

For Information

DATE: April 6, 2018

REPORT TITLE: **ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT 2017**

FROM: Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on the Region of Peel's progress in improving accessibility, removing barriers and implementing the requirements set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) as well as the strategies set out in the Region of Peel Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013-2017) for the 2017 calendar year.

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.
- As part of the AODA, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) sets out requirements that organizations must meet; one of which is to implement and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The Region of Peel 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved by Regional Council on November 22, 2012.
- The IASR requires an annual status report on the progress and measures taken to implement the requirements under the AODA and the strategies set out in the Region of Peel Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The status report outlines the actions taken to comply with the requirements for the period of January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the final year of the Region of Peel 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The status report also includes actions or initiatives that go above and beyond those mandated under the AODA, reinforcing the Region of Peel's ongoing commitment to accessibility.

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.

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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 remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, as required under the AODA as well as provide an update on the actions taken to implement the Region of Peel Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The "Annual Accessibility Status Report 2017" attached as Appendix I outlines the actions the Region of Peel has taken in 2017 to meet the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation. The report will be posted on the Region of Peel website and made available in an accessible format, upon request.

CONCLUSION

As required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), the Region of Peel Annual Status Report 2017 outlines the actions taken to implement the requirements set out in the AODA legislation for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. It also includes other initiatives not mandated under the AODA which reinforces the Region of Peel's commitment to removing barriers for persons with disabilities and making the Region of Peel an inclusive place for persons of all abilities.



Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2017

For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director, Office of Culture and Inclusion, Ext. 6741, juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca.

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Region of Peel Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2017

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 five, the last year of the Region of Peel 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (January 1 to December 31, 2017). It also illustrates other initiatives that the Region has undertaken outside of the AODA requirements to make the Region of Peel more accessible and inclusive for all. The report looks forward to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) requirements for 2018 as the Region embarks on a new multi-year accessibility plan.

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 toward 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 2017 to fulfill this commitment as well as the ongoing work undertaken towards meeting the requirements of the AODA. It builds on the Annual Accessibility Status Reports for 2013 to 2016 inclusive.

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Status Update

2017 Actions

The following table outlines the progress during 2017 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 Plan 2013 – 2017, the Region has filed four Accessibility Status Reports. These reports outline the Region of Peel's progress in the area of accessibility and actions taken to comply with the AODA requirements since 2010. The reports also demonstrate the Region of Peel's commitment to accessibility beyond meeting legislated requirements. A copy of the previous Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be found at the Region of Peel website.</p> <p>In 2017 the Region of Peel embarked on the development of the Region's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In consultation with the Region's AAC, the Region of Peel 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan renews the Region's commitment to accessibility and breaking down barriers for persons of all abilities. The new Multi-Year plan aligns with the Region's Strategic Plan. Beyond meeting legislated requirements, the new Plan sets the path to carry out the vision of a Community for Life. Accessibility is embedded into all facets of the Region's Strategic Plan and the three areas of focus: Living, Thriving and Leading. Strategic objectives from each area of focus will be undertaken to ensure that all citizens, including persons with disabilities have access to programs, services and facilities. The new Plan will carry us to 2025, the timeline the Province has established to create an Accessible Ontario. A copy of the Region of Peel 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan can be found on the Region's website.</p>
Training	<p>The Region of Peel continues to train new hires and volunteers on the requirements of the IASR, including Accessible Customer Service and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. This accessibility training forms part of the list of mandatory training that new hires must take when they commence their employment. A record of this training is kept on file. The training is offered in various formats including: eLearning modules, IASR booklet, audio podcast, IASR brochure as well as in class sessions.</p> <p>In addition to new hires, 150 students from the Summer Job Challenge program were provided in person accessibility training in 2017.</p>

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<p>Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities</p>	<p>The Region of Peel is in compliance with this requirement and continues to look for opportunities to remove barriers in its procurement practices. The Region ensures that accessibility considerations are taken into account when acquiring goods or services.</p> <p>For example, Health Services ensures that the physical space of Family Health clinics or long term care homes support persons with disabilities. Desks, tables, beds or chairs are purchased with accessibility in mind. Immunization clinics are strategically placed within the community and ensure that their locations are accessible to serve the various needs of the community. In 2017, the Public Health Unit purchased a new dental bus with a wheelchair lift in order to improve access to oral health service in the community.</p> <p>In the long term care setting, in order to minimize workplace-related injuries, ergonomic design is taken into account in equipment for staff. An example of this is seen in laundry carts that accommodate to different heights. Wheelchair accessible buses were also purchased for use by the Davis Centre and Peel Manor Adult Day Service (ADS) clients. Individuals with walkers and canes are also supported by the lift and stair access. Such buses allow ADS clients and long term care residents more flexibility to be more engaged in the community.</p>
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Information and Communication:

Requirement	Action
<p>Accessible formats and communication supports</p>	<p>The Region of Peel continues to seek opportunities for the removal of barriers as it relates to its communication products.</p> <p>To this end, the Region of Peel refreshed its brand so it better represents the organization's corporate culture; shared values, beliefs and behaviours. In consultation with the Region's AAC, the new brand consists of several elements working together: including: logo, specific colour pallet, specific fonts, use of imagery and a consistent tone and voice to messages. Accessibility considerations for branded communications include: typography, contrast, organized grid and hierarchy of text, spacing considerations, surfaces and printing medium considerations. Other accessibility considerations include: accessible editorial; alternate formats; accessibility testing for PDF files; as well as wayfinding and signage.</p> <p>In the Family Health Unit (FHU), all print materials are being rebranded to meet new regional standards ensuring they are in compliance with AODA legislation. Support programs include language and ASL translation services and messages are tailored in accordance to the client's developmental needs. The eLearning Prenatal Program includes accessibility features such as: voice over audio function for all text, closed captioning on all videos, the ability to complete training at one's own pace, and the option for clients to choose where to access the program including in their own home.</p>

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	<p>The Adult Day Service ‘Client and Caregiver’ handbook was updated with content that is simple to understand and with larger font size.</p> <p>Likewise, the Regional Clerk’s Office revised their Guide for Delegations page on the Region’s website to include specific accessibility requirements and guidelines on how to make presentations to Council more accessible.</p> <p>The Region’s Information, Systems & Technology Services (ISTS) division undertook the following initiatives to remove barriers and ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities as it relates to corporate technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read&Write Gold was acquired and forms part of our standard inventory of supported applications as it was determined to be the solution of choice for an individual with a disability due to its easy-to-use toolbar to make documents, files and web pages more accessible. • In consultation with staff from Health and Safety, version 15.0 of Dragon Naturally Speaking was acquired. This software is primarily used to convert speech to text for individuals with accessibility needs and assists them in using their computer more effectively. • Enlarged fonts and closed captioning was added to the exhibition screens at Peel’s Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA) in preparation for the Canada 150 celebrations. • Geocortex, an AODA-compliant software was deployed to replace the current Peel Asset Locator (PAL) software used by Public Works field workers to locate and display water and wastewater assets, subdivision and regional construction projects. This is targeted for completion during 2018. • AODA requirements formed part of the scope of work for the acquisition of software to support the Human Services Housing Transformation Initiative (HTI). HTI will support the entire housing continuum from homelessness prevention to home ownership and will improve operational efficiencies across the Housing Service System.
<p>Accessible Websites and Web Content</p>	<p>The Region of Peel continues its focus on its citizen facing website: www.peelregion.ca. The most frequently visited services are areas of priority focus. The Region’s Digital Standard supports a usable and accessible brand experience. The Digital Standard continually evolves to reflect accessibility best practices and new assistive technologies. New online web content is manually inspected for accessibility, tested with automated AODA checkers, audited by accessibility experts and tested by people with disabilities. In 2017, three major web content sections were redesigned and made compliant. These sections are: Public Health Immunization, TransHelp Specialized Transit, and the Region’s Strategic Plan and Annual Report.</p>

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Employment:

Requirement	Action
Recruitment and Accessible Hiring Process	The Region of Peel continues to ensure that its employees as well as members of the public are aware of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities during all stages of the recruitment process. Upon request, written interview questions may be shared with interviewees during the interview, as well as be made available in alternative formats. The Region is committed to ensuring that persons of all abilities have an opportunity to apply for employment within the organization.
Informing Employees of Supports	The Region's Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Policy (G00-23) has been implemented to meet the information and communication needs of all persons with disabilities, as required under the IASR Employment Standards.
Documented Individual Accommodation Plans	<p>The Region of Peel continues to document individual accommodation plans for employees, in accordance with AODA requirements. The Accommodation for Persons with Disability Policy Framework is composed of three areas: Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.</p> <p>The Region of Peel Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities Policy (HR03-32) was revised to include the term "barrier-free".</p>
Performance management	The Region of Peel is dedicated to making employment practices accessible and equitable for all and continues to be an employer of choice. In 2017, the Region embarked on the revision of its Performance Management Program to take effect in 2018. The new program is simple and more streamlined. It includes more opportunities for proactive conversations about performance. As the Region is sensitive to the needs of its employees, accommodation will continue to be reviewed as part of this process and throughout the employee's employment life cycle.

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Transportation:

	Action
Activities supporting full compliance of Transportation standards that came into effect January 1, 2017	<p>TransHelp, the Region's specialized transportation service, met the January 1, 2017 AODA compliance deadline. The following initiatives have been implemented and form part of the compliance requirements:</p> <p>Three categories of eligibility were introduced as required under the AODA: unconditional, temporary and conditional. This new eligibility criteria allows for more equitable access to accessible transportation that previously was primarily focused on limited mobility. It also allows for the determination of what is the best accessible transportation option for an individual with a disability as opposed to a one size fits all model.</p> <p>Based on passenger feedback, TransHelp has also introduced an online application process as an additional option for application submissions. The online application and short instructional videos about how to apply, how to ride and how to book trips, are available on the new website launched in early 2017.</p>

Design of Public Spaces:

	Action
Regional public spaces and facilities	<p>The Region of Peel continues to use the Affordable Housing Design Guidelines and Standards created for townhomes and apartment buildings to guide the design of projects and ensure that accessibility features are incorporated into the design and built form of all affordable housing developments/ projects.</p> <p>In the Cheltenham Badlands Project, AAC members were consulted on accessibility enhancements for Phase 1 of the Master Plan. The following factors will be incorporated into the Master Plan including: an internal accessible trail, two accessible parking spaces in the off-street lot, an accessible boardwalk from the on-street parking to the main feature and improved signage.</p> <p>The Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to be consulted to ensure that all Regional site plans are reviewed through an accessibility lens. The Committee reviewed site plans for the Mayfield West Phase One Seniors Apartment Building.</p> <p>The Region of Peel continues to utilize accessibility checklists for Paramedic reporting stations as well as satellite stations. In 2017, the Committee reviewed site plans for three Peel Regional Paramedic Services (PRPS) Satellite Stations using the checklist. Such checklists ensure that specific accessibility features are incorporated into the exterior and interior of Peel Region Paramedic stations.</p> <p>In preparation for the 2017 launch of ISTS services at the</p>

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	<p>Technology Service Centre's IT Kiosk at 10 Peel Centre Dr., design considerations were made to make the area in line with Accessibility standards. For easier access, the service centre was relocated to the ground floor and includes two work stations with all-access height. A similar approach will be taken at other Regional locations.</p> <p>In 2017 the Traffic Signals and Street Lighting division completed the following projects which were constructed to meet AODA standards (Audible pedestrian pushbuttons and tactile walking surface indicators). The downtown core of Bolton was revitalized with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of a new traffic signal at Hwy. 50 and Hickman St. • Construction of a new midblock pedestrian crossing on Hwy. 50 between King St. and Sterne. • Reconstruction of the four corners of Hwy. 50 and King St. <p>Other projects throughout Peel which were also built to meet the AODA requirements in 2017 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of new traffic signals at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dixie Rd. and Old School ○ Mayfield Rd. and Ace Dr. ○ Coleraine Drive and Holland Drive ○ Mississauga Rd. and Financial Drive • Reconstruction of Cawthra Rd. and Rathburn Rd. • Reconstruction of Airport Rd. and Queen St. • Construction of a new midblock pedestrian crossing at Cawthra Rd. at Breckenridge Rd.
<p>Peel Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA)</p>	<p>The Region of Peel Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA) continues to look for opportunities to improve accessibility and remove barriers in the delivery of programming, services and exhibits. Some of the initiatives carried out in 2017 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of two elevator replacements to ensure reliable access for public and employees to Court House, Art Gallery, Tunnel, Museum and Archive spaces. • Completion of studio space conversion to accommodate accessible sinks and counters. • Ongoing service disruption notification on the PAMA website whenever public and employee access was affected. • Review of PAMA staff/volunteer/Board 2017 Diversity Census Survey results and identified an action workplan to build and strengthen a diverse and inclusive workforce and Advisory Board reflecting the Region of Peel demographics. • Introduction of 11 touch screens in the Peel 150 exhibition. These screens accommodate vision impaired visitors, with scalable font, sound alternative, and multiple languages. These screens and digital technology will

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	<p>continue to be incorporated in future exhibitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of 4 gender neutral washrooms in the Museum, bringing total gender neutral washrooms at PAMA to 5, to improve inclusive access and visitor service.
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Accessible Customer Service:

Requirement	Action
Accessible Customer Service	The Region of Peel is committed to ensuring that all its programs, services and facilities are accessible by all members of the public and that their service experience is positive. Various options for providing feedback are available. AODA training, including Accessible Customer Service, is provided to all Region of Peel staff and volunteers.

Compliance:

	Action
Compliance Report	As required under subsection 14 (1) of the AODA, the Region of Peel filed its Accessibility Compliance Report with the Office of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario by the stipulated deadline of December 31, 2017.

Other Regional Initiatives:

	Action
Region of Peel 20 Year Strategic Plan	The strategic objectives contained with the three areas of focus in the Region's 20 Year Strategic Plan align with the Region's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan through clear prioritized outcomes, measures, and actions. These objectives set the direction for an accessible Peel by reducing and eliminating barriers and bringing to life the vision of a Community for Life.
Culture & Inclusion	<p>In 2017 the Office of Culture and Inclusion was created. The Office provides dedicated leadership for the Region's culture, inclusion and diversity strategies and champions an inclusive organization. Accessibility forms an integral part of creating an inclusive environment and removing barriers that may impact physical and psychological well-being.</p> <p>On June 2017 the Executive Leadership Team approved the first ever Culture and Inclusion Strategy. Part of this strategy included the development of new Regional values. The Value: "We care about and support everyone's well-being and success" speaks directly to the strategic objective of reducing barriers that impact physical and psychological well-being in the Region of Peel. Strategic initiatives will focus on mental health education; compliance with AODA legislation and education & awareness.</p>

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<p>Innovations in Dementia Care</p>	<p>Breaking down barriers at the Region of Peel goes beyond ensuring that our facilities are accessible and barrier-free. It is ensuring that our programs and services respond to the evolving needs of the community to promote a sensitive, caring and inclusive environment.</p> <p>In 2017, the Region started piloting a social interaction model, the Dementia Butterfly Care Approach at one of its Long Term Care Centres, led by Dr. David Sheard, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Dementia Care Matters. The Dementia Butterfly Care Approach is person-centered care where the core of care delivery is focused on the emotional aspect. Combined with enhancements to clinical care processes, piloting this approach will support Peel Long Term Care to better meet the clinical and social needs of residents living with challenging and complex behaviours associated with dementia. It promotes an environment of inclusivity and compassion.</p>
<p>Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan Review</p>	<p>As required by the Province, a review of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is being undertaken. Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan (PHHP) sets a strategic vision for the housing system. The renewed plan will meet provincial expectations to review the plan within 5 years. It also will contribute to the review of the Regional Official Plan 2041. As part of the implementation, the AAC will be consulted regarding the development of the Housing Master Plan, one of the renewed PHHP's key strategies.</p>
<p>Workspace Design Standards</p>	<p>The Region of Peel is committed to the health and well-being of its employees and as such endeavors to review initiatives from an accessibility perspective. One such example, is the Region's newly updated Workspace Design Standards intended to support the modernization of workspaces. In April 2018, the AAC will be engaged for comment and feedback on the Workspace Design Standards.</p>
<p>Term of Council Priority Promote Healthy and Age-Friendly Built Environments and Regional Official Plan policies</p>	<p>As part of the Term of Council Priority, Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment 27 in the Official Plan Review aims to ensure health based elements are considered in new development to support the creation of walkable communities and to support age-friendly communities. The elements include density, service proximity, land-use mix, street connectivity, streetscape characteristics, and efficient parking and form the Region's Healthy Development Assessment. The Healthy Development Assessment aligns with and further reinforces the Integrated Accessibility Design Standards and accessibility amendments to Ontario's Building Code.</p> <p>The streetscape characteristics element requires that all streets in low-density areas have sidewalks that are at least 1.5 metres wide and increased to 2 metres in medium and high density neighbourhoods, mixed use and commercial areas. This is consistent with the Integrated Accessibility Design Standards for exterior paths which specifies a minimum of 1.5 metres.</p>

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	<p>The amendment also includes an implementation policy to assess the built environment including public service facilities in neighborhoods with a significant seniors population to identify gaps and opportunities to better support Peel residents.</p> <p>Regional Council adopted the amendment in February 2017 and the Province approved it in August 2017. To advance the Term of Council Priority, staff began working with the local municipalities in 2017 to implement the policies which include a training program for municipal Planners and embedding health elements in the development application process.</p>
Housing Services	<p>The Peel Renovates Second Units Renovation Assistance Program offers one-time assistance of up to \$25,000 per household for eligible homeowners to help cover the cost of renovations to an existing second unit. Renovations are intended to improve health and safety, increase accessibility and obtain registration for a second unit.</p>
EarlyON Initial Plan	<p>In September 2017, the EarlyON Initial Plan was developed to create a roadmap for the transformation of child and family programs in Peel into EarlyON Centres. The plan identifies that EarlyON Centres will ensure inclusive and responsive programming, in which programs and services will be accessible and responsive to children, parents and caregivers with varying abilities and cultural, language, socio-economic, sexual orientation and religious backgrounds. As Service System Manager, the Region is committed to working with service providers to strengthen the degree to which programs are inclusive, accessible and responsive.</p> <p>Additionally, other accessibility initiatives in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures (for the public/families) changed to meet Regional and AODA standards for the Family Literacy Program • Accessibility considerations in the purchase of a new RV for the Learning in our Neighborhood (LION) Program and includes a lift to assist clients with varying abilities. • Capital Projects Funding Guideline for licensed child care providers includes provisions for accessibility when retrofitting, renovating or expanding child care centres.

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<p>Child and Family Services</p>	<p>In collaboration with community partners Child and Family Services provides a variety of supports and services to children and families in Peel. Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) provides a centralized point of intake for families looking to participate in the Peel Infant Parent Program or access Special Needs Resourcing. Children with special needs or those experiencing barriers to development, attending or planning to attend licensed child care programs and their families are supported through transitions and linked to appropriate services and supports.</p> <p>At the Peel Infant Parent Program they foster healthy infant-parent relationships in partnership with Peel Children’s Centre and in Children’s Drop-in Programs in Shelters (3 shelters) the Region provides developmentally appropriate programming in a safe and supportive environment.</p>
<p>Business Continuity</p>	<p>As we continue with the development of Business Continuity Plans, the Region will continue to look for accessibility considerations that may factor into the planning, response or recovery aspects of the various Business Continuity strategies. In addition, during the exercises in 2017, accessibility considerations were kept in mind to ensure there was suitable simulated response to those needs.</p> <p>With responses to significant events within the community, identification of affected residents with accessibility needs is one of the first key determinations that needs to be confirmed. While most of the events supported had very limited impacts on individuals with accessibility needs, the Region did support a private Nursing Home with an evacuation of their facility with the assistance of both TransHelp and Paramedics as other modes of transportation were not suitable for the needs of these residents.</p>