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Town of Aurora

2020 Annual Accessibility Update

Corporate Services

Introduction

The Town of Aurora is dedicated to the continuous improvement of accessibility within the community, and achieving the goals set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A). The development of the Town of Aurora's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 - 2024 illustrates how the Town will implement the legislative requirements of the A.O.D.A by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for residents, employees, and visitors.

The plan is established in compliance with the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (I.A.S.R). The plan is based on best practice research, input from the Town's 2014 - 2018 Accessibility Advisory Committee and Town staff, and is organized around the following standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

A.O.D.A Compliance

The A.O.D.A is the law that sets out a process for developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards that government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations must follow to become more accessible. These laws and standards are intended to make Ontario open to everyone by helping to reduce and remove barriers.

As a designated public sector organization the Town of Aurora is legally required to file an accessibility compliance report every two years. In 2019, the Town reported non-compliance with the Information and Communications Standard. The Town continues to work towards meeting compliance with this standard for accessible websites and web content. The Town is working towards being a leader in this space and has developed a Province approved compliance plan to meet the requirements of the Information and Communications Standard.

2020 Accessibility Highlights

Customer Service

The Town of Aurora is committed to providing excellent customer service for all residents, employees and visitors with disabilities. The Customer Service Standard under the I.A.S.R requires the Town to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.

Customer Service Outcomes

- Continue to complete mandatory A.O.D.A training, including customer service training for staff, volunteers and third parties to gain resources and tools on how to better assist a customer with a disability.
- Receive and respond to feedback about in which goods, programs, services and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities.
- Continue providing accessible processes for receiving feedback.
- Continue providing service disruption notices in a timely manner.
- Continue to ensure that people with disabilities receive goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives.

Customer Service Accomplishments

- Participation in various accessibility related activities including National AccessAbility Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Seniors Centre Without Walls (S.C.W.W) program provides remote participation opportunities for residents, supporting vulnerable and isolated seniors and adults who may find it difficult to leave home for extended periods of time.
- Transition to hosting Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings in an accessible and virtual platform.

Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standard under the I.A.S.R requires the Town to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. The Town of Aurora's Information and Communications Standard Policy was established to ensure digital accessibility in all services and information the Town provides to residents, employees and visitors.

Information and Communications Outcomes

- Ensuring that Town processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Continue to arrange for accessible formats and communication supports by consulting with the person making the request to determine suitable accessible formats or communication supports in a timely manner at no additional cost.

- Continue to inform the public of the availability of accessible materials and provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request.
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Town's website and web content to conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W.C.A.G) in accordance with the timelines set out by the I.A.S.R.
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Town's website and web content to exceed accessibility compliance requirements by providing the appropriate frameworks, tools, guidelines and training for all Town staff.
- Continue to ensure that the Town's website and web content incorporate the Information and Communications Standard Policy.
- Continue reformatting and building corporate templates to meet W.C.A.G 2.1 in accordance with the timelines set out by the I.A.S.R.
- Continue conducting reviews of the Town's Information and Communications Standard Policy and update to reflect current best practices in digital accessibility.

Information and Communications Accomplishments

- Development of the Information and Communications policy to recognize that documents, websites and media content, whether published for internal or external use, are valued assets that need to be managed in a compliant, systematic way.
- Development of online resources and videos available to all staff to assist with all components of creating an accessible document.
- Continued development and conversion of templates in accordance with W.C.A.G 2.1.
- New Town of Aurora website was launched with the platform meeting W.C.A.G requirements. Ongoing work continues to remediate documents and media content.
- Updated Corporate branding guidelines to ensure that an accessibility lens is used when approving graphically designed communication materials.

Employment

The Town of Aurora is committed to creating an inclusive environment with equality for all who work, live and play here. The Employment Standard under the I.A.S.R sets out accessibility requirements that the Town must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities.

Employment Outcomes

- Continue to ensure all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available supports and accommodations.
- Continue to ensure all applicants are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment, and the selection processes.
- Continue to consult with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

- Continue to provide employees individualized workplace emergency response information upon request.
- Continue to maintain a return-to-work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities as required.
- Continue to ensure the needs of employees with disabilities considered for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement, and redeployment.
- Continue preparing individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for Town employees with disabilities.
- Continue to conduct employee equity surveys to inform workforce planning priorities through data-informed decision making.

Employment Accomplishments

- Through the employee engagement survey the Town's current workplace demographics were assessed as a first step towards the Corporations diversity and inclusion goals.
- Recruitment process has undergone a formal review to ensure that Corporate policies and procedures are barrier-free and provide all components of equal employment opportunity.
- Reviewed and updated our compensation program to ensure fair and equitable pay.

Transportation

The Transportation Standard of the I.A.S.R sets out the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to make public transportation and related services more accessible. Both the Town of Aurora and the Regional Municipality of York share this Standard. York Region is responsible for and creates action items for removing barriers and specialized transportation services. While the Town is not responsible for all components of the Transportation Standard, the Town has obligations under the Duties of Municipalities and Taxi Cabs.

Transportation Outcomes

- Continue to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.
- Ensure that owners and operators of licensed taxicabs are prohibited from:
 - charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip.
 - charging a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.
- Ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab.
- Ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format to persons with disabilities who are passengers.

Transportation Accomplishments

- Continued to provide shuttle buses for events, such as Aurora's Haunted Forest, by the Community Services department to create barrier-free parking and transportation opportunities.

Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces Standards of the I.A.S.R provides technical requirements that ensure newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces are designed to allow for people with disabilities to move through and use amenity spaces comfortably.

Design of Public Spaces Outcomes

- Prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking, and facilities.
- Improve the accessibility of public spaces and workplaces by incorporating accessible design during renovations and redevelopments of recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and facilities.
- Continue to prevent and remove barriers within Town recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and facilities.
- Maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance.
- Respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.

Design of Public Spaces Accomplishments

- Audible Pedestrian Signals installed to advise individuals who are visually impaired when they have the right-of-way to cross at a signalized intersection and in which direction they may cross the intersection
 - Yonge Street and Brookland
 - Engelhard and Edward Street
- Door operators installed to create independence to enter and exit a variety of locations. Starting 2020 and moving forward all new door operators installed are wave operated.
 - Stronach Aurora Recreation Pool entrance and exit
 - Joint Operations Centre elevator lobby entrance and exit
 - Aurora Family Leisure Complex pool men's and women's changerooms
- Construction of a pathway lighting system along Tim Jones Trail between the Aurora Seniors Centre and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.
- Installation of a modern pool hoists and platforms at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex that are in line with universal design principles.

- Installation of adult change tables at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex and Aurora Family Leisure Complex to create optimal conditions for support persons as well as a high level of comfort and safety for the user.
- Additional handrail installed at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex spa to support individuals with mobility and visual impairments.
- Facility wheelchairs available at Town Hall, Aurora Seniors Centre, Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Joint Operations Centre.
- Emergency evacuation chair available at Town Hall for smooth stairway ascent and descent during an emergency. Purchases will continue for remaining facilitates with stairs.