



Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation

2024-2027 Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process

2025 Progress Report

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General

The Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) is committed to providing a smooth, safe, and inclusive airport experience for all travelers. As the terminal operator, SSMADC is subject to the Canadian Transportation Agency's Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR), and our approach goes beyond regulatory compliance. We are dedicated to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers across all aspects of our operations.

This 2025 Progress Report outlines the work completed during the first year of the 2024–2027 Accessibility Plan. It includes updates on infrastructure improvements, policy revisions, and findings from our 2025 Accessibility Consultation Survey. The full Accessibility Plan and this Progress Report are available on our website at:

<https://saultairport.com/accessibility-plan-and-feedback-process/>.

To support accessibility and communication with the public, SSMADC has designated the **Security/Business Administration Manager** as the primary contact for receiving feedback about accessibility, handling accommodation requests, and providing alternate formats of our accessibility materials.

Individuals can contact us in the following ways:

- **Telephone:** 705-779-3031 ext. 204
- **Email:** paate@saultairport.com
- **In Person:** Feedback form available at the Security Desk in the Terminal Building
- **Mailing Address:**
Office 221, Second Floor
Operations Building
1-475 Airport Road
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6A 5K6

Additional information and a contact form can be found on our website at:

<https://saultairport.com/contact/>.

Through these channels, individuals may request alternate formats of our Accessibility Plan, Progress Reports, and feedback process descriptions. They may also submit feedback on the barriers encountered while using our services or on the implementation of our Accessibility Plan. SSMADC welcomes all input as we work to ensure a fully accessible travel experience for every airport user.

2025 Progress

In the first year of implementing our 2024–2027 Accessibility Plan, SSMADC focused on key areas to enhance accessibility for all airport users. The following summarizes the status of action items across various categories:

Employment

The Sault Ste. Marie Airport is a key regional hub made possible by its dedicated workforce of over 400 employees. The SSMADC is fostering a culture of inclusiveness, where all staff, including those with disabilities, feel supported, valued, and a sense of belonging. The airport is committed to creating a workplace where everyone can thrive, exactly as they are.

Action	Status
Develop an Employment Policy which includes all employees, including employees with disabilities.	In Progress: Initiated the development of an inclusive Employment Policy encompassing all employees, including those with disabilities.
Review accessibility of emergency planning.	Complete: Conducted a review of emergency procedures to ensure accessibility considerations are integrated. Updates have been made to the Airport Fire Plan and consideration given to including people with disabilities in emergency exercises. In Progress: Staff will continue to review the accessibility of emergency plans during annual reviews.

Built Environment

At the Sault Ste. Marie Airport, we are committed to creating a built environment that supports and enhances every passenger's journey by identifying and removing barriers through universal, human-centered design—both now and into the future.

Action	Status
Continue to install or upgrade existing power door operators.	Complete: Upgraded the manual door at Gate 3 to an automatic door, two sets of Departures doors have also been upgraded with new automatic doors. In Progress: Other doors throughout the terminal building and operations building which are not on automatic openers have been identified and are in the capital plan to replace in future projects.
Identification of hazards and changes in elevation using contrasting colours.	Complete: Enhanced visibility of elevation changes by applying contrasting colors

	on stairs, including updated painting at Gates.
Add signage to service animal relief areas in alternate formats.	In Progress: Initiated the addition of signage in alternate formats for service animal relief areas.
Add clearly marked priority seating in the departures waiting area and accessible passenger loading zones in the Holdroom area for persons with disabilities.	In Progress: SSMADC has initiated the process of adding clearly marked priority seating in the departures waiting area and accessible passenger loading zones in the Holdroom. In planning for future terminal and operations building upgrades, consideration has been given to the replacement of furniture to enhance accessibility, functionality, and comfort. This includes more accessible and functional modular seating, improved wayfinding, and designated accessibility lanes—both within security screening areas and in the Holdroom. These upgrades form part of a broader Furniture Modernization Project, which is currently included in SSMADC's capital budget for future implementation.

Transportation

As a regional hub serving many surrounding communities, we know that travel extends beyond the Sault Ste. Marie Airport.

Action	Status
Identifying the curbside edges of terminal exterior sidewalks with yellow paint to improve visibility of transit areas and the leading edge of pedestrian paths along vehicular routes.	In Progress: Has been scheduled for completion in summer 2025. This initiative was not included in the previous year's budget and required a delay until the end of winter for suitable weather conditions to proceed safely and effectively.
Add designated pedestrian pathways between accessible parking stalls and lobby entrances using cross-hatching and colour contrasting for increased safety and easier wayfinding.	In Progress: Has been scheduled for completion in summer 2025. This initiative was not included in the previous year's budget and required a delay until the end of winter for suitable weather conditions to proceed safely and effectively.

Improve clear contrast markings and tactile walking surface indicators on stairs, curb ramps, and depression curbs.	In Progress: Initial assessments have been completed, with enhancements planned for implementation in phases. Priority areas have been identified, and work is scheduled to begin in late summer 2025, pending budget alignment and weather conditions.
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Information and Communication Technologies

At the Sault Ste. Marie Airport, we are modernizing traditional systems by adopting accessible, user-friendly ICT tools that promote independence and adapt for long-term use. ICT is being integrated across passenger and employee experience, including the website, social media, emergency alerts, and on-site services—to enhance accessibility now and into the future.

Action	Status
Consider accessibility in lifecycle management for existing ICT, including the development of the new website and the ATM replacement for this year.	Complete: Accessibility is now a core consideration in all ICT procurement and updates. A new accessible ATM model is currently installed in the terminal departures lounge. The airport's new website was completed in 2024 with accessibility standards at the forefront.
The new website will be reviewed by a person with a visual disability using ZoomText magnification software and the JAWS screen reader.	Complete: The new SSMADC website has been successfully reviewed by a person with a visual disability using ZoomText magnification software and the JAWS screen reader. The review confirmed improved accessibility and usability, ensuring the website meets standards for users with visual impairments.
Review inaccessible PDFs on website and find a solution to make the information accessible.	In Progress: A review of all existing PDFs on the website has begun to identify accessibility barriers. SSMADC is currently exploring tools and formats (such as accessible HTML alternatives and tagged PDFs) to ensure all critical content is accessible to screen readers and users with visual disabilities.
Ensuring that the website is functional on mobile devices when a person is using	Complete: The Sault Ste. Marie Airport website has been tested and confirmed to function effectively with mobile screen

speech capability such as Voice Over or Talkback.	readers, including VoiceOver (iOS) and TalkBack (Android). These tests ensure that users relying on speech-based navigation can access content, navigate menus, and interact with features across mobile devices. This enhancement supports a more inclusive digital experience for travelers with visual impairments.
Increase public awareness of accessible services and technology through the SSMADC's own channels and through partnerships with new and current advocacy groups. Specifically, the importance of self-declaration of disabilities and the need for assistance.	In Progress: Increase public awareness of accessible services and technology through the SSMADC's own channels and through partnerships with new and current advocacy groups. Specifically, the importance of self-declaration of disabilities and the need for assistance.

Communication (Other than ICT)

Action	Status
Develop and publish on our website an accessibility statement.	Complete: Included in Accessibility Training on airport website: https://saultairport.com/en/the-airport/canadian-airports-accessibility-training/
Using alternative text descriptions for images across all social media channels including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram.	In Progress: The Sault Ste. Marie Airport has begun implementing the use of alternative text descriptions for images across its social media channels, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram. This effort is part of the airport's ongoing commitment to enhancing accessibility for all users, especially those using screen readers or other assistive technologies. Continued efforts will ensure all images posted on social media are accompanied by appropriate alternative text, providing clearer content for users with visual impairments.
Growing and diversifying our list of national observance awareness days and inclusive events.	In Progress: The SSMADC actively observes several national awareness days and inclusive events to promote accessibility and community engagement. These observances are highlighted

	through various channels, including social media and community events. Efforts to grow and diversify the list of recognized observances are ongoing, with plans to introduce additional events in the future.
Create alternative forms for customer feedback, compliments and complaints.	<p>Complete: The SSMADC currently offers several channels for passengers to provide feedback, compliments, and complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Contact Form: Available on the airport's website for direct submissions. • Security Desk: On-site staff assist with in-person feedback. • Social Media: Active engagement on platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram. • Large Font Feedback Forms: Accessible forms with larger text are available upon request to accommodate passengers with visual impairments. <p>These methods ensure accessible and convenient communication for all passengers. The Accessibility Plan and related Policies are available upon request in alternate formats. These documents are available in print, large print, braille, audio format, plain language or electronic format. We will send you the document within 15 days. For Braille and audio formats, we will send them to you within 45 days.</p>

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services (DDPS)

We strive to make our programs and services accessible and inclusive, enhancing both the passenger experience and the work environment for our employees. By prioritizing accessibility, we aim to offer passengers greater comfort and independence, while also fostering stronger relationships and retention among our employees and partners.

Action	Status
Deepening community relationships through ongoing programs and experiences hosted at the Sault Ste. Marie Airport; Improving accessible	The Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) is committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment for both passengers and

emergency safety for persons with disabilities.	<p>staff. Efforts are ongoing to deepen community relationships through various programs and experiences hosted at the airport. Work to improve accessible emergency safety for persons with disabilities is actively being incorporated into current and future plans, including staff training and infrastructure updates. Community Engagement and Accessibility Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Consultation Survey: The SSMADC has launched an Accessibility Consultation Survey to gather feedback from travelers, particularly those with disabilities, to inform the development of its 3-Year Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports. This survey is part of the airport's commitment to continuous improvement and inclusivity. • Staff Training: The airport is investing in training programs for staff to ensure they are equipped to assist passengers with diverse accessibility needs, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment. <p>https://saultairport.com/en/the-airport/canadian-airports-accessibility-training/</p>
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Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Accessible purchasing at the Sault Ste. Marie Airport ensures that accessibility is considered from the outset in everything from small purchases to major contracts. With over 20 organizations supporting airport operations, accessibility is a key priority in procuring goods, services, and facilities to meet the needs of passengers and employees.

Action	Status
Research inclusive ATM machines for replacement of current ATM machine	Complete: A new accessible ATM was installed in 2024 in the terminal departures area.

Provisions of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

The following accessibility-related provisions of the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR), under the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), are applicable to Sault Ste. Marie Airport (YAM):

Part 1: Requirements Applicable to Transportation Service Providers

Sections: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10(2), 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19(1), 20, 21, 22, 23

Part 4: Requirements Applicable to Terminal Operators

Sections: 212(a), 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225(1)(2)(a), 226, 227, 229, 230, 231

Compliance Statement

Sault Ste. Marie Airport ensures compliance with, or exceeds, each of the above-referenced regulatory requirements. The Airport remains committed to fostering a fully accessible travel environment for all passengers and stakeholders.

Agency Notifications

Within 49 hours of publishing this Accessibility Plan Progress Report and Feedback Process, the Airport provided notification to both the Accessibility Commissioner and the Canadian Transportation Agency. Should any updates or amendments be made to this document, the same agencies will be notified promptly upon its republication.

Consultation

The Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) values the perspectives and lived experiences of persons with disabilities in shaping a more accessible and inclusive airport environment. As required under the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), we conducted consultations to help inform this 2025 Progress Report and to ensure that our efforts reflect the needs of those who use and interact with our services.

In 2025, SSMADC conducted an Accessibility Consultation Survey to gather input from airport users, community members, and stakeholders, including persons with disabilities. The survey was promoted locally to ensure broad participation and accessibility. It was offered in an accessible digital format, with accommodations available upon request to remove participation barriers.

The consultation period spanned three weeks, during which time we received 120 responses, including 73 fully completed submissions, primarily from residents of Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area. While we did not collect identifying information to respect the privacy of individual respondents, feedback reflected a range of experiences from persons with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities.

The survey included questions focused on key areas of the travel experience, including:

- Ease of navigating the terminal and public spaces
- Awareness and visibility of available accessibility services
- Accessibility of parking, washrooms, and check-in areas
- Interactions with airport staff
- Access to food services and information displays

Participants shared that they were generally satisfied with the accessibility of the check-in process, security procedures, and washroom facilities. However, they also identified opportunities for improvement, including:

- Increasing public awareness of available accessibility services
- Improving the visibility and identification of accessible staff
- Enhancing accessible parking support and signage

These insights have been considered in our ongoing implementation of the 2024–2027 Accessibility Plan. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, the SSMADC will continue to use consultation findings to guide updates to infrastructure, services, and communication practices.

We welcome ongoing feedback from people with disabilities, which will be considered in future updates to our plan and in the development of upcoming progress reports. SSMADC will continue to create inclusive and barrier-free opportunities for community engagement as part of our accessibility journey.

Feedback Information

As part of our ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion, the Sault Ste. Marie Airport has continued to welcome feedback from the public, airport users, and staff regarding the implementation of our Accessibility Plan and any barriers they may have experienced.

During the reporting period, we did not receive any feedback related to the implementation of our Accessibility Plan or any specific barriers encountered by individuals interacting with the airport. While no feedback was submitted, we recognize that this may indicate an opportunity to improve the visibility and accessibility of our feedback process.

To encourage greater engagement, we are taking steps to enhance our feedback mechanisms. We will be making the feedback link more prominent on the airport's website and providing clearer instructions on how to submit feedback, including the option to do so anonymously. In addition, we plan to promote the availability of the feedback process more broadly through signage within the airport and through digital communications.

Although no formal feedback was received during this period, we remain committed to identifying, addressing, and preventing accessibility barriers. We will continue to monitor and refine our feedback process and look forward to incorporating future feedback into the development and improvement of our accessibility initiatives.

Individuals are encouraged to share their experiences or suggestions related to accessibility by visiting our website or by contacting us directly via phone, email, or in person. We also offer alternative formats of the feedback process upon request.

What We Have Learned

In the first year of implementing the 2024–2027 Accessibility Plan, the Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) has gained meaningful insight into both the opportunities and challenges involved in improving accessibility within a functioning regional airport.

One of the most immediate and difficult priorities identified was the absence of automatic door openers at key terminal entrances. This posed a significant barrier for passengers with mobility challenges, particularly during adverse weather. Addressing this issue highlighted the importance of responsive infrastructure upgrades to support accessibility.

The 2025 Accessibility Consultation Survey revealed additional gaps, including the need for clearer signage and the absence of tactile walking surface indicators. While these specific improvements have not yet been implemented, they have been incorporated into the revised design scope for upcoming terminal and operational upgrades. The entire Accessibility Plan served as a guiding document in shaping the redesign, which was driven not only by financial considerations but also by the evolving needs of the aviation industry and the long-term vision for the airport's future.

Some initiatives, such as enhancing the clarity of the public address system, encountered logistical and budgetary constraints. As a result, SSMADC has adopted a phased implementation strategy to ensure progress continues without compromising day-to-day operations.

Engagement with local accessibility stakeholders provided valuable perspectives that deepened our understanding of lived experiences. Feedback emphasized the importance of staff awareness and training, prompting us to strengthen staff education on accessibility protocols and inclusive service delivery.

Overall, the first year of implementation has reinforced the importance of flexibility, collaboration, and continuous feedback. These lessons will continue to shape our accessibility priorities as we work to create a welcoming and barrier-free environment for all passengers and visitors.

Training

In 2024-2025, the Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) continued its commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment by prioritizing staff training on accessibility and disability awareness. This training plays a crucial role in ensuring that all employees are equipped with the knowledge and tools to support passengers with varying needs.

SSMADC offers comprehensive accessibility training based on the Canadian Airports Accessibility Training program. The training covers key topics such as assisting passengers with disabilities, recognizing and addressing barriers, and understanding the importance of customer service that is inclusive and sensitive to all needs.

The impact of this training has been significant. Employees have demonstrated greater awareness of the challenges faced by passengers with disabilities, resulting in more empathetic and effective interactions. Moreover, the training has had a direct effect on the implementation of our accessibility plan. For example, staff are now better equipped to identify barriers in real-time and provide feedback for continuous improvements. Additionally, the knowledge gained from this training has influenced operational decisions, ensuring that accessibility is at the forefront of service delivery.

Overall, this training has been instrumental in not only complying with regulations but also creating a more welcoming and supportive environment for all passengers, reinforcing SSMADC's ongoing commitment to accessibility.