



The Corporation of the  
City of Sault Ste. Marie

## COUNCIL REPORT

March 23, 2026

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council  
AUTHOR: Diane Morrell, Accessibility Coordinator  
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services  
RE: Accessible Document Training and Software Purchase

---

### **Purpose**

This purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to use available Barrier Removal Reserve funds to provide staff training and purchase software to create and remediate accessible documents, and to authorize proceeding with the procurement process to secure a qualified vendor to undertake staff training.

### **Background**

Under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* Information and Communication Standard, the Corporation is required to provide accessible formats upon request. This requirement has been in place since 2011.

While the Corporation has relied on the “upon request” provision to meet this requirement, access to digital information has not been equitable for persons with disabilities who require accessible formats.

Accessible formats vary depending on an individual’s disability. For example, properly structured digital documents may be accessible to someone using a screen reader, while others may require large print or Braille.

Creating accessible, “conversion-ready” documents allow the Corporation to efficiently convert information into the requested accessible format, as required by legislation. This supports timely access, meets individual accessibility needs, and ensures cost-efficient remediation of documents in formats that the Corporation cannot produce, such as Braille.

“Conversion-ready” refers to electronic documents designed to facilitate conversion into accessible formats. This includes using proper document structure such as headings, to enable navigation with assistive technologies such as screen readers.

Conversion-ready practices include, but are not limited to:

- Using sans-serif fonts

- Using upper- and lower-case letters appropriately
- Providing adequate spacing
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast
- Including alternative text for images
- Using plain language
- Applying other accessibility best practices, as appropriate.

### **Analysis**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) 2026-2030 was approved by Council on February 23, 2026, and includes the following action item:

- Provide training for employees on creating accessible, conversion-ready documents and providing communication supports.

Providing this training will enable staff to proactively create accessible documents, reducing the need for external document remediation costs and improving timely access to information. This approach also reduces the risk of Human Rights complaints related to delays in providing accessible formats and supports the Corporation's commitment to accessible customer service.

Based upon preliminary budget estimates, staff training and the purchase of new software to assist in accessible document remediation and conversion can be procured within the funding available through the barrier removal reserve.

### **Resolution in support from the Accessibility Advisory Committee:**

*Whereas the provision of accessible documents is required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, therefore be it resolved that the Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the use of Barrier Removal Reserves to the maximum amount of \$85,000 for accessible document training and software purchase for City staff, and recommend that City Council approve this request.*

### **Financial Implications**

As of March 2, 2026 the barrier removal reserves account has \$85,000 in uncommitted funds available for this training. The final cost will depend on the selected training provider, software to support document remediation and number and complexity of staff training required.

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

Accessible document training supports the Strategic Plan by demonstrating:

- Community Development; Social Equity to support equitable access and opportunities for everyone
- Quality of Life; Welcoming to instill a strong sense of community that embraces and celebrates diversity and culture with equitable, inclusive and accessible community spaces

- Service Delivery; Customer Service and Eliminate Barriers to provide accessible communications, timely resolution of concerns and fair treatment for all, by identifying and removing physical and digital barriers to enhance accessibility.

Approval of use of barrier removal reserves for this purpose does not impact the Municipal Green House Gas Reduction Plan.

**Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Accessibility Coordinator dated March 23, 2026 concerning Accessible Document Training and Software Purchase be received and that Council approve the use of up to \$85,000 from the Barrier Removal Reserve to provide staff training to create and remediate accessible documents;

Further that Council authorize proceeding with the procurement process to secure a qualified vendor to deliver the training, including the purchase of required software in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the Corporation's MYAP.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Morrell  
Accessibility Coordinator  
705.541.7310  
[d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca](mailto:d.morrell@cityssm.on.ca)