

City of Kingston 2019 Accessibility Plan Status Report

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This Accessibility Status Report is the annual update on the progress of the measures taken to improve accessibility and implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2018/2019 to implement the strategies outlined in the City of Kingston's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The purpose of this Status Report is to make the public aware of the City of Kingston's progress with regards to the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The City of Kingston is committed to eliminating barriers and improving access for persons with disabilities by providing its citizens with an inclusive accessible community through its passage and adoption of strategies and policies that promote dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all citizens. The City of Kingston will continue to work under the legislative frameworks of the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990 and other associated pieces of legislation to ensure that compliance with accessibility standards is achieved.

The 2018–2022 multi-year plan is based on best practice research, as well as input from employees, the municipal accessibility advisory committee, accessibility stakeholders and the public. It is organized around the following standards and general requirements of the AODA.

The five standards are:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

The general requirements are:

- Procurement
- Training

These priorities include strategic recommendations from the Committee and the public that will help guide the City of Kingston as it continues to plan for future accessibility initiatives,

Achievements and Successes

Customer Service

- The City launched its new Customer Relationship Management CRM system in June 2018. CRM allows for a more holistic approach to customer service by providing:
 - Increased access to online services via self-serve options;
 - Open access to current and accurate information for customers and staff;
 - A mechanism for soliciting and collecting feedback through surveys; and
 - A centralized place for customer information and interaction with the City.
- In May 2019, the Channel Management Strategy was received and adopted by Council. This strategy outlines the City's commitment to improving customer service delivery across three main channels of interaction:
 - Online service;
 - Phone service; and
 - Counter service.

In support of building a responsive multi-channel service delivery model, the Channel Management Strategy aims to provide quality customer service across all channels resulting in consistent and integrated service built around user needs while leveraging existing corporate assets and resourcing.

- The City's public engagement platform "Get Involved" provides new tools to allow increased participation of persons with disabilities in the city's public engagement process.
- The 2018 municipal election included accessibility considerations including the evaluation of all voting locations to ensure that the location was fully accessible and provided barrier free access to voters, candidates and workers. Production of election materials using simple, easy to understand language and the availability of information regarding the election in a number of communication formats.
- Annual recognition of Celebrating Accessibility Awards. Awards are presented in the following categories: Employment, Education, Recreation, Customer Service, Built Environment, Youth, Volunteer and Other.
- The Grand Theatre and the museums participate in the Municipal Fee Assistance Program (MFAP). In 2018, 136 tickets were sold through the MFAP program for performances at the Grand Theatre and two family passes were sold through the PumpHouse.
- The Museums also participate in the Courtesy Pass program offered through the Kingston Frontenac Public Library and saw approximately 70 free family museum passes redeemed in 2018. Approximately 548 people attended free Thursday night programming offered throughout the summer at the museums (Fort Night and Campfire Songs at the MAC).

- The Kingston Workplace Inclusion Charter, an initiative of the City of Kingston's Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy, is a new community partnered program designed for businesses and organizations of all sizes to support the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. The program consists of a formal charter declaration, assessment and implementation tools to support the creation of an action plan and recognition of achievement.
- American Sign Language (ASL) Interpretation - The Grand OnStage program presented its first school performance featuring ASL interpretation in April 2018 in partnership with Green Thumb Theatre and their production of *Land of Trash*. Staff worked closely with an experienced Canadian Hearing Society staff interpreter and students from the Limestone District School Board, Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, local private schools and home schools were in attendance.
- ASL Interpretation was also made available in conjunction with three different shows featured as part of the 2018/2019 Grand OnStage season. These included two sold out performances of *Pete the Cat* (1,500 students); *Erth's Pre-historic Aquarium Adventure* (1,200 patrons); and two performances of Ahuri Theatre's production of *This is the Point* in the Baby Grand. The presentation of *This is the Point* also provided an opportunity to experiment with providing "relaxed" performances as well as live audio description. An additional interpreter was also contracted by staff to assist patrons both before and after the two performances that feature ASL interpretation so the experience was not limited to the performance itself.
- Community Outreach - The presentation of *This is the Point* also provided an opportunity for community outreach with artists from Ahuri Theatre collaborating with the H'art Centre, a non-profit, charitable arts hub offering high quality opportunities for people with disabilities and those facing barriers to create, study and produce works in the arts. The collaboration led to the creation of the *Two Truths and One Lie* photo exhibit in the Springer Lounge at the Grand Theatre that was on view during the run of the show. The ten participants from the H'Art Centre involved in this collaboration were also invited to visit the Grand Theatre to see the results of their work on exhibit.
- Sensory Friendly Programming - The PumpHouse has begun to host Sensory Friendly Morning programs throughout the season. These programs are designed to provide visitors who may benefit from a more relaxed environment with a positive museum experience. This includes, but is not limited to, adults and/or children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, sensory processing delays, epilepsy, dementia, developmental disabilities and learning disabilities. Sensory Friendly Mornings feature limited attendance to help reduce crowds, no music, dimmed lights, a sensory break room, trained staff, activities with reduced stimulus, and a relaxed attitude towards noise and movement. Support materials for this program can be found online through the [website](#) for the Pump House and includes resources such as a Sensory Friendly Map and PumpHouse Social Story.

- The Special Events Office continues to utilize the Accessible Guide to Events when planning municipal events and continues to work with external event organizers to require accessibility considerations are part of the event approval process. Staff is updating this and other related documents as part of the Special Event Policy update currently underway.
- ASL interpreter services and assistive hearing devices offered at the City's Grand Opening for the Rideau Heights Community Centre and Library, Breakwater Park Grand Opening and Gord Edgar Downie Pier Dedication, Remembrance Day service and Snow Much Fun events.
- Accessible washrooms provided at all municipal events
- Increased signage at municipal events.
- Food Vendors must provide Accessible Customer Service Policy as part of the application and approval process.
- Accessible parking areas are identified and provided for all major City run events, with locations communicated through the event calendar listing and event plans.
- An area for accessible seating on an accessible, ramped stage riser continues to be incorporated into the Kingston Sheep Dog Trials Festival at Grass Creek Park, which includes areas for shade. Also, an accessible seating area was offered in front of the main stage at Snow Much Fun.
- Cooling areas were incorporated at events which include shade tents, mist tent and Utilities Kingston Water Buggy.
- Shuttle bus service offered through Kingston Transit at the Victoria Day event at Lake Ontario Park and Breakwater Park Grand Opening.
- Temporary accessible pathway at the Kingston Sheep Dog Trials Festival.

Clear and Accessible Communications

- For National AccessAbility week, the City in partnership with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) are raised awareness with ***I can...in Kingston because...*** campaign – featuring members of the community enjoying improved access and commenting on how to eliminate barriers. To celebrate, the City shared seven stories as part of ***I can...in Kingston because...*** campaign. The seven videos/stories captured accounts that encourage residents to examine their environment and think about **all** aspects of accessibility.
- Staff continue to review best practices and ensure the design of printed material that are produced to support programming, marketing and exhibits meet Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) standards as well as museum standards, where applicable. Printed collateral found on-site as well as exhibition

text are offered in both official languages and can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

- Implemented the re-design of the municipal website to conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA.
- Staff continues to attend computer and in-house training to continue the development of accessible forms and documents.

Accessible Employment

- In 2018, the City subscribed to Equitek Employment Equity Solutions. Equitek Employment Equity Solutions is a diversity outreach platform and broadcast service for Canadian corporations seeking to make their employment opportunities available to qualified job seekers from all of the underrepresented demographics across Canada. Equitek simultaneously works with many diverse groups across Canada and provides assistance to generate an applicant flow of diverse candidates through a proactive recruitment network. Equitek is a one stop comprehensive solution that seamlessly interacts with the City's applicant tracking system. Moreover, staff utilizes different social media to post opportunities and network with potential candidates (e.g. LinkedIn diversity groups).
- Staff collaborates with community agencies (e.g. KEYS, March of Dimes) to connect with people with disabilities who are unemployed or underemployed to potential City job opportunities and attend career fairs and symposiums.
- The City participates annually in Disabilities Mentoring Day. Disabilities Mentoring Day facilitates the pairing of job-ready persons with disabilities with companies that utilize the skills they have or are developing through training. The mentees gain insight from practicing professionals around job requirements, jobs duties and tasks and where mentee skill sets are a best fit.
- When conducting a job analysis, HR&OD staff reviews the job requirements standards for positions. As part of this review, staff identifies and revises standards that are unnecessarily restrictive and that may potentially exclude people with disabilities. Examples of potentially problematic standards may include blanket rules requiring valid driver's license or certain levels of unaided hearing or unaided vision.

Transportation

Transit

- Implemented service recommendations identified in the Kingston Transit 2017 – 2021 Business Plan to improve convenience, frequency and reliability.
- Constructed bus stops in accordance with the city's bus stop design guidelines. Upgrades at existing bus stops include the construction of new concrete pads suitable for accessible shelter/bench installation, concrete pads to provide infill

between the boulevard and sidewalk, and improved connections to existing sidewalks and pathways. In addition to these opportunities, Kingston Transit identifies a number of locations across the urban area of the city each year for transit stop and shelter upgrades to be completed. These locations are identified from the staff analysis of the existing transit stop inventory, along with requests received from the public.

- On September 25, 2019, Kingston Transit held the annual public meeting at the Cataraqui Centre Transfer Point in accordance with O. Reg 191/11, s. 41(2) of the AODA. The meeting provided an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of Kingston Transit directly to Kingston Transit employees. Kingston Transit staff engaged with 36 members of the public at the event. For those unable to attend, a survey was also available on the City's public engagement platform to provide feedback. The survey results are currently being compiled and reviewed.

Enhancing Accessibility of Our Public Spaces

- The new Facility Accessibility Design Standards was approved by Council in June 2019.
- A Virtual Reality (VR) tour of Kingston City Hall is now available through the Heritage Resource Centre located on site and it will soon be made available through the City of Kingston website in the summer of 2019. And, as previously identified, the websites for both the PumpHouse and MacLachlan Woodworking Museums also feature virtual reality tours that support pre-planning and that also provide alternatives forms of access to the sites.
- The public art portfolio has a number of permanent projects currently being developed that have involved various forms of public consultation. Some of these larger projects include the Alderville Commemoration Project being developed for Lake Ontario Park, the public art project being commissioned for Victoria Park and The Hub Project being developed for the intersection of Princess and Division Streets. As part of the public call for submission process for these projects, the artists must demonstrate and provide required documentation that their proposal is in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the AODA.
- The Recreation & Leisure Services Department, in cooperation with Engineering Services and Facilities Management & Construction Services, develop and improve parks and recreation facilities in compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standard and the City of Kingston's Facility Accessibility Design Standard.
- As per standard operational practices, the following is conducted on a regular basis either through legislative or municipal policy requirements:
 - Repair, maintenance, and removal of barriers on municipal trails, sidewalks and public spaces
 - Fire Code inspections of private, public, and municipal facilities

- Building Code inspections of new or renovated facilities
 - Health and safety inspections of all municipal facilities
 - Emergency management measures to promote the safety of the community within times of emergency
- Continued installation of accessible sidewalks and curb cuts.
- Public Works inspects and monitors roads, sidewalks, and parks to identify barriers or developing barriers on a routine basis. Customer service requests received from the public are also reviewed, areas are inspected and monitored to determine if accessibility is being impacted or can be improved.
- Key Public Works maintenance activities that involve accessibility considerations are:
 - Winter maintenance – sidewalks, bus stops, and roads
 - Sidewalk joint deflection inspections (identifying trip hazards)
 - Sidewalk repair and replacement
 - Tree trimming and vegetation management
 - Benches - Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)
 - Play structures
- Within the solid waste service operations, accessibility considerations include the following examples of services and/or allowances that are provided to residents upon request, or as a general operating standard:
 - Bag tag medical exemptions are permitted with a signed note from a medical practitioner certifying that the resident requires an additional bag tag per week.
 - Permitting residents to place waste or waste receptacles at an alternate location (example: beside or just outside the garage) or further up the driveway to avoid heavy lifting to and from the street curbside.
 - Delivering recycling boxes and green bins to persons that do not have transportation to pick them up.
 - Educational training on waste programs to in-home caregivers to ensure that the homeowner is still able to access the waste and waste diversion programs.
 - Assistance at KARC when unloading materials at any of the depots, or carrying out waste containers.
 - Recycling depots in the public waste system are deemed to meet accessibility standards.
 - The mobile waste diversion unit referred to as OSKAR is deemed to meet accessibility standards.
- Facilities Maintenance & Construction Services department continue to prioritize accessibility in every element of the infrastructure projects at city owned facilities and properties.
- The grand opening of the newly expanded Kingston Airport terminal building and extended runway took place in 2019. The facility now features:

- Improved accessibility including a new elevator, comfortable, accessible seating, way finding and new universal & barrier-free washrooms;
- Enhancements to the visitor experience including, improved baggage handling systems, touch screens kiosks that provide visitors with information about things to see and do in the area, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Demonstrating Accessible Procurement

- Procurement continues to develop and implement supporting tools that provide a standard format for measuring accessibility for suppliers across the corporation. This requires an in-depth review of the different categories procured by the City and the creation of the required guidelines and/or tools to ensure consistent procurement accessibility requirements. For example, a purchasing guideline released this past year for the development and evaluation of scoring criteria for the procurement of construction services included recommended evaluation criteria for accessibility components whereby marks would be awarded for accessibility considerations that exceed the legislative requirements.

Goals and Next Steps for Accessibility

- Ensure the City of Kingston continues to meet compliance with the AODA, its regulations and all other related pieces of legislation.
- Continue with organizations commitment to accessibility.
- Review City of Kingston policies and practices to ensure accessibility compliance.
- Strive to ensure that new facilities, programs and services are designed and created with accessibility features incorporated and meet FADS.
- Continue to develop resources and training materials for staff. Volunteers and contractors and promote awareness and education regarding accessibility requirements and obligations throughout the corporation.
- Continue to consult the public, persons with disabilities and MAAC.
- Work with corporate departments to explore new and innovative ways to remove and prevent barriers to access.
- Continue to monitor accessibility issues, trends and legislative changes.

Communication Information regarding accessibility at the City of Kingston, including the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and Annual Status Report can be found on the City of Kingston's website at www.cityofkingston.ca/accessibility.

This information is also available in hard-copy and accessible formats upon request.