

2024 Accessibility Report Highlights

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Overview

- Background
- 2024 Highlights
- Next Steps
- Questions

Background

- The second year for the 2023 - 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)
- The 2023 – 2027 MYAP focuses on the 5 AODA Standards
 - Transportation
 - Design of Public Spaces
 - Customer Service
 - Information and Communications
 - Employment

Transportation

Goal: The Region strives to prevent and remove barriers to transportation services for residents and visitors

Key Highlights:

- An Airport Accessibility Plan covering current accessible services and the 2024-2027 roadmap for further actions has been implemented and published.
- Phase 1 of engagement for MobilityPLUS services was completed in Summer 2024 to be used for GRT's 2030 business plan. Phase 2 of engagement is set for November 2024 and will show preliminary feedback, with the plan ready in early Spring 2025.
- In 2024, 42 landing pads were constructed and/or upgraded.
- 81 percent of GRT's stops have concrete or asphalt landing pads, an increase of 13 percent from 2023.

Transportation

Key Highlights:

- In 2024, changes were made to the ARBOC (MobilityPLUS vehicle) layout to address ongoing concerns:
 - Rear flip seats were repositioned to the front of the bus.
 - Two seats were removed to allow for a larger rear area. This improves wheelchair positioning and securement.
 - The configuration changes also ensure that weight is kept at the rear for stabilization.
- Based on feedback, the following changes were made to the MobilityPLUS application in 2024:
 - Simplified introduction and instructions.
 - Questions streamlined for comprehension and ease of completion.
 - Some questions were removed as they are no longer needed.

Design of Public Spaces

Goal: The Region strives to remove barriers to accessing our public spaces to ensure that residents and staff feel welcomed and safe in Regional facilities.

Key Highlights:

- Provincial and Federal grant applications were submitted in 2024 to assist with funding accessibility improvements.
- The Provincial Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee has completed a review of the accessible built environment standards in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and the barrier-free accessibility requirements under the Ontario Building Code (OBC).
 - Recommendations have been submitted to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Customer Service

Goal: The Region strives to deliver services that meet the needs of our residents. The Region plans to rethink and redesign our services using human-centred and equity-based principles, and by leveraging digital capabilities to better meet the community's service expectations and needs.

Key Highlights:

- Developed a draft Service Design Framework, which includes a service design standard and service assessment tool, that provides a roadmap for how to design services from end-to-end that are built on a foundation of accessibility and equity to better meet the needs of residents.
- Within the last year, 600 laptops have been provided to Community Services clients to improve employment opportunities.
- The Langs Drive building in Cambridge, which started construction in September 2024, will have 29 units (21 percent of total units) that achieve the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) accessibility definition.

Information and Communications

Goal: The Region strives to meaningfully engage diverse members of the community for feedback and advice on Regional programs, services and public spaces, and ensures that information provided by the Region to residents is accessible.

Key Highlights:

- Review and updating the GRAAC Terms of Reference started in the second half of 2024 and is ongoing. An updated version of the Terms of Reference is expected in the first half of 2025 for approval.
- New communications staff completed 2-day training on InDesign: Creating Accessible PDF's for WCAG 2.1.

Employment

Goal: The Region strives to recruit and retain diverse staff who feel that their knowledge and skills are valued.

Key Highlights:

- The Region is currently developing an Equitable Recruitment and Selection Practices Guide.
 - The guide is paired with other initiatives to address historic and ongoing oppression and reflects the Region's commitment to provide equitable employment opportunities for all.
 - The guide includes processes and resources to support management and candidates throughout the employment journey
- A peer support program for Paramedics services was collaboratively launched in April 2024. Through a partnership with the Breakwater Institute, which provides clinical direction for the program, 25 peer supporters were recruited and trained to be able to support their colleagues.

Next Steps

- 2024 Accessibility Status Report will go to Regional Council in February 2025
- New membership appointments will go to Regional Council in early 2025

Questions

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