



MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2021-2026

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The Corporation of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Statements

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

To facilitate this commitment, the Municipality of Sioux Lookout has established, maintained, and documented a multi-year accessibility plan, that will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years to identify progress made in addressing barriers and will be posted on the Municipality of Sioux Lookout's website and be made available in accessible formats upon request.

General Information

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is located in northwestern Ontario, nestled within a network of lakes, endless forest, and the rugged Canadian Shield.

Known as the Hub of the North, our municipality connects 29 remote northern communities to healthcare and essential services. With the 4th busiest airport in Ontario and a major VIA Rail stop, our central location connects over 30,000 northern Ontarians in our surrounding communities to our state-of-the-art hospital, excellent social services, as well as, the rest of Canada.

Our population of about 5,500 people live over an area of 536 square kilometres, about a third of which is water.

Here in sunset country, as our area is also known, we embrace community, diversity, and our beautiful outdoors, Ontario's north preserved from an earlier time. Sioux Lookout is special, not only because of what we have, but because our community forms deep connections between places and people, truly making us the Hub of the North.

Consultation

With a population of about 5,500 people, the Municipality of Sioux Lookout is not required to have an accessibility advisory committee. Currently public input is sought through notice on the Municipal website.

This multi-year plan will be reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities.

Purpose

The Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA) 2005) requires the Municipality of Sioux Lookout to develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and to review and updated it at least once every five years.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to making its facilities, infrastructure, and services accessible to people of all abilities. From recreation facilities, to curb cuts, to the Municipal staff – we are working toward a barrier-free Sioux Lookout in compliance with the Regulation.

Pursuant to section 29 of the AODA, the Municipality is not required to establish an accessibility advisory committee as the population is less than 10,000.

Barriers

The intent of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to identify, prevent, and remove barriers. Barriers are obstacles that stand in the way of people with disabilities, preventing them from doing many of the day-to-day activities that others take for granted. A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. There are several categories of barriers to consider.

Physical Barriers: Features, buildings, or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. For example, a doorway that is too narrow to accommodate entry by a person on a motorized scooter.

Communication Barriers: Obstacles with processing, transmitting, or interpreting information. For example, print on a brochure that is too small to read.

Attitudinal Barriers: Prejudgements or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. For example, assuming that a person who has a speech impairment can't understand you.

Technological Barriers: Occurs when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. For example, a website that does not provide for increased text size or contrast options.

Systemic Barriers: Barriers within an organization's policies, practices, and procedures that do not consider accessibility. For example, listing a driver's license as an employment qualification for an office position may prohibit persons with visual impairments from applying.

Regulation

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards in five key areas: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and Public Spaces.

In July 2016, the Government of Ontario made several changes under the Customer Service Standard. One important change that occurred during this update was that the Customer Service Standard was moved into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). As a result, all five standards now reside under one regulation.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes best practice research and recommendations that will help guide the Municipality of Sioux Lookout as it continues to plan for future accessibility initiatives.

Customer Service

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the Municipality to provide accessible public service for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement. Accessible customer service means dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for all people.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Goals:

Examine and address potential barriers at public spaces.

Ensure that in the case of planned or unplanned service disruptions, notice is provided explaining the reason for the disruption, estimated duration, and any alternative facilities or services available.

Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are, upon request, accessible for persons with disabilities.

Ensure all employees continue to complete mandatory training, offered in a variety of formats, on Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requirements and disability-related obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation required the Municipality to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Goals:

Maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and provide accessible formats, upon request.

Provide emergency information in alternative formats, upon request.

Maintain an accessible website and web content.

Monitor the website for compliance with accessibility standards.

Employment

The Employment Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out accessibility requirements that must be followed to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons with disabilities and making employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Goals:

Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations during the recruitment process.

Advise successful applicants about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Review our human resources policies to ensure they are compliant with legislation and reflect best practices.

Develop individual emergency evacuation plans with employees who require it.

Document individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

Offer a return to work process for employees with disabilities.

Promote employee responsibilities for contributing to respect in the workplace.

Transportation

The Transportation Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation.

Most of the requirements of the Transportation Standard relate to the operation of public transportation systems. The Municipality of Sioux Lookout does license taxis within the municipality but does not own or operate any transportation system.

Goals:

Monitor the need for accessible on-demand taxis in the municipality.

Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the Municipality to ensure that newly-constructed or significantly renovated public spaces are accessible.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout will meet accessibility laws when building or making changes to public spaces.

Goals:

Incorporate public consultations into existing processes whenever possible.

Meet or exceed the technical requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

Prioritize accessibility in every element of the infrastructure projects at Municipal owned facilities and properties.

Ensure that there are a sufficient number of accessible parking spots wide enough to accommodate larger accessible vehicles.

Provide preventative maintenance of accessible elements through routine maintenance and inspections.

Conclusion

This plan, which identifies strategic priorities and opportunities, will provide focus and assist in guiding the Municipality as we work together to ensure that all citizens can participate. Ensuring compliance with the legislation is fundamental to working towards the goal of achieving a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.

Contact Information

For more information regarding accessible municipal programs, services, and facilities, please visit our website: <https://www.siouxlookout.ca/en/your-local-government/accessibility.asp>, or contact us at 807-737-2700 or by emailing hr@siouxlookout.ca.

This multi-year plan is available in an accessible format, upon request.