



City of Kingston
Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-23-003

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Resource Staff: Janet Jaynes, Acting City Clerk

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2023

Subject: 2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Regulatory & compliance

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its regulations require municipalities to prepare a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan), make it public, and to consult with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) regarding the preparation of the plan. The AODA also requires annual status updates on the accomplishments achieved and progress made in terms of meeting objectives of the Plan.

The purpose of this report is to transmit the 2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update, which is attached to this report as Exhibit A.

Recommendation:

That the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends to Council:

That the 2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update, attached as Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-23-003, be received and made available to the public via the City of Kingston website.

March 2, 2023

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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	p.p. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update, attached to this report as Exhibit A, provides MAAC 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 2022 Accessibility Status Update will be made available to the public via the [accessibility page](#) of the City of Kingston 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, Acting City Clerk, 613-546-4291 extension 1262

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Derek Ochej, Committee Clerk

Muhammad Ahsan, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Manager

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – 2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update

2022 Accessibility Plan Status Update - Draft

Introduction

This report provides an annual update on the progress made and work completed by City staff in 2022 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 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 (MAAC), 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.

2022 Municipal Election

On October 24, 2022, residents of Kingston participated in the municipal election and cast their ballot for mayor, district councillors and school board trustees. Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* provides that a clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. Additionally, the clerk is required to prepare a plan for identification, removal

and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day. In accordance with these provisions, the [2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan](#) was created by staff. The objectives of the plan included:

- ensuring that all voting places met the accessibility standards established by the City;
- that all electors could independently cast a ballot and verify their choices while maintaining the privacy of their vote;
- that all electors had full and equal access to information on where and when to vote and the candidates for each office;
- that all electors could fully participate in the municipal election as an elector, candidate, or election worker; and
- that electors and candidates were aware of the accessibility measures available for the municipal election through a variety of media.

Highlights of the work accomplish to meet the goals of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan included:

- Election pages on the City website were WCAG 2.0 compliant and all PDF documents were remediated for use by screen readers before posting to the website.
- Candidate information sessions were held via Zoom, with a recording of the session made available for viewing on the City of Kingston YouTube channel.
- Staff published two podcasts via the City of Kingston: Tell Me More platform. The first episode provided listeners with information on how to run for Council, job duties and what characteristics make a good City Councillor. The second episode focused on how to vote and the different options available to residents.
- All in-person voting places were visited by City staff and a member of the MAAC to be reviewed for accessibility. All voting places were compliant with the accessibility requirements.
- Five days of in-person advance voting were offered before Voting Day, increased from one day of in-person advance voting in 2018. Staggered hours were offered (9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.) throughout the five days. Residents could vote at any one of the six locations throughout the city, regardless of where they lived.

- All in-person voting places (except for those in Countryside District) were located on either a Kingston Transit route or within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop.
- Free transportation on Kingston Transit and for registered users of Kingston Access Bus were available on all in-person voting days. Riders were required to show their Voter Information Notice to receive free transit to their voting place.
- An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter was available at an advance voting location on Oct. 21. This service was advertised on voter information notices and the City website.
- Accessible voting equipment was available at all in-person voting locations. The equipment allowed an elector to mark their ballot independently in a manner that was in no way distinguishable from other ballots. Equipment available included a touchscreen with tactile buttons and accompanying audio interface. Rocker paddles were also available to assist an elector in marking their ballot. Six electors cast their ballots using the accessible voting equipment.
- The availability of online voting was expanded from 2018. Online voting was open for electors beginning on October 5, 2022, with the voting closing at 8 p.m. on October 24, 2022, for a total of 20 days of online voting. 10 days of online voting was available in 2018.
- All elections staff who worked at voting places received training in how to provide accessible customer service and relevant provisions of the AODA.

Achievements and Successes

Customer Service

- Continued to ensure the arts organizations funded by the City through service level agreements complied with the requirements of the AODA. Those arts organizations included the Kingston Arts Council that administers the City of Kingston Arts Fund and the Kingston Theatre Alliance that presents the Kick & Push Festival.
- On March 2, 2022, a phased re-opening of the Kingston Grand Theatre began, and the venue returned to full operations on March 21, 2022, in keeping with all Provincial guidelines and public health requirements. Discount programs resumed as well to help remove financial barriers to the performing arts.
- Held the twelfth annual [Celebrating Accessibility Awards](#), recognizing three community members (Leah Riddell, Claire Davies and Bailey Daniels) and one community organization (Polson Park Public School), for their contributions

beyond legislated requirements to improving access for persons with disabilities in Kingston.

- Through the Kingston-Frontenac Renovates Program, issued 17 grants for a total of \$200,000 disbursement. Funded projects included the creation of an accessible washroom and the replacement of critical home infrastructure to allow seniors and persons with disabilities to continue to reside safely in their homes.

Information / Communication

- Created and received Council approval for the 2023-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Plan was created through consultation with members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, Kingston residents and City staff.
- Completed an update of the City's online engagement platform, [Get Involved Kingston](#) including the use of text-based engagement summaries to reduce the reliance on PDF files for information sharing.
- Established standards for including ImageID text for all photos posted to Instagram. This is in addition to existing standards to include descriptive alt-text and open captions on social media content posted to the City's channels.
- Established a Supervisor, Digital Accessibility and Information Management position, with a focus on continuous improvement of website accessibility, training and operational efficiencies related to content publishing

Employment

- Participated in Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day. Three City staff members were partnered as mentors with 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, learned about accessible employment in a real world setting and are exposed to an often-untapped pool of employee talent.
- Began use of a new learning content development tool which allows for the use of voice overs for training videos.
- Continued to work with community agencies to connect people with disabilities who are potential unemployed or underemployed to employment opportunities with the City of Kingston. This work was facilitated through partnerships with Equitek Employment Solutions, Discover Ability Network, KEYS, March of Dimes and various temporary employment agencies.

- Established a Temporary Accommodation Committee, with the goal of pooling positions together for consideration when placing staff into a role on a temporary basis while they progress back to regular full-time employment in their home position.
- Notified all job applicants at every stage of the recruitment process that accessibility accommodations are available if required.
- Provide Hiring Manager Interview Training to new and existing leaders on interview best practices, accommodation/accessibility, and legalities in interviewing.
- Engaged with residents on the update and refreshment of the City's Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy, which includes the Workplace Inclusion Charter.

Transportation

- Continued upgrade of transit bus shelters to include adequate turning radius for mobility devices within the shelter, vision strips on glass and edges, tactile warning surfaces, bariatric seating, and enhanced lighting. In 2022, 6 bus stop locations were upgraded to provide improved accessibility. An additional 4 accessible bus stops entered active service when the new route 19 was implemented in September 2022.
- Retrofitted six buses and two new electric buses with touchless mobility securement system. The system allows transit passengers using mobility devices to independently secure themselves without assistance. As identified in the 2023-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the touchless mobility securement system will be installed on all new bus purchases on a go forward basis.
- Facilitated the annual public engagement process required by the AODA for Kingston Transit. Results of the engagement are available on the [City's website](#).
- Hired 15 seasonal winter maintenance staff with the sole responsibility for clearing sidewalks and bus stops in effort to decrease the amount of time between a snow event and clearing efforts.
- Instituted a new winter program to pre-treat concrete surfaces such as sidewalks and bus stop pads on express bus routes and high traffic sidewalks. The goal of the program is to minimize snow and ice accumulation on these surfaces.

Design of Public Spaces

- Completed accessibility upgrades to Kingston Grand Theatre, including modifications to light levels in the main lobby, improved colour contrasts related

to the walls, floors and doors, installation of detectable warning surfaces to interior staircases and improved stair nosing. An accessibility audit of performance spaces within the Kingston Grand Theatre was also completed and the findings will be used to inform future capital improvements, where possible.

- Continued to work with the MAAC Public Art Project team to ensure all public art projects comply with the Ontario Building Code's requirements for accessibility in the built environment and align with Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS), where possible.
- Completed construction of the Kingston East Community Centre. Highlights of the facility include accessible appliances in the community kitchen space, an audible fire alarm system, and tactile surfaces throughout the exterior and interior, including the indoor walking track. The facility received a Rick Hansen Foundation audit and was [certified gold](#) for accessibility.
- Continued renovation of the Richardson Beach Bath House, including the addition of power door operators, a universal washroom with adult change table, widened corridors, accessible change rooms and contrasting finishes on floors, doors and walls. The project is anticipated to be complete in 2023.
- Continued upgrade of fire alarm system and device throughout City Hall. New fire alarm devices will have both audible and visual signals with project completion anticipated in the fall 2023.
- In December 2022 opened the Waaban Crossing, which features a multi-use pedestrian and bike pathway along the two-lane, 1.2-kilometre bridge. Related work was completed at the main intersections on either side of bridge (Montreal Street and John Counter Boulevard, Gore Road and Highway 15) to improve safety for pedestrians accessing the bridge.
- Received feedback from the public on the design for several new parks and open spaces, including Cataraqui West Community Park, Point Crescent Open Space, Wright Crescent Parkette, 100 Foot Park, Terra Verde Park, and Cricket Field Baseball Diamond Renovation. Residents were able to provide feedback in a variety of methods, including live-streamed virtual engagement sessions with closed captioning, in-person drop-in sessions, via the Get Involved Kingston site, paper surveys, or via phone/email contact with staff.
- Began a pilot project aimed at improving road safety and supporting active travel to schools by creating neighbourhood area speed limits and community safety zones in two areas. Measures included speed limit reductions to 40 km/h throughout the two pilot neighbourhoods and 30 km/h speed limit reductions

through posted signage in school areas, and the installation of traffic calming measures including road messaging, flexible bollards and speed display devices.

- Conducted public information sessions regarding planned cycling facility, pedestrian route and transit access improvements on Bayridge Drive between Cataraqui Woods Drive and Henderson Boulevard. The scheduled work includes the introduction of AAA (all ages and abilities) intersection upgrades.
- Received Council approval for the future installation of 31 new or upgraded pedestrian crossing locations throughout Kingston. The locations, outlined in [Report COU-22-167](#), connect to the existing sidewalk or pathway network and will help address barriers to crossing that exist within and on the periphery of neighbourhood areas. The selection of these locations was informed by the public engagement completed in 2021 and are in addition to accessible crossing upgrades that are incorporated as part of new or upgraded signalized intersections. Installation is to be completed between 2023 and 2026.

Training

- Hosted 2SLGBTQ+ Allyship & Awareness training for staff.

Conclusion

2022 is the final year of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2022. This document is the final update for the previous multi-year plan and represents the culmination of five years of dedicated work. In November 2022, both the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee and Council approved the [2023 – 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#). The Plan was created throughout 2022 with the assistance of members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, Kingston residents, and City staff.

Staff will continue to incorporate accessibility considerations into all programs and services with a goal to move above and beyond the legislated requirements. This is reflected in the goals and objectives of the 2023-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility 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.