
For Information

REPORT TITLE: Annual Accessibility Status Report 2019

FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Acting Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on the progress made and actions taken by the Region of Peel to improve accessibility, remove barriers and implement the requirements set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as well as the strategies set out in the Region's 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, during the 2019 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 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan) was approved by Regional Council on December 14, 2017.
 - The Plan was developed to align with the Region's 20 Year Strategic Plan.
 - 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 the Plan.
 - The status report outlines the actions taken to comply with the requirements for the period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.
 - The status report also includes actions or initiatives that go above and beyond those mandated under the AODA, which reinforce the Region's ongoing commitment to accessibility.
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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.

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A requirement under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) is the annual reporting of the measures taken in the Region of Peel to remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, as required under the AODA, as well as provide an update on the actions taken to implement the 2018-2025 Region of Peel Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the Plan).

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the five standards of the AODA are:

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

On December 14, 2017, the Region of Peel's second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was approved in accordance with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). As most of the IASR requirements are in force, with only the web content requirement remaining, the multi-year accessibility plan was created with objectives that go beyond legislated requirement and align with the Region's 20 Year Strategic Plan. Accessibility is embedded into all facets of the Region's Strategic Plan which is built around three areas of focus: Living, Thriving and Leading.

The "Region of Peel Accessibility Status Report 2019 - Creating a Community for Life", attached as Appendix I, outlines the actions the Region of Peel took in 2019 to continue to meet the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation, but more importantly actions and initiatives that go beyond legislated requirement and align with the Region of Peel's three areas of focus of the Region's Strategic Plan. The report will be posted on the Region of Peel website and made available in alternate formats, upon request.

2. Preparing the Annual Accessibility Status Report

In preparation for the report, each department and program area was consulted on their achievements and accomplishments undertaken during 2019 to improve accessibility and remove barriers for persons with disabilities as it relates to Regional programs, services or facilities. These included any new accomplishments as per AODA, but more notably, actions that went above and beyond legislated requirements to improve the lives of our Peel community. The information received aligns with each area of focus of the Strategic Plan: Living, Thriving and Leading.

Living – is about improving people's lives in their time of need.

Thriving - is about building communities that are integrated, safe and complete.

Leading – is about becoming a government that is future-oriented and accountable.

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3. Report Findings

The report outlines the Region of Peel's accomplishments in 2019 and demonstrates its continued dedication to accessibility, exceeding the requirements of the AODA in many areas. For a complete list of the Region's accessibility accomplishments for 2019, please refer to Appendix I, "Region of Peel Accessibility Status Report 2019 - Creating a Community for Life". Some examples include:

- Microsoft training on accessibility features in Office 365
- Council support for the Dynamic Symbol of Access and incorporating the symbol at Regional facilities
- Web chat options to enhance client experience
- The integration of programs for seniors with disabilities into our older adults' programs
- Enhancements to TransHelp service including the introduction of a free mobile app for TransHelp users.

These are just some examples of innovative and forward-thinking approaches to accessibility. These accomplishments are in line with the strategies and initiatives outlined in the Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to break down barriers and provide persons with all abilities access to our programs and services, while ensuring continued compliance with the requirements of the IASR.

The Region of Peel continues to take a proactive approach and explore opportunities to incorporate an accessible by design approach, where programs and services are inclusive and designed for all consumers with accessibility incorporated from the onset. With this objective in mind the Region's 2019 International Day of Persons with Disabilities event titled "Inclusion by Design" gathered staff and community partners and together generated a common vision of an inclusive and accessible Peel.

CONCLUSION

As required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), the "Region of Peel Accessibility Status Report 2019 - Creating a Community for Life" outlines the actions taken to implement the requirements set out in the AODA legislation and the actions taken to comply with the requirements from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. It outlines accessibility strategies and initiatives as it pertains to the three areas of focus of the Region's Strategic Plan and includes other initiatives not mandated under the AODA. It reinforces the Region of Peel's commitment to accessibility and ensures that the Region of Peel is on track in removing barriers for persons with disabilities, as laid out in the Region's 2018-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, by creating a community that is accessible and inclusive for persons of all abilities and bringing to life the vision of Community for Life.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Region of Peel Accessibility Status Report 2019 - Creating a Community for Life

For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director, Office of Culture and Inclusion, ext. 6741, juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner and Division Director.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Polsinelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "N" and a stylized "P".

N. Polsinelli, Interim Chief Administrative Officer