



# NFMC ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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## Message from the General Manager and Chair of the Board

The Nawiinginiima Forest Management Corporation (NFMC) is the first Ontario local forest management corporation (LFMC) established under the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 (OFTMA). The NFMC, a Crown Agency, was established to operate within a defined management area that includes the communities of the Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation, Pic Mobert First Nation, the Hornepayne Aboriginal community, and the municipalities of Marathon, Hornepayne, Manitouwadge and White River. The variety of goods and services the NFMC provides range from raw wood products to employment and information on sustainable forest management and renewal practices.

The frequency of the NFMC's encounters with people with disabilities is very different than a large organization of many employees who encounter the general public in their everyday business. That does not lessen the NFMC's responsibility to be aware of and respect the needs of employees, clients and the public with disabilities. Much of the work the NFMC has done to date in this area has been to adopt a formal Accessibility Policy, train staff, and upgrade its public website to meet accessibility requirements.

The Accessibility Plan that follows is a roadmap to the NFMC's achievement of accessibility objectives and meeting its Accessibility Policy's commitments. The Plan begins with the identification and removal of barriers within the timelines described by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*; is reviewed and updated as practices or procedures change or as described herein, and endorsed by the NFMC Board of Directors.

This plan and our efforts must comply with AODA, 2005, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ont. Reg. 429/07) and Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ont. Reg. 191/11).



**Carmelo Notarbartolo, General Manager**



**Grant Goodwin, Chair of the Board**

**August 2016**

## **Definitions**

### **Accessibility**

The term accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

### **Barrier**

Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

### **Disability**

Ontario's accessibility law adopts the definition for disability that is in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It defines disability broadly:

- a) "any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and , without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997."

## **Introduction**

This is the NFM's first multi-year Accessibility Plan and it was developed to comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The Plan is endorsed by the NFM's Board of Directors and will be submitted to the Province of Ontario in accordance with the reporting requirements of the AODA. Currently there are two accessibility legislations in Ontario: the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Ontarians with Disability Act, 2001 (ODA). Both legislations aim to improve accessibility for Ontarians by identifying, removing and preventing barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

The AODA applies to all public and private sector organizations in Ontario. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) also known as Ontario Regulation 191/11 which is an amendment to the

AODA creates a shift from preparing annual Accessibility Plans to the creation of a multi-year accessibility plan.

Under the AODA, the NFMC is required to establish, maintain and document a multi-year plan that outlines the Agency's strategies to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. The Plan must also document how the NFMC has met or intends to meet the requirements of the IASR. Going forward, the NFMC will be required to review and update this plan once every five years and prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the Plan.

## **NFMC Accessibility Plan – Strategies, Responsibilities and Timelines for Delivery**

### **I. General**

Reporting - Review NFMC's Accessibility Plan every two years and report on progress to the NFMC Board of Directors – Provide government compliance report every two years. Conduct formal five year review by January 1, 2021.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager, NFMC Board of Directors as per required timelines.

Review and update Policy – As NFMC practices or procedures change, or annually. Post and distribute to all employees. Post on NFMC public website.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager, annually.

### **II. Customer Service**

Feedback processes for employees and the public – Accessibility Policy is posted for public viewing and available on the website. NFMC staff are trained to work with people with disabilities to identify ways to meet their needs. Review and update ways to seek feedback and input on accessibility provisions from employees and the public. Assess their effectiveness and implement accordingly.

**Responsibility and timelines:** General Manager/Board endorsement of plan/Policy renewal August 2018 (every two years).

Barrier Identification – As information becomes apparent due to feedback or improved understanding of limitations to accessibility. Determine accessibility needs and effective strategies to mitigate barriers.

**Responsibility and timelines:** General Manager/Board endorsement of Plan/Policy renewal August 2018 (every two years).

**III. Information and Communications**

Emergency and Public Safety Information - Provide NFMC Health and Safety Program Administrator accessibility criterion to include in formal workplace inspections, including office evacuation plans, and any other public safety information.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** NFMC Health and Safety Program Administrator by September 2016.

Information for the General Public – Interaction with the public is ongoing. Every two years review requests for documentation and ensure those frequently provided are in an accessible format. Review industry/government standards and effective tools and recommend revisions as required to improve accessibility.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager by August 2018.

**IV. Employment**

Complete determination of restrictive/specialized job functions with potential barriers to accessibility.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager by August 2018.

Review standardize accessibility wording for job advertisements.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager by August 2018.

**V. Procurement and Training**

Build accessibility planning into existing strategic business planning and budgetary processes.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager and CFO, August 2018.

Provide training to new staff in Ontario’s accessibility laws that relate to persons with disabilities.

**Responsibilities and timelines:** General Manager to ensure that new NFMC complete accessibility training upon hire.

**VI. Required Reporting and Significant Task Timelines**

Accessibility Compliance Reports are required every two years:

December 31, 2017, December 31, 2019, December 31, 2021, December 31, 2023, December 31, 2025.