

For Information

DATE: May 17, 2017

REPORT TITLE: **ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT 2016**

FROM: Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update 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) for the 2016 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 rules that organizations must follow.
- One of the requirements of the 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 provides a status report for the period of January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.
- The document also includes actions not mandated under the AODA which reinforce the Region's 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.

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).

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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 2016" attached as Appendix I outlines the actions the Region of Peel has taken in 2016 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 AODA, the Region of Peel Annual Status Report 2016 outlines the actions taken to implement the requirements set out in the AODA legislation. It also includes other initiatives not mandated under the AODA that reinforce the Region of Peel's commitment to accessibility, 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

Appendix I – Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2016

For further information regarding this report, please contact Victoria Ghandour, Acting Manager, Access to Information and Privacy, Ext. 4131, victoria.ghandour@peelregion.ca.

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Region of Peel Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2016

The following is an annual report on the 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). It highlights actions to comply with the AODA requirements during year four of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016 and looks forward to the IASR requirements for 2017. It also outlines other initiatives that the Region is undertaking, outside of the AODA requirements, to make the Region of Peel more accessible and inclusive for all.

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 2016 to fulfill this commitment as well as the ongoing work undertaken toward meeting the requirements of the AODA. It builds on the Annual Accessibility Status Reports for 2013 to 2015 inclusive, which outlined the progress of the Region of Peel in complying with the requirements from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2015.

Status Update**2016 Actions**

The following table outlines the progress during 2016 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	Since the development of the Region of Peel's Multi-Year Plan 2013 – 2017, the Region's has filed three 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. A copy of the previous Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be found at the Region of Peel website.
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 person with disabilities.</p> <p>This training forms part of the list of mandatory training that new hires must take when coming on board with the organization. A record of this training is kept on file.</p> <p>The training is offered in various formats including: e-Learning modules, IASR booklet, audio podcast, IASR brochure as well as in-class sessions.</p>
Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities	The Region of Peel is in compliance with this requirement and continues to look for opportunities to remove barriers in its procurement practices. In 2016, document templates were revised to be accessible and AODA compliant and AODA forms that vendors must sign were updated to ensure the most current version of the legislation.

Information and Communication:

Requirement	Action
Accessible formats and communication supports	<p>A Regional Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Policy (G00-23) was implemented to meet the information and communication needs of all persons with disabilities. The policy outlines the Region's responsibility under the AODA with respect to the provision of accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The policy applies to all Regional staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors who produce information and communication materials on behalf of the Region of Peel. It is also intended to provide staff</p>

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	<p>with assistance in responding to requests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documents in accessible formats, and/or • information provided through or with a communication support.
<p>Accessible Websites and Web Content</p>	<p>To meet the January 1, 2017 Transportation compliance requirements of the AODA, the Region digitally supported the operational changes for the Region's paratransit service (TransHelp), including the expanded eligibility criteria. Due to barriers accessing traditional paper forms, digital options are the preferred method used by persons with disabilities. Several AODA enhancements were incorporated into the complex online application form and the Region continues to address accessibility issues as they are reported.</p> <p>The Region is focused on its citizen facing website: www.peelregion.ca and has a plan to continue to redevelop site content, prioritizing based on the website page demand and usage. Standards and templates have been developed which embody Website content to be mobile enabled, accessible and usable. In 2016, the Region delivered an updated Regional home page, employee-facing intranet home page, achieved subscriber growth to the Connect to Peel e-newsletter and completed the modernized Waste service (including reporting missed collection and cart exchanges online) – all meeting AODA compliance to level AA, ahead of the mandated timelines.</p>

Employment:

Requirement	Action
<p>Recruitment and Accessible Hiring Process</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Informing Employees of Supports</p>	<p>The Region's Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Policy (G00-23), implemented to meet the information and communication needs of all persons with disabilities also aims to ensure that the Region meets the information and communication needs of all staff with disabilities as required under the IASR Employment Standards.</p>
<p>Documented Individual Accommodation Plans</p>	<p>The Region of Peel continues to document individual accommodation plans for employees, in accordance with AODA requirements.</p> <p>The Region improved the way it communicates its commitments, processes and practices related to workplace accommodation through the development of a corporate Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities Policy (HR03-32). The policy outlines the Region's obligations and responsibilities related to the</p>

	accommodation of persons with disabilities throughout their employment cycle. Accompanying procedures outline detailed steps that Regional staff will follow to provide accommodation to persons with disabilities throughout their employment.
Performance management	The Region of Peel continues its commitment to making employment practices accessible and equitable for all and continues to be an employer of choice. The Region is sensitive to the needs of its employees and ensures that accommodation is reviewed and documented at least once a year during an employee's performance appraisal. Career development is also discussed during this period and the accessibility needs of an employee with a disability are considered when setting goals and objectives. However, this is not limited to the performance appraisal period, these discussions are ongoing with employees.

Transportation:

	Action
Activities supporting full compliance of Transportation standards coming into effect by January 1, 2017	<p>TransHelp, the Region's specialized transportation service, was diligently working to meet the January 1, 2017 compliance deadline. Some of the tasks that were undertaken are as follows:</p> <p>A revised TransHelp Eligibility Policy was introduced as part of the Accessible Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) Implementation Plan. The Policy provides a broadened definition of disability, as defined by the Human Rights Code. This will allow TransHelp to move away from the limited mobility aid focus and create equitable access to accessible transportation options for persons with disabilities in Peel.</p> <p>Three categories of eligibility: unconditional, temporary and conditional were adopted as required under the AODA. The Region's role in accessible transportation will shift from being a one-size fits all to determining, through support and education the best accessible transportation option for a person with a disability.</p> <p>The revised TransHelp eligibility policy also outlines the eligibility requirements that an applicant must demonstrate to be eligible for the service. The Policy was shared with members of the Region's AAC for their input and feedback.</p> <p>As a result of the changes to eligibility, the Region's current application form and process was also updated. The new application process will gather additional detail in the application to determine the most appropriate accessible transportation option.</p> <p>With the help of the Region's Digital Strategy team a redesign and development of the TransHelp website was undertaken for new TransHelp applicants.</p>

	<p>Under the new eligibility criteria, existing TransHelp clients will be undergoing a recertification in order to determine which eligibility category, as defined by the AODA, they would fall into. In the meantime, current service levels for clients are being maintained.</p> <p>Client partnerships with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and other community agencies, are being developed that would allow individuals who utilize TransHelp to access other community transportation services, including integration of trips with conventional services.</p> <p>A Home 2 Hub Pilot program was also introduced. The pilot program was conducted over the summer months allowing individuals with disabilities to use a combination of TransHelp and conventional transit. This pilot was an opportunity for TransHelp staff to learn about transit integration in an effort to provide better service to its clients.</p> <p>TransHelp booking hours were further extended from 08:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.</p>
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Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment):

	Action
<p>Regional outdoor public spaces and facilities</p>	<p>In addition to the Region’s Affordable Housing Design Guidelines and Standards created for townhomes and apartment buildings, the Region of Peel also utilizes accessibility checklists for the design of Paramedic reporting and satellite stations. These checklists ensure that specific accessibility features are incorporated into the exterior and interior of Peel Region Paramedic stations.</p> <p>Ongoing consultation with the Region’s Accessibility Advisory Committee ensures that all Regional site plans are reviewed through an accessibility lens. The Committee reviewed the site plans for the TransHelp and Peel Regional Paramedic Services (PRPS) Satellite Station located at 3190 Mavis Road utilizing the aforementioned checklist. The AAC was also consulted on the placement of accessible parking in the Cheltenham Badlands located in the Town of Caledon.</p>
<p>Peel Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA)</p>	<p>The following are initiatives that were carried out at the Region’s Peel Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA) to improve accessibility and remove barriers:</p> <p>All gender washroom signage for 5 washrooms were installed at PAMA in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Gallery – Lower level • Museum – Manning Square • Museum – 2nd floor (2 washrooms)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum – 3rd floor <p>The Region of Peel was awarded funding (\$99,000) under the Canada 150 Fed Dev program to retrofit aging elevators serving the Art Gallery and the Museum. This will improve accessibility for everyone. The retrofit also includes upgrades based on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities guidelines. The work on the elevators is expected to begin in November 2017 and be completed by March 31, 2018.</p> <p>A new scissors lift was installed in the Art Gallery. Its primary purpose is to transport art from the receiving area to the exhibit area in the Art Gallery. However, in an emergency situation where the elevator is not functioning, the lift can be used to transport individuals using assisted devices from one level to the next and out of the building.</p>
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Accessible Customer Service:

Requirement	Action
Accessible Customer Service	<p>The Region of Peel is committed to ensuring that all its programs, services and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. A statement of Organizational Commitment to Accessibility has been included on our Regional website.</p> <p>AODA training continues to be part of the mandatory training for all customer service representatives and is tracked through our Human Resources Management System.</p> <p>Staff from the Customer Contact Centre worked closely with TransHelp staff on the new online, accessible transportation application process to ensure that calls and queries were disseminated properly and on time for the 2017 compliance deadline.</p> <p>Peel Art Gallery Museum & Archives (PAMA) continues to evolve and develop innovative exhibits and educational programming that support the AODA guidelines. Accessibility is integrated into the design of programs, as well as exhibitions, and services. In 2016 PAMA successfully developed outreach programs such as Museum Memories and Young at Heart. These programs were created to stimulate memory and conversation by incorporating multi-sensory elements through a series of tactile art workshops conducted at regional and private seniors long-term care facilities and retirements residences in Peel.</p>

Regional Initiatives:

	Action
Region of Peel 20 Year Strategic Plan	<p>Extensive community and stakeholder engagement, including consultation with the Region of Peel's Accessibility Advisory Committee informed the Region of Peel's 20 Year Strategic Plan and four year Term of Council Priorities resulting in the Region's Vision, Mission and Brand:</p> <p>Vision: Community for Life Mission: Working with you to create a healthy, safe and connected community Brand: Working with you</p> <p>Peel's strategic plan sets out three areas of focus: Living, Thriving and Leading. Each of these areas of focus contains strategic objectives that will set direction for the next 20 years. Moving forward, the Region's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will align to the strategic objectives in each areas of focus and will include clear prioritized outcomes, measures, and actions.</p>
Innovations in Dementia Care	<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>The Region of Peel is committed to providing an atmosphere for its long term care residents that promotes inclusiveness, dignity and compassion, especially for those suffering from dementia. Over the last few years, there has been a significant increase in residents with dementia or Alzheimer's entering Peel's Long Term Care Homes. These residents have increasingly complex physical, cognitive, and/or psychological health needs. In September 2016 Council was presented with a report on the need for new and innovative approaches to Dementia Care. Such approaches would be responsive not only to the physical needs, but also to an individual's psychological and social needs. More information will be forthcoming as the Region embarks on this journey.</p>