



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

2008 Annual Report - City of Toronto Accessibility Plan

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| Date: | August 19, 2008 |
| To: | Executive Committee |
| From: | City Manager |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | |

SUMMARY

The submission of an Annual Report on the City of Toronto's Accessibility Plan to the Ontario Accessibility Directorate is a requirement under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). This report provides an update on the progress of implementation and will be posted on the City's website and reviewed with the City's Disability Issues Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. this Annual Report on the City's Accessibility Plan be submitted to the Ontario Accessibility Directorate and forwarded to the City's Disability Issues Committee for information.

Financial Impact

None.

Equity Statement

This Annual Report provides an update on the City's progress towards achieving a barrier free environment. The Accessibility Plan helps to identify, remove and prevent barriers to

access in services, policies and programs for people with disabilities who may be staff or members of the public.

DECISION HISTORY

In 2003, the City filed its first Accessibility Plan under the ODA. Subsequently, reports were provided in October 2004, June 2006 and September 2007. These reports were posted to the City's website and were reviewed by the City's Disability Issues Committee.

The City's Accessibility Plan outlines divisional plans highlighting initiatives which optimize accessibility for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Plan is one of the components of the City Council's Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (2003). In 2004, the City of Toronto established Accessibility Design Guidelines (ADG) for use when renovating or building new municipal facilities. City Council also directed that these Guidelines be made available to the development industry and were posted on the City's website.

Links to the City's Accessibility Plan, implementation updates and the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines follow:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) – Submission of a City of Toronto Accessibility Plan <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/accessibilityplan/index.htm>

2004 Implementation Update – City of Toronto Accessibility Plan
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2004/agendas/council/cc040928/pof7rpt/cl038.pdf>

2005 Implementation Status Report and Update of the City of Toronto Accessibility Plan
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060627/pof5rpt/cl009.pdf>

2007-2008 Status Report and Update of the City of Toronto Accessibility Plan
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-6162.pdf>

Appendix 1 - City of Toronto Divisional Accessibility Plans
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-6163.pdf>

Accessibility Design Guidelines
http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/accessibility_design_guidelines.htm

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Each year the City of Toronto reviews its progress in implementing its Accessibility Plan.

This Annual Report identifies initiatives which have been completed, where implementation has begun or is on-going, and those which have been targeted for future

Staff report for action on the 2008 Annual Report - City of Toronto Accessibility Plan

implementation. The financial impacts of implementation are addressed by the capital and operating budgets.

The passage of additional legislation in 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) complements the requirements of the ODA. The AODA applies to the public, broader public and private sectors of the Province of Ontario with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025.

COMMENTS

The City's 2003 Accessibility Plan provides a corporate framework for implementing the requirements of the ODA. City divisional initiatives aimed at achieving equity for people with disabilities are also reported and monitored in the City's Action Plan on Access, Equity and Human Rights. The following is a summary of significant outcomes from Accessibility Plan implementation for 2003 – 2008.

Commitment #1: **Develop effective consultation strategies with the City's Advisory Committee on Disability Issue, so that they can fulfil their responsibilities under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.**
Community
Input

Status: **Ongoing**

Action Taken: The Disability Issues Committee provides advice to Council on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan. The Disability Issues Committee and their network of organizations have been consulted on matters which include: review of provincial legislation; accessible design guidelines; accessible taxis; accessible web design and assistive technology; life safety; equity in employment.

Commitment #2: **Establish divisional accessibility advisory committees and working groups to address accessibility issues, develop strategic plans and co-ordinate reports for the annual accessibility plans.**
Establish systemic approach to report on the City's accessibility plan

Status: **Completed, process ongoing.**

Action Taken: An interdivisional staff team on access, equity and human rights develop and implement the City's Accessibility Plan and the City's Action Plan on Access, Equity and Human Rights. The interdivisional staff team and similar intra-divisional groups have been established to increase staff knowledge and expertise to address access, equity and human rights issues and also assess the impact of initiatives taken to remove barriers and create opportunities for the City's diverse communities.

Commitment #3: **Complete the Accessibility Design Guidelines (ADG) for submission to Council in 2004. The Accessibility Design**
Accessibility

Audits and Guidelines **Guidelines are based on Universal Design principles and will provide practical examples of solutions for optimising accessibility.**

Status: **Completed**

Action: The ADG guide the renovation and construction of City facilities. Based on accessibility audit findings, a capital program with a budget and implementation plan authorized by City Council are developed for essential retrofits of identified facilities. The Guidelines continue to be used as a resource by the development industry.

Commitment #4: **Implement a Building Condition Assessment to assess shelter facilities for barrier-free adaptation.**

Accessibility audits and assessments

Status: **Accessibility audits have been completed on 56 purchase of service shelter facilities. In addition, eleven (11) non-profit housing projects have been selected to receive Affordable Housing/Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding (HPI/AHP) for the period ending in March 2009.**

New construction development includes barrier free design.

Action Taken: Accessibility retrofits have commenced on purchase of service shelters and are dependent on available funding.

Time Frame: Projected completion estimates of HPI/AHP-funded projects: 10% in 2008; 40% in 2009; 30% in 2010.

Commitment #5: **Implement the City's Official Plan (OP) and ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered during the zoning by-law review and preparation of amendments.**

Accessibility and the City's Official Plan

Status: **Initiated**

Action Taken: The principle of ensuring universal access in public spaces, buildings, parks and facilities is enshrined in the City's Official Plan policies. The process to amend the Official Plan to incorporate accessibility requirements and design guidelines into the OP's Site Plan Control Policies has been initiated.

Timeframe: To be considered by City Council in 2008.

Commitment #6: **Develop a protocol to ensure that accessibility issues are addressed in new development projects.**

Accessibility in new construction

Status: **Completed**

Action Taken: City Council endorsed the Accessibility Design Guidelines (ADG) as a resource guide in May 2004 to guide the construction of new facilities and the renovation of City-owned facilities as well as those owned by other sectors. Construction of new City facilities are expected to comply with the ADG.

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| <p>Commitment #7: Accessibility audits: City operations/facilities</p> | <p>Develop an accessibility audit of Parks, Recreation and Culture facilities and programs.</p> <p>Status: Process has been initiated for all aspects of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.</p> |
| <p>Action Taken:</p> | <p>Accessibility audits of facilities were initiated in 2004 and renovations have begun. "Getting Services Right for People with Disabilities" strategy initiated in 2008. Strategy will ensure that divisional parks, playgrounds, natural areas, facilities and programs meet the AODA accessibility standards.</p> |
| <p>Time frame:</p> | <p>Pending City Council approval, implementation strategy to be developed in 2009.</p> |
| <p>Commitment #8: Customer Service</p> | <p>Review customer service operations for accessibility and continue to be responsive to the changing needs of the City's diverse communities and workforce.</p> <p>Status: Process completed in preparation for launch of City's 3-1-1 initiative.</p> |
| <p>Commitment #9: Accessible Election Strategy</p> | <p>Develop a comprehensive municipal election strategy to provide accessibility for electors with disabilities.</p> <p>Status: Process initiated in 2006.</p> <p>Staff are taking steps to undertake analysis and consult with stakeholders, such as the City's Disability Issues Committee to determine effectiveness of the 2006 election initiatives.</p> |
| <p>Commitment #10: Accessible public meetings</p> | <p>Seek and maintain improvements to accessibility for all public meetings and events hosted by the City of Toronto.</p> <p>Status: Completed, processes are regularly reviewed for effectiveness.</p> <p>Action Taken: A staff awareness campaign, including a comprehensive intranet website was launched in October 2007 to ensure City of Toronto employees have access to information, tools and resources to facilitate accessible public meetings; and in particular, for people who are deaf, deafened, people with a hearing loss and people who are blind, or with visual impairments.</p> |
| <p>Commitment #11: Workplace Accommodation</p> | <p>To complete a policy and guidelines on workplace accommodation.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p> |

Action Taken: Adopted by City Council: Employment Accommodation Policy, July 2004; Guidelines for Employees, Managers and Human Resources staff, October 2006.

Commitment #12: **To complete the employment equity workforce survey and report on the results of the survey.**
Employment Equity Survey

Status: **Survey completed for Management and excluded staff.**

Action Taken: Data results are available and Employment Equity unit staff are available to assist in the use of data for planning and design of access and equity initiatives. Employment Equity staff are taking steps to complete the workforce survey.

Ongoing implementation

Each City division has prepared a plan to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in the services and programs provided by that Division. These divisional plans will be posted on the City's website, as required by the ODA, 2001.

The City will continue to address barriers to accessibility by:

- a) Reviewing existing customer service policies and procedures to address accessibility requirements.
- b) Addressing information barriers in the delivery of accessible customer service (City's website; improve program registration methods, information delivery and outreach strategies).
- c) Continuing to provide diversity training and awareness and enhancing customer service training to meet AODA compliance deadlines.
- d) Providing timely and equitable access to City services and programs, including public meetings and consultations.
- e) Improving physical accessibility of City facilities, parks, playgrounds, natural areas and buildings.
- f) Including barrier free/accessibility considerations in purchasing, policy and decision-making processes (for example: Accessibility standards and definitions in technology RFPs and other purchase of service agreements).
- g) Facilitating creative partnerships with the disability community to enhance decision-making and service provision.

Future issues

With the passage of the AODA, the Government of Ontario has signalled its intention to move beyond the requirements of the ODA with the development of standards to address the following areas: (1) Customer Service, (2) Information and Communications, (3) Employment, (4) the Built Environment, and (5) Transportation. These standards are being developed by committees established by the Government of Ontario with membership drawn from the disability community, industry and sector representatives. City staff are represented on the standards development committees. The first set of standards has been developed for Customer Service and has been approved for implementation by 2010 in the public sector and 2012 for the private sector.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

[http://www.e-](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

[laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

In addition, the Ontario Accessibility Directorate is developing an annual reporting tool to be completed by public sector organizations. Reports will be required in 2010.

Conclusion

The Annual Report on the City's Accessibility Plan provides an update on accessibility initiatives to improve access to City operations for people with disabilities. The City is making steady progress in achieving its goal of becoming a barrier free city.

CONTACTS

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix 1 – City of Toronto Divisional Accessibility Plans