



The Corporation of the  
City of Sault Ste. Marie

## COUNCIL REPORT

February 3, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council  
AUTHOR: Diane Morrell, Accessibility Coordinator  
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services  
RE: Video Remote Interpreting Trial

---

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enter into a one-year contract with Canadian Hearing Services for the purpose of trialing Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) service for American Sign Language interpretation at the Civic Centre.

The trial is for one year, and if the service is successfully used by the community, Accessibility will follow the procurement process, and a Request for Proposal will be issued for future service provision.

### **Background**

On November 29, 2021, Council approved the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2025, which includes an annual financial commitment of \$5,000 for implementing Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) through the Canadian Hearing Services.

Text Net was a service the City provided to communicate with the Deaf Community for many years; however, the service was not used, and a new service for communication with Deaf people is VRI for in-person interactions.

During COVID 19, many services were paused, and VRI was one of them. VRI service resumed in the spring of 2024.

### **Analysis**

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the City is required to 'provide accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

People who are Deaf communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) or Les Signes de Quebecoise (LSQ).

VRI provides on-demand ASL and LSQ for in-person customer interactions and will be introduced at the Ronald A. Irwin Civic Centre lobby customer service area.

The equipment is portable and self-contained and can be used anywhere in the Civic Centre for either short or long communication support.

If the trial VRI service has been successfully used by the community, Accessibility will follow the Procurement Policy, and an RFP will be issued for future service provision.

Further consideration will be given to expanding VRI in other customer service areas in the Corporation.

The contract has been reviewed and approved by the Legal Department.

### **Financial Implications**

The following equipment for VRI has already been purchased:

1. Cost for equipment to provide the service - 1,835.46.
2. Cost for cellular data to provide the service - \$11.00/month

Cost for VRI service is \$600 per year, plus \$6/minute ASL/LSQ interpretation, with a minimum billable use of 2 minutes.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has an annual budget of \$5,000 to cover the cost of the service.

### **Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact**

The topic of this report is linked to the Strategic Plan, Community Development (Social Equity), Quality of Life (Welcoming) and Service Delivery (Eliminate Barriers).

This service will provide communication support for an equitable customer service experience at the Ronald A. Irwin Civic Centre for customers who are Deaf and communicate with American Sign Language (ASL) or Les Signes de Quebecoise (LSQ).

VRI service also aligns with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA") and the Corporations Accessibility Policy respecting the four Core Principals of:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equality of Opportunity

Video Remote Interpreting Trial

February 3, 2025

Page 3.

The climate change impact has implications on end-of-life electronics, and the appropriate channels for the disposal of e-waste will be followed as per community waste management offerings, at that time.

**Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Accessibility Coordinator dated February 03, 2025, be received and that Council approve entering into a one-year contract with Canadian Hearing Services for a trial of on-demand Video Remote Interpreting.

The relevant By-law 2025-24 is listed under item 12 of the Agenda and will be read with all by-laws under that item.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Morrell

Accessibility Coordinator

705.941.7310

[d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca](mailto:d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca)