

Annual Multi Year Accessibility Plan Report

City of Guelph

Date: 2020

Introduction

A City of Guelph's commitment to Accessibility compliance is a crucial aspect of corporate responsibility, ensuring that services and facilities are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. This commitment is aligned with the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which mandates organizations to follow standards that make them more accessible to people with disabilities. Organizations are required to develop accessibility policies, create a multi-year accessibility plan, and file an accessibility compliance report, reflecting their dedication to this cause. By adhering to these guidelines, companies not only comply with legal obligations but also embrace inclusivity, fostering an environment where everyone has equal opportunities to participate and contribute.

Achievements

Website Accessibility

The City has been working hard to make sure its website can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities. This is to meet international web standards. Teams across different departments have been improving the website and training staff to create documents that are easy for everyone to use. They've bought new software and taught people how to use popular programs to make accessible documents. By the end of the year, this big project will be mostly done, but the City will keep making sure that everything on the website is accessible for all.

Over the last year, our team has learned a lot about working together, training, and adapting to new software. We've realized that as technology changes quickly, we need to keep training our staff to use this knowledge in their daily jobs.

In 2020, we started using a new system called eSCRIBE for City Council meetings. It helps us organize agendas and minutes and makes sure they're easy to access and read on our website, even on phones. Now, you can find everything related to City Council meetings in one spot.

Also, you can watch City Council meetings live or recorded on Facebook Live, with captions that appear automatically.

Financial Implications

The Web Accessibility Project software Site Improve, that tests City websites for accessibility, has an annual fee of just under \$16,000. This software was purchased for 2020 and 2021.

Built Environment

Since 2018 the following facilities have been newly built or renovated to improve accessibility:

- Wilson Street Parking facility
- Victoria Road Recreation Center
- Hastings Stadium – Improved spectator seating
- Margaret Green Park Washrooms
- Riverside Park Washrooms
- Main Branch Library

- 50 Municipal Street employee areas

Replacement of park playground equipment 2020 projects:

- Exhibition Park Tennis Court Washrooms
- Planning for the South End Community Centre
- Guelph Transit office update
- Waterworks Pump House to offices
- The Boathouse

The City will review and update annually its procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

Guelph Transit

Guelph Transit has made changes to help people with different needs use the bus. Most bus stops are now easy to get to, and they have signs that follow the rules for accessibility. On the buses, there are reserved seats for those who need them, and you can get information about the bus route and stops both by seeing and hearing. The staff who talk to passengers online or on social media know how to communicate in a way that's good for everyone. Also, since the Covid-19 outbreak, there are new signs and stickers to help all passengers.

Guelph Transit has been a leader in the transit industry since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. During this time, the priority has been placed on ensuring the safety of staff and customers with increased measures of sanitization and personal protective equipment (PPE). Both conventional and mobility services have all vehicles cleaned three times daily, sanitizing from the floors to the highest touchpoints. All operators of conventional and mobility service are provided with extra masks for customers who may require or request one. In addition, management staff are present at Guelph Central Station to provide masks to passengers if needed. Conventional buses have AODA Covid-19 signage, onboard hand sanitizers for customers at a level where passengers with a disability have access, along with regular announcements (and matching signage) relating to mask-wearing. The operator's driving area is now shielded from the main bus area, protecting both the employee and passengers on the bus. Mobility service also utilizes similar measures of AODA compliant signage and stickers relating to service and Covid-19 measures. Mobility operators are provided with their own face shield and sanitizer wipes, gloves, and facemasks, with additional PPE measures put in place for passengers. Service delivery standards within conventional and mobility service is continuously adapting to the needs of passengers, accounting for the needs of all customers.

Feedback

Early in 2020 the City added one more way for the public to communicate feedback regarding accessibility by including "Inaccessible Entrance" to the Report a Problem system available to the public. This map-based system also includes a form for the public to complete to communicate their "problem" to City staff. A link on the home page of this application was added to guide those using assistive technology past the map and directly to the form. The form meets the WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA.

From Q 2 through to Q 4, four Inaccessible Entrance that were accessibility related concerns were logged by the public and resolved by staff.

Challenges and Improvements

As Covid 19 continues, the City will be looking for ways to further improve customer experience.

Conclusion

In the coming year, accessibility compliance work is set to become even more integral to organizational operations, aligning with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As we approach the AODA's goal for a fully accessible Ontario, the focus on digital inclusivity intensifies, reflecting a broader commitment to removing barriers for individuals with disabilities. This alignment not only ensures legal compliance but also fosters an inclusive environment that benefits all users, reinforcing the province's dedication to accessibility and setting a standard for others to follow.

For an accessible version of this document, questions or feedback, please contact accessibility@guelph.ca or 519-822-1260 or TTY 519-826-9771