

For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Accessibility Planning Program Update – September 16, 2021**

FROM: Gary Kent, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update of the activities undertaken by the Region of Peel Accessibility Planning Program and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, subsequent to the May 20, 2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee and Accessibility Planning Program have been involved in various activities during this period, which are categorized as follows:
 - Consultation and compliance support provided to Regional Programs;
 - Participation in community events.
 - This report also highlights upcoming events and observances.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The main objective of the Region of Peel's Accessibility Planning Program (the Program) is to ensure that Regional programs, services and facilities continue to be inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities. In order to accomplish this objective, the Program works collaboratively with all Regional departments and the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (the Committee).

2. Activity List

a) Consultation and Compliance

i) Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (GTHA AAC) Meeting

- The GTHA AAC held its joint meeting on June 18, 2021.
- This was its first meeting since October 3, 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The GTHA AAC is composed of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the AACs throughout the GTA and Hamilton as well as representatives from the various transportation services providers including TTC, Metrolinx, Presto, TransHelp, Wheel Trans, etc.

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- The objective of the meetings is to share information on the provision of accessible transportation services by the various service providers throughout the GTA and share best practices, challenges and struggles with the objective of an improved transportation system and service experience for persons with disabilities.
- Items discussed at the meeting included: Metrolinx Overview of Projects; Fare and Service Integration; and Updates by each transit service provider.
- Meeting minutes will be shared when they become available.

ii) Hurontario LRT Virtual Overview Session

- On July 27, 2021 Metrolinx held a consultation session with AAC members from the 4 municipalities in Peel.
- The purpose of the session was to provide an accessibility overview of the Hurontario LRT project.
- Substantial completion of the project is targeted for 2024.
- Feedback was requested from AAC members on some of the design elements of the project.
- The presentation highlighted key accessibility features at terminal stops/stations (Brampton Gateway, Port Credit Station), the Mississauga City Centre stop, as well as typical stops along the LRT corridor.
- More information on this project can be found by visiting the Metrolinx website: www.metrolinx.com/hurontarioLRT.

iii) Digital Accessibility Planning

- Staff from Digital Marketing, Service Excellence & Innovation and Accessibility Planning met to discuss collaboration as we move forward with our digital accessibility initiatives.
- The work undertaken to meet legislated website compliance requires different areas of the organization working together more strategically to fulfill our accessibility mandate as it relates to digital accessibility.
- The initial brainstorming session included the following suggestions:
 - Improving the accessibility page on our intranet site - one stop shop for all things accessibility.
 - Ensure our 'digital workforce' has an understanding of digital accessibility.
 - Incorporate accessibility in our digital literacy program.
 - Enhancing the service experience from a client perspective by ensuring accessibility tools and supports are in place.
 - Accessibility training related to specific roles (ie. website content contributors, frontline customer service providers).

iv) 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report

- Every two years the Region of Peel must file an Accessibility Compliance Report with the Province which confirms that the Region is in compliance with the requirements under *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).
- The last compliance report was carried out in 2019.

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- Relevant program areas are being consulted for clarification and confirmation of compliance.
- A detailed report of the Region's response will be provided to the Committee at its next AAC meeting.
- The report must be filed by December 31, 2021 deadline.

b) Participation in Community Events

i) National AccessAbility Week (NAAW)

- NAAW was observed from May 30 to June 5, 2021.
- The Region of Peel commemorated the week through a virtual event titled, "Today's Accessibility Experience".
- The objective of the event was to gain a better understanding of how the pandemic has impacted persons with disabilities through testimonies of lived experience.
- Event attendees included Regional staff and community agency partners.
- Keynote speaker Carol-Ann Chafe presented the new reality for persons with disabilities, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed gaps and opportunities that have emerged.
- Carol-Ann reiterated the message that everyone has a role to play, as individuals and as community organizations to break down barriers and promote inclusivity in the community.

c) Upcoming Events and Observances

i) National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

- The Region of Peel will be commemorating National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.
- This observance aims to increase public awareness of the positive outcomes of hiring persons with disabilities in Canada and the positive impact persons with disabilities have when they are employed.
- More information will be shared as planning gets underway.

ii) 2021 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

- As proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly, International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is observed annually on December 3rd.
- This day aims to promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities and to take action for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.
- More information on how the Region of Peel will be acknowledging this observance will be shared as the date approaches.

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CONCLUSION

This report summarizes the activities and consultations that the Accessibility Planning Program (the Program) has been involved in, together with participation of members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (the Committee) since May 20, 2021. The Committee and the Program continue to engage in activities that support the Region of Peel's primary accessibility objective of ensuring Regional programs, services and facilities are inclusive and accessible for all persons with disabilities and respond to the evolving community needs, including during times of a pandemic.

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

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

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