

City of Greater Sudbury 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Introduction

The City of Greater Sudbury is a community of communities that respects the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities and endeavors to facilitate inclusive access to municipal programs, services and facilities.

This plan highlights the key achievements of the City of Greater Sudbury in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers and will provide focus and assistance in guiding the organization in its commitment to “*ensuring an inclusive and accessible community for all residents*”, as outlined in the City of Greater Sudbury’s 2015 – 2018 Corporate Strategic Plan.

The City of Greater Sudbury recognizes that while much work has been done to enhance access to municipal programs, services and facilities, there is more work ahead.

A Look at the City of Greater Sudbury

Centrally located in Northeastern Ontario, the City of Greater Sudbury is composed of a rich mix of urban, suburban, rural and wilderness environments.

The City of Greater Sudbury is 3,267 square kilometers in area, making it the geographically largest municipality in Ontario and the second largest in Canada with a low population density relative to our size. The municipality provides a broad range of services across a geography that is many times larger than most Southern Ontario municipalities. This presents unique challenges, some of which impact on accessibility, particularly when it comes to movement and transportation as well as community based access to services.

City of Greater Sudbury’s Commitment to Accessibility

The City of Greater Sudbury has affirmed its commitment to providing its citizens with an inclusive and accessible community through its passage and adoption of strategies and policies that promote these values.

Of note is the recent commitment made by Council in the 2015-2018 City of Greater Sudbury Corporate Strategic Plan which identifies the development of an accessibility strategy and abilities centre with community hubs as a Quality of Life and Place priority.

Governing Legislative and Policy Framework

The Province of Ontario is responsible for determining the legislative framework and standards for accessibility for organizations across the province. Under the provincial legislative framework, municipalities, including the City of Greater Sudbury, are responsible for accessibility as it relates to municipal programs, services and facilities. Specifically, accessibility within the City of Greater Sudbury is mandated and governed by a number of pieces of provincial legislation and regulations, including the following:

- [The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#)
- [The Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990](#)
- [The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Regulation 191/11– The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations](#)
 - Part I – General Requirements
 - Part II – Information and Communications Standards
 - Part III – Employment Standards
 - Part IV – Transportation Standards
 - Part IV.1 – Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Building Environment)
 - Part IV.2 – Customer Service Standards

Of particular importance is Part I, subsection 4 (1), (2) of the General Requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations, which requires municipalities to:

(a) establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers to meet its requirements under this Regulation;

(b) post the accessibility plan on their website, if any, and provide the plan in an accessible format upon request; and

(c) review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.

Achievements in the Prevention and Removal of Barriers (2012-2017)

To date, the City of Greater Sudbury has met or exceeded the statutory requirements and compliance deadlines as mandated by provincial accessibility legislation.

In the previous [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(2012-2017\)](#), three key priorities were identified: Legislative Compliance, Access to Recreation and Community Mobility. In order to achieve these priorities and improve the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities, a number of projects were undertaken by various operating departments. Some of these projects and initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

Bell Park Waterfront Accessibility Project: The Accessibility Advisory Panel was instrumental in the development of this transformational project. This project included the creation of a new accessible washroom and change-room, accessibility upgrades to existing washrooms, improved waterfront and beach access and the purchase of two beach wheelchairs at the Main Beach of Bell Park, which were made available to public in the summer of 2016. These enhancements to the accessibility of the waterfront not only increased access for all residents, but also played a role in the Blue Flag certification of the Bell Park Main Beach.

(<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=785&itemid=8937&lang=en>)

Accessible Playgrounds: Inclusive play has been and remains a key focus of the City of Greater Sudbury. Over the past five years, a number of playgrounds were the recipients of Enabling Accessibility Fund Grants for accessibility improvements to play structures, field houses, splash pads and outdoor rinks such as:

- Kin Park Accessible Playground
- Ridgecrest Accessible Outdoor Rink
- Ridgecrest Accessible Playground
- Ridgecrest Accessible Splash Pad
- Robinson Playground Accessible Field House
- Theresa Playground Accessible Playground

Recreational Building Condition Assessments: From 2012-2016, building condition assessments were conducted for all City of Greater Sudbury arenas, pools and field houses. These third-party assessments included information and guidance on how the City of Greater Sudbury can enhance the accessibility of these facilities.

City of Greater Sudbury Website: With the re-launch of the City of Greater Sudbury website, all newly added content was created to be fully compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. Prior to the launch of the website, approximately 100 City staff responsible for the creation of website content received formal accessibility training. In the creation of the new website, design colours that provide optimal contrast were utilized and a font size button was added to allow citizens to browse the website with larger fonts. Numerous technological/design improvements were made to enable users with screen readers and other adaptive assistive technologies to browse the website easier and TTY contact information was included on every page of the website in a prominent location.

Social Services: A number of improvements have been made to Ontario Works offices in order to remove physical barriers to access for persons with disabilities, some of which include; a wheelchair accessible interview room, the designation of the office as a scent free environment, a larger interview room, modifications to the waiting room and home and hospital visits for clients who cannot come in to the office. With regards to addressing information and communication barriers, alternative methods of communication are now utilized for clients when requested or required. Additionally, all communication materials have been standardized to make use of simple language and contrasting and accessible font styles and sizes and all new Ontario Works staff receive accessibility training, which includes communication techniques.

Municipal and School Board Elections: The 2014 Municipal and School Board Election was planned with accessibility in mind. During the selection of voting locations, accessibility evaluations and audits were performed by City of Greater Sudbury Election Team staff on all potential locations and as a result of this new practice, all 2014 voting locations were fully accessible. Additionally, a large emphasis was placed on the creation of an accessible communications strategy for both voters and candidates. Election materials were created using simple language and high contrasting colours. Information regarding the election was made available in a number of communication formats. As part of a pilot project, internet voting was utilized for the first time during the advance voting period in an effort to improve accessibility by enabling voters to cast ballots from home using their own adaptive technology as appropriate. The City of Greater Sudbury's Accessibility Advisory Panel took part in a pre-election mock internet vote to evaluate the accessibility of the technology and provided positive feedback with respect to the usability and accessibility of internet voting.

Accessible City Council and Committee Meetings: At Tom Davies Square, a number of modifications were made to two committee rooms to enhance the accessibility of the spaces. Adjustable desks were installed to allow for the accommodation of persons with mobility aids and functionality for amplification systems was added to the rooms. Live-streaming of Council and Committee meetings was also implemented to allow for remote viewing.

Planned Strategies and Actions for the Identification, Removal and Prevention of Barriers (2017-2021)

Accessibility Priorities

In the creation of this plan, the City of Greater Sudbury Accessibility Advisory Panel was consulted and provided feedback regarding the progress made on the three key priorities identified in the 2012-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: Legislative Compliance, Community Mobility and Access to Recreation. Over the course of the term of the current Accessibility Advisory Panel and in the development of new Multi-Year Plan these themes continued to emerge and Panel members identified two new themes; Education and Awareness and Meeting and Event Accessibility.

At the recommendation of the Accessibility Advisory Panel, the key priorities of Legislative Compliance, Community Mobility and Access to Recreation were carried over from the previous plan and two new priorities of Education and Awareness and Community and Event Accessibility were added to form the basis of the 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

These priorities include strategic recommendations from the Panel that will help guide the City of Greater Sudbury as it continues to plan for future accessibility initiatives, which are outlined below:

Legislative Compliance: Legislative compliance not only includes compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and its associated regulations, but also ensuring compliance with accessibility provisions of other acts.

The City of Greater Sudbury continues to make use of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards Implementation Plan* that was established in 2013 as part of the Annual Accessibility Plan. This plan outlines the legislative requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations* and assigns numerous tasks and actions to appropriate departments and staff across the organization that are to be completed in order to achieve compliance and meet legislated deadlines. Regular updates are made to the plan as new standards are introduced and compliance is achieved.

Community Mobility: The City of Greater Sudbury continues to work towards making our City fully accessible to all residents, whether it is through enhancements to the public transit service or the installation and maintenance of sidewalks. The City of Greater Sudbury recognizes that regardless of how accessible a municipal facility or program may be, without a barrier free means of accessing these opportunities, citizens, including persons with disabilities, may not be able to fully participate in and take advantage of all our community has to offer. In addition to identifying community mobility as a priority of the 2017-2021 Multi-Year Plan, the Accessibility Advisory Panel provided the following recommendations:

- Ensuring access to sidewalks through the installation of curb cuts, placement of sidewalks in highly travelled areas (especially those in close proximity to a bus stop/shelter) and regular sidewalk maintenance.
- Enhancing pedestrian safety through the use of adequate lighting (specifically at bus stops/shelters), by providing more visual cues and information to pedestrians through the use of signage, through the continued installation of accessible crosswalks with audio, visual and tactile cues and in high traffic locations, and by ensuring colour contrasts are present in crossovers and on stairs located inside and outside municipal facilities and buildings.
- The continued creation of accessible parking spots, ensuring that there are a sufficient number of accessible parking spots wide enough to accommodate larger accessible vehicles (i.e. van with a descending ramp).

Access to Recreation: The City of Greater Sudbury is fortunate to be a community that has a recreational opportunity available in every season. Access to inclusive recreational opportunities plays an important role in ensuring that all citizens are able to participate in and enjoy everything that our community has to offer. The Accessibility Advisory Panel identified key considerations for the enhancement of both existing and new municipal recreational opportunities. These enhancements focus on both the access to and safety of accessible elements and spaces including; improved way-finding signage, visual cues and colour contrasts, ensuring proper maintenance of accessible elements and ensuring access to accessible parking at recreational facilities and buildings. The Panel also strongly encouraged the development of a tool to monitor, audit and evaluate the accessibility of municipal recreational facilities and spaces. As a result of the improvements made to the Main Beach at Bell Park through the Bell Park Waterfront Accessibility Project, the Panel recommended that Bell Park be used as a standard for all future accessibility enhancements made to public beaches.

Education and Awareness: The City of Greater Sudbury is committed to promoting a culture of accessibility awareness and understanding within its organization. In order to achieve this goal, the Accessibility Advisory Panel emphasized the need to provide employees with continued and job-specific training and educational opportunities as they relate to working and communicating with members of the accessibility community. The Panel highlighted the importance of working with community partners to ensure that information regarding the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities is communicated widely and through multiple channels and that the information provided include who to contact at the City with respect to accessibility supports, questions and concerns.

Meeting and Event Accessibility: Ensuring that citizens are able to participate in all facets of community life requires that events and meetings not only be held in accessible and barrier free spaces, but that the persons responsible for organizing them give consideration to accessibility needs and requirements during the planning phase. The Accessibility Advisory Panel stressed the importance of ensuring that City staff that are responsible for holding public events, meetings, etc. have knowledge and understanding of the types of accessibility supports that may be required by those attending. Adding to this, the Panel noted that information regarding the type of supports available and how to request them should be effectively communicated to the public prior to the meeting or event.

Moreover, these five priorities and recommendations as identified by the members of the City of Greater Sudbury Accessibility Advisory Panel form the basis of the 2017-2021 Multi-Year Strategic Accessibility Plan. These priorities and strategies will serve to guide accessibility planning for the City of Greater Sudbury over the next five years and will assist City Departments and Divisions in the development of projects and initiatives to enhance the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities.

Departmental Plans, Projects and Initiatives

In consultation with City of Greater Sudbury Departments and Divisions during the creation of this plan, it was found that work to achieve these priorities over the next five years is already underway.

Some of the projects and initiatives planned to enhance the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities throughout the City of Greater Sudbury include, but are not limited to, the following:

Pedestrian Access: Over the past year a number of accessible pedestrian crossovers have been installed at various locations throughout the City of Greater Sudbury and plans are in place to install an additional 21 new pedestrian crossovers. These

crossovers not only improve the overall safety of pedestrians, but also include key accessibility features. These features include colour and tactile contrast warning strips at the curb to alert pedestrians with a visual disability that they are about to step onto the road and flashing lights, audio cues and signage to notify both pedestrians and motorists that a person is entering the crossover/traversing the roadway.

Accessible City Planning: The Downtown Sudbury Master Plan and Action Strategy give thought and consideration to how downtown *"must be strongly connected to the rest of the City and accessible to all. It should be easy to get around in"*. Two ongoing projects identified in the Downtown Master Plan in 2017, Project 37 – the Tom Davies Square Courtyard Upgrade and Project 40 – the Brady Green Stairs have been designed to be compliant with accessibility legislation. In 2015, a detailed design was completed for the Capreol Downtown Waterfront Community Improvement Plan, which is intended to provide accessible recreation for future and current residents. This Plan, as well as all City initiated Community Improvement Plan related projects, is also designed to be compliant with accessibility legislation. Adding to this, the City of Greater Sudbury's Official Plan, Phase 1 of its Five Year Review recommends densification, sidewalk access and curb cuts, accessible parking, and other accessible elements be incorporated into the plan update, including additional references to accessibility in Urban Design (Section 14.0), Heritage Structures, Districts and Cultural Landscapes (Section 13.2) and Designing Parks (Section 7.3).

Accessible Meetings and Meeting Spaces: The City of Greater Sudbury recognizes the importance of providing equal and accessible opportunities for members of the public to attend or view meetings of Council and Committee. Openness, Accountability and Transparency are ideals and values that the City of Greater Sudbury holds in high regard. In order to increase public participation and engagement with civic life all meetings of Council and Committee are live-streamed enabling home viewers to use their own technology solutions to increase accessibility. Additionally, City of Greater Sudbury staff will continue to investigate closed captioning of live-streamed Council and Committee meetings. Work is also being done to upgrade existing adaptive sound amplification systems and alternative adaptive communication technologies are being explored for those citizens who wish to attend meetings and events held at Tom Davies Square. Renovations to the Tom Davies Square Foyer and Courtyard will also improve access to City Hall.

Affordable and Accessible Housing: Greater Sudbury Housing is planning the construction of two new affordable housing rental units. The first will be a 65 unit specific to seniors with five accessible units and the second will be a 12 unit, fully accessible building for individuals with acquired brain injuries. Federal and Provincial Social Infrastructure Funding (SIF) has been allocated to the Ontario Renovates

Program which assists low-income households in improving accessibility within their home and 87 City of Greater Sudbury households will be selected to participate in this program in 2017. Throughout the next five years, Housing Services will be conducting a social housing revitalization to ensure that the social housing stock matches the accessibility needs of the community.

(<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1203&lang=en>).

City of Greater Sudbury Website: All existing web content on the City of Greater Sudbury website is being re-written to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, which will be complete by May 2018. This includes proper use of headings, alt text on graphics and multimedia, and linking and use of tables. Plans are being made for regular and continued accessibility training for communications staff, including staff across the organization with who edit the website. An accessibility guide is being created to help staff who edit the website ensure that they are following web content accessibility best practices. Online PDF's are also being made accessible and other public web applications are being upgraded over the next five years to meet accessibility requirements.

Accessible Recreational Opportunities: As identified by the Accessibility Advisory Panel and in previous Annual and Multi-Year Plans, access to recreation and inclusive play opportunities continue to play a role in the development of an equitable and healthy community. Accessibility upgrades and enhancements are planned over the next five years for a number of municipal playgrounds and facilities.

Municipal and School Board Elections: *The Municipal Elections Act, 1996* contains a number of provisions related to accessibility which the municipality must adhere to, including the development of pre and post Election Accessibility Plans that address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers affecting voters and candidates with disabilities. These plans must be prepared before voting day and within 90 days after voting day and be made available to the public. In addition to the legislated requirements, City of Greater Sudbury Election staff are planning a number of strategies to enhance the overall accessibility of the 2018 Municipal and School Board Election, some of which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Utilization of internet voting as the sole method of vote for the 2018 Municipal and School Board Election.
- Evaluation of all Electronic Voting Locations to ensure that the location is fully accessible and provides barrier free access to voters, candidates and workers.

- Production of election materials using simple, easy to understand language with high contrasting colours and the availability of information regarding the election in a number of communication formats.
- Utilization of alternative methods to communicate and receive information from voters and candidates, such as the use of the VoterView Candidate's Portal, and allowing for the electronic filing of candidate documents.

Conventional and Specialized Transit Service: Plans are currently underway to evaluate and make recommendations to adjust all public transit services provided by the City of Greater Sudbury, specifically in an effort to improve the City's ability to meet community needs, including those of the accessibility community (<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1129&itemid=13378&lang=en>). As part of this evaluation and review, the Accessibility Advisory Panel will be consulted on a regular basis to provide recommendations and feedback. City of Greater Sudbury Transit will continue to ensure full and timely compliance with all legislative requirements including Regulations. As per the requirements of the legislation, annual Transit public input sessions will be held and Annual Transit Accessibility Plans will be developed and made available to the public.

Development of Accessibility Monitoring, Auditing and Evaluation Tools: In order to work towards achieving a fully accessible City, mechanisms are needed to evaluate achievements in accessibility and identify areas for improvement.

The City of Greater Sudbury has developed an Accessibility Consultation Survey that will be rolled out to the public in the fall of 2017. The purpose of this survey is two-fold.

First, it will provide persons with disabilities and accessibility stakeholders and community partners with an opportunity to share their experiences regarding the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities. Specifically, they will be able to rank their accessibility experience of each individual City Department under the following accessibility themes; attitudes, policies and procedures, information, communication, and technology, and facilities and public spaces.

The second function of the survey relates to how persons with disabilities and accessibility stakeholders are currently receiving information about accessible municipal programs, services and facilities and how they would like to receive this information in the future. The results of this portion of the survey will help to guide the efforts of the City of Greater Sudbury to improve and increase communications regarding the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities.

Throughout the next five years, an Accessibility Consultation Survey will be released to the public on an annual basis. It will serve as an auditing tool for ongoing public consultation regarding the accessibility of municipal programs, services and facilities, ensuring that the accessibility community can continue to play an active role in helping to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for those with disabilities.

Conclusion

This plan, which identifies five key themes and opportunities for improving accessibility, will provide focus and assist in guiding the organization as we work together to ensure that all citizens can participate our community's great northern lifestyle. Ensuring compliance with the AODA standards is fundamental to working towards the goal of achieving a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.

The City of Greater Sudbury would like to express its gratitude to the members of the City of Greater Sudbury's Accessibility Advisory Panel for their commitment to enhancing the accessibility of our municipal programs, services and facilities and addressing the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers to persons with disabilities. Thank you for your invaluable time, comments, suggestions, and dedication.

For more information regarding accessible municipal programs, services and facilities, please visit the City of Greater Sudbury's website (<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/accessibility/>) or contact the Legislative Compliance Coordinator for comments, questions, or concerns relating to accessibility.