

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: April 29, 2024</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Corporate Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: May 22, 2024</p>

Subject

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update

Recommendation

That the “Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update” report dated April 29, 2023, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services, 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 2023-2028 (included as Appendix 1) is the City's third plan and builds on the success of the previous plans, outlining the actions the City will take to meet and go beyond AODA requirements.
- The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update (included as Appendix 2), highlights the City's completed 2023 initiatives which have identified and removed barriers to people of all abilities.
- The 2023 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report (included as Appendix 3) 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 2023 (included as Appendix 4). The City remains compliant with all requirements under the AODA's standards with one exception, related to accessible websites and content. To meet this requirement, the City continues to invest a significant amount of time and resources into training staff and developing an accessible digital strategy.
- The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility conducted a site inspection at multiple locations throughout the city to assess compliance with a number of requirements under the AODA's standards. The City demonstrated compliance on the inspected intersections, pathways, recreational trails, parks and boardwalks (included as Appendix 5).

Background

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate fully in society. Based on the most recent data from Statistics Canada, the percentage of people who have a disability has risen from 24 per cent in 2017 to 28 per cent in 2022. That increase means that more than a quarter of the population has a disability and equates to more than 201,000 Mississauga residents. It is expected that this number will continue to rise given the aging population and at some point, most of us will likely face some type of temporary, situational or permanent disability. People with disabilities can face multiple barriers to accessing goods, services, facilities, public spaces and 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, visitors and employees can enjoy.

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 with disabilities 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 City's 2023-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1) is a roadmap to creating a better city for everyone. It outlines key actions the City will take to meet and go beyond its legislated obligations to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Its commitments translate into increased opportunities for people with disabilities 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.

City staff work in partnership with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review and seek feedback on City programs and services and promote awareness in the community.

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

The City's 2023-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes initiatives that will help the City's commitment to an inclusive community where all residents, visitors and employees have access to City services, programs and facilities in a manner that is integrated and promotes dignity and independence. The initiatives fall under six key areas stemming from legislative obligations:

- Governance and Reporting
- Equitable customer service
- Digitally-inclusive communications
- Inclusive employment
- Accessible movement
- Universally-designed facilities and public spaces

These requirements operate in addition to the duty to accommodate under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the [Ontario Building Code](#).

2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update

Every year the Facilities & Property Management Standards, Training & Compliance team provides an update on the accessibility achievements from the previous reporting year. The 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update (Appendix 2) highlights the City's completed 2023 initiatives which have improved accessibility for everyone.

The 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update (Appendix 2) highlights the City's completed 2023 initiatives which have improved accessibility for everyone. This report highlights three key achievements by the organization in 2023:

- Accessibility improvements at facilities and public spaces
- Working to establish a more inclusive employment culture
- Participating in multiple accessibility compliance activities led by the Government of Ontario

MiWay has also prepared the 2023 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report, which is included as Appendix 3 and highlights the improvements made to the City's transportation system to ensure its services and operations are accessible to everyone.

Accessibility improvements at facilities and public spaces

Identifying, preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities creates a Mississauga that is built for everyone – whether you're pushing a stroller, making a delivery, or using a walker or a wheelchair.

One of the City's goals is to improve accessibility in and around City facilities and public spaces, making them inclusive for everyone. Part of that commitment includes actively reviewing City

spaces and removing barriers. The following accessibility upgrades implemented at facilities and public spaces in 2023 supports this goal:

1. Hazel McCallion Central Library
 - Added universal washrooms on three floors and upgraded washrooms featuring contact-free fixtures; installed 14 accessible workstations across all floors equipped with assistive technology and height-adjustable desks; added accessible kiosks (self-checkout, automated book return and hold pick-up)
2. Malton Youth Hub
 - Added accessible entrances, elevator and path of travel; installed accessible washrooms, universal washroom and a barrier-free gender-neutral washroom
3. Tomken Twin Arena
 - Installed automatic sliding doors at main entrance and arena entrances
4. Vimy Park
 - Increased accessibility and entrance space for local events and commemorative ceremonies by improving walkways, site furnishing, lighting and connections to the cenotaph
5. Richard Memorial Park
 - Constructed a new all-season accessible washroom that includes male and female multi-stall washrooms and a new universal washroom. Additional upgrades include creating a barrier-free path of travel to the washroom
6. The Credit Woodlands
 - Added curb cuts, adjusted sidewalks and installed tactile plates where appropriate as part of a Tactical Urbanism project on the Credit Woodlands. Also added protective barriers to newly created pedestrian spaces
7. Churchill Meadows Community Garden
 - Created new accessible path leading to the accessible garden bed
8. Playgrounds
 - Improved accessibility at four community playgrounds through targeted improvements including accessible swing seats, transfer platforms, engineered wood fibre safety surfacing, paved access route and park benches with armrests on concrete pads

These accessibility upgrades will make these facilities and public spaces more accessible and accommodate employees, residents and visitors of all abilities.

Working to establish a more inclusive employment culture

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 this issue, the City continues to implement a targeted outreach strategy for recruiting people with disabilities. Part of this strategy includes continuing partnerships with both the Ready, Willing and Able organization and the Discover Ability Network that support the employment of people with disabilities. The City will also look to build upon newly developed partnerships with the CNIB, Community Living Mississauga and Community Living Burlington. In addition to providing support and resources during the employment process, these organizations connect employers with individuals with disabilities seeking employment.

Participating in multiple accessibility compliance activities led by the Government of Ontario

The City participated in two compliance activities required by the province, a site inspection to assess compliance with a number of requirements under the AODA's standards and the biennial filing of the City's accessibility compliance report.

Site inspection

In September, the AODA inspector from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Division of the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility conducted a site inspection at multiple locations through Mississauga. The intent of the inspection was to assess compliance with certain requirements under the AODA's standards, including exterior paths of travel, intersections, recreational trails, beach access routes and boardwalks. The Information was obtained from the on-site inspection based on observations, measurements and discussions with City staff at three different locations, Parkside Village Drive, Central Parkway and Achill Crescent, and Lakefront Promenade. Based on the inspection completed, the City was deemed to be fully compliant with the requirements.

Accessibility Compliance Report

In 2023, the City filed a successful accessibility compliance report with the Government of Ontario (Appendix 4 - 2023 Provincial Accessibility Compliance Report). The City remains compliant with all requirements under the AODA's standards with one exception, related to accessible websites and content.

In 2021, the City was required to ensure that all websites and web content are accessible, meeting the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA standards. This requirement has proven difficult to meet and the City is aware of an unprecedented number of public sector organizations also continuing to report non-compliance with this requirement in 2023. Many of these organizations have provided feedback to the province requesting the province to re-examine how web compliance is assessed moving forward.

To meet this final requirement, the City continues to invest a significant amount of time and resources into making the City's websites, web content and applications more accessible. Staff have launched multiple training courses on creating accessible documents and web content, expanded website information governance and publishing standards and are currently

developing a digital strategy to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements. Staff will continue to work on website accessibility and provide updates on meeting this requirement to the province. Council and the public can 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, 2021 and most recently in 2023. The City's next compliance report will be filed with the province in 2025.

Financial Impact

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

Conclusion

This report provides a status update on the 2023 initiatives to implement the City's multi-year accessibility plan and highlights a number of City initiatives completed, that support the City's commitment to providing accessible programs, services and facilities in the communities. As the City of Mississauga continues to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, monitoring and reporting on the progress and results in meeting the plan's commitments are important. Council and the public can track the City's progress through annual status updates and compliance reports to the province every two years. These reports are available in an accessible format on the City's website.

Attachments

- Appendix 1: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – 2023-2028
- Appendix 2: 2023 Accessibility Annual Status Update
- Appendix 3: 2023 MiWay Annual Accessibility Report
- Appendix 4: 2023 Provincial Accessibility Compliance Report
- Appendix 5: Government of Ontario Site Inspection Letter



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