

Date: April 26, 2022

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of
Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

Originator's files:

Meeting date:
May 11, 2022

Subject

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2021 Accessibility Annual Status Update

Recommendation

That the "Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2021 Accessibility Annual Status Update" report dated April 26, 2022 from Facilities and Property Management be received for information.

Executive Summary

- The goal of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is to identify, prevent and remove barriers to make Ontario accessible by 2025.
- Establishing a multi-year accessibility plan is a requirement under the AODA. The City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022, describes the actions the City will take to meet AODA requirements. Cumulatively, 95% of the 64 commitments were completed by the end of year four (2021).
- The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2021 Accessibility Annual Status Update, included as Appendix 1, highlights the City's completed 2021 initiatives which have identified and removed barriers to people of all abilities.
- The 2021 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report included as Appendix 2, highlights the improvements made to the City's transportation system to ensure its services and operations are accessible to everyone.
- The City filed an Accessibility Compliance Report with the province in December, 2021, included as Appendix 3.
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to impact the way the City operates as an organization but ensuring access to City programs and services for people with disabilities continues to be a priority and forms part of the City's commitment to accessible customer service.

Background

Accessibility impacts people's daily lives, families, careers and opportunities and makes it easier for everyone to participate more fully in the community. More than 173,600 Mississauga residents have a disability – that's nearly one quarter of the population. These residents can face multiple barriers to accessing goods, services, facilities and obtaining gainful employment and the need for accessible services will continue to rise as the population ages. Planning for accessibility helps create a more vibrant city that all residents and visitors can enjoy. To increase sustainability and enhance the quality of life in Mississauga, the City is committed to an inclusive community where all residents and visitors have access to City services, programs and facilities in a manner that is integrated and promotes dignity and independence.

The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is to identify, prevent and remove barriers to make Ontario accessible by 2025. To meet this goal, the Act outlines accessibility requirements so people of all abilities can participate in all areas of daily life. The requirements are applied under five standards:

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

Establishing a multi-year accessibility plan is a requirement under the AODA. The 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1) outlines the actions the City will take to meet and go beyond its legislated obligations to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. These achievements translate into increased opportunities to access employment and to fully participate in the social, cultural, recreational economic and political life of Mississauga. The accomplishments highlighted in this report demonstrate the City's commitment to creating a barrier-free environment for all residents and visitors.

The City continues to encourage local businesses and organizations to meet accessibility requirements and prevent and remove barriers, however, the City has no official role in enforcing these requirements. Ensuring these requirements are met is the responsibility of the Ontario government.

Present Status

Every year the Facilities & Property Management Accessibility Planning & Compliance team provides an update on the accessibility achievements from the previous reporting year. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2021 Accessibility Annual Status Update (Appendix 1) highlights the City's completed 2021 initiatives which have improved accessibility for people of all abilities.

Meeting our commitments

Year four saw 95% of the 64 commitments in the City's five-year accessibility plan completed. These accomplishments demonstrate the City's commitment to creating a barrier-free environment for all residents and visitors.

MYAP section	Number of commitments	Completed by 2021
General requirements and governance	9	9 (100%)
Customer service	6	5 (83%)
Information and communications	11	10 (91%)
Employment	9	9 (100%)
Transportation	10	10 (100%)
Design of public spaces	19	18 (95%)
Total	64	61 (95%)

In addition to updating the status of the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, this report highlights five key achievements by the organization in 2021:

- Elevator renewal and accessibility upgrades at five facilities
- Working to establish a more inclusive employment culture
- Raising awareness of accessibility in the community
- Updated training modules to incorporate accessibility, including closed captioning
- Accessibility compliance report submission with the Government of Ontario

MiWay has also prepared the 2021 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report which is included as Appendix 2 and highlights the improvements made to the City's transportation system to ensure its services and operations are accessible to everyone.

Elevator renewal and accessibility upgrades

One of the City's goals is to improve accessibility in and around City facilities, making them inclusive for everyone. Part of that commitment includes actively reviewing City spaces and removing barriers. The Elevator Renewal and Accessibility Upgrades supports this goal and led to the upgrade of six Type-C lifts at five locations with Limited Use Limited Access (LULA) Elevators in 2021:

1. Clarke Memorial Hall
 - Additional upgrades include creating a barrier-free path of travel allowing safe access to the elevator from parking lot
2. Erin Mills Twin Arena
 - Additional upgrades include new front entrance sliding doors and creating an accessible viewing gallery

3. Huron Park Community Centre
4. Clarkson Community Centre
5. MiWay Administration Offices

The elevator and accessibility upgrades will make all five facilities more accessible and accommodate employees, residents and visitors of all abilities. The key improvements for the project were completed in early 2021.

Inclusive employment

The City is working to establish a more inclusive employment culture. An inclusive employment culture ensures candidates and employees with disabilities have the support to join, work effectively, experience career growth and have opportunities for learning, development and progression. Unfortunately, many people with disabilities face barriers that prevent them from participating in the workplace.

To address these barriers, the City built a Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and implementation plan based on collecting and analyzing employee data. To help set the City's priorities moving forward, staff partnered with KPMG to conduct an assessment of the City's employment policies. The assessment led to 10 recommendations the City will focus on moving forward to address systemic employment barriers in the recruitment and succession planning processes.

Raising awareness in 2021

Accessibility innovation at the City of Mississauga goes above and beyond the requirements under the AODA's Standards. Across City Departments, accessibility leads are passionate champions who seek opportunities to showcase and improve accessibility across the community. For example, City staff participated in a variety of virtual events as part of the City's recognition for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD) on December 3rd:

1. Assistive technology lesson with Makers Making Change (setting a Guinness World Record)
2. Power of inclusive language panel with the Rick Hansen Foundation
3. Create accessible forms lesson presented by Dax Castro

In addition to IDPWD, the City raised accessibility awareness through hosting and attending multiple events. Staff participated in the Virtual Mississauga Older Adult Expo, including hosting a session on accessibility at the City, National AccessAbility Week events and province-wide consultations and conferences. These events reached residents, visitors, and organizations across the City and built awareness and capacity to deliver more inclusive public services and programs in the community.

The City will continue to build awareness on accessibility and will be participating in this year's National AccessAbility Week which begins May 29, 2022.

The City is an active member on the Peel Region accessibility networking group (made up of the region and three local municipalities) and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals which has over 100 municipalities and other public sector organizations represented. Membership in these groups ensures the City is abreast of current developments and other municipal initiatives.

Updated Training

In 2021, City staff launched a new training module, updating training materials that were created in 2012. The training provides information about the town's requirements on all five standards under the AODA including updated requirements under the Accessible Customer Service Standard and provides information and helpful tips on how to interact with individuals with a variety of disabilities such as physical, developmental and cognitive disabilities, including a section on Autism. The training module incorporates accessibility, including closed captioning.

Compliance report

In 2021, the City filed a successful accessibility compliance report with the Government of Ontario (Appendix 3 - 2021 Provincial Accessibility Compliance Report). The report indicates that the City is compliant with 97% of AODA legislated requirements to-date, failing to meet one requirement. Staff have developed a strategy to meet this final requirement and are currently making progress towards full compliance.

Council and the public are able to track the City's progress through annual status reports and compliance reports to the province every two years. The City has filed compliance reports in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and most recently in 2021. The City's next compliance report will be filed with the province in 2023.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the Recommendations in this report.

Conclusion

This report provides a status update on the 2021 initiatives to implement the City's multi-year accessibility plan. Annual status updates are posted on the City's website in an accessible format.

In four years, the City has completed 95% of its 64 commitments in our 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. We know that more progress is needed in order to make the City a more accessible organization that helps people with disabilities participate fully in their life and work. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to impact the way the City operates as an organization but ensuring access to City programs and services for people with disabilities

continues to be a priority and forms part of the City's commitment to accessible customer service. Forging new partnerships and innovative ways of working will enable the City to remove more barriers and continue driving towards becoming a more accessible employer and service provider.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2021 Accessibility Annual Status Update

Appendix 2: 2021 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report

Appendix 3: 2021 Provincial Accessibility Compliance Report



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