

City of Greater Sudbury

Multi Year Accessibility Plan

Fall 2012

Introduction:

The City of Greater Sudbury is a community of communities that respects the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and endeavours to facilitate inclusive access to municipal programs, services and facilities. 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 plan, which identifies 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 in the community's great northern lifestyle. This plan, like the City's Strategic Plan, is "*a promise from the past and a vision of our future*".

As described by the World Bank Group on its [Disabilities and Development: Accessibility Webpage](#):

"Accessibility is a huge part of the inclusion of people with disabilities. An accessible barrier free environment is the first step towards fulfilling the right of people with disabilities to participate in all areas of community life. Accessibility is a very broad term covering all aspects of assuring that disabled people can participate and have the same choices as non-disabled community members. This includes: access to transportation; election access; access to water supply and sanitation; technology access; appropriate sources of communication and media to ensure information; and an infrastructure that breaks down all physical barriers preventing equal access for disabled persons as the members of a community."

<http://go.worldbank.org/MQUMJCL1W1>

Our City:

Centrally located in Northeastern Ontario, the City of Greater Sudbury is composed of a rich mix of urban, suburban, rural and wilderness environments. It is a vast community whose historic settlement patterns have grown into communities which are spread across the Sudbury Basin.

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 which 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.

The City of Greater Sudbury is a multicultural and truly bilingual community with more than a quarter of our residents having French as their mother tongue and this is always considered when implementing information and communications strategies in support of accessibility.

In addition to being home to 160,275 citizens, the City of Greater Sudbury is a regional centre for financial and business services, tourism, health care and research, education and government. Many of the half million residents of Northeastern Ontario from the Quebec border to the eastern shore of Lake Superior and from the James and Hudson's Bay coastlines to the Georgian Bay area travel to Sudbury and use services as varied as our transportation and medical systems.

Community Demography of Disability:

According to Statistics Canada and the Persons and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), 15.5% of Ontario residents have a disability, with the prevalence of disability increasing with age. Using the 2011 Census figures for Greater Sudbury and the PALS prevalence of disabilities rates, it is estimated that there are approximately 25,000 citizens with disabilities living in our community, of whom, approximately 900 are children under the age of 15 and 1,100 are teens and young adults and more than 12,000 are adults over the age of 65. These numbers are expected to grow as the population ages, as there is more public awareness about disabilities and as the stigma about disclosing disabilities is lessened.

AGE	PALS Prevalence of Disability as % of Population - Ontario 2006	CGS Population 2011 Census	Estimate of CGS Population with a Disability
0 – 4	1.8	8050	145
5 – 14	4.7	16060	755
15 – 24	5.3	21015	1114
25 – 44	8.7	39760	3459
45 – 64	20.6	48750	10043
65 – 74	36.7	13940	5116
75 and over	60.1	11840	7116
Total population	15.5	160275	24843

In developing the City of Greater Sudbury Accessibility Plan, particular consideration is given to two groups at opposite sides of the age spectrum; the first being children and young people; and the other being seniors.

“Because of physical barriers, stigma, and the absence of a voice” young people with disabilities may not always have the opportunities to develop “skills, interests and friendships” (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/40052.html>) and therefore creation of environments that promote social inclusion are important. One of the themes in this plan is helping children with disabilities to integrate in the community through leisure and recreational activities. Encouraging and enabling children with disabilities to participate fully in the community facilitates the intellectual, physical and social growth of the child while interacting with peers helps develop social skills and form friendships.

As described in the World Health Organization’s World Report on Disability

“The ageing of the world’s population is also expected to increase the prevalence of disability. In all world regions the proportion of people over the age of 60 is predicted to rise over the next few decades. . . .Almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life . . .

http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html

According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Aging, *by 2031, about one of every four Canadians will be 65 years or older.* It is known that the prevalence of disabilities increases with age. According to the Institute,

32% of seniors have disabilities that affect their mobility, 29% have disabilities that affect their agility, and 25% have disabilities that cause them pain. . .About 16% of Canadians over 65 will experience some cognitive impairment, such as memory loss, and another 8% will be diagnosed with a degenerative brain disease, such as Alzheimer’s Disease or another dementia.

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/34013.html>

The Institute has identified that there are important policy implications which flow from an aging population and an ever increasing population that has disabilities:

“When a significant number of people in society have disabilities, there are a lot of practical implications - everything from the duration of a crosswalk light to the way that we build our homes and cities.” @ <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/34013.html>

Guiding Principles and Key Planning Documents:

The themes described in this plan as priorities for accessibility are aligned with the organization’s Vision, Mission and Values and rooted in four key planning documents which guide the strategic thinking and work plans for the City of Greater Sudbury.

The Vision, Mission and Values of the City of Greater Sudbury were adopted by the first Council of the City of Greater Sudbury during its inaugural year and have subsequently been reaffirmed by Council as part of their strategic and business planning processes over the past decade.

Vision:

The City of Greater Sudbury is a growing, world- class community bringing talent, technology and a great northern lifestyle together.

Mission:

We provide excellent access to quality municipal services and leadership in the social, environmental and economic development of the City of Greater Sudbury.

Values:

In fulfilling our roles and as stewards of the community we:

*Provide high quality service with a citizen focus
Manage the resources in our trust efficiently, responsibly and effectively
Encourage innovation and accepting risks
Maintain honest and open communication
Create a climate of trust and a collegial working environment
Act today in the interests of tomorrow*

The City of Greater Sudbury has developed four broad strategic goals which are articulated in the City's Official Plan as described below.

A Healthy Community: It is a Council priority for Greater Sudbury to be a Healthy Community offering a high quality of life to its residents.

Economic Development: Economic development is essential to the future of this community and an important building block of a Healthy Community.

Sustainable Development: A healthy and prosperous future depends on Greater Sudbury being a sustainable community.

Focus on Opportunities: Greater Sudbury must build on its strengths and recognize where opportunities exist to improve the community.

Supporting the above principles are the four key planning documents of the organization, all of which have been approved by Council and which serve as the framework for much of the work of the organization. Within each of these plans are a number of elements which relate to Accessibility as summarized in the following paragraphs.

The Official Plan which was adopted in 2006 following several years of work, which included significant public input. The Official Plan includes a number of elements related to accessibility in areas as varied as: Living Areas (Section 3.1); Employment Areas (Section 4.1 and 4.2); Parks and Open Spaces (Section 4.1 and 4.2); and Transportation (Section 11.1 and 11.3). In 2012, Council embarked on a review of the Official Plan, which review includes consultations with the Accessibility Advisory Panel. The Panel discussed densification, sidewalk access and curb cuts, parking for accessibility; and the AODA Standards as elements for incorporation into the plan update.

The Healthy Community Strategy has been endorsed by the United Nations University as a Regional Centre of Expertise and model for sustainable development and is founded on the assumption that everyone is responsible for creating a sustainable future together. The strategy,

"Embraces the World Health Organization's definition of a Healthy Community as a place which is constantly improving its physical and social environment and, using the resources of the community, enables its citizens to help each other carry out their daily tasks and develop their potential."

Within the Health Community Strategy, the Active Living/Healthy Lifestyle pillar reflects a community that *"assigns appropriate resources to build capacity and equitable access for all."*

The Long Term Financial Plan reflects on the importance of meeting social equity objectives through specific programs including financial support for the Healthy Community strategy and for actions that promote social and environmental well-being.

Coming of Age in the 21st Century: Digging Deeper serves as a guide for the economic development of the community. Within this plan the engine of Greater Sudbury as the regional centre for health services expertise in Northeastern Ontario is particularly germane to accessibility. This engine includes recognition of the community's aging population and the opportunities that exist to tailor health services expertise to this demographic, many of whom, as noted above, have some form of disability.

Council recently adopted the City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan 2012-2014. The document identifies social inclusion and accessibility priorities as opportunities for the organization. Building from the key planning documents the strategic plan establishes five priorities for the current term of Council. One of those priorities is that of a Healthy Community which includes enacting the Sustainable Mobility Plan, increasing use of our accessible public transportation system, incorporation of a health impact assessment tool or healthy community lens into decision making on key projects and undertaking a feasibility study for a therapeutic pool. Other action items within the Strategic Plan which will enhance accessibility include the redevelopment of the City of Greater Sudbury webpage which includes meeting AODA webs standards and more customer service training for staff.

City of Greater Sudbury Commitments to Accessibility

Council has also formally expressed its support for accessibility by way of resolution. In 2003, City Council (Resolution 2003-523) adopted a Policy of Universal Access as follows:

"City Council adopts this Policy of Universal Access. By adopting this policy, our service, programs and facilities will be accessible to people with disabilities regardless of the type of disability and age. Council understand that the implementation of this policy statement requires financial resources and changes on how we deliver service and build our infrastructure, from sidewalks to libraries. Towards this end, departmental Business Plans and budgets will be required to include specific initiatives to implement this policy over time in consultation with Council's Accessibility Advisory Committee in a manner that is transparent to the community. The Council's yearly Accessibility Plan will provide the policy direction to the departments for the implementation of this Policy on Universal Access."

This commitment was reinforced in 2009 when Council updated its Citizen Services Policy as part of the City's compliance implementation plan for Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. By-law 2009-216 describes how.

"The City of Greater Sudbury respects the independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity of all citizens; Citizens with disabilities may use support persons, personal assistive devices and service animals when accessing municipal programs, services and facilities; Communication with a citizen with a disability will be done in a manner that takes into account the citizen's disability."

The City of Greater Sudbury is compliant with both the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 (AODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and supports the AODA's primary purpose which is:

"To develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to the goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, building, structures and premises by January 1, 2025."

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act contains provisions for the development of accessibility standards and their phased implementation. The first of these, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Regulation 429/07 came into effect on January 1, 2008. The City of Greater Sudbury is in compliance with this standard as was reported to Council on August 12, 2009 which report can be found online at: <http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=3&id=213>.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard, Regulation 191/11 consists of three accessibility standards: Information and Communications; Employment; and Transportation. The City's Implementation Plan for the Integrated Standard was included as an Appendix to the 2012 - 2013 Accessibility Plan and presented to Council on September 11, 2012. That report can be found online at:

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=7&id=502>

The City of Greater Sudbury has historically demonstrated its commitment to accessibility in a variety of ways, from the introduction of a Handi-Transit system more than two decades ago, which system is now fully parallel to the conventional system, to significant investments in Pioneer Manor, including the new lodge for dementia patients.

Specific projects over the past five years which have enhanced accessibility include, but are not limited to:

Arenas: Gerry McCrory Sports Complex had a second elevator added to the building, to accommodate the larger wheelchairs and scooters for which the existing elevator is not suitable. A new rink board system was installed at Garson Arena to enable access for sledge hockey. Door openers, accessible viewing areas and entrance ramps have been added to a number of community arenas and an accessible washroom was constructed at the Sudbury Community Arena.

Bell Park: The Accessibility Advisory Panel contributed ideas to the design of the new Grace Hartman Amphitheatre including recommending a suitable drop-off area for Handi-Transit, adequate accessible parking, and seating space designed to accommodate larger wheelchairs and scooters and the diversity of the audience at recent concerts is a reflection of the accessibility of the venue. The park has new accessible washrooms and a ramp has been constructed to provide sledge and stroller access to the Ramsey Lake Skate path.

Playgrounds: The Accessibility Advisory Panel championed an integrated and accessible playground project which has been transformative in how the City thinks about playground installations. In 2010, three fully accessible and inclusive play structures were installed at the Howard Armstrong Recreation Centre, at the James Jerome Sports Complex and at Ridgecrest Park and Council directed that accessible elements be included in all new playgrounds. Both the James Jerome Sports Complex and Ridgecrest Playground added accessible washrooms and paved walkways and at Ridgecrest, a hard surface rink area, for multi-season use by all playground users was installed. In 2012 the Theresa Park Playground received a grant of \$50,000 from the Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility fund which together with funds from the municipality and the Theresa Playground Neighborhood Association will be used to install an accessible play structure.

South Branch Library: The location of the library provides for accessible travel to the library branch, as there are sidewalks with curb cuts for pedestrians, proximity to public transit and accessible parking. Technology enhancements include adaptive software for persons with learning and/or visual disabilities and meeting rooms that are equipped with an amplification system which will enable individuals with hearing disabilities to participate. Lighting, layout and stack design give consideration to access and the building has visual and audible fire alarm systems.

Seniors Care: At Pioneer Manor, projects such as a resident gym and a therapeutic garden are part of the ongoing capital funding program. In June 2010 the City opened the Lodge, a 60,000 square foot, two-storey facility at Pioneer Manor, which now houses 64 residents with advanced dementia. The Lodge was specifically designed to meet the specific care needs of residents with dementia in a safer and more home-like environment. In addition to the \$14.6 Million spent on the Lodge, the City contributed \$2 Million to Villa St-Gabriel in Chelmsford.

Pedestrian Access: As roads are repaired and rebuilt across the community, sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts and other accessibility features are also renewed and built to conform to current standards. Audible Pedestrian Signals and Pedestrian Countdown Timers have been added at specific intersections. New trails, as for example the Junction Creek Waterway Park include accessible access points. The newly rebuilt Lily Creek trail is fully accessible and includes linkages to the James Jerome Sports Complex.

Transit: Every vehicle in the conventional transit fleet is now fully accessible and an education campaign is underway to promote the use of conventional transit by all citizens. The Transit Stop Announcement System offers both audio and visual notification of the next scheduled stop and facilitates travel for individuals with disabilities, tourists, seniors, students and new residents. The City's Handi-Transit system is fully parallel to the conventional transit system. A review of the Handi-Transit service delivery model, which review includes consultations with riders, ridership data analysis and stakeholder input is underway.

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"*. The new Municipal Zoning By-Law, amended the threshold at which an accessible parking space is required so as to create more designated accessible parking spaces and in May 2010, panel members were invited to provide input into the Downtown Parking Strategy, with particular emphasis on accessible parking.

Employee Training: To date more than 3,000 Employees have received Accessible Customer Services information, with the degree of detail tailored to the employee's workplace role and how frequently they interact with citizens. The reach of this training is best described in an email received from a citizen who wrote that he wanted to *"let you know that my son is a councilor for Camp Sudaca, and during orientation, was to*

watch the Accessibility video . . . the whole group watched it, and . . . the feedback was very positive on the whole video.”

Themes from Public Input Meetings

Each year, the City of Greater Sudbury’s Accessibility Advisory Panel holds a special meeting to receive input from the citizens of the community as to barriers which are encountered when accessing municipal programs, services and facilities. A barrier is identified as a human made design flaw in the environment that prevents or hinders a person with a disability from fully participating in society or from accessing a service. Barriers can be physical barriers, information or communication barriers, attitudinal barriers, technological barriers, policies or practices, which make it difficult for a person with a disability to access programs and services offered by the City of Greater Sudbury. These meetings have proven to be an asset as each year the public provides the city with their thoughts on what the municipality can do to become more accessible.

Over the most recent five years common themes have emerged from the public input meeting. Those themes relate to community mobility and to access to recreation as described in the section which follows.

Community Mobility:

The freedom to make choices is, in our mobile society, dependent upon the freedom to move.

--- Colorado Transit

The first such theme relates to mobility and movement through the community and has two parts, pedestrian movement and transit service. As one citizen who does not drive said at the June 2012 public input meeting, it is the combination of transit and our sidewalks that are most important to her every day and enable her to participate in the community.

For person with all types of disabilities, sidewalks that are relatively flat and have good curb cuts that are aligned to an intersection are important to mobility and access. This is particularly true for persons who may use a mobility aid such as a walker, wheelchair, cane or crutches and for persons with a visual disability who need to be able to move seamlessly from one street to another and to cross safely at all intersections. Further, sidewalks that are slanted or canted either towards the street or towards a yard, make it difficult to balance if walking, with an aid, having vertigo or any balance disability. Sidewalks need to be well maintained as crumbling or missing pieces of sidewalks can create tripping hazards and make it difficult to maneuver with an assistive device. Aligning sidewalk curb cuts with the curb cuts on medians makes it easier to cross busy intersections as do Audible Pedestrian signals at strategic intersections and clear visual and structural markings of medians. Winter maintenance is critical to persons with disabilities who encourage clearing medians of snow and avoiding having snow piled around those poles where walk light activation signals are mounted. When construction

is planned, citizens have asked that the City consider how persons with disabilities can move on the streets and sidewalks during the construction period.

Transit is a critical service for many persons with disabilities, some of whom are not able to drive independently. Public input has been very favourable with regards to the expansion of accessible conventional transit fleet. Handi-Transit riders have expressed a desire to continue to work towards shorter ride times and for more flexibility in booking trips.

Access to Recreation:

The Paralympic Movement builds a bridge which links sport with social awareness thus contributing to the development of a more equitable society with respect and equal opportunities for all individuals

<http://www.paralympic.org/TheIPC>

As noted by the Canadian Paralympic Foundation “*Canadians with a physical disability are significantly less likely to participate in recreational or competitive sports when compared with able-bodied Canadians.*” www.paralympicfoundation.ca/index.cfm/home. Access to recreational facilities and play opportunities is key to removing barriers to participation and social inclusion and is another key theme that has emerged through the public input meetings.

Young people who have attended the public input meetings or consulted with staff have reflected on their wishes for integrated and accessible recreation opportunities. For example, a four year old described how he would like to have a park that he could play in without using his walker. He described how it would need to be easy to walk in, with no rocks or sand and have features, including swings that he could use. An eleven year old wished for a swing that she could use.

Other ideas related to accessible recreation include designing parks to be barrier free, having flat, stable play surfaces for unstructured play, installing swings with appropriate supports, having ramps to access playground equipment and providing pathways between different outdoor elements at sports complexes. Easy access to parking, family friendly change rooms with plenty of grab bars at pools, arenas and fitness centres, and assistive devices to facilitate entry into pools have also been noted over the years as it relates to improving access to recreational facilities.

The Sudbury Community Arena is without a doubt the recreational facility which is most often specifically noted in the context of accessibility. The current elevator at the Sudbury Community Arena is too small to accommodate scooters and larger wheelchairs, restricting access to the ground level. This issue has been raised several years at the public input meeting by citizens who encourage the city to consider renewal of the entrance to the Sudbury Community Arena and installation of a new elevator that can accommodate larger mobility devices. Citizens have also noted that audio systems and sound remain challenging for citizens with hearing disabilities and that this is particularly true at the Sudbury Community Arena.

While these structural barriers have been noted at the Sudbury Community Arena, citizen feedback has been quite positive with regards to staff and how staff work to accommodate citizens. For example, correspondence was received from a citizen who attended an arena event describing how *“My sister has special needs and is in a wheelchair . . . Every staff person I came into contact with. . . (was) extremely helpful . . . Had a wonderful evening and it was made extra special with the service we received from your staff.”* The City of Greater Sudbury currently has an Arena Renewal Strategy process underway, the findings of which may impact on how accessibility is addressed in arenas in the future. The Panel will provide input into the Arena Renewal Strategy.

Budget and Resources

Responsibility for overseeing the municipality’s accessibility responsibilities is assigned to the Executive Director, Administrative Services who sits on the City’s Senior Management Team. This ensures that accessibility is noted as senior staff discusses and debate any items which may impact on accessibility. Day-to-day responsibility for accessibility is assigned to the Legislative Compliance Coordinator in Clerk’s Services. Members of the management group work on accessibility issues in their areas of responsibility and frequently consult with their peers and with Administrative Services in this regard. Many City of Greater Sudbury staff members work on accessibility issues or provide services to citizens with disabilities as part of their daily routines.

Recently, the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals surveyed members as to how municipalities fund accessibility. Fourteen municipalities responded, all of which are mid to large sized municipalities. Most respondents noted that accessibility is built into all departmental and capital budgets. Examples provided of how accessibility is incorporated into existing budgets would include that as facilities are renovated they are built to code, as new transit vehicles are purchased they are low floor buses and library material acquisition budgets include alternate format collections such as audio books. The City of Greater Sudbury also follows this model of enhancing accessibility through daily activities and through the existing operating and capital budgets. Further, the City of Greater Sudbury includes specific references to having regard to accessibility in its purchasing documents.

Some of the responding municipalities also have funds specifically dedicated to accessibility. The amount and purpose of Operating Budget funds specific to accessibility varies considerably between municipalities, but is consistently relatively small, often under \$25,000 and support items such as accessibility panel meetings and accessibility planning, accessibility related training, provisions of interpreters (ie sign language interpretation), employee accommodations and AODA compliance requirements.

Approximately half of the respondents had larger accessibility budgets, as for example Sault Ste Marie which budgets \$85,000, Sarnia which budgets \$100,000, Thunder Bay which budgets \$120,000 and Mississauga which budgeted \$300,000 on a one time

basis. These larger budgets for capital projects are generally for projects related to AODA compliance, though a few municipalities specifically reference accessibility in parks, trails and facilities as being funded from these budgets.

In recent years, Administrative Services has gradually increased the budget for accessibility through a reallocation of resources within the department. In 2012, the operating budget for “Accessibility Planning” is \$105,000. The budget is used to support initiatives which are required for AODA compliance. In recent years, this has included the development and delivery of the employee training for the Customer Service Standard and a short-term contract employee to assist with the very specific and detailed planning associated with Integrated Standard compliance.

In 2012 and 2013 achieving compliance to that standard will continue to require financial and human resources. Any unspent resources from the “Accessibility Planning” budget are allocated to a reserve fund which is used, with Council direction, on projects that transform how the community perceives and thinks about accessibility. In the last term of Council the reserve fund balance was used to purchase the accessible playground equipment at James Jerome Complex and the Howard Armstrong Recreation Centre.

Accessibility Priorities 2012 - 2017:

Work is ongoing in each and every department with regards to making the City of Greater Sudbury more accessible for everyone by removing barriers, be they physical barriers such as a doorway which requires an automated door opening control or informational barriers, such as the new City of Greater Sudbury website which meets the Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA. Further, mechanisms are in place through the 3-1-1 and ACR system to receive input from Citizens when they encounter challenges with accessibility and these items are resolved as they occur.

Having given consideration to the themes that have emerged over the past five years of public input meetings, and knowing that compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its associated regulations is mandatory for the City of Greater Sudbury as it is for all municipalities, the Accessibility Advisory Panel has identified the three themes described below as priorities for the period 2012 – 2017.

Most of the resources and responses required to address these priorities will come at the departmental level, as for example Transit will continue to work on issues related to public transportation, Infrastructure Services will continue to work on sidewalk and pedestrian access and Leisure Services staff will focus on access to recreation.

In addition, staff will continue to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Panel to identify a transformative project or projects. This transformative project will present new opportunities for persons with disabilities to integrate into the fabric of an active community; will remove barriers of both the physical and perceptual varieties; and at the

same time advance community awareness of the possible. The transformative project will be one that relates to either Community Mobility or Access to Recreation as those are the priorities, identified in this Master Plan which expand beyond meeting legislative compliance, to providing creative solutions to advance accessibility. The reserve fund for accessibility will be used to support at least one such project in each term of Council.

Priority One: Legislative Compliance

Legislative compliance includes not only 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's Implementation Plan under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 was included as part of the 2013 Annual Accessibility Plan which was presented to Council in September 2012. In accordance with that plan, numerous tasks and actions have been assigned to appropriate departments and staff across the organization. Elements related to Information and Communications and Employment which will have significant organizational impacts and which require resources to achieve compliance include: Training (2014); Recruitment and Employment Policies (2014); and Accessible Communication Supports (2015).

Once the Built Environment Standard is adopted by way of Regulation, an Implementation Plan to achieve compliance to that Standard will be a priority and is expected to require considerable resources at both the planning and implementation stages.

One example of compliance with other legislation relates to elections, which are fundamental to democracy. The Municipal Election Act has a number of provisions related to Accessibility which the municipality will adhere to. The recent decision by City of Greater Sudbury Council to introduce e-voting in the advanced polls will enhance access to voting and remove barriers for many residents, particularly those with. The Panel will be consulted in 2014 with regards to specific elements of an accessible election.

Priority Two: Community Mobility

The City of Greater Sudbury continues to work on Community Mobility on two fronts, being sidewalks and transit.

The City of Greater Sudbury conventional transit fleet is now fully accessible. As transit vehicles are replaced they feature the newest and most accessible features available. The city operates a fully parallel Handi-Transit system. Work is underway to ensure full compliance with the Integrated Standard as it relates to Transit. Elements of that standard for which compliance has not yet been achieved include: Revised Eligibility

Process (2014); Review of Booking Systems (2014); Pre-Boarding Announcements (2017); and Categories of Eligibility (2017),

In 2012 – 2013 Greater Sudbury Transit will be undertaking a review of the Handi-Transit service, which review will include extensive consultations with Handi-Transit riders and with key stakeholders. The dialoge will include reviewing the booking and eligibility systems in light of growing pressures placed on the system by an increase in riders, which increase is expected to continue as the community ages and conversations around opportunities to more closely integrate the conventional and Handi-Transit systems, so as to allow riders to move easily between the two ridership options. Consultations will include considerations around how to meet those elements of the Integrated Standard noted above. The results of that review will be presented to the Accessibility Advisory Panel for their input in and subsequently a report will be presented to Council in 2013.

Currently the City of Greater Sudbury uses the Minimum Maintenance Standards O.Reg. 239/02 as a guideline for the management and maintenance of sidewalks. In 2011, a Contractor was hired to perform an inventory and condition analysis of concrete sidewalks throughout the entire City. Subsequently, specialized sidewalk grinder equipment was purchased and was commissioned in August 2012. The grinder is designed to remove the displacements found in concrete sidewalks leaving behind a smooth angular transition and removing the uneven edges and lips which are particularly difficult for persons with accessibility needs. Infrastructure Services staff are developing a sidewalk condition index and preparing a work plan for addressing the sidewalk displacements identified in the survey and also for use in the development of the City's future Road and/or Sidewalk capital construction program. In 2013, the proposed Capital Budget for Sidewalks and Curbs is \$730,000.

Infrastructure Services staff will be asked to make a presentation to the Advisory Panel in 2013 to describe the current sidewalk programs and to receive feedback from the panel.

Priority Three: Access to Recreation

In the last term of Council, the Accessibility Advisory Panel received information on accessible and inclusive play, from which emerged the accessible and inclusive playground equipment project and the installation of new playground equipment which has served to transform thinking about how children use, access and integrate in playground settings. The City's Strategic Plan includes elements in regards to access to recreation, as for example the feasibility study for a therapeutic pool.

In addition to giving consideration to the access issues at the Sudbury Community Arena through the Arena Renewal Strategy, the Panel supports the continuous changes being made in recreational facilities, to facilitate access. Further, the forecasted capital allocations specific to accessibility in various Citizen and Leisure Services buildings of \$300,000 in each of 2014 and 2015 will assist in removing barriers and enhancing

access. This funding is in addition to other planned capital projects which as they are developed and built adhere to current Ontario Building Code requirements which improve accessibility.

In October 2012, Leisure Services staff made a presentation to the Accessibility Advisory Panel regarding the next opportunities for transformative recreation. Staff noted the popularity of the Jim Gordon Boardwalk, Bell Park and the Ramsey Lake Skate Path, all of which have accessible elements and asked the panel if there were interested in building on the uniqueness of Greater Sudbury as a “City of Lakes”. The panel discussed how to make our lakes more accessible, beside, in and on water. Ideas noted include innovative solutions for boating as for example construction of docks that allow direct and level access onto a pontoon style boat and for fishing through the development of safe and accessible shore based fishing areas. Waterfront and shoreline access, including the ability to get across a sand beach and into the water was noted as important. Some members of the panel have seen beach and water access opportunities in other countries which they asked staff to explore further for applications in Greater Sudbury.

Conclusion

This plan, which identifies three 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 in the community’s great northern lifestyle. Ensuring compliance with the AODA standards is fundamental to working towards that Act’s stated goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025. Creating unique and Sudbury based access to recreational opportunities will ensure that everyone can enjoy our greater Northern lifestyle and having a community where freedom of movement is a priority ensures that citizens can travel safely, by pedestrian power or by public transit, to the places and events that matter to them.

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 and this plan provides an outlines of the priorities for the next five years.