

Appendix 'A' to Report to Council CSBU-2025-021

City Of North Bay

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC)

2024 Annual Report

a) Background

This report reflects activities undertaken by the North Bay Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) during 2024.

b) Summary of Activities – Year 2024

a) Committee Membership – 2024

Barbra Smith (Chair)
Linda Thomas-Ouellette (Vice-Chair)
Robert Nielsen
Suzanne Nielsen
Andrew Gustafson
Phil Geden
Robert Irvine
Kim Kitchen
Johanne Brousseau
Cory Adams
Laura Johnston
Councillor Gardiner (City Council Representative)

Staff:

Adam Curran Secretary-Treasurer

During the 2024 year, long term members of MAAC, Robert and Suzanne Nielsen resigned from the Committee for personal reasons. MAAC would like to thank both Rob and Suzanne for their commitment to MAAC for many years and wish them the best in the future.

MAAC also lost a new member Phil Geden. Phil passed away in 2024. MAAC extended condolences to Phil's family and friends.

b) Meetings of the Committee

The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee met eight (8) times in 2024. Meetings generally take place the second Thursday of every month, at 12 p.m.

c) Municipal Projects

A standard practice has been established where once the capital budget has been approved by Council, Municipal Staff will send their projects to MAAC. MAAC will review these projects and invite staff members to come and discuss projects of interest to MAAC.

MAAC meetings are regularly attended by City Staff. This allows Staff to receive feedback from the Committee regarding the accessibility of existing and proposed policies, programs, services, facilities and infrastructure. It is also an opportunity for MAAC members to gain a greater understanding of municipal processes and projects.

Community Centre

The Manager of Special Projects presented the Community Centre designs to MAAC.

Two members of MAAC also reviewed the drawings in detail and provided the Manager of Special Projects recommendations and items to be considered. The Community Centre designs meet AODA standards, and a number of items have been included that exceed those standards, including:

- the installation of two adult change tables
- elevating viewing decks
- no ramping or elevation change from dressing room to ice surface, including larger door access to the ice surface
- contrasting colours for doors to ensure they are visually viewed
- removable player benches to accommodate sledge hockey tournaments
- grab bars will be included in dressing rooms for sledge hockey

There was discussion related to the interior doors to the dressing rooms and the need for pushbutton operators on each door. It was explained to the Committee that the doors are not self-closing and most of the time are left open to allow for free flow into the dressing room. The dressing rooms are designed to allow for the doors to remain open and provide for privacy for changing. Although there is no requirement for pushbuttons on each of these doors through the AODA, 4 change rooms bathrooms will have pushbutton operations, 2 on each side of the rinks.

The Manager of Special Projects committed to returning to MAAC in 2025 as the design and construction of the Community Centre progresses.

Airport Accessibility Plan

The Airport Manager sent a draft version of the 'Airport Accessibility Plan' for MAAC to review.

MAAC was very pleased with the Plan, however, had a couple of questions of clarification or suggestions for future improvements within the Airport.

The Airport Manager was able to make some of the minor changes and said they would consider some of the other suggestions when a larger renovation was taking place.

Para Bus

The Manager of Transit attended a MAAC meeting to discuss Para Bus and the changes that have been implemented from the recommendations of the previous MAAC.

Some of the changes include changes to the application form, which makes the requirements for Para Bus based on the individual and not on their ability or disability. This makes the Para Bus more inclusive to individuals who need to take the Para Bus.

MAAC also learned about different categories of ridership which include unconditional service, conditional service and temporary service.

MAAC was pleased to learn that people living with vision loss are able to apply for conditional ridership during the winter season.

The Manager of Transit also highlighted the accessible features of the conventional service.

Paddle Presentation

Representatives from PADDLE attended a MAAC meeting to discuss some of the challenges their clients face in the community.

Some of the challenges identified by Paddle during the presentation were that some private businesses are not accessible, debit machines are typically too high in businesses, and most businesses do not have accessible change tables.

MAAC agreed that these are challenges faced within our community and elsewhere, however, MAAC recognizes the City is restricted in its powers to require private businesses to undertake these types of renovations without the business completing major renovations that would necessitate the need for a building permit.

However, MAAC recognizes that additional education could be completed to help businesses understand low-cost approaches to making their businesses more accessible. MAAC will work with staff on developing an education plan.

Paddle also identified some additional improvements that could be made to public spaces and services including identifying streets without sidewalks, the need/use of phone to use dynamic dispatching, and the suggestion of new floating chairs to complement the existing beach mats. These suggestions have been presented to different staff members.

Armstrong Park

MAAC would like to thank the Parks Department for the additions of accessible features to the existing park including, two additional accessible parking spots, the accessible beach mat to provide access to Trout Lake, and the change room that has accommodated an adult change table.

MAAC would like to thank the Mayor and City Council for their support for accessibility in the Community.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Smith
Chair, North Bay Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee