



# Owen Sound Transportation Company Accessibility Progress Report

## General

### Executive Summary

This document describes the Owen Sound Transportation Company's (OSTC) progress in achieving accessibility targets outlined in the Accessibility Plan. This is OSTC's first progress report following the first accessibility plan published in 2024.

The Owen Sound Transportation Company (OSTC) is an operational enterprise agency of the Province of Ontario. The OSTC owns and operates a seasonal vehicle and passenger ferry, the MS *Chi-Cheemaun*, from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island and MV *Niska I*, a landing craft style ferry between Moosonee and Moose Factory Island on the Moose River, just south of James Bay in Northern Ontario.

The OSTC also provides vessel management services for the Ministry of Transportation Ontario for three vessels: the MV *Pelee Islander*, MV *Pelee Islander II* and the MV *Jiimaan* (not in service), operating under the Pelee Island Transportation Service, and a daily air service (third-party contract) between the Ontario mainland and Pelee Island during the winter months when the ferries are not operating.

The OSTC employs approximately 40 full-time employees and up to 140 seasonal employees during the summer.

### Accessibility Statement

The Owen Sound Transportation Company Limited (OSTC) is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The OSTC is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers for travellers with disabilities so that everyone is treated with dignity and can fully participate in the experience of travelling with us.

### Feedback and Contact Information

To provide feedback on our accessibility plan, or to request an alternate format of the plan or a description of our feedback process, please contact us through any of the options below and we will respond in the same format. Customers can also provide feedback anonymously.



Online feedback:

[www.ontarioferries.com/who-we-are/#wwa-contact-us](http://www.ontarioferries.com/who-we-are/#wwa-contact-us)

Email:

[info@ontarioferries.com](mailto:info@ontarioferries.com)

Phone:

519-376-8740

Mail:

Manager of Health, Safety, Environment and Compliance

1415-1<sup>st</sup> Ave West, Suite 3000

Owen Sound, ON N4K 4K8

### Feedback Information

OSTC welcomes feedback from all customers regarding the accessibility of our services. Passenger comments this year concerned the configuration of the elevator on the *Chi-Cheemaun*. OSTC encourages passengers with disabilities to use the fully accessible elevator on the docks to access the passenger area. OSTC also offers assistive devices that fit inside the elevator to assist passengers.

### Provisions of CTA Accessibility Related Regulations

The OSTC is subject to the Personnel Training for the Assistance of Persons with Disabilities Regulations (SOR/94-42).

### Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

There have been no significant changes in this area. OSTC's primary means of communication with customers continues to be through the website. OSTC also communicates with customers by phone, email, social media and text message, and will provide information in an alternative format if requested.

If sailings are cancelled or significantly delayed, OSTC notifies affected customers by the quickest means possible and sends notifications through email, SMS text and social media. Local news and radio stations are also notified and broadcast notices.



Passengers receive reservation confirmations by email. It was noticed that confirmations issued for special event sailings did not always have a statement requesting passengers with accessibility needs to inform OSTC so accommodations can be arranged. This has been fixed.

### Communication other than ICT

Since the publication of the first accessibility plan last year, directional signage onboard the *Chi-Cheemaun* and *Pelee Islander II* were updated or added. These updates include adding signage in Braille and improving font sizes and colour contrasts for better visibility.

### Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

OSTC's procurement policies continue to follow the Government of Ontario's procurement policies.

### Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

OSTC customers may make reservations online through our website, by phone with a Reservation Agent or in person at the terminals. Persons with disabilities who require assistance boarding the ferry are asked to self-identify so staff can make appropriate preparations. There have been no changes made or proposed in this area.

All OSTC staff regardless of their position continue to complete basic accessibility training. Staff who regularly interact with customers complete additional training specific to their work and location. Basic training is completed online in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Additional training or orientation is completed onsite and includes procedures for assisting passengers onto the ferry, providing wheelchairs, operating the elevators and familiarising with emergency evacuation procedures for passengers with disabilities.

### Transportation

There have been no changes in this area. OSTC continues to offer a shuttle service for walk-on passengers and their baggage between the terminal and ferry.

OSTC is a transportation service and our work to identify and remove barriers in this area is further addressed under "Built Environment."



### Built Environment

#### *Offices and Terminals*

There have been no changes to the design of offices and terminal buildings. OSTC continues to offer mobility aids and shuttle services for passengers and customers who require this assistance.

#### *MS Chi-Cheemaun*

The automatic door and emergency alarm system in the barrier-free washroom on the lounge deck were replaced over the winter and are a significant upgrade over the previous arrangement.

The passenger elevator and some interior doorways are original from 1974 and are often too narrow to accommodate scooters and larger wheelchairs. OSTC continues to offer assistive devices that fit inside the elevator and doorways to assist passengers. Any new vessels will be designed to comply with existing accessibility standards.

#### *MV Pelee Islander*

Long-term planning includes designing and building a new vessel to replace the *Pelee Islander* that meets accessibility standards. There are no planned changes to the passenger areas of the vessel to date.

#### *MV Pelee Islander II*

The doorways to the outside deck are watertight doors with high sills and heavy handles. This may limit access for passengers who wish to sit outside on the deck. There are only stairs to the outside seating areas so passengers in wheelchairs are unable to sit outside. OSTC continues to consider modifications that allow easier access to the outer deck that does not compromise the safety of the vessel; however, there have been no proposed changes to date.

### Employment

OSTC is committed to providing an equitable and fair working environment to all employees. All job postings have an inclusivity statement that welcomes applications from persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups. OSTC commits to providing all reasonable accommodations as requested by applicants during the recruitment process.

Shipboard employees are required by Transport Canada to undergo marine medical examinations that attest to their fitness to work onboard and respond effectively to marine emergencies. As such, OSTC is unable to offer shipboard employment to persons who cannot



pass a marine medical examination, and this may limit eligibility for some people. Some terminal positions also require employees to be assessed for their fitness by a medical practitioner. These assessments include physical fitness and visual acuity. The physical fitness requirements of the terminal positions are established with the safety of the employee, passengers, ships and environment in mind.

OSTC is committed to supporting employees who require accommodations, modified work due to injury and early and safe return to work. These areas are managed by Human Resources.

### Consultations

OSTC welcomes feedback from all customers regarding the accessibility of our services. Consultations have been carried out through surveys sent by email to all customers after they travel with us. Feedback is also received in person by shipboard and terminal employees and is passed on to the office by department heads.

To date, efforts to solicit feedback on OSTC's accessibility plan produced no comments. OSTC will initiate a more comprehensive survey with the public focused on specific areas.