



Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation

2024-2027 Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process

2026 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 2026 Progress Report outlines the work completed during the second year of the 2024-2027 Accessibility Plan. It includes updates on infrastructure improvements, policy enhancements, and key findings from the 2026 Accessibility Consultation Survey, which provided valuable insight into passenger experiences and accessibility priorities.

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.

2026 Progress

Findings from the 2026 Accessibility Consultation Survey indicate that passengers continue to report high satisfaction in key areas, particularly:

- Staff friendliness, professionalism, and willingness to assist
- Efficiency of check-in and security screening
- Ease of navigating the terminal environment

At the same time, feedback identified important opportunities for improvement in:

- Awareness and visibility of accessible services
- Exterior accessibility, particularly during winter conditions
- Boarding processes for passengers with mobility needs
- Terminal amenities, including seating, washrooms, and comfort features

The following summarizes updated progress and status of action items across each category:

Employment

The Sault Ste. Marie Airport is a key regional hub made possible by its dedicated workforce of over 400 employees. 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.	Progressing: Continued development of an inclusive Employment Policy. Additional considerations now include accessibility awareness, accommodation, and alignment with evolving best practices.
Review accessibility of emergency planning.	Ongoing: Accessibility considerations remain integrated into emergency procedures. Annual reviews continue, with increased focus on ensuring inclusive emergency response for persons with disabilities through training and planning exercises.

Built Environment

At the Sault Ste. Marie Airport, we remain committed to enhancing the built environment through universal, human-centered design.

Action	Status
Continue to install or upgrade existing power door operators.	Complete / Ongoing: Previous upgrades remain in place. Doors to the Operations building have been improved. Additional doors have been identified and prioritized within future capital planning.
Identification of hazards and changes in elevation using contrasting colours.	Complete: Enhancements to stair visibility and elevation changes continue to support safer navigation.
Add signage to service animal relief areas in alternate formats.	In Progress: Continued implementation of accessible signage, including consideration of visual and tactile formats. Capital planning has been updated to include indoor service animal relief area past screening.
Add clearly marked priority seating and accessible passenger loading zones.	In Progress: Advancing through the broader terminal Furniture Modernization Project. 2026 feedback reinforced the need for accessible, clearly designated seating areas.
Enhance seating comfort and accessibility (new 2026 focus)	In Progress: Based on passenger feedback, improvements to seating comfort, accessibility, and layout are being incorporated into future upgrades.
Review boarding accessibility and mobility support (new 2026 focus).	Under Review: Feedback identified challenges with boarding processes. SSMADC is assessing potential improvements, including ramp options and enhanced mobility support.
Improve washroom accessibility and functionality (new 2026 focus).	In Progress: Passenger feedback regarding usability and comfort has been incorporated into future improvement planning.

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: Work is continuing as part of phased improvements. Reinforced by feedback identifying visibility as a key safety concern.
Add designated pedestrian pathways between accessible parking and entrances.	In Progress: Being implemented in phases. Feedback emphasized the importance of clearer pathways and safe navigation routes.
Improve contrast markings and tactile indicators on stairs and curbs.	In Progress: Priority areas identified; implementation ongoing.
Enhance winter maintenance of accessible areas (new 2026 priority).	In Progress: Survey feedback highlighted challenges with snow and ice. SSMADC is reviewing and strengthening winter maintenance practices for accessible parking, walkways, and curbside areas.

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 ICT systems.	Ongoing: Accessibility remains embedded in ICT procurement and upgrades.
Website reviewed using assistive technologies.	Complete: Website continues to meet accessibility standards.
Review inaccessible PDFs and improve accessibility.	In Progress: Ongoing work to ensure documents are accessible through improved 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 speech capability such as Voice Over or Talkback.	Complete: Confirmed functionality across mobile assistive technologies.
Increase awareness of accessible services and technology.	In Progress: 2026 feedback identified awareness gaps. Efforts are underway to improve communication through the website, signage, and public outreach.

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.	In Progress: Continued expansion across all platforms.
Growing and diversifying our list of national observance awareness days and inclusive events.	In Progress: Ongoing community engagement and recognition initiatives.
Create alternative forms for customer feedback.	Complete: The SSMADC currently offers several channels for passengers to provide feedback, compliments, and complaints: • 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, LinkedIn and Instagram. • Large Font Feedback Forms: Accessible forms with larger text are available upon request to accommodate passengers with visual impairments. 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.
Improve visibility of accessibility services (new 2026 focus)	In Progress: Enhancing signage and communication to ensure passengers are aware of available services and supports.

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 emergency safety for persons with disabilities.	The Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) is committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment for both passengers and 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 • 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. https://saultairport.com/en/the-airport/canadian-airports-accessibility-training/
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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 48 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 people 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 2026 Progress Report and to ensure that our efforts reflect the needs of those who use and interact with our services.

In 2026, SSMADC conducted an Accessibility Consultation Survey to gather input from airport users, community members, and stakeholders, including people with disabilities. The survey was promoted locally and made available in an accessible digital format, with accommodations provided upon request to remove participation barriers.

The consultation period spanned several weeks, during which time we received over 80 responses from a diverse group of participants, including seniors, individuals with mobility challenges, and those with invisible, 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 accessible services
- Accessibility of parking, washrooms, and check-in areas
- Interactions with airport staff
- Access to seating, food services, and amenities

Participants shared that they were generally satisfied with many elements of their experience, particularly:

- Staff friendliness, professionalism, and willingness to help
- Efficiency of check-in and security screening processes
- Ease of navigating the terminal

However, respondents also identified opportunities for improvement, including:

- Increasing awareness of accessibility services, as some passengers indicated they were unaware of available support such as mobility assistance
- Improving accessible parking and exterior pathways, especially during winter conditions where snow and ice created barriers
- Enhancing boarding accessibility, including options to better accommodate passengers using mobility aids
- Upgrading terminal amenities, such as seating comfort, availability of charging stations, and water bottle filling stations
- Improving washroom functionality, including temperature, accessibility, and usability

- Expanding signage and wayfinding, including the addition of tactile and braille elements

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

We welcome ongoing feedback from people with disabilities and remain committed to creating inclusive, 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 continues 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 2025-2026 reporting period, no formal feedback was received through the airport's established accessibility feedback channels, such as the website, email, phone, or in-person submissions.

While no direct feedback was submitted through this process, we recognize that this may indicate an opportunity to improve the visibility, clarity, and accessibility of our feedback mechanisms.

At the same time, SSMADC did receive valuable insights through the 2026 Accessibility Consultation Survey, which provided meaningful input on passenger experiences and accessibility priorities. These findings are being used to inform ongoing improvements.

To encourage greater engagement with the formal feedback process, SSMADC is taking steps to:

- Increase the visibility of the feedback link on the airport's website
- Provide clearer instructions on how to submit feedback, including the option to do so anonymously
- Promote awareness of feedback options through signage within the terminal and digital communication channels

Although no feedback was submitted through the formal feedback process during this period, SSMADC remains committed to identifying, addressing, and preventing accessibility barriers. We will continue to monitor and refine our feedback process and

look forward to incorporating future submissions 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. Alternate formats of the feedback process are available upon request to ensure accessibility for all users.

What We Have Learned

In the second year of implementing the 2024–2027 Accessibility Plan, the Sault Ste. Marie Airport Development Corporation (SSMADC) has gained deeper insight into both the strengths and ongoing challenges associated with improving accessibility within a regional airport environment.

Findings from the 2026 Accessibility Consultation Survey reinforced that customer service is one of the airport's strongest assets, with passengers consistently highlighting the professionalism, friendliness, and helpfulness of staff. These positive interactions play a critical role in shaping the overall travel experience and support a welcoming and inclusive environment.

At the same time, the consultation findings identified several key areas requiring continued focus:

- Awareness of accessibility services remains a gap, as some passengers indicated they were not fully aware of the support available to them
- Seasonal conditions, particularly during winter, significantly impact accessibility, especially in parking areas, sidewalks, and curbside access points
- Infrastructure limitations, including boarding processes and terminal amenities, continue to influence accessibility and overall passenger comfort
- Wayfinding and signage improvements are still needed, including clearer visual indicators and accessible formats such as tactile and braille elements

While significant progress has been made on previously identified priorities such as the installation of automatic door operators and improved visibility of elevation changes feedback confirmed that accessibility is an ongoing, evolving process that requires both physical improvements and enhanced communication.

The 2026 survey also highlighted that many challenges are not solely related to infrastructure, but also to communication and awareness, reinforcing the importance of ensuring that passengers understand how to access available services.

SSMADC continues to apply a phased and flexible implementation approach, allowing for steady progress while balancing operational requirements and financial

considerations. Engagement with passengers and the broader community remains essential, ensuring that improvements are informed by real experiences and evolving needs.

Overall, the second year of implementation has reinforced the importance of:

- Maintaining strong, customer-focused service
- Improving communication and visibility of accessibility supports
- Addressing seasonal and operational barriers
- Continuing to invest in infrastructure enhancements

These lessons will continue to guide SSMADC as we work toward creating a more accessible, inclusive, and barrier-free airport experience for all passengers.

Training

In 2025-2026, 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.

SSMADC continues to provide comprehensive accessibility training based on the Canadian Airports Accessibility Training program, equipping employees with the knowledge and tools required to support passengers with a wide range of needs.

Training focuses on key areas such as:

- Assisting passengers with disabilities
- Recognizing and reducing barriers
- Providing inclusive, respectful, and customer-centered service

Building on previous training initiatives, additional emphasis has been placed on:

- Supporting passengers with invisible disabilities, including those with cognitive or sensory needs
- Proactively identifying when passengers may require assistance, even if not explicitly requested
- Strengthening communication skills and empathy in all passenger interactions

The impact of this training continues to be evident in feedback from the 2026 survey, where passengers consistently identified staff attitude, helpfulness, and professionalism as a key strength of the airport experience.

Training has also contributed to improved operational awareness, enabling staff to:

- Identify accessibility barriers in real time
- Provide immediate support to passengers

- Contribute to ongoing improvements through feedback and observation

SSMADC recognizes that training is not a one-time initiative but a continuous process and will continue to enhance training programs to reflect evolving best practices and passenger needs.

Overall, accessibility training remains a critical component of SSMADC's approach, ensuring that all employees are equipped to contribute to a safe, welcoming, and barrier-free environment, and reinforcing the organization's ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion.