THUNDER BAY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY INC.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN & FEEDBACK PROCESS

2024 - 2027

Thunder Bay Airport

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Introduction

As a terminal building operator, the Thunder Bay International Airport (TBIA) is subject to Parts 1 and 4 of the Canadian Transportation Agency's <u>Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations</u>. The safety of our passengers, employees and communities we serve is our top priority.

We want all persons to have a positive experience when flying into, or out of our airport and we understand that inclusion to all guests that travel into and out of our airport is the utmost importance.

1. Executive Summary

Thunder Bay Airport recognizes the importance of ensuring accessibility for all travelers, including those with disabilities. As part of our commitment to inclusivity and meeting the needs of diverse passengers, we have developed an Accessibility Plan aimed at enhancing accessibility throughout our facilities and services.

Key Objectives:

1. **Infrastructure Improvements:** We aim to enhance physical accessibility by improving infrastructure such as ramps, elevators, signage, and designated accessible parking spaces.

2. **Staff Training:** Ensuring our staff is well-trained in assisting passengers with disabilities is paramount. We will provide comprehensive training to all personnel to effectively address the needs of travelers with disabilities.

3. **Communication and Information:** Accessibility extends beyond physical infrastructure to communication and information dissemination. We will implement measures to ensure that information is available in accessible formats and that communication channels are inclusive and accommodating.

4. **Collaboration:** Collaboration with disability advocacy groups and stakeholders is essential in shaping our accessibility initiatives. We are committed to engaging in ongoing dialogue and collaboration to ensure that our efforts align with the needs of the disability community.

Action Plan:

1. **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Thunder Bay Airport will conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing infrastructure to identify areas for improvement. This will include upgrading facilities such as restrooms, boarding gates, and waiting areas to meet accessibility standards.

2. **Staff Training Programs:** We will develop and implement training programs for all airport personnel to increase awareness and understanding of disability-related issues. This will include training on providing assistance using specialized equipment, and communicating effectively with passengers with disabilities.

3. **Accessible Information Services:** Thunder Bay Airport will invest in technology and resources to ensure that information is available in accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and digital text-to-speech services. Additionally, our website and communication channels will be optimized for accessibility.

4. Community Engagement: We will actively engage with disability advocacy groups, travelers with disabilities, and other stakeholders to gather feedback and insights into our accessibility initiatives. This collaboration will help us continuously improve our services and address evolving needs.

Timeline and Evaluation:

Thunder Bay Airport will implement the Accessibility Plan over a defined timeline, with regular evaluations to assess progress and effectiveness. Key performance indicators will be established to measure the impact of our initiatives and identify areas for further improvement.

The Accessibility Plan underscores Thunder Bay Airport's commitment to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all travelers. By prioritizing infrastructure upgrades, staff training, accessible information services, and community engagement, we aim to ensure that individuals with disabilities can travel through our airport with dignity, respect, and ease. Through ongoing collaboration and dedication to accessibility, we will continue to enhance the travel experience for everyone who passes through Thunder Bay Airport.

2.   Accessibility Statement

The purpose of this accessibility plan is to implement, guide, and create attainable goals to position Thunder Bay International Airport on becoming a barrier-free airport for all of our guests. It outlines objectives related to the requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)* as well as the *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR)*.

This accessibility plan will be reviewed every three years to ensure it reflects our commitment to accessibility compliance. With this plan, the TBIA can improve the overall guest experience within our airport and truly create an inclusive environment.

The TBIA is committed to meeting the requirements of both the ACA and ATPDRs. This plan helps summarize and show our customers, passengers, employees, and all that use the airport where we are, where we are headed, and how we will get there.

3.   General

The Thunder Bay Airport Authority encourages anyone to give feedback by using the Feedback Form located on the Accessibility page of our website.

Feedback and requests can also be submitted through email, registered mail, telephone or through any of our social media channels. Feedback can be submitted anonymously.

You may submit feedback to our accessibility specialist who oversees all accessibility issues within the Thunder Bay Airport.

Contact: Jackie MacDonald, Thunder Bay Airport Accessibility Specialist

Phone: 807-473-2600

Email: Jackie.macdonald@tbairport.on.ca

Mailing Address: 100 Princess Street, Suite 340 Thunder Bay, ON P7E 6S2

Website: https://www.tbairport.on.ca/

Social Media Platforms:
Please click on the icon of your choosing to access Thunder Bay Airport's social media channels.

We monitor all accounts closely and strive to get back to you in a punctual manner during regular business hours.

4.   Consultations

Thunder Bay Airport continues to build on becoming a barrier-free terminal building. Some of the steps we've taken in the past to help us get there are as follows:

1. In 2017 we engaged a local Accessibility Advisory Committee as we finished up major renovations within our Air Terminal Building. The committee met with the Airport Authority to walk through the renovations and new areas of the building to see if they had any further suggestions or comments to help improve the facility for those travelling with disabilities.

2. We continuously work with the City of Thunder Bay on accessibility best practices and their Lift+ program. Lift+ is a City of Thunder Bay public transit service, offering door-to-door transit for residents and visitors who, due to a disability, are not able to use Thunder Bay Transit for all or part of their trips. Lift+ services most locations within city limits. You must book in advance by calling the booking line up to seven (7) days in advance of your trip. All trip requests are based on availability and are not guaranteed. For more information, please visit the **Lift+** section on the City of Thunder Bay's website. Lift+ specialized buses can carry up to four mobility devices (dependent on their size) at one time. This includes non-folding or non-collapsible mobility aids.

3. Earlier this year we consulted with Monsido, a digital leader on website accessibility and optimization. We consulted with Monsido to ensure we understood where we stood in terms of our accessibility compliance on our website and what we need to do to get there to meet the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA.* While we are not yet fully compliant in 2.1 Level AA we now have a better understanding of the work we need to do in order to make that happen.

4. Thunder Bay Airport Authority also partnered with Canadian Airports Council (CAC) and Canadian Owners & Pilots Association (COPA) to implement a new training program that would meet the new requirements of the ATPDR.

5. Accessibility at YQT

Thunder Bay Airport wants to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable trip whether you're flying to or from our airport. We recommend notifying the airline you are flying with of your needs at least 48 hours in advance.

Accessible Ground Transportation

There are a number of accessible ground transportation providers in Thunder Bay, including taxis, city buses, shuttle services, and rideshare providers. YQT strongly suggests prearranging your trip to and/or from the Thunder Bay Airport with the service provider of your choice. For more information on our ground transportation options, please visit our **Ground Transportation** page.

Lift+ is a City of Thunder Bay public transit service, offering door-to-door transit for residents and visitors who, due to a disability, are not able to use Thunder Bay Transit for all or part of their trips. Lift+ services most locations within city limits. You must book in advance by calling the booking line up to seven (7) days in advance of your trip. All trip requests are based on availability and are not guaranteed. For more information, please visit the **Lift+** section on the City of Thunder Bay's website. Lift+ specialized buses can carry up to four mobility devices (dependent on their size) at one time. This includes non-folding or non-collapsible mobility aids.

Lift+ Booking Number: 1 (807) 345-0777

For travellers who may be interested in renting a car during the duration of their stay, please visit our **Rental Cars** page to book and for more information.

Airline Assistance

If you are flying into or out of Thunder Bay Airport, it is important you notify the airline you are flying with at least 48 hours in advance if you require additional assistance. Airline representatives will be able to provide you information on transportation throughout the terminal, wheelchair use, arrange passenger escort services, and assist in the check-in and boarding process all the way through to the arrival of your final destination.

For a list of all airlines that fly into and out of Thunder Bay, please visit the **Airlines** page of our website for further contact information.

Baggage Assistance

Carry-on Baggage

Your carry-on baggage is brought with you through security screening. Each airline sets the number of carry-on bag allowances, as well as the size and weight restrictions for each bag. Check with your airline for more details.

Checked Baggage

Airlines set their own baggage allowance standards, including size and weight restrictions. Check with your airline for checked bag limitations or to learn how to pack specific items.

When you arrive at the airport, your checked luggage will be weighed and tagged before you place it on the designated bag drop. If you're travelling with special items, such as golf clubs or bicycles, please review airline policies in advance as some restrictions may apply.

What Can I Bring?

Unsure what you can and cannot bring with you through screening? Please visit the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) website and use the what can I bring tool to help you pack and search for specific items you are looking to bring, but are unsure if they are allowed.

Baggage Carousels

There are two baggage carousels located on the main floor of our terminal, outlined on our area map. Your checked bag will appear on either carousel shortly after your flight has arrived.

Baggage Carts

We have numerous baggage carts available on the main floor of our terminal, between our two baggage carousels. The baggage carts are free to use to help assist passengers with their baggage,

Baggage Assistance

For passengers needing assistance with their baggage prior to their departure, please call our Security Operations Centre (SOC) and pre-arrange assistance by telephone at (807)473-2612. While not necessary, it is recommended you call in advance to pre-arrange. Upon arrival into Thunder Bay, airline staff would be happy to assist a passenger needing assistance with their baggage to their vehicle, shuttle or other method of transportation.

Lost Baggage

Arrived into Thunder Bay before your luggage? Connect with the airline you travelled with to submit a baggage claim. All airline staff can be found on the main floor of the terminal building. For a full list of air carrier's contact information please visit our airlines page.

Curbside Assistance

Thunder Bay Airport has designated drop-off and pick-up areas on the curb. Specifically, there is a "Curbside Assistance" area located on the east end of our building, as outlined by the orange circle on the area map below. Curbside Assistance is also offered in all six (6) of our accessible parking stalls in our short-term parking lot.

Passengers needing extra assistance from the curb (including by guiding) to their designated airline check-in counter or upon arrival to the curbside zone are encouraged to call our Security Operations Centre (SOC) and pre-arrange assistance by telephone at (807)473-2612. While not necessary, we recommend calling at least 48 hours in advance of your trip.
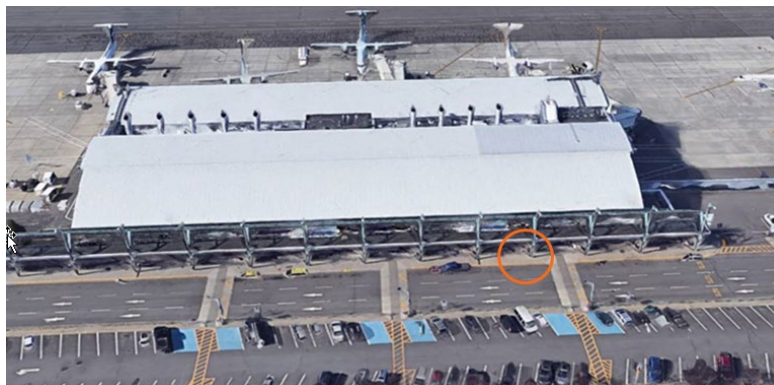
*Curbside assistance parking spot in front of the terminal*

Parking

Accessible parking spaces are available in both our long-term and short-term parking lot. To use one of the designated accessible parking spots, ensure you have your Accessible Parking Permit displayed and visible on your vehicles front dash.

Service Relief Area

YQT has two designated service relief areas, one just outside the west end of the Terminal building, and as outlined in red from the map below and the other one inside our secure departure lounge behind Gate #1. Wayfinding signage inside and out of the terminal building has been updated to guide passengers to the respective areas.
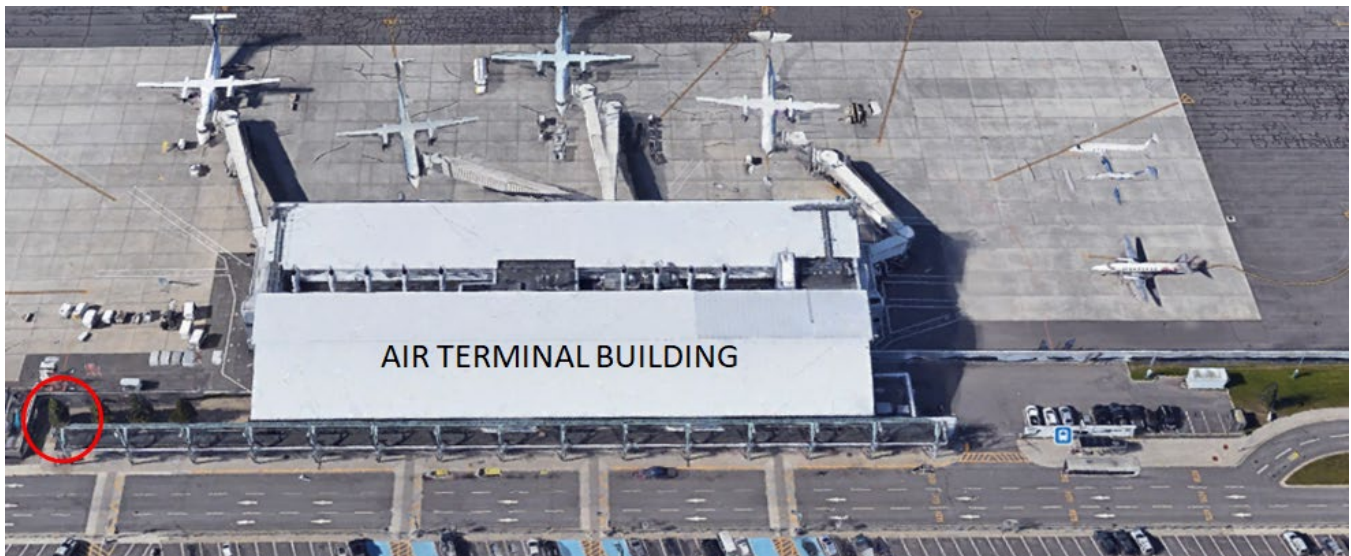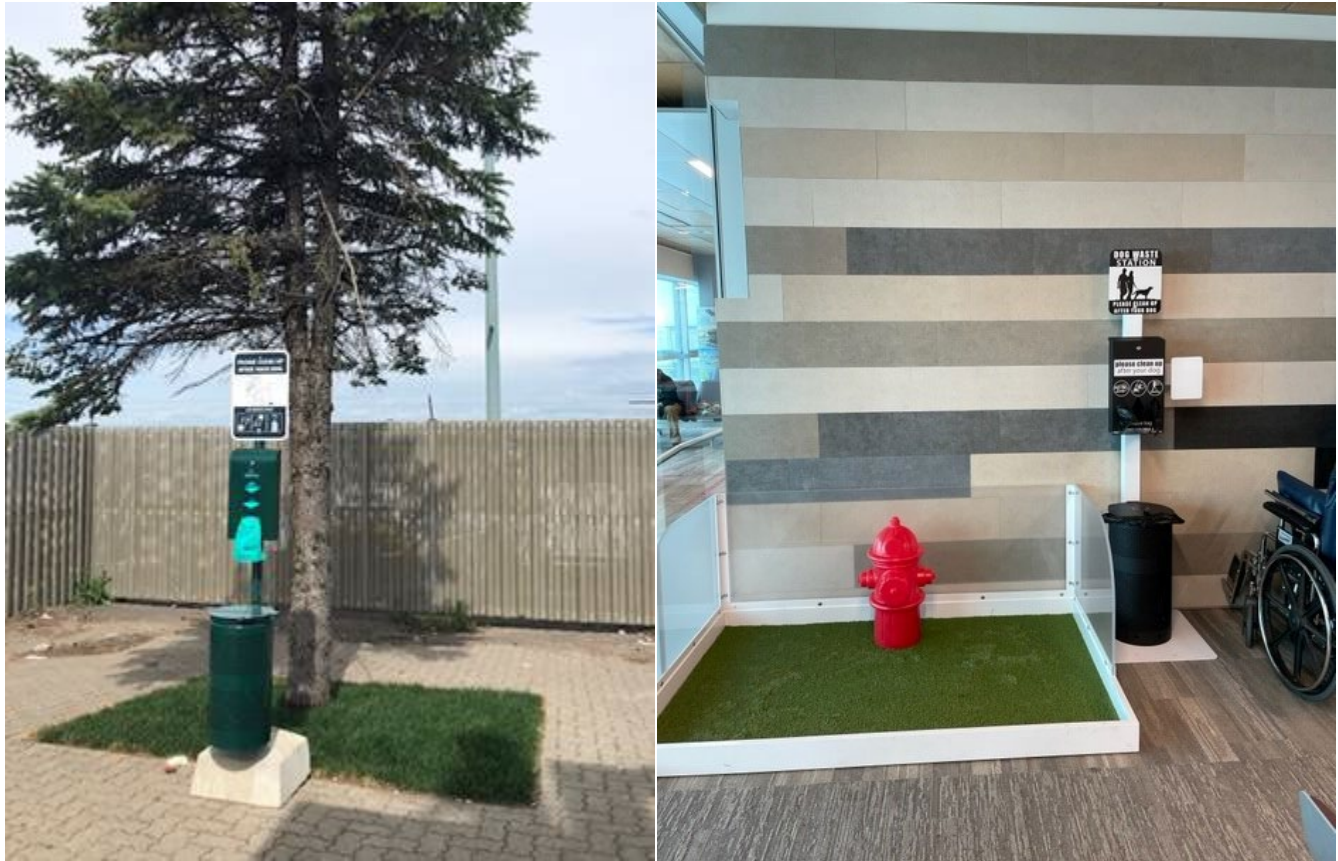
Outdoor and indoor service relief areas for your pet

Please remember it is your responsibility to clean up after your pet and dispose of any garbage using the garbage can provided in that area.

Washrooms

The Thunder Bay Airport has two "barrier free" washrooms as well as numerous wheelchair accessible washrooms throughout the terminal building. The barrier free washrooms are located on the first floor of the terminal building, beside baggage carousel #2, and another just outside of Arrivals 2 on the second floor.

For a map of our terminal building please click here

Wheelchairs

Thunder Bay International Airport is fully wheelchair accessible. Passengers requiring assistance to and from the boarding gate, or deplaning an aircraft are encouraged contact the airline they are flying with when making their travel arrangements. It is suggested you give at least 48 hours' notice prior to travel.

6. Employment

Thunder Bay Airport recognizes the importance of fostering an inclusive workplace environment where individuals of all abilities are valued and provided with equal opportunities for employment. Our commitment to accessibility extends beyond our facilities and services to include our workforce, where diversity and inclusion are celebrated.

The following policies are currently implemented to address potential systemic barriers to equal access:

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Employee & Family Assistance Program
- Commitment to Development & Shared Responsibility
- Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Policy

7. Built Environment

Thunder Bay Airport is committed to providing an accessible built environment that ensures all passengers, including those with disabilities, can navigate our facilities safely, comfortably, and independently. We recognize that the physical design of our airport plays a critical role in facilitating accessibility and are dedicated to continually improving our infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of our travelers.

Key Objectives:

1. **Universal Design:** Thunder Bay Airport strives to embrace universal design principles, ensuring that our facilities are usable by individuals of all ages and abilities, without the need for adaptation or specialized design features.

2. **Compliance with Accessibility Standards:** We are committed to complying with relevant accessibility standards and regulations, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651 Accessibility Standard for Buildings.

3. **Continuous Improvement:** We recognize that accessibility is an ongoing process and are committed to continuously evaluating and enhancing our built environment to address emerging needs and technological advancements.

4. **Collaboration and Engagement:** Thunder Bay Airport actively engages with disability advocacy groups, passengers with disabilities, and other stakeholders to gather feedback and insights into accessibility challenges and opportunities. This collaboration informs our decision-making process and ensures that our initiatives are responsive to the needs of the disability community.

Key Features and Initiatives:

1. **Accessible Parking:** Thunder Bay Airport provides designated accessible parking spaces located close to terminal entrances, with ample space for wheelchair access and clearly marked signage. We also offer curbside assistance at any of our marked accessible parking spots. This is noted on signage located at each accessible parking spot.

2. **Accessible Entrances:** All terminal entrances are equipped with automatic doors, providing barrier-free access for passengers with mobility aids or strollers.

3. **Wayfinding and Signage:** Clear and intuitive wayfinding signage is installed throughout the airport, featuring high contrast colors, large fonts, and tactile elements to assist passengers with visual impairments in navigating the terminal.

4. **Accessible Restrooms:** Accessible restrooms are available on all levels of the terminal, equipped with spacious layouts, grab bars, accessible sinks, and tactile signage indicating restroom facilities.

5. **Assistive Technology:** Thunder Bay Airport offers assistive technology, such as visual paging systems, to facilitate communication and enhance the travel experience for passengers with hearing impairments.

6. **Service Animal Relief Areas:** Designated service animal relief areas are located outside the terminal, providing a safe and comfortable space for service animals to relieve themselves before or after flights.

Future Directions: Thunder Bay Airport is committed to ongoing improvements in accessibility and has identified several areas for future enhancements, including:

- Expanding the availability of accessible seating areas throughout the terminal.

- Implementing wayfinding technologies, such as mobile apps and interactive maps, to assist passengers in navigating the airport.

- Enhancing accessibility features in retail and dining areas, such as lowered countertops and accessible seating options.

- Incorporating feedback from passengers with disabilities into the design and planning of future terminal expansions and renovations.

Thunder Bay Airport is dedicated to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all travelers, regardless of their abilities. By prioritizing universal design principles, complying with accessibility standards, continuously improving our facilities, and engaging with stakeholders, we strive to ensure that every passenger can access our airport with ease and dignity. Through ongoing collaboration and commitment to accessibility, we aim to set a standard of excellence in providing accessible built environments for airports across Canada.

8.   Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Thunder Bay Airport recognizes the importance of leveraging information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance accessibility and improve the travel experience for all passengers, including those with disabilities. We are committed to implementing ICT solutions that facilitate communication, provide information in accessible formats, and empower passengers to navigate our facilities independently.

Thunder Bay Airport provides all up to date flight information, including flight cancellations and delays on it's website. www.thunderbayairport.com

Information that is time sensitive that may impact your travel experience will be shared immediately onto our website and social media channels.

Thunder Bay Airport is dedicated to leveraging information and communication technologies to enhance accessibility and improve the travel experience for all passengers. By prioritizing accessible information delivery, digital accessibility, assistive technologies, and employee training, we strive to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access information, communicate effectively, and navigate our facilities with confidence and independence. Through ongoing commitment to ICT accessibility, we aim to set a standard of excellence in providing inclusive and accessible airport experiences for travelers of all abilities.

9.   Communication, other than ICT

Thunder Bay Airport is committed to ensuring effective communication for all passengers, including those with disabilities, through a variety of non-ICT means. We recognize that clear and accessible communication is essential for providing a seamless travel experience and strive to accommodate diverse communication needs throughout our facilities.

Key Objectives:

1. **Clear and Concise Communication:** Thunder Bay Airport aims to provide information in a clear, concise, and easily understandable manner to accommodate passengers with cognitive disabilities or language barriers.

2. **Visual Communication:** We prioritize visual communication methods, such as signage, maps, and symbols, to assist passengers with visual impairments in navigating the airport independently.

3. **Auditory Communication:** Thunder Bay Airport ensures that auditory information, such as announcements and emergency alerts, are delivered in multiple formats to accommodate passengers with hearing impairments.

Key Features and Initiatives:

1. **Clear Signage:** Thunder Bay Airport features clear and prominently displayed signage throughout the terminal, including directional signs, informational signs, and safety signs, to assist passengers in navigating the airport efficiently.

2. **Symbolic Wayfinding:** We utilize universally recognized symbols and icons to convey essential information, such as restroom locations, boarding gates, and amenities, making it easier for passengers with cognitive or language disabilities to understand.

3. **Braille Signage:** Braille signage is provided at key locations throughout the airport, such as elevator buttons, restroom doors, and information kiosks, to assist passengers with visual impairments in locating essential facilities.

4. **Visual Alerts:** Visual alert systems, such as flashing lights and visual displays, are installed in addition to auditory announcements to ensure that passengers with hearing impairments can receive important information and emergency alerts.

Thunder Bay Airport is dedicated to ensuring effective communication for all passengers, regardless of their abilities or communication needs. By prioritizing clear and accessible communication methods, including visual signage, symbolic wayfinding, braille signage, visual alerts, and human assistance, we strive to create an inclusive and welcoming airport environment where every passenger can navigate with confidence and independence. Through ongoing commitment to non-ICT communication accessibility, we aim to set a standard of excellence in providing inclusive and accessible airport experiences for travelers of all abilities.

10. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

TBIA is committed to promoting accessibility through procurement of goods, services and facilities and recognizes that work needs to be done within their procurement policies in order to offer best procurement practices.

TBIA's goal is to partner with companies and businesses that believe in a barrier-free transportation system by offering:

- **Inclusivity**: All procurement processes must consider the needs of individuals with disabilities and aim to provide solutions that are accessible to all.
- **Compliance**: All procurement activities must comply with relevant local, provincial, and federal accessibility regulations and standards, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- **Accessibility Criteria**: Include specific accessibility criteria in all procurement documents, such as requests for proposals (RFPs), tenders, and contracts. These criteria should cover:
    - Accessible design and usability of goods
    - Inclusive service delivery
    - Barrier-free facilities and infrastructure

By adopting these new changes into our procurement policy, Thunder Bay Airport reaffirms its commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all passengers, ensuring that every procurement decision supports this goal.

11. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Designing and delivering programs and services for Thunder Bay Airport's accessibility plan involves creating initiatives tailored to meet the diverse needs of passengers with disabilities. The goal is to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can navigate the airport safely, comfortably, and independently.

To begin, the airport will conduct a thorough assessment of its current programs and services to identify any barriers to accessibility. This assessment may include evaluating areas such as passenger assistance services, information provision, communication methods, and staff training.

Based on the assessment findings, the airport will develop a comprehensive plan to address accessibility gaps and enhance the overall passenger experience. This plan may involve a variety of initiatives, including:

1. **Training Programs:** Implementing training programs for airport staff to raise awareness about disability rights, communication techniques, and best practices for assisting passengers with disabilities. These types of training programs include:

    - The role of the CTA and the ATPDR
    - Training that meets the requirements of the ATPDR to include:
        1. Key terminology and definitions
        2. Types of assistive devices
        3. Assistance and interaction with the public, including curbside assistance, check-in assistance and general assistance
        4. Service dogs and support persons
        5. Handling mobility aids and equipment
        6. Language of dignity

2. **Accessible Information:** Ensuring that all airport information, including signage, announcements, and online resources, are available in accessible formats such as braille, large print, and digital displays.

3. **Assistance Services:** Offering personalized assistance services for passengers with disabilities, including wheelchair assistance, escort services, and support with baggage handling.

4. **Communication Channels:** Providing multiple communication channels for passengers to request assistance or provide feedback, such as dedicated helplines, email contacts, and accessible communication apps.

5. **Facility Design:** Incorporating universal design principles into the airport's infrastructure, including accessible parking, restrooms, seating areas, and pathways.

6. **Collaboration with Disability Organizations:** Partnering with local disability organizations to gather feedback, insights, and recommendations for improving accessibility initiatives.

7. **Continuous Improvement:** Establishing processes for ongoing evaluation and improvement of accessibility programs and services based on feedback from passengers and stakeholders.

Throughout the design and delivery process, the airport will prioritize inclusivity, dignity, and respect for all passengers, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to the airport's facilities, services, and amenities.

12. Transportation

Thunder Bay Airport serves as a vital transportation hub for the region. In addition to ensuring accessibility within the terminal, Thunder Bay Airport prioritizes accessibility in transportation to and from the airport.

1. **Public Transit:** The airport collaborates with the City of Thunder Bay public transit authorities to ensure that bus routes serving the airport are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including wheelchair ramps and priority seating.

2. **Accessible Parking and Drop-Off:** Designated accessible parking spaces and passenger drop-off areas are provided near terminal entrances, offering convenience and ease of access for travelers with disabilities.

3. **Taxi, Ride-Sharing Services & Hotel Shuttles:** The airport works with taxi and ride-sharing companies to ensure that accessible vehicles are available for passengers requiring wheelchair-accessible transportation.

4. **Rental Cars:** The airport works collaboratively with all rental vehicle operators on airport to ensure they offer accessible services or products.

For all companies that have a contract with the Thunder Bay Airport, they are subject to our training program that complies with the ATPDRs.

13. Accessibility Plan 2024-2027

Thunder Bay Airport remains committed to ensuring that all passengers, including those with disabilities, have a positive and inclusive travel experience. This accessibility plan outlines our strategic approach to enhancing accessibility across our facilities, services and operations from 2024 to 2027.

Objectives:

- Improve physical accessibility throughout the air terminal building.

- Enhance service delivery to support passengers with disabilities.

- Ensure effective communication and information accessibility.

- Foster an inclusive culture through training and awareness programs.

Strategic Priorities:

3.1 Physical Accessibility

Facility Upgrades

- By the end of 2024, new elevators will be installed which will feature improved lighting and high-contrast controls, making them easier to use for individuals with visual impairments.

Expansion and New Constructions

- By the end of 2027, two new accessible washrooms will be added to our terminal building. These modern facilities are designed to accommodate the needs of all passengers, including those with disabilities or mobility challenges. Features include spacious layouts, grab bars, and other accessibility aids to ensure comfort and convenience.

Service Delivery

- By the end of 2024, new training that complies with the ATPDR will be rolled out to the Thunder Bay Airport staff and respective stakeholders. This training focuses on assisting passengers with various disabilities.

- By the end of 2024, our new procurement policy will be in place which will focus on inclusivity and consider the needs of individuals with disabilities and aim to provide solutions that are accessible to all. We will include specific accessibility criteria within our RFPs, tenders and contracts.

Communication and Information

- By 2025, TBIA will upgrade the airport website to ensure it meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards.

Thunder Bay Airport is dedicated to providing an accessible and inclusive environment for all. This accessibility plan for 2024-2027 outlines our commitment and strategic approach to achieving this goal. By enhancing physical accessibility, improving service delivery, ensuring effective communication and fostering an inclusive culture, we aim to set a standard for accessibility in air travel.

To request this Accessibility Plan in other formats, such as large print, or audio formats please reach out to the accessibility specialist noted in the Feedback section of this plan.