ste. Marie in 2019. The City and Social Services offered to businesses, the opportunity to order a custom-built, safe and portable ramp, free of charge. Eighteen (18) ramps were constructed and donated to one-step businesses in the City, making these businesses accessible. See link below for more information on StopGap and on StopGap's YouTube channel.

[Stopgap.ca](#)

### **Municipal Autism Strategy Development**

An autism strategy working group was developed to provide input in the creation of roadmaps and autism services inventory.

The roadmaps are to assist community members in navigating the many steps when moving towards an autism diagnosis. Created were a birth – 16 years roadmap and an over 16 roadmap.

In addition, planning staff created “Sensory Spaces – Design guidelines for the spatial and perceptual needs of individuals with autism”. This document will assist city staff when developing public spaces.

[Municipal Autism Strategy](#)

### **Barrier Removal Tool**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie's website Accessibility page has added a link that allows people to report barriers to accessibility. These can be barriers within the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie offices, facilities and/or services. The barriers reported are addressed with the identified City Department and feedback is provided.

[Report a barrier](#)

### **Bellevue Park**

The Bellevue Park Interactive Outdoor Sensory Playground is the first of its kind available to our community. Enhanced accessible play options eliminate barriers to play, provide sensory stimulation and promote family bonding. This project was made possible through funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (Enabling Accessibility Grant) and donations from the Algoma Autism Foundation, the Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie, Community Living Algoma and the City.

### **Greenwood Cemetery**

The cemetery chapel doors were replaced, making the chapel barrier free so all community members can access this space independently.

### **Topsail and Prince Island Paths**

Topsail Island at Bellevue Park had a paved pathway added to encompass the island and Prince Island had pathway replaced due to high water damage. In total 1.62 km of paved paths that are 2.5 metres wide were constructed. In addition, many benches were placed as rest spots along the paths. The barrier removal reserve account funded this project.

### **Strathclair Sports Complex**

The expansion of the Strathclair parking lot and pathways was identified by the Accessibility Advisory Committee as a priority in 2017 and 2018. This project was created through funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (Enabling Accessibility Grant), Sault Youth Soccer Club and Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### **Bellevue Marina**

Dock improvements at the Bellevue Marina took place in 2019 and 2020. The main docks are 6 feet wide with a 4.5 foot wide ramp that has a double railing leading to the 1 metre wide fingers. The surface is constructed of slip and wear resistant materials. There is a social gathering with a poured concrete surface and will contain accessible seating.

[Bellevue marina](#)

## **Parking Lots**

City operated parking lots and facility lots were upgraded to barrier free parking spaces inclusive of an access aisle. All new private lots must adhere to this standard.

See section 5.5 of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Zoning Bylaw

[Zoning Bylaw](#)

## **Public Restroom Map**

Accessibility office assessed and researched public restrooms. An interactive Google Map was developed in order that residents and visitors can access public restroom information, such as whether restrooms include barrier free facilities, hours, location and directions. This was determined to be a priority project as accessing appropriate restroom facilities is a significant barrier to people with disabilities.

[Public restroom map](#)

## **Corporate Website**

### **Statement on changes to the website from Information Technology Department:**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie takes accessibility seriously, and strives to meet and exceed accessibility standards wherever possible. The Province of Ontario sets a standard for information and communications to assist organizations, like the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in making their information accessible to the widest audience.

The Province of Ontario uses the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 to set its compliance requirements for websites and their content. WCAG 2.0 includes three levels of compliance, ranging in strictness, with Level A being the least strict, and Level AAA being the strictest.

The Province requires municipalities to deliver content that meets the criteria described by Level AA of WCAG 2.0. The City of Sault Ste. Marie constantly reviews its website and its content to ensure this standard is met, and works hard to reach the higher levels of compliance.

### **Curb Cuts**

The Public Works and Transportation Department consults with the Accessibility Coordinator yearly to determine the priorities for curb cut repair. The Accessibility Coordinator maintains a list from public input and provides it yearly.

The following is the list of repairs in the past five years because of input and the specific funding:

23 McMeeken Street, 27 McMeeken Street, 146 Heavenor Street, 20 Cunningham Road, 4 Cunningham Road, 164 Poplar Avenue, 148 Poplar Avenue, 220 Poplar Avenue, 6 Montgomery Avenue, 34 Routledge Avenue, 130 Brien Avenue, 80 Curran Drive, 208 Prentice Avenue, 416 Farwell Terrace, 424 Farwell Terrace, 706 Korah Road, 159 Wilson Avenue, 608 Lake Street, 86 Moluch Street, 134 Moluch Street, 83 Laronde Avenue, 130 Churchill Blvd (2), 560 Shannon Road, 1 Cambridge Place, 9 Texas Avenue, 1265 Queen Street East, 1235 Queen Street East, 78 Moluch Street, 43 Smale Avenue, 55 Smale Avenue, 75 Smale Avenue, 112 Wawanosh Avenue, 122 Wawanosh Avenue, 65 Poplar Avenue, 103 Poplar Avenue, 87 Campbell Avenue, 88 Campbell Avenue, 80 Wawanosh Avenue, 70 Wawanosh Avenue, 8 Van Daele Street, 5 Van Daele Street, 1025 Lake Street, 3 Charlotte Avenue, 61 Elmwood Avenue, 248 Northern Avenue-both Sides, 6 Koprash Court, 7 Koprash Court, 83 Koprash Court and 84 Koprash Court .

### **Accessible Pedestrian Signals Proximity Sensors**

All lights being replaced or new intersections now have the audible feature as a standard feature.

Proximity sensors will begin being added in 2022. This will enable people with vision or mobility disabilities to activate the lights without having to press the button.

### **John Rhodes Community Centre (JRCC)**

Accessible parking and sidewalk improvements. The curb in front of the barrier free parking on the pool side of the lot was removed. This allows people to exit there vehicle and go straight up to the sidewalk without having to enter the path of traffic.

### **GFL Memorial Gardens**

The GFL Memorial Gardens is a fully accessible facility.

If you need any further information, contact the Box Office at 705-759-5251 ext. 2. Also, see the link below for a detailed outline of the accessibility features of this facility.

[GFL Memorial Gardens Accessibility](#)

### **City of Sault Ste. Marie Senior Services**

The ramp to access the Seniors Drop in Centre was repaired and accessible parking was added.

[Seniors services](#)

### **John Rhodes Community Centre Arena – Sledge Skating**

Sledges are owned and maintained by the City of Sault Ste. Marie for the purpose of Public Skating. Sledge Skating times are posted on the City website along with other public skating times. Sledges are also available for use for other user groups upon request.

[Sledge skating information](#)

### **John Rhodes Community Centre Pool**

The JRCC pool has barrier free entry with actuators on all doors with elevator access to the second floor viewing area. Barrier free parking is conveniently located just outside the pool main entry door. An accessible family change room has a ceiling lift with high/low adult change table as well as an accessible shower station and washroom. Both the beachfront and competition pool have ramped access. Two water wheelchairs and an otter bathing chair are available for use. Also available are portable aquatic lifts that will lift directly into the pool without the use of a water chair. Mobility device charging areas are available for use.

[Pool Accessibility](#)

### **Accessible Outdoor Seating**

Accessible seating, in the form of benches or accessible picnic tables, will be added throughout the community. Locations will be chosen by the Accessibility Advisory Committee considering all public input received.

### **Canadian Hearing Services – Video Remote Interpretation (CHS-VRI)**

The addition of the CHS - VRI will begin in 2022. This service enables people with deafness to interact on site with a live sign language interpreter using a tablet screen. The locations for this service will be chosen with input from the deaf community

[CHS-VRI](#)

## **Barrier Removal Budget Spending**

### **Barrier Removal Projects 2022**

- \$20,000 – Vulnerable Persons Registry
- \$10,000 – support to improving curb cuts
- \$10,000 – pedestrian crossing proximity sensors
- \$10,000 – Parks, 2 accessible swings and 2 instruments
- \$10,000 – accessible outdoor seating
- \$ 6,000 – captioning city council meetings
- \$ 5,000 – door actuator added at GFL main entrance interior set of doors
- \$ 5,000 – Canadian Hearing Society Video Remote Interpreting
- \$ 2,000 – John Rhodes Community Centre
- \$ 7,000 – Contingency for barrier removal as recommended by the AAC and Accessibility Coordinator

### **Barrier Removal Projects 2023**

- \$20,000 – Vulnerable Persons Registry
- \$10,000 – support to improving curb cuts
- \$10,000 – pedestrian crossing proximity sensors
- \$10,000 – JRCC pool change table and lift replacement
- \$10,000 – Parks, 2 accessible swings and 2 instruments
- \$10,000 – accessible outdoor seating
- \$ 6,000 – captioning city council meetings
- \$ 5,000 – Canadian Hearing Society Video Remote Interpreting
- \$ 2,000 – John Rhodes Community Centre
- \$ 2,000 – Contingency for barrier removal as recommended by the AAC and Accessibility Coordinator



## **Barrier Removal Projects 2024**

- \$20,000 – Vulnerable Persons Registry
- \$10,000 – support to improving curb cuts
- \$10,000 – pedestrian crossing proximity sensors
- \$10,000 – Parks, 2 accessible swings and 2 instruments
- \$10,000 – accessible outdoor seating
- \$ 6,000 – captioning city council meetings
- \$ 5,000 – Canadian Hearing Society Video Remote Interpreting
- \$ 2,000 – John Rhodes Community Centre
- \$12,000 – Contingency for barrier removal as recommended by the AAC and Accessibility Coordinator

## **Barrier Removal Projects 2025**

- \$20,000 – Vulnerable Persons Registry
- \$10,000 – support to improving curb cuts
- \$10,000 – pedestrian crossing proximity sensors
- \$10,000 – Parks, 2 accessible swings and 2 instruments
- \$10,000 – accessible outdoor seating
- \$ 6,000 – captioning city council meetings
- \$ 5,000 – Canadian Hearing Society Video Remote Interpreting
- \$ 2,000 – John Rhodes Community Centre
- \$12,000 – Contingency for barrier removal as recommended by the AAC and Accessibility Coordinator

## **Barrier Removal Reserves**

In the event that funds remain in the reserves after the planned projects, The City of Sault Ste. Marie Accessibility Coordinator with input from City Departments, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public will return to council to approve other barrier removal initiatives.

## **Accessibility Resources**

[Accessforward Accessibility Standards Training](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission - Working together: the Code and the AODA](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)

[Accessible Canada Act](#)

[Rick Hansen Foundation](#)

[Employers Toolkit - conferenceboard.ca](#)

[Illustrated Technical Guide for the Design of Public Spaces](#)

### **Developed/Submitted by:**

Nancie Scott

Accessibility Coordinator

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