



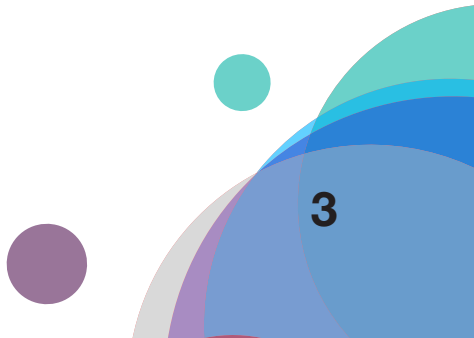
2020
**Accessibility
Plan Status Report.**





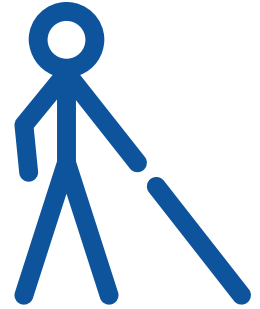
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Introduction

This report provides an annual update on the progress made and work completed by City staff in 2020 to improve accessibility and implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11.



Under the IASR, the City of Kingston is required to develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which outlines, over a maximum five-year period, the actions and steps the municipality will take to remove barriers to accessibility. This report acts as a companion to the City's current [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2022](#).



The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based on best-practice research, and input from employees, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, accessibility stakeholders and Kingston residents. The Multi-Year Plan, and this report, are organized around the five standards contained within the IASR and the general requirements of the AODA.



The five standards of the IASR are:

1. Customer service;
2. Information and communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of public spaces.

The general requirements of the AODA are:

- Procurement; and
- Training.

Operational enhancements

Beginning with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013 – 2017, the City has progressively included more accessibility considerations in its standard departmental operations. A few examples of this are:

- Using [Facility Accessibility Design Standards](#) (FADS) in the design and construction of public infrastructure such as parking, streetscapes, and City-owned facilities.
- Incorporating accessibility considerations for all users in the development and redevelopment of public parks and spaces.
- Forming project teams comprised of City staff and appointees from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee for projects related to public art, accessible parking, active transportation, and land use planning strategies.
- Constructing roads and sidewalks to incorporate the use of tactile warning strips, auditory signaling devices at intersections, accessible sidewalks, and curb cuts.
- Maintaining bus stops, sidewalks, and roads during the winter to meet provincial standards and ensure safe travel for all residents.
- Providing alternative service-delivery options for solid waste collection to meet the specific needs of residents with disabilities. This includes delivery of recycling boxes to homes and permitting these residents to set out waste containers in alternate locations to the standard curbside collection.
- Developing new and adapting existing recreation programs and special events to ensure inclusive participation for residents of all ages and abilities.



COVID-19 pandemic

This report must also be viewed through the lens of a unique chapter in world history: on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic. The resulting public health measures implemented as Canada experienced the first and second waves of the pandemic in 2020 required a redeployment of City resources and provided an opportunity to rethink the delivery of City services.

With projects delayed and services interrupted because of public health measures, staff adapted existing and created new programs to maintain service continuity. These adaptations and modifications frequently provided the benefit of increased accessibility to persons with disabilities. For example, the Grand Theatre and MacLachlan Woodworking Museum were closed for a significant portion of 2020, with staff temporarily laid off or redeployed. As alternate programming was considered, accessibility was a primary consideration as programs moved online.

Pandemic-related achievements and successes will be noted throughout the following section of this report. Of even greater importance is the potential for these enhancements and improvements to be implemented in an eventual post-pandemic service-delivery model.

Achievements and Successes

Customer Service

- An accessibility assessment of performance spaces in Regina Rosen Auditorium and Baby Grand Theatre is being completed to make spaces more accessible to performers and staff using mobility devices through either temporary solutions implemented as needed, or more permanent solutions requiring a re-design of spaces. Conceptual plans have been developed, and a range of temporary and permanent solutions are now being reviewed by staff.
- In the winter of 2020, accessibility-identification features were incorporated into Customer Relations Management software to better flag accessibility concerns for staff and align concerns with proper reporting channels.
- In October 2020, the Grand OnStage began offering virtual productions. This program connected artists and art patrons through virtual performances that could be viewed from home. Performances included closed captioning, where possible.
- The #YGKMuseumFromHome program was created. It offered residents downloadable activity pages based on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Pages are available through the [PumpHouse Steam Museum](#) website and focus on learning activities and themes covered in the standard in-person museum programming.



- The [Kingston Civic Collection](#) website was launched in May 2020. The website provides residents with permanent, online access to the civic collection for research, learning, and enjoyment, where previously the collection was only available for limited, in-person viewing.
- Workplans for the Cultural Services Department have been affected by the pandemic, but key initiatives, like the review of funding programs (such as the City of Kingston Arts Fund), are expected to get underway in 2021 to ensure those programs reflect best practices in relation to other funding programs in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- The Integrated Care Hub (ICH) was opened in collaboration with community partners. It offers 24/7 low-barrier and wrap-around services to vulnerable citizens with immediate needs, such as safety, food and rest, and longer-term needs, such as addiction and mental health services. The ICH is operated by HIV/AIDS Regional Services with on-site harm reduction and Consumption and Treatment Services being offered by Kingston Community Health Centre. This facility was temporarily located at the Artillery Park Aquatic Centre, beginning on July 31, 2020, and was relocated to 661 Montreal Street in November 2020.

Clear and Accessible Communications

- An accessibility audit of digital content and developed remediation plans was completed, where required, to achieve compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standard for web accessibility. Completion of the audit provided staff with the extent and size of gaps relating to 2021 standards in order to prioritize remedial work. Audits will be conducted bi-annually moving forward.



- Worked with external vendors to ensure accessibility compliance on programs such as Development and Services Hub (DASH), Njoyn (recruitment and applicant tracking system) and Customer Relations Management software.
- Developed protocols for providing digital content in alternate formats if accessibility compliance could not be met.
- Reviewed and remediated existing web and PDF content for compliance with 2021 WCAG standards.
- The City created and executed a process for holding council and committee meetings virtually due to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, only council meetings were live-streamed and committee meeting proceedings could only be attended in-person or viewed after the fact. Conducting meetings via Zoom, with live closed captioning and streaming on YouTube for all meetings increased the ability for all residents to view and participate in the meetings. Meeting recordings are also posted to YouTube and closed captioned.
- Beginning in summer 2020, the City created and executed a process for hosting public engagement sessions virtually due to the pandemic. As with council and committee meetings, prior to the pandemic public engagement sessions were held exclusively in-person. The move to online engagement sessions conducted via Zoom, and live-streamed on YouTube with live closed captioning, allowed for an increased ability for all residents to view and participate in meetings
- Beginning in summer 2020, the City supported expanded options for public engagements so that residents could choose to complete City surveys digitally or via telephone or mail as they prefer.

- Public art signage was produced following accessible guidelines for font size, style and contrast, and placed in a viewing zone that is comfortable for both standing and seated people.

Accessible Employment

- The City participated in [Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day](#). Four City staff members served as mentors to persons with disabilities who were seeking access to workplace contacts, environments, skills, and human resource processes. Through participating in the day, the City corporately, and staff individually, learn about accessible employment in a real world setting and are exposed to an often untapped pool of employee talent.
- Major construction projects for internal City facilities are being completed with accessibility features, including:
 - Fleet Maintenance Garage: inclusion of detectable warning surfaces, colour contrasting doors and wall-to-floor transitions, and power-operated doors.
 - Kingston Fire and Rescue Maintenance Garage: inclusion of equitable accommodations and accessible kitchenette and washroom, accessible door hardware and light switches, power door operators and tactile warning services.

Transportation

- Redesigned 10 bus stops for increased accessibility and constructed accessible bus platforms at Via Rail station.
- Received approval from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan to design and construct 12 passenger stations, which will meet or exceed AODA standards. Construction of the passenger stations will take place over the next two-to-three years.

Enhanced Accessibility of Public Spaces

- Increased promotion of [virtual reality and digital tours](#) of City Hall and other historic City sites through City website and social media.
- Continued program to add additional sidewalk plows to fleet as part of multi-year expansion plan.
- Implemented a detailed sidewalk inspection plan per provincial maintenance standards. The inspection plan identified an increased number of hazards due to a more thorough process. The information gathered is to be used for the increased maintenance and repair of sidewalks.
- Completed phase one of installing wayfinding signage in City Hall. Work included use of tactile lettering (where required), the inclusion of braille on all wall-mounted signs and directories, and the use of contrasting letters and pictograms.
- Completed Phase 1 of the fire protection upgrades at City Hall. Phases 2 and 3 are expected to proceed in 2022 - 2023, which will include installation of new audible and visual signaling devices throughout the building.



- Created an accessible route from the Market Street entrance to the new gallery space in the west wing of City Hall. Improvements included: widened doorways, new door operators and contrasting doorframes.
- Continued construction of Kingston East Community Centre, including the following accessibility features: accessible appliances, universal washroom with accessible shower and change table, tactile surfaces to delineate running track, contrasting finishes on doors and wall-to-floor transitions and doorless entry to main washroom facilities.

Accessible Procurement

- Continued work on an evaluation model that makes legislated accessibility requirements a mandatory component of proposal submissions. In addition to legislated requirements, project-specific accessibility requirements are determined by Finance Department staff and the City department conducting the procurement. For construction-related projects, for example, proponents may be required to state their accessibility plans and how they intend to commit to those plans within the scope of project deliverables.
- Implemented a completely online, paper-free bidding system, removing the physical barriers associated with delivery of bids in-person at City Hall.

Training

- In fall of 2020, staff guidelines for accessibility best practices on social media postings were developed.
- Worked to develop a Digital Content Accessibility Guide and online learning course for internal staff.
- Throughout 2020, staff received additional training on accessible document creation, video captioning best practices and accessible social media communications.

Conclusion

The City of Kingston continues work to implement the AODA and IASR and to remove barriers to accessibility of City facilities and services. Staff will continue to consult internally, and with external stakeholders and residents, to improve accessibility both for individual projects and services.

As the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2022 enters its final years, staff will begin the necessary consultation and planning for the creation of the next Multi-Year Plan.

Information regarding accessibility at the City of Kingston, including the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Status Reports, can be found on the [Accessibility](#) page of the City's website.

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

