



# Corporate Report

<b>DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION</b>	City Manager's Office - Office of the City Clerk	<b>REPORT NO.</b>	R 1/2015
<b>DATE PREPARED</b>	12/04/2014	<b>FILE NO.</b>	
<b>MEETING DATE</b>	01/12/2015 (mm/dd/yyyy)		
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Accessibility Progress Report		

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This Report is for information only.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Report provides an update of the City's progress on achieving the compliance required through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. There are requirements, known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) with which the City of Thunder Bay must comply in order to establish and maintain barrier-free access to City facilities, services, information and communications, employment, and transportation. Overall the City is currently meeting requirement deadlines and ongoing improvements are scheduled through the Capital budget. The City is, in fact, ahead of the timeline for some of the accessibility requirements to be in place

## **DISCUSSION**

The City of Thunder Bay has always been a leader in the provision of accessible programs and services for people with disabilities. While there is room for improvement the City does listen to the community through various organizations and direct feedback provided by phone calls or on the website. Providing accessible facilities and equipment, whether in parks or buildings requires planning utilizing capital assigned through the budget process.

In July 2013 City Council adopted the 2013 – 2018 Multi-year Accessibility Plan and the Corporate Accessibility Policy (Report No. 2013.097 (Office of the City Clerk). An amendment to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation now includes requirements for the design of public spaces (O. Reg. 413/12), which come into effect on January 1, 2016. The Accessibility Plan (Attachment A – Overview of the Plan) and an extensive Accessibility Audit of City facilities, which was completed at the same time as the Plan, provide a roadmap for compliance over the next few years. This Report provides an outline of progress to date.

Advice and support for the implementation of the Plan is provided by the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. Within the City there is an Administrative Accessibility

Working Group whose responsibility it is to keep their Departments apprised of Corporate initiatives and to ensure that Accessibility is considered when changes in program, service or capital projects occur. The Municipal Accessibility Specialist works with both Committees and Departments, providing training and assistance in working toward meeting compliance requirements and in the implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Overall the City is currently meeting requirements and is, in fact ahead of the timeline for some of the accessibility requirements to be in place.

### 2013/14 Compliance Requirements

#### **Training**

To date, the primary focus of the Municipal Accessibility Specialist has been the development and implementation of training for all City employees, contractors and volunteers in the required areas of the Ontario Human Rights Code and Integrated Accessibility Standards. Materials have been developed as both in-person classroom presentations and online self-directed training. In conjunction with Human Resources, a training network was developed in October 2013 to assist with the dissemination of this training. The first training session was held for staff of the City Clerk's office in November 2013 and has been regularly scheduled since.

As of October 2014, approximately 2,600 of the 3,200 full and part-time City staff have been trained primarily by the Municipal Accessibility Specialist. Tracking is administered by Human Resources. Training opportunities for the remaining staff continue to be scheduled by the Municipal Accessibility Specialist, Human Resources and the Training Network through coordination with Department Managers. During Corporate Orientation new staff receives the Accessible Customer Service training. This training also incorporates the Ontario Human Rights Code and Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirement training.

#### **Information and Communications Standard**

The City of Thunder Bay's website is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure web content and documents are accessible. City staff continue to be trained on the creation of accessible PDF documents.

Consultation has taken place on creating accessible forms and Excel spreadsheets.

The Municipal Accessibility Specialist is available as a resource to City staff and has consulted regularly on website and web content accessibility and clear print guidelines for printed documents, signage and promotional materials. For example, the Respect. campaign materials have been revised to provide a higher contrast green to improve access for those with visual impairments.

Feedback on accessibility issues in City services can be provided to the Office of the City Clerk. This information is then given to the appropriate City department for required follow up.

## **Barrier Identification and Removal**

Attachment B – 2014 Identification of Accessibility Barriers/Improvements lists the work undertaken by various Departments to address Accessibility Issues within the City Programs and Facilities. Highlights of this list are provided below.

As a high priority building City Hall improvements were:

- Replacing the power-assisted doors to the S. H. Blake Memorial Auditorium with a power-assisted single door to ease entry;
- Installation of visual fire alarms
- Based on Community feedback reversing the door on the main floor accessible washroom to provide ease of access for people with larger wheelchairs

More improvements are in the work plan for 2015.

Accessibility is a consideration in any renovation or new build of a City owned facility. Highlighted projects completed this year:

- Boulevard lake renovations to washrooms to improve accessibility
- Concession area at Delaney arena made accessible
- Churchill Pool added an accessible portion to the service counter and added power door operator to access the pool deck
- Transit Services installed 16 new accessible shelters
- Transit Office redesigned and renovated to meet accessibility standards
- Parks at Trowbridge Falls installed an accessible bridge with pathway access from the parking lot.
- Roads continued its sidewalk ramping program – all new ramps are marked with a texture to alert those with a visual impairment that they are at an intersection.
- Roads and Engineering continue the installation of audible pedestrian signals
- Compliance is also required in City materials provided on the website, Human Resources and all City Communications
  
- Corporate Information Technology continued training in creating Accessible pdfs, and continues to improve website accessibility.
- Human Resources reviewed and implemented accessible recruitment and hiring practices according to legislative requirements
- Human Resources also created a template for accommodation plan for a person with a disability
- Corporate Safety created a form that will assist employees in identifying if they require an individualized workplace emergency response plan. Information is currently being distributed.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC):

The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises City Council on the development and implementation of the Municipal Accessibility Plan and on the effectiveness of the Plan and the City's progress in meeting legislative standards under the AODA. The Committee also advises City Council on issues related to people with disabilities within programs, services, and facilities provided by the City of Thunder Bay. They hold an annual Community Meeting to inform citizens about the City's progress on accessibility and the Municipal Accessibility Plan. In addition they provide community leadership on issues related to people with disabilities as they relate to the City of Thunder Bay's programs, services, and facilities.

The AAC meets monthly and at these meetings has invited several City Division to attend to advise the Division of issues and to advise the staff on accessibility issues and improvements. This past year the AAC have met with staff from Transit, Roads, Parks, Inclusion Services, Facilities and the City Clerk's Office regarding Elections.

The AAC served as an ongoing resource for Transit Services as they developed and implemented Specialized Transit Services and worked to meet AODA requirements for conventional transit services.

The Built Environment Working Group, a subcommittee of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, reviews and makes recommendations for barrier removal for site plans. This has been an active committee in 2014 as Construction Services reviews renovation plans with them and Parks is now accessing them as a resource. In addition Planning Services utilizes the Committee's advice regarding accessibility of new construction under site plan control. This group is also in the process of reviewing the accessibility audit presented by AccessAbility Advantage and prioritizing barriers for removal.

### **Consultation**

In May 2014, the Accessibility Advisory Committee hosted two public information sessions with a theme of recreation and leisure for people with disabilities, with a keynote address from a local Paralympian. Staff presentations included the Canada Games Complex, Inclusion Services, Parks, the Walkability Committee and Transit.

### Plans for 2015

The Departments will continue in their commitment to including accessibility in their plans for renovation and new builds. The Accessibility Specialist will review with departments the priorities as outlined in the Accessibility Audit. The capital budget will be used to support the accessibility for equipment, renovations and new builds other capital related accessibility initiatives. It is the intent of the Accessibility Specialist to work with Planning Services and Infrastructure and Operations on the development of comprehensive and accessible way-finding, both internal and external throughout the City.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATION***

There are no financial implications associated with this Report.

### ***CONCLUSION***

This Report was presented for information only.

### ***BACKGROUND***

Current estimates indicate that approximately one in seven people in Ontario live with a disability. This number is expected to reach one in five people within two decades. The estimate in Thunder Bay is one in six people who live with a disability. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, there are requirements, known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) (IASR) with which the City of Thunder Bay must comply in order to establish and maintain barrier-free access to City facilities, services, information and communications, employment, and transportation. An amendment to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation now includes requirements for the design of public spaces (O. Reg. 413/12), which comes into effect on January 1, 2016. Compliance with the requirements is mandatory, staged over time and subject to review by Access Ontario. Non-compliance results in fines of up to a maximum of \$100,000 per day for corporations.

The City of Thunder Bay has always been a leader in the provision of accessible programs and services for people with disabilities. While there is always room for improvement the City does listen to the community through various organizations and direct feedback provided by phone calls or on the website. Providing accessible facilities and equipment, whether in parks or buildings requires planning utilizing capital assigned through the budget process.

In 2012-2013 The City hired a consultant, AccessAbility Advantage, to review the current state of accessibility of City facilities, programs and services and, in consultation with the community, staff and Accessibility Advisory Committee, to develop a 5 year Implementation Plan to guide the City in meeting the requirements of the AODA. In addition, a comprehensive accessibility audit was done on key City facilities to indicate what is required to be compliant with the accessibility standards as legislated by the province.

### **Adoption of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The 2013-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was made possible with the input of people with disabilities through the Accessibility Advisory Committee and input from individuals from our community. The Plan identifies barriers removed in the prior year and barriers to be removed in the year to come, as well as compliance timelines set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. These actions are outlined in the Accessibility Governance section below.

This Plan was adopted by City Council in July 2013 (Report No. 2013.097 (Office of the City Clerk)).

**Adoption of the Corporate Accessibility Policy**

The adopted Corporate Accessibility Policy (Policy 08-01-04) recognizes the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The Policy outlines the City's strategy to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This Policy was adopted by City Council in July 2013 (Report No. 2013.097 (Office of the City Clerk)).

***REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED***

Attachment A – Timelines for Compliance with Accessibility Standards

Attachment B – 2014 Accessibility Barriers and Improvements, City of Thunder Bay

***PREPARED BY: Sheelagh Hendrick, Deputy City Clerk***

<b>THIS REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY:</b> (NAME OF GENERAL MANAGER) <b>TIM COMMISSO, CITY MANAGER</b>	<b>DATE:</b>  December 19, 2014
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