

For Information

DATE: November 1, 2016

REPORT TITLE: **ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT 2015**

FROM: Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update for the year 2015 on the progress made and actions taken by the Region of Peel to improve accessibility and implement the requirements set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) as well as the strategies set out in the Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013-2017).

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.
- One of the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) is to implement and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The Region's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Regional Council on November 22, 2012.
- The IASR also requires an annual status report on the progress and measures taken to implement the requirements under the AODA and the strategies set out in Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- This document outlines the actions to comply with the requirements for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

In 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), with the objective of improving accessibility for Ontarians by identifying, removing and preventing barriers faced by persons with disabilities by 2025.

6.3-2
ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT 2015

On November 22, 2012, the Region of Peel's first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2013-2017, was passed in accordance with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR).

A requirement under the IASR is the annual reporting of the measures taken to improve accessibility in the Region of Peel as required under the AODA as well as an update on the actions taken to implement the Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The "Annual Accessibility Status Report 2015" attached as Appendix I outlines the actions the Region of Peel has taken in 2015 to meet the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation. The report is also to be posted on the Region of Peel's website and made available in an accessible format, upon request.

CONCLUSION

As required under the AODA, the Region of Peel Annual Status Report 2015 outlines the actions taken to implement the requirements set out in the AODA legislation. It outlines the actions taken to comply with the requirements from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. The 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.



Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

1. Appendix I - Annual Accessibility Status Report 2015

For further information regarding this report, please contact Victoria Ghandour, Manager, Regulatory Compliance, extension 4131, victoria.ghandour@peelregion.ca.

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Region of Peel Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2015

This report constitutes an annual report on the progress of measures taken by the Regional Municipality of Peel to improve accessibility and implement the requirements set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The report provides an update on the implementation of the Region's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. It highlights actions to comply with the AODA requirements during year two of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

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 AODA is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025.

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, section 4(3) (a).

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.

The Region of Peel Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013-2017) reflects the Region's commitment to creating accessible programs, services and a workplace that ensures full participation of persons with disabilities.

This document outlines the work undertaken in 2015 to fulfill this commitment as well as the ongoing work undertaken towards meeting the requirements of the AODA. It builds on the *Accessibility Status Report 2013* and 2014, which outlined the progress of the Region of Peel in complying with the requirements from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2014.

Status Update

2015 Actions

The following table outlines the progress during 2015 to implement the Region of Peel's 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as well as the status of the work undertaken to comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

General:

Requirement	Action
Annual Status Report on the Multi-year Accessibility Plan	<p>Since the development of the Region of Peel's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013 – 2017, the Region has filed two status reports. Two reports filed in 2013 and 2014 outline the Region's progress since 2010. A copy of the Annual Accessibility Status Reports 2013 and 2014 is available on the Regional website.</p>
Training	<p>The Region of Peel uses various formats to provide training to all new employees and volunteers on the requirements of the IASR, including Accessible Customer Service and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to person with disabilities. Here is a list of formats that are currently offered for the training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IASR eLearning: This is a series of three online modules that can be completed on separate occasions, or in a single session. 2. IASR Booklet: An easy to read booklet designed for self-study for employees who do not have immediate access to a computer and for contractors and vendors. The last page of the booklet has a tearaway response card that must be mailed to the Accessibility Planning Program to ensure registration is recorded in PeopleSoft-HRMS. 3. IASR MP3 Audio Podcast: An audio-only podcast is available to those with a vision disability or those who prefer to listen to the training content. The audio file can be downloaded to a USB stick or mobile device. 4. IASR Brochure: An easy to read brochure designed for self-study for Regional volunteers. The last page of the brochure has a tearaway response card that must be mailed to the Accessibility Planning Program to ensure registration is recorded. 5. Classroom Training: In person AODA training sessions are delivered to summer students and participants in the Region of Peel summer job challenge program. <p>This training has been added to the list of mandatory trainings, which all new employees receive during their Orientation session.</p>

Information and Communication:

Requirement	Action
Accessible formats and communication supports	<p>In December 2014, all Region of Peel staff were notified via an organization wide email of their obligations with respect to accessible formats and communication supports, to ensure Regional compliance by the January 1, 2015 deadline.</p> <p>New Signage was created and placed in all public facing service counters throughout the Region to inform residents and members of the public of the availability of documents in accessible formats and of the availability of communication supports, upon request. The Region of Peel website was also revised to reflect similar messaging and a new online form was launched for such requests. Region of Peel Call Centre processes were also updated to ensure proper handling of requests.</p> <p>In 2015, a corporate policy G00-23 was developed to ensure that Region of Peel staff at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities under this new AODA requirement and have the knowledge and tools needed to develop accessible formats and to provide information supports upon request. The policy also included an accompanying resource guide. Further details regarding the policy and its implementation activities will be captured in next year's report.</p> <p>Region of Peel Family Literacy Program with American Sign Language</p> <p>In 2015 Human Services staff partnered with the Canadian Hearing Society and Mississauga Library to develop a Family Literacy Program in American Sign Language for families and young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The literacy workshop series ran at the South Common library branch and focused on developing home literacy practices that parents could incorporate into their everyday life to improve literacy outcomes for their children. Five families and their young children connected with each other weekly to spend time as a family and to learn about literacy development.</p> <p>The program was facilitated by one literacy volunteer who was deaf herself and other volunteers who delivered the program in Sign Language. Volunteers received information related to literacy as well as facilitation training through the Regional Literacy team and utilized community ASL interpreters.</p>

Accessible Websites and Web Content	<p>Work is underway to redesign the Region of Peel’s website, which will take into account accessibility and conformity with the AODA legislation. As the Region updates or creates new sections of its website or digital self-service applications, they are being made compliant to WCAG 2.0 Level AA. The Region continues to work towards meeting WCAG 2.0 Level AA in advance of the AODA 2021 deadline.</p> <p>New websites and web content such as the new internal and external home pages use new technology platforms that include improvements to accessibility.</p>
Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities	<p>The Region of Peel has been in compliance with the requirements under this section since 2013. In 2015 the purchasing staff made minor revisions to two standard clauses to reflect legislative updates.</p> <p>The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities acknowledgement was revised to make it simpler and more precise. Similarly the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities clause was simplified.</p> <p>Both documents were posted on the purchasing website with a statement notifying vendors that upon request, all of these documents are available in accessible formats.</p>

Employment:

Requirement	Action
Recruitment and Accessible Hiring Process	<p>The Region of Peel continues to ensure that its recruitment practices are accessible for everyone. It ensures that everyone is aware of the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment cycle.</p>
Informing Employees of Supports	<p>Support is provided to Regional employees returning to work after illness or injury. The employee is connected with a member of the Disability Management team and all concerned parties work together to ensure that the needs of the employee are met for a successful return to work process as outlined in the Region’s Return to Work (RTW) Process document.</p>
Documented Individual Accommodation Plans	<p>The Region of Peel continues to document Individual Accommodation Plans for employees, in accordance with AODA requirements.</p> <p>The Region is in the process of developing an Accommodation</p>

	<p>Policy Framework, which consists of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: Outlines the Region's commitment, guiding principles and roles and responsibilities • Procedures: Outlines detailed steps for workplace accommodation, throughout the employment cycle • Guidelines: Plain language guide which explains the workplace accommodation and return to work processes <p>At the end of 2015, the draft documents were provided to stakeholders for their review with an expected completion date of April 2016. The Policy was approved in 2016 and further details will be reported in next year's report.</p>
Performance management	<p>Changes have been made to the policy and administration for performance management.</p> <p>The Human Resources Policy for Performance Appraisal (HR08-02) has been revised and indicates that employee accommodation plans are to be reviewed in conjunction with the performance review, at least annually, or more often if deemed necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The Human Resources Guide to Performance Appraisals addresses questions regarding accommodation requirements and performance objectives.</p>

Transportation:

	Action
Activities supporting full compliance of Transportation standards coming into effect by January 1, 2017	<p>After completing the Region's Accessible Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) in 2014, Transhelp, the Region's specialized transportation service, began implementation of the ATMP to address the upcoming requirements of the IASR as well as the Council approved five recommendations for the Accessible Transportation Master Plan (ATMP).</p> <p>The Council recommendations were designed to improve the customer experience and increase service delivery efficiency of TransHelp.</p> <p>A timeline was established for implementing the recommendations from the ATMP to ensure that the AODA requirements are met by the 2017 deadline.</p> <p>The Region of Peel's Accessibility Advisory Committee is a key stakeholder as the Accessible Transportation Master Plan is implemented. Transhelp continues to make regular presentations to the AAC to share the ATMP progress and to</p>

	<p>seek advice from the members.</p> <p>In 2015, TransHelp made enhancements to its phone system, specifically a software upgrade to the Integrated Voice Recording (IVR) system, which allows Transhelp clients better options for their trip confirmation, time checking and trip cancellations.</p> <p>Transhelp also began the Payment Line, which allows customers to make payment by phone using a credit card, where payments were previously only accepted at Regional offices.</p> <p>Transhelp booking hours were extended from 2pm to 6pm. These hours were further extended in 2016, which will be captured in next year's report.</p>
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Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment):

	Action
Compliance required by January 1, 2016	<p>The Affordable Housing Design Guidelines and Standards continue to govern new housing projects in the Region of Peel. The document has been updated to capture the recent amendments made to Ontario's Building Code regarding barrier free requirements. A terminology section has also been added to the document which describes the three different types of barrier free suites incorporated into new housing projects for the Region of Peel.</p> <p>The Affordable Housing Design Guidelines, which were created for apartment buildings, is now divided into townhome and apartment guidelines. Both sets of guidelines ensure that universal accessibility features are incorporated into new units.</p> <p>The Affordable Housing Active Design Guidelines and Standards outlined elements for consideration during the procurement, design, and rehabilitation or retrofit phases that promote an active lifestyle among affordable housing residents in the Region of Peel. Examples are: locating housing close to a variety of local services and daily amenities, installing outdoor active play areas & paths, increasing the frequency of indoor stair use and creating community gardens.</p> <p>The Region of Peel is ahead of the compliance timeline as it relates to the Design of Public Spaces Standard. It ensures that consultants, who design for new builds and major renovations, take this Standard into account. The Region's affordable housing projects such as Creditvale Mills and Norton Lake have incorporated outdoor playgrounds and exterior path requirements from the Standard.</p>

	<p>In consultation with the Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee, accessibility has been incorporated into the Region's Active Outdoor and Active Stairwell projects, an initiative which aims to create places that promote healthy behaviour and physical activities for all.</p>
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Accessible Customer Service:

Requirement	Action
Accessible Customer Service	<p>The Region of Peel continues to provide excellent, accessible customer service that is in line with Regional values. Ongoing compliance with this Standard includes training of new employees and volunteers who serve the public on behalf of the Region.</p>