

City of North Bay

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

## **2004 Update – Municipal Accessibility Plan**

September 2004

(Large Print version)

Submitted To: Mayor & Council

Submitted By: North Bay Municipal Accessibility  
Advisory Committee

## **Executive Summary:**

- 1) This Update is a progress review of the 2003 Municipal Accessibility Plan, focused on the Short-Term recommendations in that Plan
- 2) Council and City staff are to be commended on the progress made on a number of fronts since the Plan was adopted and investments that have been made
- 3) The Committee consulted with community organizations serving citizens with special needs by way of a survey. Issues have been identified or re-affirmed in Section 5 of this Update
- 4) The Committee encourages Council and staff to make continued progress on the Short-Term recommendations outstanding and to turn attention to the 13 Medium Term recommendations contained in the Accessibility Plan (attached)
- 5) The Committee requests that Council allocate a sum of \$10,000 in the 2005 Operating Budget in order to fund 2 accessibility building audits and additional employee awareness training

## **1.0 Introduction to the 2004 Update**

- Council adopted original Municipal Accessibility Plan (MAP) in September 2003
- Requirement under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)* for annual reviews of the Plan, commenting on specific improvements to services and on areas requiring further improvement in order to increase accessibility to City-owned or City-run facilities, programs or services
- This Update will make observations about City of North Bay accomplishments and make further specific recommendations for possible improvements to City-owned and operated facilities, programs and services
- Note that like the original Accessibility Plan (which was a Joint Plan under the Act), this update will reflect both City operations and City Transit programs and services

## **2.0 Process behind Update**

- Compare City actions in a number of areas against the Short-Term recommendations contained in Section 5.0 of the 2003 Municipal Accessibility Plan

### **3.0 How the M.A.A.C. Consulted**

- Contacts/follow up with City staff throughout 2004
- Contact with community organizations for persons with special needs by way of surveys to approximately 30 local groups - administered in July of 2004
- Comments given to Committee members throughout the year

### **4.0 Achievements/Improvements**

- Kudos to the Council and staff for the start
- Progress made on a number of fronts
- Use the Short Term recommendations from the 2003 MAP as a guiding tool

#### *4.1 Mobility Concerns*

- Focus on Transit investments and service improvements made
- Accessible (regular) fleet in place – 0 in January 2003; 2 coaches in regular fleet by October 2003;
- Tenders for Conventional 'Low Floor' coach replacements – 2004/05/06 (6 coaches to be replaced commencing with 1 in 2004, 3 in 2005 and 2 in 2006)
- Tenders for Para-Bus fleet replacements – 2004 (1 Para-Bus vehicle to be replaced)

- City Transit now allows registered attendants or care givers to ride at no charge
- City Bus Stop signs are scheduled for refinishing with different colour schemes to make them easier to identify (in progress)

#### *4.2 Facility/Design Concerns*

- Recent building renovations to the North Bay Public Library included extra hand rails and improved front entrance ramping, visual marker strips on front entry steps, re-grading of the Children's Dept. entry (off McIntyre St.) and a designated and signed on-street accessible parking space on Worthington St. by the main entrance
- Recently-completed projects (such as the North Bay Aquatic Centre) have also embodied a number of accessibility improvements
- "Open For Business" resource guide and video on order for use by City as an employee training/awareness tool
- The Committee is concerned that the only functioning audible traffic signal in City (Fisher at the Princess St. trail crosswalk) was taken out of service due to complaints from neighbours. This now creates a safety issue for persons with disabilities who wish to use the crossing. The Advisory Committee encourages Council and City staff to communicate such issues for advice before taking action, to re-use the signal equipment somewhere else, and to continue authorizing the purchase and

installation of such equipment, perhaps with existing commercial areas as a first area of priority.

- Surface painting and improved signage for accessible parking spaces (on-street/off-street) will be completed during 2004

#### *4.3 Communications Concerns*

- The Committee wishes to commend Council and staff for the Computer-Assisted Dispatch in place now at North Bay Fire Services. It is a piece of software that allows a citizen with restrictions to be “flagged” on a database. Emergency Responders can be informed as they respond to an incident at a particular site. Program registrants can be added at any time.
- City staff are actively investigating feasibility/costing for document production in alternate formats and alternate methods for citizens to communicate with City staff via telephone or on the Internet.
- The Advisory Committee intends to invite staff representatives from different City departments and agencies to attend future Advisory Committee meetings in order to share information and build awareness.

#### *4.4 Policy/Procedure/Practice Concerns*

- 1 front-line staff awareness session was held (with representatives from the Canadian Mental Health Association – May 2004)

- 1 Committee-sponsored awareness 'event' was held (involving the Mayor & Deputy-Mayor/Council) – July 2004
- Revised Set Fines – Accessible Parking Spaces (approved by Council in August 2004; presently awaiting Provincial approval)
- Transit Operator Training on patrons with special needs and Low-Floor Coaches ( training completed Spring 2004)
- City staff participating in training provided by others as continued awareness (September 2004)
- Accessibility Resource Manual compiled and distributed to City supervisory staff (June 2004)
- Accessibility considerations in City Purchasing Policy (under review)

## ***5.0 Results of the Community Consultations***

- The surveys received acknowledged progress made by the City in different areas, but raised issues identified including: 'flatten' the ramps at intersections, install more audible traffic signals, improve winter maintenance of sidewalks, improve employee awareness and attitudes, simplify all written material for persons with reading difficulties, eliminate admittance fees/charges for attendants/caregivers at City facilities or events, extend the Lake Nipissing Boardwalk to the water's edge in several spots, increase the size of the Para-Bus fleet, improve City buildings for persons

with sight or hearing impairments, install more international symbols in City buildings or facilities, renovate more washrooms in City buildings or facilities to improve accessibility and consider special admission rates at City facilities or events for persons with disabilities.

## **6.0 Specific Recommendations for 2005**

- Include the following as a general Goal Statement for the Municipal Accessibility Plan itself:

“The City of North Bay encourages, in the provision of municipally owned and operated facilities, programs and services, improved access for citizens and visitors with special needs. In this way, the City helps to contribute to a desirable quality of life for the community.”

- Encourage continued work on the Short-Term recommendations outstanding (public education – Traffic safety programs, Sunday Para-Bus service, pole markers for City Transit stops, development of an Accessible Housing Registry, increase number of accessible parking spaces in downtown, increased staff awareness training, improvements to City building entrances for persons with visual impairments)
- Request that Council and staff commence analysis and investigation of the 13 Medium

Term recommendations identified in the 2003  
Municipal Accessibility Plan

- Encourage continued attention to accessibility concerns in City Capital Budget discussions for 2005
- Request that an Operating Budget allocation of \$10,000 be provided in the 2005 Operating Budget for the purpose of providing 2 building accessibility audits (City Hall, Memorial Gardens) estimated at \$4,000 each and \$2,000 for additional employee awareness training sessions.

## **Appendices**

2003 Municipal Accessibility Plan – Medium Term  
Recommendations

(attached)

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Members  
– 2004/5/6

Donna Forget (Chair)

Denise Alkins (Vice-Chair)

George Lake (Member)

Serge Falardeau (Member)

Dorothy Robidas (Member)

Councillor Judith Koziol (Council rep.)

Jeff Celentano (City staff rep./Secretary)

*Excerpts – 2003 Municipal Accessibility Plan*

*Table 3 – Medium Term (7 – 12 months) Recommendations*

<b><i>CNB Facility, Program or Service</i></b>	<b><i>Type of Concern or Barrier</i></b>	<b><i>Recommended Solution</i></b>
International symbols	Communications	Investigate the use of international signage system for all CNB facilities
Ramp/Curb Cut signs	Mobility	Place signs/enforce
Para Bus Service	Mobility	Sell Para-Bus Passes
Public Library	Facility/Design	Make turn-styles easier for persons who use wheelchairs to use, modify elevator for users with larger wheelchairs/scooters
City Staff	Communications	Collect samples of other Accessibility Plans and incorporate best practices in CNB Plan
City Staff	Facility/Design	Promote accessibility issues in Building Code administration and with other local public agencies
City Staff	Facility/Design	Design all CNB buildings alterations

		for accessibility
<b><i>CNB Facility, Program or Service</i></b>	<b><i>Type of Concern or Barrier</i></b>	<b><i>Recommended Solution</i></b>
Loading Zones – Para Bus	Mobility	Create more spaces on public and private lands
Council Meetings	Communications/Practice & Procedure	Make available in alternate formats
Council – Bylaws/Policies	Practice/Procedure	Commence a review of key Bylaws (Traffic, Parking, Waste Collection) that may affect persons with disabilities
9-1-1 Dispatch	Communications/Practice & Procedure	Make available in alternate formats
Washrooms – CNB Arenas & facilities	Mobility, Facility/Design	Install automatic doors, make washrooms gender-free for persons requiring assistance
Council & City Staff	Communications	Develop a Public Education Program