

# Corporate Report

---

**REPORT NUMBER** 155-2025-City Manager's Office-Office of the City Clerk

**DATE**

**PREPARED**

April 28, 2025

**FILE**

---

**MEETING DATE** July 21, 2025

---

**SUBJECT** 2024 Accessibility Progress Report

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This Report is for information only.

## **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

These pillars of the Strategic Plan are inherent to the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Safety and well-being. Our community is healthy, safe, and strong.
- Sustainability. We advance a thriving economy and environment.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report outlines the City of Thunder Bay's progress in 2024 toward creating a more inclusive and accessible community. It highlights key initiatives and accomplishments aligned with the 2024–2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, aimed at identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to municipal programs, services, and facilities. Barriers can be visible or invisible and include attitudinal, information and communication, systematic, physical and technological barriers.

Throughout the year, the City implemented a range of accessibility improvements, including upgrades to recreation facilities, enhanced training for staff, expanded inclusive programming, playground renewals, and transit service enhancements. These efforts were guided by ongoing collaboration with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and informed by public engagement and feedback.

The report also reflects the City's continued compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. By embedding accessibility into planning, infrastructure, and service delivery, the City remains committed to fostering a barrier-free environment that supports the full participation of all residents.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **Accessibility Plan**

The Office of the City Clerk provides oversight and strategic direction for accessibility-related initiatives, projects and the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan). The Municipal Accessibility Specialist is responsible for working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and its sub-committee known as the Built Environment Working Group, whose members offer valuable insight to the community and supports the City of Thunder Bay and Administration in the implementation of the Plan. The Specialist also assists City departments in responding to accommodation needs and ensuring that municipal programs and services are as accessible as possible.

The Municipal Accessibility Specialist is committed to preparing annual status updates (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4 (3); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 3 (1)), describing what has been done to achieve the City's accessibility goals described in the Plan. Reports will be posted on the City's website and presented as required to City Council and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### **Barrier Identification and Removal**

The following list outlines many of the projects completed in 2024 that aimed to remove barriers to accessing City programs and services. This list is not exhaustive. These include:

#### **Recreation Facilities**

- New portable pool lifts for entry and exit use in the shallow, lanes, deep and hot tub
- Three new accessible resistance machines at the Canada Games Complex (seven in total with swivel seat for wheelchair access)
- Additional grab bars installed in the Women's shower area at Churchill Pool
- In addition to seated Yoga, Chair Zumba has been added
- A FIT 5 class has been added for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, a more social exercise experience for Inclusion Services participants

#### **Customer Service & Communications**

- Staff Training

- Language awareness training document created – Language Matters – Disability
  - Additional training resources provided for Inclusion Facilitators
- Inclusion, Junior Inclusion Services and Personal Attendant for Leisure (PAL) cards are now available online as fillable forms
- Closed Captioning is manually applied to the City's "The Minutes" Podcast to ensure accuracy

### Parks & Playgrounds

- Vickers Park Playground Renewal
  - New inclusive play structure with rubber safety surface
  - Concrete access walkways, covered shade structure with accessible tables
  - Added designated accessible parking spaces on Selkirk Street that access the park with new accessible curb drop and tactile warning strip
- North Neebing Park Playground Renewal
  - Replaced old inaccessible playground with new structure, inclusive components and Engineered Wood Fibre Safety Surface
  - New granular walkways added to connect the park and neighbourhood as well as create a loop in the park
  - Metal shade structure with seating
- Mission Island Boat Launch Park Playground Renewal
  - New playground and structure with inclusive components and Engineered Wood Fibre Safety Surface
  - New granular access walkway and sitting area
- Wasco Park Playground Renewal
  - Replaced inaccessible playground with new structure, inclusive components and Engineered Wood Fibre Safety Surface
  - New granular access walkway and concrete sitting area
- Trowbridge Falls Park Playground Renewal
  - Replaced old inaccessible playground with new structure, inclusive components and Engineered Wood Fibre Safety Surface
  - New granular access walkway and concrete sitting area
- Algoma Daycare Tot Area Playground
  - Constructed new natural play area with concrete walkways, various tactile play surfaces, shade structure and rain garden
- Waddington Park Trail Rehabilitation

- Phase two of existing multi-use trail rehabilitation, plus the addition of a new trail from the accessible parking spaces to the tennis and basketball courts, and new asphalt trail with accessible grade from the park to Dacre Street
  - Trail lighting upgrade to LED fixtures
- Chippewa Park Sandy Beach
  - Added an Accessible Change Room
  - Crusher fines top coated granular pathway from the parking lot to the change room and the beach
  - Accessible beach mat and portable lift have been purchased and will be installed for use this summer
- Charry Park De-Pavement Project
  - Removed cracked and degraded asphalt bumps and replaced with rain garden and connecting crusher fines coated granular walkway
  - Concrete sitting area connects to existing playground area

#### Sidewalks and Recreation Trails

- Lift and Level program
  - In 2024 approximately 16 sidewalks with trip edges were ground down or padded with asphalt across the City
- Multi-Use Trail improvements at:
  - William Street underpass
  - Near Fairbrooke Crescent
  - Near Dease Street
  - Near MacIntosh Street
  - An accessible ramp was built replacing the stairs to connect the trail at the dead end of Melon St off of Junot Ave.

#### Transit Services

- Transit 2024-2029 Accessibility Plan, updated in 2023
- Bus Stop Upgrade Program (ongoing)
  - 5 new bus stop shelters
  - 25 mobility pads connected to pedestrian infrastructure
- Transit App Partnership
  - Transit App was introduced to provide the public with real-time departure information and trip planning
    - The app meets WCGA 2.0 level A and level AA and meets the guidelines of WCGA 2.1 A and AA
    - Riders can set preferences such as:
      - prioritize trips that minimize walking

- ability to turn on display accessible stop information (i.e. wheelchair icon)
- utilize GO mode – where it provides step-by-step audio instructions
- screen reader compatible
- Transit Service Disruptions
  - Enhanced communications utilizing Transit Services Facebook and Transit Services webpage
  - Advance notice signage is installed at affected bus stops, as well as additional temporary signage when detoured routes are required

## **CONSULTATION**

Consultation plays a vital role in the Accessibility Plan and is a central focus of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Engaging with both the community and City Administration allows for meaningful dialogue and the proactive identification of accessibility concerns related to municipal facilities, services, and initiatives.

This collaborative approach is also integral to the development and implementation of the City of Thunder Bay's overall Accessibility Plan. It is a standard practice within the corporation for departments to consult with the AAC before presenting proposals to City Council or the public to ensure accessibility considerations are addressed early in the planning process.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meets at least eight times a year and hosts an annual open house.

In 2024, the AAC hosted two (2) public open house events to introduce the 2024 – 2029 Multi Year Accessibility Plan and receive feedback from the community; held a flag raising ceremony to celebrate National AccessAbility Week; and dropped the puck at a Lakehead University Thunder Wolves game to raise awareness about Invisible Disabilities.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The Office of the City Clerk receives a dedicated capital envelope approved through the annual capital budget process, which provides flexibility to fund unexpected or one-time projects that fall outside of departmental capital budgets.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City of Thunder Bay continues to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility through ongoing efforts to identify, remove, and prevent barriers across municipal programs, services, and facilities. In 2024, significant strides were made in areas such as inclusive recreation, accessible infrastructure, transit enhancements, and community engagement. These initiatives reflect the City's dedication to fostering an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of its residents.

The collaboration between City departments, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and community stakeholders plays a vital role in ensuring the effective implementation of the 2024–2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Through thoughtful planning, continuous consultation, and responsive service delivery, the City is making meaningful progress toward its vision of a barrier-free community.

This report highlights the achievements of 2024 and reinforces the City's ongoing obligation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. As accessibility needs continue to evolve, the City remains committed to integrating inclusive practices into all areas of municipal operations.

## **BACKGROUND**

In Ontario, approximately 2.6 million people have a disability. This means roughly one in four Ontarians live with a disability and face various types of accessibility challenges in their everyday life. Also, as the aging population is expected to grow in the next 25 years, it is projected that the number of people living with a disability is also expected to grow in our province.

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and requirements through the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (O. Reg. 191/11) (IASR), the City of Thunder Bay must comply with this legislation to create and maintain barrier-free access to City facilities, programs, services, information, communications, employment and transportation.

Compliance is legislated with biennial reporting to the provincial accessibility directorate. Penalties apply if compliance requirements are not met. Non-compliance fines may result in penalties of up to a maximum of \$100,000 per day for corporations.

In June 2024, City Council adopted the 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Corporate Accessibility Policy (Policy 08-01-04).

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED**

None.

***REPORT PREPARED BY***

Flo-Ann Track, Council & Committee Clerk and Acting Municipal Accessibility Specialist,  
City Manager's Office

***REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY***

Kerri Marshall, Acting City Manager

Date (06/06/2025)