

For Information

DATE: September 5, 2014

REPORT TITLE: **ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT**

FROM: Gilbert Sabat, Commissioner of Service Innovation, Information and Technology

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update for 2013 on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the Region of Peel's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) which aims to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025.
- The AODA sets out accessibility standards that organizations must meet in five key areas: Customer Service, Employment, Transportation, Information & Communication and Built Environment.
- One of the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) is to implement and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- On November 22, 2012, Regional Council approved the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Region of Peel.
- Another requirement under the IASR is the preparation of an annual status report on the progress and measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan.
- This document outlines the progress of the Region of Peel's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2013.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The AODA aims to improve accessibility for Ontarians by identifying, removing and preventing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. The goal of the *Act* is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. The AODA sets out accessibility standards that organizations must meet in five key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Build Environment

The first standard, the Customer Service Standard became law in 2008 (Ontario Regulation 429/07). In 2011, the Province combined the Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation Standards into one regulation referred to as the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The last standard, the Built Environment Standard for design of public spaces has now been introduced.

One of the requirements under the IASR is to develop, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. On November 22, 2012, Regional Council approved the Region of Peel's first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2013-2017, in accordance with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR).

It is also a requirement of the IASR to report on an annual basis on the progress towards meeting the goals of the Region of Peel's five year Accessibility Plan. The "Annual Accessibility Status Report 2013" attached as Appendix I to the subject report, outlines the accomplishments the Region of Peel has undertaken in 2013 towards inclusion and removing barriers for persons with disabilities in the Region of Peel. The report is

also to be posted on the Region of Peel's website and made available in an accessible format, upon request.

CONCLUSION

To meet the legislated requirements of the AODA, the Region of Peel must comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) by preparing an annual status report on the progress towards implementing the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The annual status report reinforces the Region of Peel's commitment to accessibility and ensures that the Region of Peel is on track in removing barriers for persons with disabilities and making the Region of Peel an inclusive place to live, work and play.



Gilbert Sabat, Commissioner of Service Innovation, Information and Technology

Approved for Submission:



D. Swarc, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

1. Appendix I - Annual Accessibility Status Report 2013

For further information regarding this report, please contact Brian DeNiese, Manager, Service Innovation & Improvement, extension 4088, brian.deniese@peelregion.ca.

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Region of Peel Annual Accessibility Status Report 2013

An annual report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the Region's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Background

In December, 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) was passed by the province on Ontario to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. After public consultation and much feedback suggesting the need for stricter provincial standards, in 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The AODA aims to improve accessibility for Ontarians by identifying, removing and preventing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. The goal of the Act is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. The AODA sets out accessibility standards that organizations must meet in five key areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

The first standard, the Customer Service Standard became law in 2008 (Ontario Regulation 429/07). In 2011, the Province combined the Information and Communication, Employment and Transportation Standards into one regulation referred to as the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The last standard, the Built Environment Standard for design of public spaces has now been introduced.

Although the AODA is now in place, until all accessibility standards are implemented, the ODA will remain in force and organizations must continue to implement both.

One of the requirements under the AODA is to develop, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan and report on an annual basis on the progress towards meeting the requirements of the IASR.

In 2013 the Region of Peel developed its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013-2017), in accordance with the requirements of the AODA and the IASR.

Organizational Commitment to Accessibility

The Region of Peel is committed to implementing, maintaining and enhancing accessibility with respect to employment and the use of all Regional goods and services, programs and facilities for all persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- respects their dignity and independence and is sensitive to their individual needs;
- ensures reasonable efforts are made to ensure that service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as well as those without disabilities; and

- allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services as those without disabilities, in the same location and in a timely and similar manner considering the nature of the service and accommodations required.

Status Update

Accessible Customer Service:

Requirement	Action
Accessible Customer Service	<p>The Region of Peel complied with this regulation by 2010.</p> <p>The Region of Peel is committed to providing excellent accessible customer service that is in line with the Region's five Regional values. Ongoing compliance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of an Accessible Customer Service policy and its availability online and in alternate formats • the creation of a feedback and notification form • ongoing training of new employees, volunteers, and third parties acting on behalf of the Region of Peel • the addition of a new-hire checklist to ensure new staff receive Accessible Customer Service training • the submission of a compliance report to the Province in 2010

General:

Requirement	Action
Accessibility Policies (s.3)	The Region of Peel has established a corporate accessibility policy (G00-20) which outlines how the Region will meet its obligations under the AODA. The Policy outlines the rules the Region will put in place to support achieving its accessibility goals and includes a statement of organizational commitment to accessibility.
Multi-Year Accessibility Plans (s.4)	The Region of Peel's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the Region's strategy to prevent and remove accessibility barriers and to meet the requirements of the AODA. The plan is posted on the Region's website and is available in alternate formats upon request.

<p>Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities (s.5)</p>	<p>A standard clause is included in all Regional contracts regarding the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> and the training that is required. Successful vendors are required to sign the acknowledgement of Accessibility Regulations for Contracted Services which is provided as an appendix to the contract.</p> <p>The Peel Purchasing website also informs vendors on the requirements to comply with the AODA. It notes that the Region of Peel will consider accessibility for people with disabilities to goods or services when making purchasing decisions and provides links to additional accessibility resources.</p> <p>The Region of Peel ensures that Affordable Housing Design Guidelines and Standards are incorporated into new housing projects. This document serves as a guide to the housing provider, developer, consultant and builder in order to provide a universal accessible environment that supports tenants and visitors with disabilities. The Affordable Housing Design Guidelines is provided to the architect during the design stage. If the project is a turnkey contract, the guidelines are given to the developer.</p> <p>These guidelines were used in recent new builds at Snelgrove, Creditvale Mills and Norton Lake.</p> <p>Universal accessibility features are also incorporated into new office buildings.</p>
<p>Training (s.7)</p>	<p>The Region of Peel has completed its training to the Corporation on the AODA and Human Rights Code as it pertains to person with disabilities. This training assists employees, volunteers and third party vendors better serve the citizens of Peel. Providing inclusive service is consistent with Regional values.</p> <p>Training was completed by December 31, 2013 using a variety of methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-learning modules (online) • Class training • Print training <p>Human Resources orientation sessions for new hires speaks to the mandatory training that new hires are required to receive, including training on Accessible Customer Service and the AODA and Human Rights Code.</p> <p>The Region maintains a record of the training provided. The Human Resources Management System identifies new hires and provides a report of who has received training.</p>

Information and Communication:

Requirement	Action
Feedback Processes (s.11)	<p>The Region of Peel ensures that feedback processes are accessible for person with disabilities. Feedback to the Region can be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person, by visiting one of our Regional locations • Via telephone by calling 905-791-7800 • Online via an Online Customer Feedback card • Via mail <p>All feedback will be reviewed and responded to within 2 business days, if submitted in person, by phone or online and within 15 business days if submitted by mail.</p>
Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information (s.13)	<p>The Region of Peel Emergency Management Program reviewed and assessed its processes and promotional materials to ensure compliance. Some examples of documents available in accessible formats include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Region of Peel Emergency Plan • Your Personal and Family Emergency Preparedness Guide • “Be Prepared to Assist in an Emergency – Assisting People with Disabilities” pamphlet • Master Supply Checklist • Emergency Food Plan • Vehicle Emergency Kit • Winter Weather Safety Tips <p>Emergency Management website was reformatted to meet the WCAG 2.0 at Level AA</p>
Accessible Website and Web Content (s.14)	<p>New websites such as the Emergency Management website have been reformatted to meet the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirement.</p> <p>The Region undertook five investigations related to the citizen experience on the external website, including an assessment of the site’s accessibility. The assessment included a review of key areas of the site against the WCAG 2.0 standard as well as hands on testing by a person with a visual disability. Investigation findings and recommendations were approved by the Executive Management Team and will result in improved digital citizen experience.</p> <p>Moving forward, a new Waste Management site will be demonstrated using new technology platforms that will include improvements to accessibility. In addition, changes to processes and roles/skill sets will be addressed to ensure the Region’s external site will be usable and accessible to all citizens.</p>

Employment:

Requirement	Action
Recruitment and Accessible Hiring Process (s.22-24)	<p>The Region of Peel notifies its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation during the application process which includes a commitment statement posted on its intranet and internet sites.</p> <p>Availability of accommodation is also communicated to all candidates invited to participate in the selection process and forms part of the employment agreement with the successful candidate. The Region informs successful candidates of the policies in place for accommodating employees with disabilities. Everyone involved, including the person asking for accommodation, work together, exchange relevant information, and search for accommodation solutions together.</p>
Informing Employees of Supports (s.25)	<p>The Region of Peel supports employees returning to work after illness or injury. The Region's Return to Work (RTW) Process document outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties when an employee returns to work or modified work after an injury or illness.</p> <p>The Region's Modified/Alternate Work Program policy (Policy HR03-04) assists employees requiring modified or alternate work as a result of an injury or illness.</p> <p>The Region of Peel is presently revising the Disability Accommodation Policy and Guidelines to further support employees with disabilities and provide disability-related job accommodations.</p>
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees (s.26)	<p>Upon request, the Region consults with an employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically needed in order to perform the employee's job. • Generally available to employees in the workplace.
Workplace Emergency Response Information (s.27)	<p>Information regarding evacuation procedures is posted throughout Region of Peel buildings beside each door to the corridor.</p> <p>Emergency signage such as the Evacuation Procedures, includes accessibility features like lowered posting for persons using wheelchairs, large font, large floor plan and clear concise instructions.</p> <p>Information regarding the building's fire and life safety systems, evacuation procedures, evacuation teams and persons requiring assistance protocol is made available to staff through the Region's intranet site.</p>

	<p>Staff is informed on an annual basis of the building's evacuation procedures and protocols for person's requiring assistance or accommodation.</p> <p>Evacuation Teams receive annual training on duties and procedures, including assisting persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Recent updates to the emergency response information for 10 Peel include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade to a two stage fire alarm system for Suite A; • Upgrade to audible speakers and visual strobes for Suite A; • Updates to 10 Peel's website to include more detailed Fire and Life Safety information for employees with disabilities; and • A new protocol to keep track of persons requiring assistance during an evacuation or emergency. <p>Individual accommodation plans for employees include, if required, individualized workplace emergency response information.</p> <p>The individualized workplace emergency response information is provided to the person designated to provide assistance to the employee during the emergency, with the employee's consent.</p> <p>The information is reviewed when the employee moves to a different location or job, when the employee's overall accommodation needs and accommodation plans are reviewed or when the Region reviews its organizational emergency response plan.</p>
Documented Individual Accommodation Plans (s.28)	<p>The Region of Peel has completed a Physical Demands Analysis for all positions in Bands 1 through 6 (approximately 1100) to assist with determining the essential duties of the position and assisting with accommodating employees into suitable positions.</p> <p>The Region is in the process of reviewing its existing employee accommodation policies and processes to ensure that Regional employees are able to participate in their work without accessibility barriers.</p>
Return to work process (s.29)	<p>Employees requiring accommodation are identified upon their return to work from either an occupational and or non-occupational injury or illness.</p>
Performance management, career development and redeployment (s.30-32)	<p>The Region of Peel Human Resources staff is currently updating other policies and guidelines to address staff accessibility needs.</p>

Transportation:

Requirement	Action
	<p>The Region of Peel provides accessible transportation through its specialized TransHelp service, while conventional transportation is delivered by the local area municipalities.</p> <p>The Region of Peel ensures that transportation services and vehicles are accessible to people with disabilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of emergency preparedness and response policies for all Region of Peel buses. • The inclusion of Emergency Plans for TransHelp vehicles and equipment failure plans as a critical component of the TransHelp Operator training program and manual. • The ability for staff to access documents through their Operator manual and standard operating procedures database. The manual is reviewed annually and as required. • Maintenance policies to handle unforeseen problems regarding specialized transportation services. Operator manuals are provided in accessible formats upon request. • The creation of accessibility policies relating to transportation for visitors made available through Peel's website, users' manual and the Region's customer contact centre. • The coordination of services with Regional adjacent service providers to facilitate cross boundary connections. TransHelp recently negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with GTHA specialized transportation providers. • The provision of training to employees and contracted service providers. • The waiving of fares for persons accompanying people with disabilities. • Fast tracking of applications to assist individuals requiring emergency or compassionate transportation. <p>Moving forward, the Region of Peel has launched the Accessible Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) in order to clarify the vision and estimate the demand for the provision of future transportation services for people with disabilities residing in the Region of Peel and to ensure compliance with the AODA.</p>