



City of Kingston
Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-22-005

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Resource Staff: John Bolognone, City Clerk

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2022

Subject: 2021 Accessibility Plan Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Regulatory & compliance

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to transmit to the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee the 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report, attached to this report as Exhibit A. The 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report details the achievements and successes of City of Kingston staff with respect to implementing the 2018 – 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and improving accessibility and removing barriers to City services for persons with disabilities.

Recommendation:

That the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends to Council:

That the 2021 Accessibility Plan Update Report, attached as Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-22-005, be received.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Neil Carbone, Commissioner,
Corporate Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Ontario Regulation 191/11, the City of Kingston is required to develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which, over a minimum five-year period, outlines the actions and steps the municipality will take to remove barriers to accessibility. The 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report, attached to this report as Exhibit A, provides the Committee with an update on the achievements and successes accomplished by City staff in implementing the 2018 – 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The goal of the multi-year plan is to improve accessibility and remove barriers to City services for persons with disabilities.

Following its presentation to Council, the 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report will be posted on the [accessibility page](#) of the City's website.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

[Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\) Ontario Regulation 191/11](#)

[City of Kingston 2018 – 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

None

Contacts:

Janet Jaynes, Deputy City Clerk, 613-546-4291 extension 1262

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

All Directors were consulted on the 2018 – 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and have been consulted on this 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report

Muhammad Ahsan, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Office Manager

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Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Report



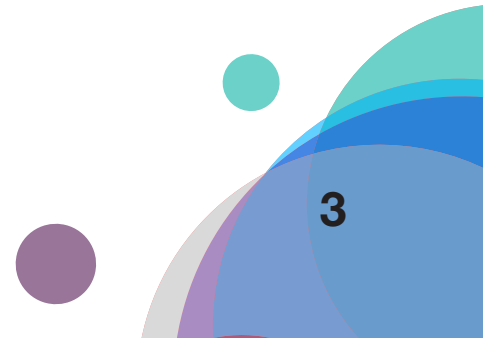
**2021
Accessibility
Plan Status Report.**





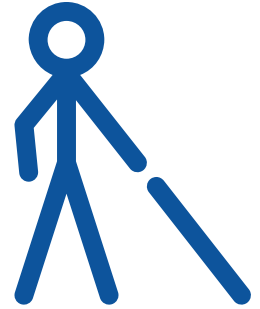
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Introduction

This report provides an annual update on the progress made and work completed by City staff in 2021 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

As detailed in the 2020 [Accessibility Plan Status Report](#) update, the City has continued to progressively include accessibility considerations in its standard departmental operations.

A noteworthy operational enhancement for 2021 was the hiring of a Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and a Project Manager for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office is responsible for the creation and execution of a work plan to address internal and external aspects of equity, diversity and inclusion for the City of Kingston. The four goals of the current work plan are:

1. Culture and Climate
2. Recruitment and Retention
3. Education and Training
4. Policies and Services

In June 2021 the first members of the City's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee were appointed by City Council. The mandate of the Committee is to provide guidance to staff and Council in the development of policies, initiatives and programs aimed at reducing barriers in the workplace at the City of Kingston and fostering diversity and inclusion in all areas of the organization, both internal and external.

The EDI Office and Committee maintain separate operations from the City's Accessibility Office and Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, but all groups work in partnership as accessibility is a key component of EDI initiatives and vice versa.



COVID-19 pandemic

In 2021 the world continued to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. As Canada experienced second, third and fourth waves of the pandemic and subsequent public health regulations, many City departments were affected by these regulations, resulting in project delays and service interruptions. City staff continued to adapt services and programs throughout the changing public health landscape, recognizing the outsized effects of the pandemic on persons with disabilities.

As discussed in the 2020 Accessibility Plan Status Report, many of the adaptations for service delivery will continue to be delivered once public health regulations are eased, increasing accessibility for services and programs for all Kingston residents.



Achievements and Successes

Customer Service

- Continued to review technology solutions for accessibility, with several solutions receiving critical upgrades to address accessibility shortcomings.
- Determined the requirements for the continued conduct of Council and Committee meetings in an electronic format, with a goal of providing for hybrid participation through a mix of in-person and electronic attendance for Council and Committee members, City staff and the public.
- Shifted Grand OnStage programming online and developed a hybrid in-person/online approach to deliver live performing arts events.
- Offered therapeutic swim classes with reduced capacity five days a week.
- Utilized cable protectors and appropriate lighting at 2021 Holiday Market to reduce trip hazards and improve experience.
- Provided accessible pathways and washrooms at all municipal events.
- Continued to offer small group museum and City Hall tours as well as walking tours of Ontario Street. Each public offering considered barriers to accessibility and included alternate delivery and format options responsive to visitor needs.



Information / Communication

- Implemented improvements to accessibility identification features in the Customer Relationship Management system. Improvements allow Customer Experience staff to easily flag requests as accessibility related and to classify requests received from the public to reporting standards.
- Expanded the use of live American Sign Language interpretation and closed captioning for virtual public events such as the Mayor's Arts Awards and the Celebrating Accessibility Awards.
- Reviewed and remediated over 1,600 documents on the City of Kingston website for accessibility.
- Began preparations for redesign of the City's public website. The redesign will include a focus on the use of web-based content over PDF content.
- Established a contract with a third-party expert to assist with the creation and remediation of accessible web content to ensure timely availability.
- Partnered with the Kingston Economic Development Corporation to host Bridges to Better Business: Reducing Barriers to Increase Accessibility, a webinar held on the International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The event featured a panel discussion with representatives from Kingston-area businesses discussing how small businesses can improve accessibility for their clients and employees.
- Implemented a public art signage program in relation to new installations with input from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Public Art Project Team.



Employment

- Participated in Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day. Three 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.
- Hired a second Digital Content Analyst to assist with the creation of accessible digital and web content.
- Developed a Remote Work (Telework) policy. The policy establishes rules for alternate working arrangements where eligible employees have approval to carry out some or all of their work duties away from the official workspace, on a regular or periodic basis, from a designated remote work location (typically a home office). As part of the policy, employees are provided with all necessary equipment to perform their work in a safe manner.
- Identified 10 entry-level positions and established new job posting qualifications.
- Completed a collection of employee self-identified social identities and social location through voluntary survey. 34.4% of respondents identified as having a disability or requiring mental health support.
- Reviewed and revised 24 human resources policies, with revisions including diversity and inclusion, establishing support and accommodation, ensuring confidentiality, and providing equal opportunities for all potential new employees.



Transportation

- Upgraded eight bus stops to improve accessibility. Improvements included construction of concrete pads suitable for accessible shelter and bench installation, concrete infill pads between sidewalk and boulevard and improved connections with sidewalks and pathway based on site-specific conditions.
- Purchased two electric buses with new Q'Straint Quantum automatic wheelchair securement system. The Q'Straint Quantum allows passengers using mobility devices to independently secure themselves with minimal assistance from bus operators. The new securement system has received positive feedback from bus operators and passengers.
- Installed four new pedestrian signals at locations throughout Kingston that did not previously have pedestrian crossings.
- Constructed a 1.3-kilometre multi-use pathway on Henderson Boulevard connecting Days Road to Bayridge Drive, including the incorporation of accessible rest benches.
- Added additional sidewalk plowing units to meet service level requirements of the City's winter maintenance policy.
- Created the City's first fully accessible 2021 Community Risk Assessment providing an overview of community risks across Kingston Fire & Rescue's area of responsibility.
- Upgraded 19 pedestrian sidewalk connections including tactile walking surface indicators.



Design of Public Spaces

- Began restoration of exterior stone stairs of City Hall, with anticipated project completion in the spring of 2022.
- Completed installation of wayfinding signage in City Hall, including tactile lettering, contrasting lettering, pictograms and braille on wall-mounted signs and directories.
- Began second phase of wayfinding signage project at City Hall, which will include updated exterior signage incorporating tactile lettering, contrasting lettering, pictograms and braille, where appropriate, along with tactile maps for site navigation.
- Completed first phase of fire protection upgrades at City Hall. Design and planning for the second phase began, involving the removal and replacement of existing fire alarm elements with modern systems including audible and visual signalling devices.
- Continued to explore the development of conceptual plans to improve accessibility related to the performance spaces within the Kingston Grand Theatre.
- Began a refresh of the Kingston Grand Theatre lobbies, including enhanced lighting, improved colour contrast, and tactile warning surfaces.
- Applied for and received an accessibility audit of the Rideau Heights Community Centre through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program. The facility received a final rating of 86% and a certification level of Gold, detailed in the [following report](#). An audit will also be conducted of the Kingston East Community Centre upon completion of construction, anticipated in Spring 2022.



Training

- Trained a variety of City staff on the use of Equidox, the City's standard accessibility review and remediation tool for PDF content posted to the City's website.
- Improvements were made to the staff Intranet site to better outline and promote digital accessibility guidelines and resources based on four of the five pillars of AODA compliance.
- Recreation & Leisure Services staff received training to help reduce stigma and negative attitudes surrounding mental health.
- Heritage Services Programming staff received trauma-informed and trauma-supported training as part of the development of the Refuge Canada exhibition at the PumpHouse Museum. The entire Heritage Programming team received cultural humility and anti-racism training.



Conclusion

2021 is the penultimate year of the current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2022. Staff will be working with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee and residents of Kingston to prepare the next multi-year accessibility plan, building on the achievements and successes of the current plan.

Many of the legislated deadlines of the AODA for municipalities the size of Kingston have been implemented. The focus of future work on accessibility will be to improve City programs and services above and beyond the legislated requirements. Staff will continue to build upon the base completed to remove barriers and improve accessibility.

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.