

DATE: October 25, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **REGION OF PEEL 2013-2017 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

FROM: Norma Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, attached as Appendix I to the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services, titled 'Region of Peel 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan', be approved.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Region of Peel has prepared its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.
- Under the AODA, accessibility planning requirements has shifted from preparing annual accessibility plans to preparing a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan every five years.
- For the Region of Peel the deadline to create and publish the 2013 – 2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is January 1, 2013.
- The 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is attached as Appendix 1.
- Once approved, the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be available electronically on the Region of Peel website, printed in hard copy and will be available in alternate accessible formats upon request.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* came into effect on June 13, 2005 with the goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025. The AODA applies to all public and private sector organizations.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) which is an amendment to the AODA creates a shift from preparing annual accessibility plans to the creation of a multi-year accessibility plan. Under the AODA, the Region of Peel is required to establish, maintain and document a multi-year plan that outlines the Region's strategies to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. The Plan must also document how the Region of Peel has met or intends to meet its requirements under the IASR. The Region of Peel must prepare its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan by January 1, 2013. Going forward the Region of Peel will

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be required review and update this plan once every five years and prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the multi-year plan.

Regional Council has approved the previous eight Accessibility Plans, which were developed using the information submitted by the departments, and through consultations with the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Similar to previous years' plans, the first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Region has been prepared using the information collected from Regional departments. The Plan has also been presented to AAC for review and comment.

2. Preparing the 2013 – 2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects the continued dedication of the Region of Peel in meeting its commitment to create accessible Regional programs, services, and a workplace that ensures full participation of individuals with disabilities.

This year each Regional department prepared a departmental accessibility plan using a standardized template to highlight the services they provide and their commitment to accessibility. The information reported in the templates outline the department's accessibility accomplishments to-date and future accessibility initiatives in two sections titled "Looking Back" and "Going Forward". The "Looking Back" section outlines the department's accessibility barriers that have been identified and the methods that have been utilized to remove barriers for persons with disabilities. The "Going Forward" section outlines the activities that departments will undertake to remove barriers for persons with disabilities and to improve the accessibility of their programs and services.

The templates used by the Regional departments were further divided into six themes that were developed in consultation with the AAC for departments to report their accomplishments and planning efforts using an accessibility framework. The themes used are illustrated here:

1. **Helping People Live Independently:** the activities reported under this theme illustrate how various Regional departments are creating barrier-free communities in Peel to assist people with disabilities to live independently in safe and accessible neighbourhoods of their choice.
2. **Making Regional Services More Accessible:** All activities reported under this theme illustrate how various Regional departments are providing services, programs and facilities that are accessible for people with a full range of disabilities so that Region services are welcoming and inclusive.
3. **Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness:** The activities reported under this theme illustrate how various Regional departments are working on changing attitudes and raising awareness by breaking down the invisible barriers people with disabilities face.
4. **Making it Easier to Move Around the Region:** The activities reported under this theme illustrate how various Regional departments are providing services that will allow people in the community to participate in typical everyday activities. For example, providing accessible travel choices, improvements to accessibility to the transportation system and pedestrian networks and roadways.

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5. **Making it Easier to Participate in Regional Government:** The activities reported under this theme illustrate how Regional departments are making it easier for people with disabilities to participate in Regional government.
6. **Helping/Assisting Regional Staff Work Independently:** The activities reported under this theme illustrate how various Regional divisions are providing necessary resources and work accommodations for Regional staff with disabilities to work independently.

An AODA compliance section is also included in the plan. This section is also divided into a "Looking back" section which outlines the activities that the Region has undertaken to comply with the AODA standards and a "Going Forward section" which outlines the initiatives that the Region is planning to undertake between 2013 and 2017 to meet the AODA requirements that will come into effect after 2013.

3. Consultations

The format for the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed in consultation with the Region of Peel's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Members of the AAC, AODA subcommittee reviewed the draft plan and provided feedback and a workshop was held with all AAC members to provide an overview of the plan. A draft of the plan was endorsed by the AAC at the October 16, 2012 meeting.

CONCLUSION

Upon receiving Council approval the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reported to the Minister of Community and Social Services responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the ODA and AODA. The insight and expertise of the AAC members have strengthened the Plan, enforced a strategic focus and provided a solid foundation for addressing accessibility for persons with disabilities within the programs and services delivered by the Region of Peel.

The Regional Multi-Year Accessibility Plan represents the ongoing process of ensuring that all Regional programs and services continue to be more accessible for persons with disabilities. As an organization strongly committed to integrated processes, the Region of Peel will continue its efforts to identify and remove existing barriers while laying the foundation for the prevention of future barriers.



Norma Trim
Chief Financial Officer
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Approved for Submission:


D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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