



City of Kingston
Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-24-006

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services

Resource Staff: Danika Lochhead, Acting Director, Arts & Culture Services

Date of Meeting: May 2, 2024

Subject: Arts & Culture Services Updates

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Corporate business

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) with an update regarding the work of the Arts & Culture Services Department as it relates to supporting accessibility and removing barriers to participation in arts and culture activities. This report includes updates related to work completed in 2023 and 2024 to-date, which includes work from the Special Events Office that is now part of the Arts & Culture Services Department.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Jennifer Campbell,
**Commissioner, Community
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, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Background

The City's Arts & Culture Services Department facilitates accessible arts and culture-based programming, public art, events and sector development initiatives across the City and through arts venues including the Kingston Grand Theatre, and integrates accessibility priorities into arts and culture plans, policies and initiatives.

Analysis

Below is a high-level overview of Arts & Culture Services programs, initiatives and projects completed in 2023 and in 2024 to-date related to accessibility.

Asset Management

- Added balcony railings in the Regina Rosen Auditorium, upper balcony, at the Kingston Grand Theatre for patrons who require a touch railing due to vision limitations.
- Convert the women's washroom in the Kingston Grand Theatre, adjacent to the Baby Grand, into an accessible dressing room/washroom. Planning process to begin in late 2024 with construction to follow in 2025.

Programming

- Continued to offer discounted tickets for Grand OnStage (GOS) shows through the Municipal Fee Assistance Program and the Pay What You Want program and set goals and key performance indicators on improving community access to discount ticket offerings.
- Presented young audience productions that offer relaxed programs for patrons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for the Deaf community.
- Facilitated accessibility accommodations for students/young people during shows such as creating quiet/relaxed spaces in the theatre, select shows for the GOS season that focus on disability, accessibility and inclusion themes, support community partners who work in developmental services to provide access to GOS shows.
- Continued to engage community partnerships for summer arts programming and make accessible arts programming opportunities to long-term and extended care facilities and through the City's community centres.
- Met with the MAAC Public Art project team and reviewed plans for upcoming public art projects including Rideau Heights Community Centre and Kingston East Community Centre.

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Special Events

- Continued to utilize the “Accessible Guide to Events” when planning municipal events and also work with external event organizers to ensure accessibility considerations are part of the event approval process. This includes but is not limited to:
 - ASL interpreter services and/or assistive hearing devices offered at events and always when there is an MC or speakers; accessible washrooms provided; increased signage; events to include pathways that are wide enough to accommodate those with mobility devices or service animals going both ways, have curb cuts to allow for easier access, and have a height clearance free of branches or signs that may not otherwise be detected; and webpage, posters and general promotion of events follow *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) guidelines.
- Accessibility highlights from the City’s feature events in 2023 and 2024 to-date include:
 - Spring into Summer – provided a sensory area, prioritized accessible parking, included an accessible and designated viewing area, provided accessible washrooms, and included a ramp at the main stage for wheelchair access for a performer;
 - Sheep Dog Trials – accessibility features included accessible parking and drop-off areas along with accessible portable washrooms;
 - Rockin’ the Square concert – included a fenced off wheelchair accessible viewing area in Springer Market Square and provided free transit day-of;
 - Intercultural Arts Festival – provided accessible access points, the inclusion of a sensory-reduced zone, and ASL interpretation for opening ceremonies and presentation of Civic Awards;
 - New Year’s Eve K-town Countdown – provided sensory skate with reduced sound and lighting; and
 - Solar Eclipse – included accessible parking and drop-off areas at main City event, provided accessible portable washrooms and coordinated free transit across the City.
- Collaborated with the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Office on City feature events, diversity events, and interdepartmental or community partnership-based events to ensure every attendee has a way to participate and be included in the events.

Sector Development

- Completed the Kingston Music Strategy that included Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IIDEA) as a foundational principle to the Strategy and applied to all recommendations, such as spaces and types of venues, promoting diverse genres, policies and audience access.
- Initiated a large-scale of the review of the City of Kingston Arts Fund that included in its scope to provide greater access to the funding program, and to prioritize artists, arts

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workers and residents who are part of equity deserving groups, including the Deaf and disability arts sector, in the public engagement process.

- Helped to establish Service Level Agreement between H'Art Centre with the City's Community Development & Wellbeing Department to provide accessible arts programming that encourages community participation and inclusive arts training for adults with disabilities, and in alignment with Community Safety and Wellbeing plans.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Dianne Zemba, Manager, Grand Theatre, Arts & Culture Services

Jayson Duggan, Performing Arts Manager, Arts & Culture Services

Jon Hayter, Supervisor, Special Events Office, Arts & Culture Services