

Subject: City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility

Plan – Annual Update (2024)

File Number: ACS2024-OCC-GEN-0003

**Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 7 May 2024
and Council 15 May 2024**

Submitted on April 26, 2024 by Tyler Cox, Manager, Legislative Services

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Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la ville
d'Ottawa – Compte rendu annuel (2024)**

Numéro de dossier: ACS2024-OCC-GEN-0003

Rapport présenté au Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

Rapport soumis le 7 mai 2024

et au Conseil le 15 mai 2024

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REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Corporate Services Committee recommend that Council:

- 1. Receive the City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan –Annual Update (2024) report;**
- 2. Receive the consultation plan to develop the new 2025-2029 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan;**
- 3. Approve the Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiries Procedure;**
- 4. Approve the updated City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy;**
- 5. Receive information related to exceptions and non-compliances with the Design of Public Spaces Standard and Accessibility Design Standards, as detailed in this report.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et des services organisationnels recommande au Conseil municipal :

- 1. de prendre connaissance du Compte rendu de 2024 sur le Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la Ville d'Ottawa;**
- 2. de prendre connaissance du plan de consultation pour mettre au point le nouveau Plan d'accessibilité municipal 2025 - 2029 de la Ville d'Ottawa;**
- 3. d'approuver les procédures de rétroaction et de demandes de renseignements accessibles des résidents;**
- 4. d'approuver la version à jour de la Politique sur l'accessibilité;**
- 5. de prendre connaissance de l'information se rapportant aux exceptions et aux cas de non conformité par rapport aux Normes de conception des espaces publics et aux Normes de conception accessible selon les modalités précisées dans ce rapport.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#) of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#), designated public sector organizations, such as the City of Ottawa, are required to, establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to meet its legislated obligations and prevent and remove accessibility barriers in its services, programs, communications and its public spaces.

The [2020-2024 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan \(COMAP\)](#) was approved by Council on November 25, 2020. The City is also required to prepare an annual status update report on the progress of the multi-year plan. This will be the last update on the 2020-2024 COMAP.

The City continues to report non-compliance with the AODA related to accessible websites and web content. Since 2015, the City has reported non-compliance with Section 14 (4) of the IASR to the Province, which includes standards for web sites and web content. Additionally, in 2023, the City reported non-compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standard related to the requirements of exterior paths of travel, Section 80.5. The City continues to work towards full compliance and provides updates on its progress to the Province, as requested. The City is required to submit an AODA Compliance Report to the Province every two years. This Compliance Report was submitted to the Province in December 2023. Further details will be provided later in this report.

This update report provides an overview of the developments with respect to the legislative framework that governs accessibility in City, Ontario and in Canada. Furthermore, it reflects the content of feedback the Corporate Accessibility Office (AO) receives through many channels in place to learn about the issues and experiences of Ottawa residents with disabilities. In 2023, there remained significant and continued impacts to people with disabilities due to emergency situations, including several weather-related emergency events. These impacts and the City's efforts to assist residents with disabilities in emergency situations will be discussed later in this report.

In July 2023, City Council approved its Term of Council priorities that were structured around the long-term goals (10+ years) and strategic priorities. This report is developed to align with the Council-approved long-term goals which include that the City will be a place where residents experience a good quality of life and live in neighbourhoods that are diverse, inclusive, safe, connected, accessible and affordable and where residents

benefit from a healthy, sustainable and equitable built environment that supports the City's efforts to address climate change. This report is also developed to align with the Council-approved strategic priorities including: a city that has affordable housing and is more livable for all, a city that is more connected with reliable, safe and accessible mobility options, and a city that is green and resilient. In setting the 2023–2026 City Strategic Plan, the City prioritized meaningful reconciliation and collaboration with the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation and Urban Indigenous communities. The AO has developed a plan to engage with the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation branch at the City, with the goal of learning from community organizations to understand and support emerging and systemic accessibility issues and needs.

The AO recognizes that this report to Council may include technical language. For a condensed, plain language version, see the COMAP 2024 Resident Facing report (**Document 1**).

SYNTHÈSE ADMINISTRATIVE

En vertu du Règlement sur les normes d'accessibilité intégrées (RNAI) de la Loi de 2005 sur l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario (LAPHO), les organisations du secteur public désignées, dont la Ville d'Ottawa, doivent établir, mettre en œuvre, mettre à jour et consigner un plan d'accessibilité pluriannuel décrivant dans leurs grandes lignes la stratégie qu'elles adoptent pour s'acquitter de leurs obligations en vertu de la loi et pour prévenir et éliminer les obstacles qui se dressent contre l'accessibilité de leurs services, programmes, communications et espaces publics. Le Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la Ville d'Ottawa (PAMVO) 2020-2024 a été approuvé par le Conseil municipal le 25 novembre 2020. La Ville est également tenue de préparer un compte rendu annuel sur l'état d'avancement de son plan pluriannuel. Il s'agit de la dernière mise à jour du PAMVO 2020-2024.

La Ville continue de rendre compte des cas de non-conformité à la LAPHO relativement aux sites Web et au contenu Web accessibles. Depuis 2015, la Ville déclare au gouvernement provincial qu'elle ne respecte pas le paragraphe 14 (4) du RNAI, qui prévoit des normes pour les sites Web et les contenus Web. De plus, en 2023, la Ville a déclaré qu'elle n'était pas conforme aux Normes de conception des espaces publics relativement aux exigences des voies de déplacement en extérieur (article 80.5). La Ville continue de se consacrer aux efforts qui lui permettront de respecter parfaitement ce règlement et soumet dans les cas nécessaires, au gouvernement provincial, des comptes rendus sur les progrès accomplis. La Ville doit soumettre tous les deux ans, au

gouvernement provincial, un rapport de conformité à la LAPHO. Ce rapport de non-conformité a été soumis au gouvernement provincial en décembre 2023. Le lecteur trouvera de plus amples renseignements plus loin dans ce rapport.

Dans ce compte rendu, nous donnons un aperçu de l'évolution de la situation en ce qui a trait à la structure-cadre législative qui régit l'accessibilité en Ontario et au Canada. En outre, ce rapport fait état de la teneur des commentaires adressés au Bureau de l'accessibilité (BA) sur de nombreux circuits de communication pour porter à sa connaissance les problèmes et l'expérience des résidents d'Ottawa en situation de handicap. En 2023, il y a toujours d'importantes incidences, attribuables aux situations d'urgence, dont plusieurs événements d'urgence liés à la météorologie, sur les personnes en situation de handicap. Il est question, plus loin dans ce rapport, de ces incidences et des efforts consacrés par la Ville pour aider les résidents en situation de handicap.

En juillet 2023, le Conseil municipal a approuvé les priorités de son mandat, structurées en fonction des objectifs à long terme (10 ans et plus) et des priorités stratégiques. Ce compte rendu a été rédigé pour concorder avec les objectifs à long terme approuvés par le Conseil municipal et selon lesquels la Ville se veut un lieu dans lequel les résidentes et les résidents ont une bonne qualité de vie et habitent des quartiers divers, inclusifs, sécuritaires, connectés, accessibles et abordables et dans lequel les résidentes et les résidents profitent d'un environnement bâti sain, durable et équitable, qui appuie les efforts de la Ville dans la lutte contre les changements climatiques. Ce compte rendu a aussi été rédigé pour concorder avec les priorités stratégiques approuvées par le Conseil municipal, à savoir une ville qui offre des logements abordables et qui est plus habitable pour toutes et pour tous, une ville qui est mieux connectée et qui offre des options de mobilité fiables, sécuritaires et accessibles, ainsi qu'une ville verte et résiliente. En établissant son Plan stratégique 2023-2026, la Ville a donné la priorité aux efforts significatifs de réconciliation et de collaboration avec la Nation Anishinabe Algonquine et les communautés autochtones urbaines. Le Bureau de l'accessibilité (BA) a mis au point un plan pour consulter la Direction des relations avec les Autochtones de la Ville afin de réunir, auprès des organismes communautaires, l'information qui permettra de connaître et de promouvoir les enjeux et les besoins émergents et systémiques dans le domaine de l'accessibilité.

Le BA reconnaît que ce rapport au Conseil peut comprendre des termes techniques. Pour prendre connaissance de la version condensée en langage simplifié, veuillez consulter le rapport 2024 destiné aux résidents sur le PAMVO (**pièce 1**).

BACKGROUND

The AODA requires large public organizations, such as the City, to, “establish, review and update their accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities and if they have an established AAC, they shall consult with the committee.” The 2020-2024 COMAP is the City’s third multi-year accessibility plan since the AODA requirement came into effect. This is the fourth and last update on the 2020-2024 COMAP.

To develop the 2020-2024 COMAP, the AO consulted widely with persons with disabilities, caregivers, organizations, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and members of the public. This annual update report was also shared with the AAC for their feedback, which is included in the Accessibility Impacts section of this report.

This is the City’s 23rd annual report, which provides a status update on the organization’s progress in 2023 and includes three main sections.

The first section provides information on the City’s emergency response in 2023, and a discussion on accessibility legislation and implementation at the City. It also provides information on the City’s compliance with the AODA, and developments on the AODA and the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA).

The second section provides details on the City’s 2023 efforts in the areas of stakeholder engagement, partnerships, training and events. This foundational work ensures the City remains connected to the community of people with disabilities and ensure City services and training meet the needs of the community.

The third section provides a summary of the City’s initiatives (**Document 2**) which are broken down into the five standards of the AODA: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces and Customer Service.

As this is the final report on the 2020-2024 COMAP, the final section provides a summary of the AO’s Consultation Plan ahead of creating the City’s next multi-year accessibility plan (**Recommendation 2 and Document 3**). After this proposed extensive consultation, the 2025-2029 COMAP will be presented to Council in Q4, 2024, and if approved, all initiatives under the plan will launch in 2025.

The initiatives and improvements highlighted in this report demonstrate the City’s commitment to meeting the legislated requirements of the AODA, as well as implementation of non-legislated advancements in accessibility, which support the inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in Ottawa, including residents, employees and visitors.

The implementation of the AODA and the IASR continues to be a priority for City Council, City of Ottawa leadership and its employees in all departments and services. The City has worked collaboratively with the Government of Ontario, the City's AAC and the community to implement and monitor the legislation and identify and remove barriers to City services, programs, and facilities.

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) and Ottawa Public Health (OPH), although governed by separate boards, report on AODA compliance with the City. Similarly, the Committee of Adjustment (CoA) is an independent, autonomous tribunal appointed by City Council, which also reports on AODA compliance with the City. Ottawa Police Services (OPS) is considered a separate "large organization" and as such, reports separately.

The provisions of the AODA and particularly its Transportation Standards do not apply to the City of Ottawa's conventional bus service, Para Transpo service and rail service managed by the Transit Services Department as they are federally and independently regulated. These services do, however, provide annual accessibility updates through the COMAP report and have committed to meeting the "spirit and intent" of the AODA.

Since 2021, there have been many changes to City departments. These have impacted the departments responsible for some accessibility initiatives, but not the implementation of the initiatives themselves. In 2023, departments impacted by these changes were:

- The City Manager's Office
- Public Information and Media Relations
- Legal Services
- Financial and Corporate Services Department

Changes to reflect the responsibility of initiatives have been included in the 2024 COMAP Update Report. The AO has worked closely with these modified departments to ensure there are no impacts to service with the department's transition.

Many of the initiatives outlined in this report have become part of regular business at the City, integrated in operations, and staff have continued to report on their progress in the 2020-2024 plan as they continue to expand, evolve, and increase accessibility.

It should be noted that for the purpose of this report, the City continues to use person-first language when referring to persons with disabilities. However, language is continually evolving and there is increasing discussion and preference around using disability-first language. While staff are trained to follow the lead and preferences of

individuals, use of person-first language in this report is consistent with the language used in the AODA and the advice of the AAC. The City remains responsive to the preferences of the community of persons with disabilities, and this will be assessed and discussed with the AAC on an ongoing basis, and with the community as part of the new multi-year accessibility plan consultations.

DISCUSSION

2023 Emergency Planning and Response

In 2023, the City responded to numerous emergency situations and events. According to the City's Climate Change Master Plan, Ottawa will become much warmer and wetter over the coming decades, with more extreme heat days, heavy rain and extreme weather events like heavy winds, floods and winter storms. As such, the AO continues to work with staff across the organization to ensure people with disabilities are not only considered in our emergency response planning, but also in the development of policies and strategies related to climate change response.

In April 2023, an ice storm impacted various parts of Quebec and Ontario, resulting in power outages in numerous areas across Ottawa for several days, as well as severely damaging property and infrastructure across the city. The AO worked closely with staff in Public Information and Media Relations (PIMR) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to release a special edition of the "Accessibility Spotlight" e-newsletter featuring information and resources specific for persons with disabilities, including the list of accessible facilities open to allow residents to receive services, shower and charge their devices, as well as mental health services and supports available from OPH.

Over the summer months, the City was frequently under air quality and smoke advisories due to the increased number of forest fires that occurred across Ontario and Quebec. Once again, the AO worked closely with staff to release a special edition of "Accessibility Spotlight" to highlight various health and safety considerations for persons with disabilities, particularly those with environmental sensitivities and those with lung or heart conditions.

The AO understands that emergency situations disproportionately impact people with disabilities. During these emergencies, the AO worked closely with other City departments and services to ensure accessible communications were available to residents by including information for vulnerable residents in public information, such as

the Accessibility Spotlight newsletter, as well as including the provision of captioning and sign language interpretation in both American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ) in all emergency-related media availabilities.

The AO also participated in various meetings and contributed to the City's Climate Resiliency Strategy currently in development, ensuring an accessibility lens was considered in the development of the identified actions and policies. Additionally, communications were shared regarding strategies and ways to cope with extreme heat in a summer edition of Accessibility Spotlight. Information related to extreme cold conditions was provided in February 2024.

A stakeholder workshop on the Extreme Heat Strategy was held during the summer of 2023 with the Ottawa Disability Coalition, upon request, to gather information related to people with disabilities during extreme heat situations.

In February 2023, the AO organized a virtual consultation with various community stakeholders to discuss emergency planning. Staff from the OEM were in attendance to collect feedback on ways to improve the accessibility of existing City programs, services and resources related to emergency preparedness, as well as to speak to initiatives currently underway. Various topics were discussed including the potential creation of a vulnerable person registry, as well as alternative communication formats to use during an emergency when cell phone networks are overloaded.

Additional feedback from this consultation with disability stakeholders led the AO to organize a virtual public event in February 2024, in partnership with both the OEM and OPH, who presented on information and resources with a focus on emergency preparedness considerations for those living with disabilities. The event also included a facilitated discussion to learn about the needs, perspectives, concerns and questions shared by attendees, as well as explore opportunities for further collaboration.

Accessibility Legislation and City Implementation

Accessibility Impacts Statements in Committee and Council

Reports

On October 13, 2011, Council approved [motion FEDCO 10/1](#), which directed staff to immediately include a mandatory "Accessibility Impacts" section in all reports to Committee and Council. In this section, staff are to review proposed projects, prior to Council approval, for potential positive or negative impacts on people with disabilities and older adults and describe steps taken to remediate any negative impacts identified.

On March 27, 2012, Council approved the first Accessibility Impacts Checklist to support report writers to complete this section.

To support staff in the creation of meaningful accessibility impact statements in their Committee and Council reports, as well as to improve accessibility in projects and reduce the City's risk of non-compliance, the AO developed a new Accessibility Impacts Statement Workshop in 2022 and delivered several sessions throughout 2023. Details regarding attendance and participation in these sessions can be found later in this report.

Additionally, the AO continues to provide enhanced support to report authors by reviewing the legislative agenda on a weekly basis and proactively offering review and recommendations for some reports. More than 75 reports received enhanced support by the AO to complete this section in 2023. Specifically, a number of reports that had previously included "There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report" were improved to include acknowledgement of barriers created or removed by the project, relevant references to legislation, and enhanced consultation commitments with persons with disabilities and the AAC.

This continued process has received positive feedback from staff across all departments and has allowed the AO to build new relationships across service areas, resulting in new opportunities to increase accessibility across the organization. Due to its success, this practice has been added as a COMAP initiative and will continue in 2024.

Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiry Procedure and Updates to Accessibility Policy

In accordance with Section 80.50 of the IASR, residents and visitors are invited to provide accessibility-related feedback, which is forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented, and tracked.

While accessible feedback and resident inquiries have been received and responded to through various other Corporate and departmental-led complaint processes, this formal procedure was created to ensure the City meets the legislated requirements under the IASR. As such, **Recommendation 3** asks Council to approve the new Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiry Procedure (**Document 4**).

This Procedure is intended to supplement and provide an overarching framework for other Corporate and departmental feedback and complaint mechanisms. Processes may vary depending on the department and service area; however, this Procedure applies to all City employees.

Feedback regarding this Procedure have been collected and incorporated from all members of the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) and other departmental subject matter experts, as required, as well as Legal Services and the Business Integration Team (BIT).

As a result of this new Procedure, the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Policy **(Document 5)** has also been amended to include reference to this new Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiries Procedure, pending Council approval **(Recommendation 4)**.

Accessibility Working Group

The AWG is an inter-departmental working group mandated by Council to monitor the City's Accessibility Plan progress, including compliance with the AODA, through the Business Support Services (BSS), Accessibility Function. All departments, along with OPH and OPL, provide a representative from their BSS unit, or otherwise, to coordinate and facilitate the implementation, maintenance and reporting on compliance with all applicable AODA, IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code requirements, as well as other departmental specific accessibility legislation.

In general, this group meets approximately ten times per year. Staff develop expertise related to accessibility within their service areas, monitor departmental priorities for opportunities, and respond to resident feedback. Training opportunities are frequently shared with the group by the AO. Some of the work supported by the AWG in 2023 included, but is not limited to:

- Compiled information on departmental accessibility initiatives for the annual COMAP report;
- Provided links to departmental service areas and staff to address accessibility-related feedback and complaints in a timely manner;
- Provided feedback on the Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiries Procedure;
- Provided budget information related to accessibility for the AAC;

- Served as a resource for departmental staff to engage with the AAC;
- Applied an accessibility lens to projects; and
- Compiled departmental compliance information required to support the 2023 AODA Compliance Report.

The AO would like to thank all AWG representatives for their commitment and dedication to increasing accessibility across the organization in 2023.

City's Compliance with the AODA

As a designated public sector organization, the City is required to submit an accessibility compliance report to the Province every two years. This report was submitted to the Province in December 2023.

AWG representatives received an orientation on the compliance reporting process in September 2023. A workbook was provided to support departments to work through the compliance attestation questions, which were signed off by each department's General Manager or equivalent.

As noted, the City continues to be fully compliant with all applicable requirements under the AODA, with two exceptions: accessible websites and web content under the Information and Communication Standard, and exterior paths of travel under the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This information was previously shared with City Council by memo from the City Clerk in February 2024.

Web Accessibility

Since 2015, and continued in 2021 when a higher standard came into effect, the City has reported non-compliance with Section 14 (4) of the IASR which include standards for web sites and web content:

1. By January 1, 2014, new internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A.
2. By January 1, 2021, all internet websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than:
 - i. success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and
 - ii. success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

The City updated its compliance plan agreement with the Province in December 2020 and an update on its progress was submitted with the City's most recent Compliance Report in December 2023 (see **Document 6** for the City's Compliance Plan Agreement and **Document 7** for the 2023 Compliance Plan Agreement Update). This agreement plan update highlights the resources the City has committed towards web accessibility, and the steps the City continues to take towards this goal.

As shared with the Province in previous years, the challenges related to the requirements contained in Section 14 remain, despite the City's commitment to full implementation of the WCAG requirements. Significant effort, time, and resources continue to be invested to comply with this standard.

The City has also implemented all the recommended elements contained in the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative Strategy, the governing body of WCAG as well as the agency that develops standards and support materials to help organizations implement accessibility. Upon recommendation of this strategy the City has incorporated various web/digital accessibility initiatives including, but not limited to, creating a web accessibility policy, defining roles and responsibilities, having a monitoring framework in place, engaging stakeholders, consulting the disability community and the AAC, evaluating early and often, and creating a tracking process.

The City's main public-facing website, ottawa.ca, which has approximately 10,500 pages, has been prioritized and is substantially in conformance, as described below. Many of the City's web assets that are not fully WCAG 2.0 AA conformant have undergone extensive remediation to improve the usability and accessibility for all users.

The City maintains a master list of all public-facing web applications and websites and monitors progress on their compliance status. As of December 2023, the City has 68 websites and applications, which are owned and maintained by various departments. Approximately 51 per cent of these are conformant with WCAG 2.0 AA, an improvement from 40 per cent in 2022.

The City also continues to utilize SiteImprove, an automated monitoring tool, which continuously scans ottawa.ca and other City-controlled websites to report on accessibility issues. Representatives from all City departments can view their respective issues and run reports to be shared with their contributors. Quarterly reviews are also conducted by ServiceOttawa staff for ottawa.ca content. To prevent publishers adding inaccessible content to ottawa.ca, an accessibility specific plug-in was added to the content publishing tool. This allows content contributors to run an accessibility scan on

their HTML-based content, prior to posting. This tool provides support for issues such as improper heading structure, missing alternative text and table structures, among other checks.

The ServiceOttawa branch works closely with the City's Quality Assurance team to ensure that new or updated features to all websites, both internally and externally facing, exceed legislated requirements. The Corporation now tests against WCAG 2.2 AA levels, beyond current legislative requirements. Additionally, ServiceOttawa, Information Technology Solutions (ITS) and the Procurement branch have been working on a procurement process that reduces the risk of launching a new service with a non-compliant third-party solution.

Existing challenges with vendors remain in both understanding the accessibility requirements properly and delivering accessible products. During the Request for Proposal (RFP) and pre-RFP stages, the City is working to articulate accessibility needs to vendor's and assist on de-risking projects prior to, and post signing of contracts and Statements of Work. Quality Assurance testing is still ongoing for both internally developed and third-party applications/sites, and there has been an increase in requests for accessibility testing since 2022.

As described above, the City continues its efforts towards reaching compliance with the WCAG requirement and is pleased to share its continued progress through regular reporting or through updates to our Compliance Plan Agreement.

Design of Public Spaces

Furthermore, in 2023, the City undertook a fulsome review of all Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard elements which have been redeveloped or newly constructed since January 1, 2016. The City is committed to achieve compliance with Section 80.5 of the IASR, which states that obligated organizations shall meet the requirements set out in the DOPS.

Starting in 2022, the City began an extensive project, Accessibility Requirements in Construction (ARC), to examine all construction programs to assess whether their activities could be classified as maintenance or redevelopment within the meaning of the IASR. A full assessment of the scope of each program was conducted with support from the AO and Legal Services to ensure the program includes the required accessibility features. The progress and outcomes of the ARC project are included later in this report.

During this review, it was found that the implementation of certain traffic control measures such as an All-Way Stop Control (AWSC), a Pedestrian Crossover (PXO) or Adult School Crossing Guard (ASCG) may constitute redevelopment if a new element is added to an existing public space, or the functionality of an existing public space is significantly altered as a result. In these instances, the City must comply with the applicable DOPS and the City's Accessibility Design Standards. To achieve compliance with the IASR, the intersection must meet the accessibility standards prescribed in Sections 80.23, 80.26 and 80.27 related to exterior paths of travel.

Given this clarification, it was discovered that some traffic control measures installed since 2016, which included the implementation of AWSC's, PXO's, and ASCG's, did not meet the IASR at the time of implementation. Depending on the location, some of the intersections are missing various elements included in Sections 80.23, 80.26 and 80.27, related to curb ramps, depressed curbs and tactile walking surface indicators. There are a total of 97 non-compliant locations (**see Document 8**), all of which will be remediated before 2029 through the Pedestrian Accessibility and Intersection Ramping (PAIR) Program, as stand-alone projects submitted to Infrastructure Services Design & Construction, or, where feasible, coordinated through future roadway resurfacing, integrated projects, or other transportation related projects. Road Safety Action Plan Program funding will continue to be allocated towards the required retrofits until such a time that all locations are compliant to the legislation. The estimated cost in 2024 dollars to achieve compliance is approximately \$5 million.

As such, the City has submitted another proposed Compliance Plan Agreement to the Province regarding the DOPS, with the Provincial Compliance Report in December 2023 (**see Document 9**). Updates will be provided to the Province, as requested, and to Council by way of this annual report.

The City is committed to provide accessible infrastructure for residents and will ensure that future projects with an imminent public safety concern that trigger the application of the IASR will be prioritized and will meet the applicable accessibility standards at the time of implementation. Any new warranted traffic control measures will only be implemented when compliance with the IASR can be achieved. As a result of education through discussions led by the AO and supported by Legal Services, staff are now better equipped to determine when the regulatory standards are triggered and take necessary steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.

Additionally, the AO has been working closely with staff in the Standards and Quality Management Branch in IWSD to work on a revised process to track and document exceptions and non-compliances related to the DOPS or deviations to the Accessibility Design Standards (ADS). Currently, IWSD follows the Business Process for Review and Approval of City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards Directive, which states that any deviations from the ADS are subject to the approval of the Director, Infrastructure Services. However, through AODA compliance reporting and the work of the ARC project, there is a need for delegated authority to be expanded to other departments, as not all deviations fall under the responsibility of IWSD. Discussions regarding changes to the Directive are ongoing. In the meantime, both staff in the AO and the Standards and Quality Management Branch continue to support staff to implement strategies to mitigate potential accessibility impacts where the DOPS or ADS cannot be met.

Provincial Accessibility Legislation Reviews and Development

Provincial Standards Development Committees (SDCs) include representatives from various sectors, including businesses, municipalities, and people with disabilities, who make recommendations on how to improve and develop new standards set out by the AODA. These committees are responsible for developing and/or reviewing accessibility standards in Ontario in five key areas: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces.

Each accessibility standard is required to be reviewed five years after it becomes law to determine its impacts and make improvements, if required. The committees put forward initial recommendations for public feedback to help them draft their final recommendations to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility for consideration. The Province has now received final recommendations from the SDC's for all accessibility standards. The final Committee, regarding the Design of Public Spaces, was formed in 2022 and includes a member of the City's AO. The Committee submitted their draft recommendations to the Province in the spring of 2023. It is anticipated the Province will release these for public feedback in the Spring of 2024, at which time the City will have an opportunity to provide comments.

Additionally, in the summer 2023, the Ministry established another SDC to undertake an evidence-based and focused review of the Customer Service Standard for the second time, since the original draft recommendations on the

Standard were submitted to the Province in 2014. It is expected the Committee will release its draft recommendations later this year.

During discussions with the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), Provincial staff have stated that they will look to make comprehensive legislative changes, based on the recommendations of the various SDCs.

The AO has documented all AODA SDC Recommendations (**see Document 10**), which includes 50 recommendations in the areas of Information and Communication, Employment and Customer Service, to date. As previously noted, while Transit Services is committed to meeting the “spirit and intent” of the AODA, they are federally and independently regulated. As such, the three recommendations on the Transportation Standards are not included in the total number of recommendations that would directly impact City programs, services and facilities. All additional recommendations put forward by both the DOPS and the new Customer Service SDCs will also add to this lengthy list. As such, if approved by the Province, all these recommendations will result in legislative changes which will impact the City’s programs, services, goods and facilities. While the timeline for these changes is unknown, the AO will continue to closely monitor any changes to the AODA and support the City to implement these updates to the legislation.

The AODA and its regulation also require a statutory review every three years after the previous report was tabled to assess its effectiveness. In September 2022, the Province announced that Rich Donovan would be the Fourth Reviewer of the AODA. The AO submitted feedback on the AODA review in April 2023, which was shared with Council in the 2023 COMAP update report. The review focused on three key areas: potential changes to improve the AODA’s success, spreading awareness and building community support, and compliance and enforcement. Mr. Donovan released an interim report on collected feedback to date in March 2023, and the [final report and recommendations](#) regarding the AODA’s reform was submitted to the Province a few months later. It was released publicly by the Province in December 2023.

In this final report, Mr. Donovan describes the AODA as “a failure,” with missed opportunities and stalled progress for implementing or complying with the regulation. He identifies five categories of assessments required, as well as numerous crisis, strategic, and tactical recommendations as to how to improve the outcomes of the AODA and its impacts on persons with disabilities. The Province has not yet provided any information on how, when or if it intends to implement any of these recommendations.

Accessible Canada Act Development

While the City and its facilities, programs, and services are not governed by the Federal Government's ACA, the AO has been closely following the development of its standards, particularly for areas that may go beyond Provincial legislation. Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC), the organization responsible for the development of accessibility standards under the ACA, is guided by seven principles, very similar to the standards of the AODA:

- Employment
- The built environment
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication (other than information and communication technologies)
- The procurement of goods, services and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Ontario was the first province to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ASC in 2022. The goal of this MOU is to optimize each level of government's objectives by reducing or eliminating the duplication of resources and efforts. It is hoped that the harmonization of standards in the future will lead to improved understanding and implementation.

Philip Rizcallah, ASC's Chief Executive Officer, presented at two in-person conferences in 2023 with the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) to provide members with key updates and resources regarding the development of their standards. Through ASC's newsletter, the public is encouraged to provide feedback on all standards released for public review.

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, three new accessibility standards were published by ASC in collaboration with the Canadian Standards Association group. These standards represent, "another step towards contributing to a more inclusive and barrier-free Canada" and include:

- Accessible Dwellings (December 2022)
- Accessible Design for the Built Environment (January 2023)

- Accessible Design for Self-Service Interactive Devices Including Automated Banking Machines (January 2023)

In addition to these standards, 12 others are currently under development. These include:

- Accessibility Requirements for Information and Communication Technology Products and Services (Winter 2024)
- Emergency Measures (public review Winter 2024)
- Plain Language (Spring 2024)
- Employment (Fall 2024)
- Wayfinding and Signage (public review Fall 2024)
- Emergency Egress (exit) (public review November 2024)
- Outdoor Spaces (Spring 2025)
- A Model Standard for the Built Environment - Accessibility for Federally Regulated Entities as defined in the Accessible Canada Act (public review Spring 2025)
- Acoustics (public review Fall 2025)
- Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services (public review Fall 2025)
- Accessible Travel Journey (public review Fall 2025)
- Accessible and Equitable Artificial Intelligence Systems (public review 2026)

Two standards are currently listed as notices of intent, which inform Canadians and standards organizations of what is being worked on to help reduce the risk of creating redundant standards, as well as to make the standard development process more transparent. These include:

- Acoustics in the Built Environment
- Heritage Buildings and Sites-Accessibility for Federally Regulated Entities as defined by the Accessible Canada Act

In the 2022 – 2026 Council Governance Review, under Section 5 - Accessibility Reports, Delegated Authority was provided for the City Clerk to execute and file with the

designated federal authority all accessibility reports and other information as required under the ACA.

The AO will remain engaged with ASC in the development and the implementation of its standards and how they may apply to the City when Provincial legislative updates are made.

The AO will continue to monitor the development and review of legislation at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal level to ensure adherence to the various legislative requirements.

2023 Stakeholder Engagement, Partnerships, Training and Events

City of Ottawa Accessibility Advisory Committee

2023 was a period of transition for the AAC. The 2018-2022 term members continued to serve in their role and advise on a host of projects until new members were officially appointed. The former term members met twice in early 2023, including a special meeting to discuss the 2023 e-scooter pilot. The discussions regarding this meeting, including the introduced motion, are discussed later in this report.

The previous AAC members' term officially came to an end in March 2023, at which time new Committee members were appointed. Recruitment efforts were made to ensure diverse representation from the disability community and consider intersectional identities and perspectives. The Committee is also mandated to include a minimum of two older adult members.

The new term members of the AAC met for the first time in May 2023. Over the remainder of the year, they held 6 additional meetings, including the Duty to Consult meeting, which includes consultation on most planned capital projects for the year. ASL interpretation is provided at meetings, as requested by the Committee Chair. Other supports are actively offered, and available upon request.

This legislated Committee offers advice to City Council and staff on matters related to accessibility for persons with disabilities and older adults in Ottawa. In addition to several areas in which the City has a duty to consult with the AAC, as specified in the AODA, City Council and staff can consult on a variety of projects that benefit from an accessibility lens. Meetings are open to the public and the AO also shares meeting

information with interested stakeholders in advance of meetings via email and on ottawa.ca.

Staff consult with the AAC through in-person meetings, emails, working groups, site plan reviews, Environmental Assessment Studies, and Revitalization Project consultations. Hundreds of projects are reviewed as part of the annual Duty to Consult meeting.

Since the appointment of the new Committee, they have already been consulted on a variety of projects including: the on-demand taxi study, the new Civic Campus of the Ottawa Hospital, the affordable housing capital plan overview, Lansdowne 2.0, Bank Street cycling and transit improvements, and many more.

The Committee also provides input on politically sensitive projects, where accessibility needs to be balanced with other priorities. When needed, members have asked difficult questions of staff to ensure that accessibility for older adults and persons with disabilities was respected, prioritized, and enforced. They have also pushed for greater transparency on accessibility-related decisions so that residents can understand how and why decisions about accessibility are made.

The City is extremely grateful for the dedication and engagement of the AAC. Members can serve on the Committee for two terms, and approximately half of its previous members returned this current term. Committee members are generous with their time and expertise towards making the City more accessible for all.

The City thanks AAC members for their valuable contributions. Due to these efforts, staff and Council continue to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the removal of physical, social, and attitudinal barriers in our municipal planning, design and decision making.

Community Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with persons with disabilities continues to be a primary focus of the AO in the 2020-2024 COMAP. It is expected this this will remain a priority in the next plan as well. Supported by the AO, several other departments have also begun to develop relationships through targeted engagement with persons with disabilities.

In 2023, City staff continued coordinating meetings with representatives from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), the Canadian Council for the Blind (CCB), the Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians (AEBC), the Ottawa Disability Coalition (ODC) and the National Capital Association of the Deaf (NCAD). During these meetings, City staff answered questions and addressed concerns from the community

regarding City infrastructure, programs, and services. These meetings also serve to inform City staff of trends and new developments, which inform priorities in the coming years. Some of the topics discussed at meetings in 2023 included:

- Accessible taxis and updates to the by-law
- Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities
- E-scooters
- Snow clearing

Additionally, the AO worked with staff in Road Safety, Transportation Engineering and the Standards and Quality Management to organize an on-site visit to two Ottawa intersections to obtain feedback on both a “protected” and “reverse-protected” intersection design, as per the requirements in the [Protected Intersection Design Guide](#), published in 2021. Participants from CNIB, AEBC, ODC, the City’s AAC as well as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist from Vision Loss Rehabilitation and the Co-Chair of the Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Committee within the Council on Aging of Ottawa were all in attendance and provided valuable feedback that will help improve and inform accessible design of future city intersections.

The City has a strong relationship with representatives from all these organizations and consultations and meetings will continue in 2024. The AO will also work closely with stakeholders to develop the new multi-year accessibility plan, launching in 2025. Many of these representatives are volunteers with their organizations and are very generous with their time and expertise. Staff would like to thank these community stakeholders for their time and continued efforts to ensuring our City is accessible for all residents.

Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals

Since 2019, the City has taken the lead in coordinating the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP). ONAP is an unincorporated, voluntary “network of accessibility professionals working towards the advancement of universal access for persons with disabilities through the sharing of information, resources, and best practices.” This network is comprised of staff from designated public sector organizations who have a direct role in implementing the AODA. In addition to municipalities, ONAP members typically work for police services, public transportation organizations, hospitals, or educational institutions (registered with the Ministries of Education or Training, Colleges, and Universities). The City plays a leading role in

sharing information and resources within this group and receives a wealth of information and support from its members.

In 2023, the City supported two hybrid ONAP conferences, hosted by the Region of Waterloo and the City of Brampton. Ottawa continued to organize and facilitate sessions, as well as present and share resources. Both meetings were attended by staff from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, who spoke to developments within the Ministry and potential legislative changes.

In November 2023, the City hosted a virtual meeting with ONAP and the Chief Accessibility Officer (CAO) of Canada, Stephanie Cadieux. Ms. Cadieux delivered remarks about her priorities as CAO, new developments and innovations in accessibility and best practice. The City also facilitated a question-and-answer period for members to gain further information on the future of accessibility in Canada.

The City will continue to coordinate this group in 2024, as well as play a lead role in the facilitation of any in-person conferences and virtual meetings.

Canadian Accessibility Network

At the City's AccessAbility Day in 2021, it was announced that the City would be partnering with the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN). This Network, now under the leadership of the Accessibility Institute at Carleton University, is a national collaboration to advance accessibility for persons with disabilities through:

- Research and Innovation
- Education and Training
- Policy
- Employment
- Community Engagement

CAN empowers collaboration and knowledge exchange across sectors, disciplines, and industries, to minimize duplication and build on each other's strengths and achievements toward solutions.

CAN is comprised of a consortium of collaborators, representing various organizations across Canada, including postsecondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, service providers, associations and foundations, public and private industry.

The Advisory Council is comprised of member representatives for each of the formal partners of CAN. The role of these members is to bring a pan-Canadian voice to the Network, as it relates to advancing accessibility for people with disabilities. Members across the country provide advice and recommendations to the Governing Council on behalf of partner organizations with a focus on:

- Ensuring that the Governing Council and the Domain Area Committees benefit from the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and their support teams
- Offering a cross-sectoral, cross-disciplinary, and cross-country sounding board for the Governing Council and Domain Area Committees
- Informing the efforts of the Domain Area Committees by having some of its members serve on one or more of these committees as appropriate and feasible
- Providing a forum for partner organizations to come together to learn from one another, engage in collaborative initiatives and network

In 2023, the City remained a member of the CAN Advisory Committee as well as Chair of the Policy Community of Practice. All members of staff in the AO also participate in all other Communities of Practice. The AO also partnered with CAN in May 2023 to celebrate the City's annual AccessAbility Day, which will be detailed further in this report.

The City continues to leverage this partnership to:

- Grow service excellence through innovation to improve and meet the needs of the community
- Invest in the professional development of the City's current and future leaders by involving them as City representatives
- Attract talent from across Canada by engaging a group of professionals in 12 post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, associations, foundations, and private industry that is healthy, adaptive and diverse
- Advance the Ottawa brand on a national level as an employer of choice
- Focus and advance the safety, accessibility, culture, social and physical well-being for vulnerable residents; and
- Leverage accessible and sustainable designs in the built environment to meet the future growth and service needs of the City

This partnership is an opportunity for the City to inform and advance the work of its AAC, AWG, staff working on accessibility in each department, and COMAP.

In 2023, the CAN Language Guide was released, which was developed with significant contribution by City staff. The CAN Language Guide was created to establish the use of consistent, inclusive language for all CAN communications and to set a standard for CAN that both acknowledges the context of the language and honours the diverse and intersectional identities of all people. Organizations and communities outside the Network are encouraged to use the Guide to promote the use of respectful and inclusive language, and it serves as a resource for City staff in creating information for the public and interacting with residents. The Guide is a living document, and it will be regularly updated to reflect how language is constantly evolving.

International Association of Accessibility Professionals

In 2020, staff from the AO became members of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). The Association's mission is to define, promote, improve, and diversify the accessibility profession globally through certification, education, and networking to enable the creation of accessible products, content, services and environments.

The IAAP is a not-for-profit membership-based organization for individuals and organizations that are focused on accessibility or are in the process of building their accessibility skills and strategies. The objective is to help accessibility professionals develop and to support organizations integrate accessibility into their services, products, and infrastructure. This membership provides the City with access to accessibility experts, learning opportunities and best practices from around the world to enhance accessibility at the City. The City continues to benefit from learning opportunities through the IAAP.

In 2023, three members of the AO successfully completed the required certification to become Certified Professionals in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC). Remaining members of the AO will obtain or maintain their IAAP membership and work towards obtaining this certification as well, which will positively contribute to City projects and supporting City staff.

2023 Accessibility Training

As stated in Section 7 of the IASR, organizations, such as the City, are obligated to provide training on the requirements of the accessibility standards and on the Ontario Human Rights Code. Training must be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons, such as those who participate in developing the organization's policies and must be completed as soon as is practicable.

A revised training plan for all City employees, volunteers and third-party contractors was approved by Council in May 2023, outlining all mandatory and optional accessibility-related training available, as well as intended participants.

Third-party vendors and contractors are also required to ensure they and their staff are trained as part of the General Terms and Conditions of doing business with the City. The online Accessibility Training for External Contractors/Consultants course is comparable in content to the online session completed by City employees.

Throughout 2023, all training facilitated by the AO was offered virtually. While the AO understands the value of in-person training for targeted discussion and information retention, it also should be noted that virtual training offers a higher level of accessibility and allows the AO to include a high number of participants in sessions to meet compliance requirements in a timely manner. The AO will provide in-person and virtual training throughout 2024.

To ensure staff receives training that is "appropriate to their duties," the City offers the following themed AODA related trainings, described in this report:

- AODA: Accessibility for All
- AODA Management Compliance
- Accessible Procurement
- Accessible Documents
- Accessibility Impacts Workshop

AODA: Accessibility for All

As of December 31, 2023, over 87 per cent of City employees have completed the Corporate-wide AODA: Accessibility for All training. The AO understands new staff are trained as soon as practicable, which can be challenging due to time constraints and service delivery expectations, however, compliance is monitored through the City's Human Resources hubs, to ensure training is completed. A total of 3,041 individuals

completed the AODA: Accessibility for All training last year, including part-time and seasonal hires.

The breakdown by language was as follows:

- English: 3,021
- French: 20

Feedback is reviewed regularly to make improvements to the course. Based on previously received feedback, the AO is aware that the length and of the amount of information provided in this course is quite comprehensive and covers all Standards. The AO continues to provide support to staff across the organization on accessibility-related questions and concerns related specifically to their positions and department's business.

The compliance rates included in this report are based on a "snapshot in time" as some staff may have been trained in the interim of when they were hired, and when the report was completed. It is also important to note that it is not practicable to train staff that are not actively in the workplace, including those on long-term disability, maternity, and other leaves of absences. Non-compliance with the regulation is monitored on a quarterly basis, and management, the City's Human Resources hubs, the AWG, and the AO work collaboratively to ensure the City meets the staff training requirements of the IASR.

AODA Management Compliance Training

Managers and supervisors at or above Level 6 attend mandatory AODA Management Compliance training to clarify their specific roles and responsibilities and further meet the requirements of Section 7.2 of the IASR. This training encourages managers to gain accessibility knowledge related to their roles, understand accommodations for staff with disabilities, and ensure they and their staff meet the requirements of the AODA.

As only 50 per cent of managers and supervisors had completed this training at the end of 2022, the AO prioritized facilitating a higher number of both Corporate-wide and intact sessions to increase training compliance. The AO worked closely with members of the AWG to organize intact sessions for staff in specific departments, including tailored sessions for both the General Manager of Transit Services, as well as the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and the Deputy MOH in Ottawa Public Health.

As such, in 2023 the AO facilitated 18 training sessions, including seven intact sessions for staff in specific departments with a total of 658 staff in attendance across all

sessions. This represents a significant increase of 316 staff that were trained in 2023 alone, compared to the previous year.

As a result, since December 31, 2023, over 86 per cent of managers and supervisors at a level 6 or above have now completed this mandatory training, representing an increase of approximately 35 per cent compared to the end of 2022.

Accessible Procurement Training

To integrate and track accessible features in procurement, the AO delivers the Accessible Procurement Workshop to staff whose role includes making regular purchases. This interactive workshop allows participants to explore what accessible features are, what to consider when purchasing items and administering contracts, and how to enhance the accessibility of goods, services, and facilities in general. While no Accessible Procurement workshops were held in 2023, these sessions are available upon request and several departments have already requested intact sessions in 2024. Over 900 employees have attended this workshop to-date. Accessible procurement resources continue to be shared by the AO on a regular basis with staff who are required to complete accessible procurement tracking.

Accessible Document Training

In 2023, 35 staff were trained to produce accessible documents using Microsoft Word. An additional 25 staff were trained to produce accessible Portable Documents (PDF) and 18 were trained on the use of Axes software to verify and remediate PDF documents.

Accessibility Impacts Statement Training

As previously noted, to support staff across the Corporation to write meaningful Accessibility Impacts statements in their Committee/Council reports, the AO developed a new workshop in 2022 intended for report writers, project managers and any staff that work in policy development and the legislative agenda. The workshop reviews the "Three Steps to Developing Accessibility Impact Statements" document and offers participants the opportunity to reflect on department-specific reports and associated accessibility considerations.

In 2023, three sessions were facilitated with staff across the organization and one intact session for staff in Community and Social Services (CSS). All sessions were full at capacity, with 43 staff trained, and participants provided positive feedback on the

content. They also indicated they had a better understand and ability to produce accurate and meaningful statements on future reports.

Accessibility Training for Volunteers

All City volunteers must complete AODA training as part of their onboarding. In 2023, 163 new volunteers completed this training which remains comparable to those trained in 2022.

Procurement

The Corporation continues to ensure that City purchases include accessible design, criteria and features as prescribed by section 5 of the IASR. The City ensures that accessibility design, features and criteria are included where possible in procurement, regardless of dollar value.

In 2022, Supply Services awarded 1,100 new contracts (including optional extensions) valued above \$25 thousand under delegated authority totaling approximately \$688 million. In terms of dollar value, accessibility requirements were included in 99 per cent of all new procurements after adjusting for those where it is not applicable. It should be noted that there is a lag in the City's ability to provide this information that does not align with the timing of this report, therefore this information will always be reported one year behind.

Most departments track accessible procurement under \$15 thousand using the Monthly Procurement Tracking form. Departments that track by exemption are encouraged to send reminders to staff who make purchases, to ensure accessibility is considered for all practicable purchases. Most departments that track by exemption primarily purchase items found on the non-practicable list. By including accessible design, features and criteria in all City purchases, the City ensures items, information and public facilities are accessible to clients with disabilities. The AO continues to provide training and resources to staff to support them in making accessible purchases.

AccessAbility Day Event

In 2023, the City celebrated its 20th AccessAbility Day as part of National AccessAbility Week (NAAW). The virtual Canada-wide event took place on May 31, in collaboration with the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN) and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada - National Capital Region (IPAC-NCR).

The event began with Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, who officially proclaimed May 31, 2023, as AccessAbility Day in Ottawa. During his remarks, he emphasized the importance of collaboration between stakeholders and all levels of government, a theme echoed throughout the event.

The keynote speaker was Stephanie Cadieux, Canada's first Chief Accessibility Officer. For the panel discussion, Ms. Cadieux was joined by Meenu Sikand, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Province of Ontario's Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, and Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure, Program Manager of Accessibility from the City. Each speaker offered unique and valuable perspectives on the developments in accessibility policies and legislation at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels.

In keeping with the 2023 NAAW theme, the discussion offered insights into how accessibility frameworks can begin moving "from possibilities to practice." The panelists highlighted the interconnected role of all levels of government in influencing a cultural transformation across the board. The City's partnership with CAN and IPAC-NCR contributed positively to the event's overall success with well over 300 people in attendance including public servants at the federal, provincial and municipal levels from across Canada, and locally including members of City of Ottawa Council, Senior Leadership, the AAC, staff, and community members.

Treat Accessibly Halloween Event

On October 28, 2023, the City hosted its annual Trick or Treat with the Mayor event in person at City Hall. Again, this year the City partnered with "Treat Accessibly," a movement that aims to make Halloween accessible and inclusive for everyone, as well as increased awareness of accessibility during the holiday by distributing treats at the end of one's driveway.

In this spirit, the Office of Protocol continued with initiatives to make the event more accessible to persons with disabilities, including distributing non-edible treats, ensuring queues and entrances were wheelchair accessible, and reducing sound levels and lighting effects. Promotion of this initiative was done through social media and other external communications. Additionally, "Treat Accessibly" lawn signs were on display at the event, and lawn flags were distributed to event attendees to bring home and participate in the accessibility initiative on Halloween night.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities Event

On Thursday, November 30, 2023, the City held its annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) event to discuss the advancements made in accessibility and the ongoing efforts within the organization to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities across the city.

The United Nations' IDPD, celebrated annually on December 3, is a Global Day of Recognition that aims to promote the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. It serves as a day to promote the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities, and celebrates their achievements within our city, and around the world.

Among the notable attendees and speakers at this event, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe emphasized the significance of the day and proclaimed December 3, 2023, as International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Ottawa. Councillor Liaison to the AAC, Marty Carr, highlighted some of the notable projects the City's AAC has consulted on, including the on-demand transit demonstration pilot project and the affordable housing capital plan overview. Both the Chair and Vice Chair of the AAC, Vania Karam and Dr. Holl Ellingwood, spoke to the Committee's dedication and commitment to furthering accessibility across the City.

The keynote speaker for this event was Dr. Jay Dolmage, Professor and Chair of the English department at the University of Waterloo, renowned author, and the founding editor of the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*. He presented on "Institutional Ableism and its Alternatives" and included thoughtful remarks regarding the concept of universal design. Over 160 people attended this event, and the AO received various positive remarks regarding Dr. Dolmage's presentation, stating he was, "one of the best speakers yet". Several participants also shared they appreciated his candidness regarding ableist attitudes, especially within the context of educational institutions.

Together, the speakers offered valuable insights on this year's theme, "United in action to rescue and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for, with and by persons with disabilities," and emphasized the City's unwavering commitment towards sustainability and accessibility within and beyond the scope of the AODA.

2023 Departmental Accessibility Initiative Achievements

Highlights of various accessibility initiatives and actions undertaken across City departments and service areas throughout 2023 are summarized below. These

initiatives have prevented and removed barriers to accessibility in City services, programs, policies, purchases and projects.

Due to the high volume, this report does not include all the accessibility initiatives undertaken by the City in 2023. However, a full listing of the 2023 accessibility initiative outcomes is available in **Document 2**.

2023 Information and Communications Initiatives

The AO releases a monthly e-newsletter called, “Accessibility Spotlight.” The newsletter includes accessibility articles related to City services, events, programs, initiatives from all departments across the City, and other related topics to keep residents and subscribers informed.

In 2023, the AO sent out 15 editions of the newsletter featuring a total of 39 articles, which were distributed in both English and French. In December 2023, the English edition was sent to 4965 subscribers (increase of 332 since 2022) and the French edition was sent to 251 subscribers (increase of 36 since 2022). The AO is committed to sharing updates and information with public and will continue to work to find ways to increase the newsletter’s subscribers. Some of the articles included in 2023 include:

- Accessibility Supports for Vacant Unit Tax Declaration
- OC Transpo - Making it easier for people with guide dogs to travel on public transit
- Francophone Month and French Accessibility Supports
- City of Ottawa’s Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Recent updates to accessibility on Ottawa’s patios
- The City of Ottawa celebrates its 20th Annual AccessAbility Day
- Accessible Taxi Service Pilot Project
- Building Paths of Travel for Everyone
- United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Tactile Delineator Pilot Project

Three special editions were published to support information sharing with the public related to important events and emergency situations. These included:

- Accessibility Resources for residents affected by the ice storm
- AccessAbility Day
- Special Air Quality Statement is in effect due to wildfire smoke

As the need for supports before, during, and after emergency situations become more pronounced, OPH's Emergency Management Team continues to engage and collaborate with internal and external partners with a focus on emergency preparedness as it relates to persons living with disabilities. OPH is creating external emergency management web pages using a population health approach, including persons with disabilities. The OEM also updated information and resources for persons with disabilities online in 2023.

The AO continues to support departments that want to include sign language interpretation for virtual or in-person events and has also developed a Guide to Providing Sign Language Interpretation, which includes step-by-step instructions and considerations for its inclusion in all City meetings, consultations, celebrations, or community events. These efforts contribute to reducing communication barriers for the Deaf community and ensuring all residents in the City have access to essential information.

Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) has worked throughout the year to ensure the accessibility of their digital content. The Digital Services Coordinator, and the Digital Services Officer monitor web pages and links daily for compliance. Additionally, the department continues to have web contacts within Operational Service Areas that are responsible for ensuring Accessibility compliance.

The Ottawa Paramedic Service has two content contributors that work with Digital Services to update First aid and CPR course information on ottawa.ca. All content posted by the Public Education team is accessible. Ottawa Fire Service (OFS) launched a comprehensive contact OFS page which compiles contact information that was previously distributed throughout the site and displays this information in an accessible way.

Community and Social Services (CSS) formalized the roles of two Digital Services Coordinators within their Business Support Services unit in 2023. The Digital Services team aims for continuous improvements to ottawa.ca, and other departmental digital assets.

Recreation, Culture, and Facility Services (RCFS) have undergone updates related to accessibility for their online services. All programming is now available for viewing on register.ottawa.ca, which is fully compliant with web accessibility standards. Programs are searchable by age category, facility, season, activity name and by keywords. The register.ottawa.ca site can be accessed via any computer or mobile device, including at OPL branches. Guides were published throughout 2023 for Inclusive Recreation offerings.

As part of OPH's 2024-2027 Departmental Strategic Plan, work was completed to develop a Partner Engagement Strategy that focuses on increasing the diversity of engaged partners. This work will include a review of how equity-deserving groups, including people with disabilities, are represented in formal and informal engagement work. As an example, OPH's Immunization Unit continuously engages with the public and/or partners. The team receives, reviews, and acts on feedback related to disability accommodations received through its various channels including its immunization service locations and the feedback form on the OPH website.

OPH's Immunization Unit also collaborates with its partners to ensure that individual clinic locations are accessible to all. The Unit also meets other disability-related accommodations upon request.

2023 Employment Initiatives

All staff, including new hires, continue to complete the Count ME In! questionnaire, from the Workplace, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging unit and the data is assessed accordingly. As of December 31, 2023, 85 per cent of continuous staff have completed the Count Me In! questionnaire, providing a clearer picture of the workforce at the City. Employees who identify as persons with disabilities indicated the highest increase in representation from all equity-deserving groups listed in the questionnaire from 18 per cent in December 2022 to 22 per cent in December 2023. As of December 2023, 9.8 per cent of management have identified as persons with disabilities.

Work continued last year on the LEAD IT (Leverage Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion Targets) Program. Staff in Community and Social Services (CSS) and the former Innovative Client Services Departments worked in partnership to bring LEAD IT to implementation through the creation of key guidelines, training, tools, and resources designed to ensure the City incorporates a comprehensive approach to an equitable staffing process.

In 2023, the phased implementation/pilot of LEAD IT continued with two participating departments, CSS and PRED. Currently, 47 staff have completed the LEAD IT: Introduction to Strategic Hiring training, 76 staff have completed the LEAD IT: Bias Awareness for Strategic Hiring training, 47 staff have completed the LEAD IT for Hiring Managers training and 23 staff have completed the LEAD IT for Hiring Panels training.

An evaluation of the pilot was conducted, and work remains underway to implement improvements based on results. The courses were soft launched in January 2023 and are available to all City employees via the Learn platform. As a next step, the project team is planning for corporate wide implementation in 2024, which will include a broader phased implementation approach.

In 2023, the City piloted a Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging training for leaders on the Harvard Manage Mentor platform. Topics covered included:

- What Diversity Is – and Why It Matters
- Understand and Counter Bias
- Lead Inclusively
- Become a Diversity Advocate
- Advance your Organization's Diversity Efforts

The training was shared with all supervisors and managers. Participants reviewed up-to-date materials on equality, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB), engaged in self-reflection on their role in supporting EDIB work, and created an action plan to better address EDIB in the workplace. As part of the LEAD IT strategic hiring process, hiring managers and interview panelists participating in LEAD IT competitions completed additional training related to equity in the hiring practice as well as a targeted Bias Awareness eLearning module.

Bias Awareness Training for Employees and for Leaders continues to be available for in-person training sessions. These courses aim to help participants strengthen their roles and clarify their responsibilities as leaders and members of hiring teams in reducing unconscious biases within the organization and their communities and emphasize the importance of self-checking inherent beliefs that create systemic barriers for some employees in our workforce, including those with disabilities. In 2023, the Learning Centre ran 47 sessions of Bias Awareness Training for Employees, and 24 sessions of Bias Awareness for Leaders. The City also launched an e-learning

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging course, offered through the self-directed Harvard ManageMentor offerings which was completed by 225 employees.

The continued impact on mental health on City employees, not only in the context of emerging from the pandemic, but also due to the numerous emergencies that took place in 2023, is recognized by management and staff across the corporation. As such, a SharePoint site for People Leaders was launched featuring self-assessment and check-in tools, and conflict management resources. A SharePoint site dedicated to employee wellness, featuring articles and resources related to mental health was updated throughout the year to ensure the content remained relevant. Communications from the Senior Leadership Team continued to encourage staff to utilize available resources and supports, including the Employee and Family Assistance Program and LifeSpeak, a self-directed digital wellness platform. LifeSpeak content was refreshed to include new awareness modules on a variety of topics.

The City also partnered with vendors to ensure staff and management had access to a variety of events and training materials focused on mental health and well-being. Departments across the City have been working with HR Wellness Consultants to establish and expand Peer Support Programs in alignment with current best practices. Peer Support safeguards mental health and well-being through confidential, non-judgmental, and supportive conversations.

The City's Affinity Groups continued to be active in 2023, which included the Employees with Disabilities Affinity Group. The City currently has 11 active Affinity groups that support various lived experiences and social identities and consider intersectionality in their membership.

Outreach efforts have built connections with the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN), where a member of the Workplace Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging team represents the City at regular meetings.

In November 2023, representatives from CNIB joined the City's AWG meeting to present their Come to Work program, which includes career support and focuses on connecting job seekers who are blind or low vision with employers. The AO and HR are exploring partnership opportunities.

The AO continued to share information with employees and management through internal communications in 2023. This included updates and resources available to employees returning to the office and the City's continued commitment to its legislative responsibilities. In 2023, the AO published 14 articles in the internal In the Loop

employee newsletter and 9 articles in Management Bulletins. These included, but were not limited to:

- Individual Workplace Emergency Response Information (IWERI) Reminders
- AODA Management Compliance Training
- Duty to Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee
- COMAP Highlights and Updates
- Accessible Municipal Virtual Events
- Guide to Providing Sign Language Interpretation

The Workplace Accommodation Policy and Procedure was updated in August 2023, to ensure they reflect and support the needs of the current and future workforce. The duty to accommodate employees in the workplace legally requires employers, under the AODA and Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), to proactively eliminate workplace standards, practices, policies, requirements, procedures or rules that have or may have a discriminatory impact on an individual or group of individuals as required under human rights law. The Workplace Accommodation Policy is the framework the City uses to ensure an inclusive, barrier-free work environment that allows a diversity of individuals to contribute as full members of their work teams.

In 2023, the Ottawa Paramedic Service participated in and hosted various recruitment events and promoted the Service as an inclusive employer. Some of these included Expo Prehospitalier 2023, and career fairs at Algonquin College and La Cité, among others. Additionally in 2023, the Paramedic Service produced two new, bilingual recruitment videos for paramedics and Ambulance Communications Officers which were promoted widely across social media platforms and ottawa.ca.

Human Resources represented the City or supported the participation of departments at 19 outreach events and career fairs and initiatives in 2023. These events are an opportunity to showcase the City as an employer of choice and to highlight specific opportunities, such as summer student and co-op student employment. HR also attended other events targeting youth and professionals from diverse backgrounds, including a Youth Career Event organized by staff in Community and Social Services, career fairs hosted by Worldskills and the YMCA, and Welcoming Ottawa Week with a series of events targeting newcomers.

Staff in Public Works (PW) has developed and implemented the following departmental Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training:

- EDI Foundations - 385 staff completed
- Exploring Microaggressions in the Workplace - 62 Supervisors and Managers completed

Additionally:

- Relevant hiring Supervisors and Managers have completed Inclusive Hiring training
- EDI Learning bites have been undertaken at three quarterly Extended Department Leadership Team meetings with Supervisors and Managers
- A learning event was held to mark the International Day of Tolerance in November

Finally, the City's e-learning platforms, Learn (for networked staff) and oLearn (for non-networked staff, contractors, and community partners) include an accessible version and accessible transcript for all HR-developed courses. Transcripts are available upon request for older non-compliant courses.

2023 Transportation Initiatives

In 2019, Council directed staff to review the feasibility of a study of the on-demand accessible taxicab service and subsequently approved the retention of a consultant to undertake the study. On June 28, 2023, the On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Service Study and Minor Amendments to Vehicle-for-Hire By-law related to Taxicabs report was submitted to Council. This report presents the consultant's findings and provides staff's recommendations based on those findings and associated stakeholder consultations.

The recommendations are based on both consultations with key stakeholders undertaken by the consultant and City staff. Comments received from stakeholders were considered and incorporated into the recommendations accordingly. The consultant discussed their research and identified options with the City's AAC. The Committee was provided an overview of the consultant's findings, including information on the programs of other municipalities, and had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. The details of the consultant's process and the Committee's response are outlined further in the report submitted to Council.

Staff followed-up with the Committee to discuss the consultant's recommendations, which pointed to several deficiencies of the service. The Committee supported the proposed incentives to recognize the higher costs of accessible vehicles and the efforts of accessible taxicab drivers and supported the centralized dispatch model.

The proposals put forward in the report considered the Committee's input on the consultant's recommendations.

In addition to the AAC, the consultant also discussed his research and identified options with the taxi union, taxi brokers and accessibility advocates, including accessible taxi plate holders and on-demand taxi users that had previously corresponded with City elected officials and staff. These stakeholders were provided an overview of the consultant's findings, including information on the programs provided by other municipalities, and had the opportunity to provide feedback. Comments received from the respondents are detailed in the consultant's report, along with their overall recommendations. Staff subsequently discussed the consultant's recommendations with the identified stakeholders, who were supportive.

The recommendations included a centralized dispatch dedicated to on-demand accessible taxicabs and several financial incentives to accessible taxicab plate holder licensee and drivers that recognize the higher costs of operating an accessible taxicab. A three-year pilot was approved to provide an opportunity for evaluation of the efficacy of the proposed initiatives.

Some of the financial incentives outlined in the report included \$5,000 per year for three years for each accessible taxicab. These funds are for the investment in wheelchair accessible vehicles. Up to \$2,000 per year will be available for each accessible taxicab driver for accepting all on-demand wheelchair accessible trip requests and maintaining the vehicles operation and availability, as well as the implementation of a \$15 per trip contribution payable to the accessible taxicab driver for each completed on-demand wheelchair accessible fare. To allow accessible taxicabs to stay in service longer, the requirement that accessible taxicab vehicles must be less than five model years of age upon entry to the fleet will be repealed. There will also be an increase from the current ten-year vehicle age limit to twelve model years for taxicab vehicles that are fully wheelchair accessible, fully electric or hybrid.

If the recommendations are approved by Council, funds to cover the associated expenditures would come from the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund derived from the voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge to Private Transportation Companies collected by the City. Based on the number of existing accessible plate holder licenses, licensed

taxicab drivers operating those vehicles as well as an estimated number of on-demand accessible fares, the proposed incentive programs would represent in the range of \$1.5 million annually. The pilot project is designed to increase on-demand wheelchair accessible service and will apply to all wheelchair accessible taxicabs and licensed accessible taxicab drivers, and to all wheelchair accessible fares, subject to eligibility criteria.

By-law and Regulatory Services continued to provide financial support to Transit Services (TS) to provide accessible transportation improvements. This included \$115,624 for taxi coupons, \$71,994 for discounted taxi coupons and \$150,000 for rural transportation funding.

TS provided \$856,000 in funding to community and social services agencies in 2023 for the delivery of transportation services to rural older adults and persons with disabilities. \$200,000 of the overall funding envelope was provided by the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund, which is generated through an accessibility surcharge paid by ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft. It was noted that the demand for the agencies' services increased in 2023. They provided 8,650 one-way trips in 2023, an increase of about 29 per cent compared to 2022 and were able to meet about 92 per cent of all trip requests.

TS completed the construction and rehabilitation of eight on-street bus stops in 2023. This included the addition of two upgraded bus shelter pads, four accessible bus stop landing pads and four new accessible exterior benches. In addition to these improvements, OC Transpo also:

- Installed three new accessible exterior benches at stop 2474 at the entrance to Westgate Shopping Centre, stop 6050 at Kanata and Huntsville, and stop 8724 at St-Laurent and Hemlock.
- Lowered the height of the Route Destination boxes on all newly installed bus flags to ensure the information is more accessible to customers of smaller stature and those using mobility devices.

In alignment with the AODA's requirement to provide Notice of Temporary Service disruption, TS issued roughly 600 construction notices and bulletins to over 9,000 subscribers in 2023, providing information on impacts due to Stage 2 O-Train construction. Each of these publications included a statement underlining the critical importance of maintaining accessibility during construction and contact information for those who require disability-related accommodation.

Multiple Stage 2 information presentations were made to community stakeholders and groups, each of which included information on pedestrian connectivity, parking, station and vehicle accessibility features, and construction impacts.

In 2023, TS completed the installation of pedestrian connections, providing access to Stage 2 stations consistent with the City's Accessibility Design Standards. These included:

- Algonquin Station pedestrian bridge over Woodroffe Avenue
- Bayview Station pedestrian bridge
- Place d'Orléans and Trim Stations pedestrian bridges over Highway 174
- Queensview Station pedestrian bridge over Highway 417
- Rideau River Bridge at Carleton Station
- Roosevelt Avenue temporary pedestrian bridge
- Woodroffe High School pedestrian bridge, which is now open to the public

2023 Built Environment (Design of Public Spaces) Initiatives

In 2022, the City began work on a project that clarifies the requirements of the AODA, the DOPS, the ADS and the general inclusion of accessibility features in current construction programs. The goal of this project, called Accessibility Requirements in Construction (ARC), was to provide City staff with all mandatory accessibility requirements to incorporate into current City construction programs, as well as how to enhance accessibility and accessible features to the greatest extent possible in development, redevelopment, and maintenance construction activities.

Collaboration and relationship building remained a key component of ARC and have been key factors in the project's ongoing success. The ARC project team consisted of staff from across all applicable departments that manage construction programs, including Infrastructure and Water Services, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development, Public Works, Recreation, Culture and Facility Services and Transit Services. Additionally, staff in Legal Services contributed to its success by providing clarified definitions to support staff in discerning the difference between when a project is considered a redevelopment activity versus a maintenance activity, as well as the legislative application and accessibility requirements under each.

Through several cross-departmental meetings, coordinated and led by staff in the AO, additional relationships were established to help program management teams across all

applicable departments learn about these shared challenges, as well as how to better collaborate and share their respective knowledge and expertise to address challenges. Additionally, through this collaborative project, teams across the City were made aware of upcoming projects and ways to improve project management efficiencies through the bundling of construction programs and funding opportunities.

Through the ARC project, staff gained a better understanding of the accessibility requirements in the City's various construction programs to ensure legislated requirements and standards were met to the highest degree. This project demonstrated the City's commitment to accessibility by ensuring infrastructure is accessible to residents and visitors, which will ensure that future projects with an imminent public safety concern that triggers the application of the AODA will be prioritized and will meet the applicable accessibility standards at the time of implementation.

As a result of education through discussions led by the AO and supported by Legal Services, staff across the organization are now better equipped to determine when the regulatory standards are triggered and take necessary steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.

In order to support businesses impacted by COVID-19, the City developed its Patio Innovation Program in 2020 to encourage new or expanding restaurant patios and café seating into the City's right of way. As a result, this allowed restaurants to keep serving customers during Provincial closures, which provided the opportunity to generate revenue and keep some staff employed. Due to its success, this program has continued, and Council also approved changes to the Right of Way Patio By-law in 2023. While existing accessibility measures were kept in place, such as ensuring a 2-meter clear pedestrian path of travel, winter maintenance provisions were added to ensure owners maintain their spaces free of snow and ice.

As part of this report, Council also approved the Urban Design Guidelines for Commercial Patios, a resource that will help review commercial patio proposals on both private property and in the right of way. The guidelines were developed with an accessibility lens and provide design details on subjects such as furniture, partitions and vegetation.

Raising awareness and promoting education on accessibility legislation and emerging practices remains a priority for the City. In 2023, the City partnered with the National Capital Heavy Construction Association and the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies to offer the annual Education Series. There were four sessions of the annual Education Series between January 26 and March 8, addressing issues of mutual

interest to the City and industry partners, including accessibility. On March 8, City staff presented on new standards for accessibility features at protected intersections including delineation between cycle tracks and sidewalks as well as directional Tactile Walking Surface Indicators.

In addition, the AO collaborated with staff in Infrastructure and Water Services to organize a webinar for City staff about accessibility in engineering design. The webinar featured presentations from Alan Perks, a senior Civil Engineer and Engineer-in-Residence at the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Ottawa, as well as Tracy MacDonald, Senior Bridge Engineer at the New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. The presentations focused on the inclusion of universal design and provided staff with an understanding of accessibility and how it's embedded into everyone's role. Over 50 staff were in attendance and provided positive feedback regarding the information presented, as well as the resources both speakers provided post-event.

In April 2023, staff in the Standards and Quality Management branch presented sidewalk standards to the Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Committee of the Council of Aging, with a focus on walkability and accessibility. During the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) annual conference in September in Ottawa, staff in both the Standards and Quality Management branch Transportation Planning presented at a workshop titled "Universal Accessibility and Active Transportation." The focus was on accessibility considerations during design of active transportation facilities, as well as key accessibility features and City requirements. Staff in the Standards and Quality Management branch also facilitated a panel discussion titled "First-Person Lessons on Accessibility in Transportation." Discussion with panelists from Accessibility Simplified, SignAbleVision Inc. and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind will all help inform the City's future revisions to design guidelines and accessibility standards.

Variances to the City's ADS or AODA non-compliances are subject to a deviation process and documented as a requirement of the AODA (**Recommendation 5**). The City's deviation process for infrastructure projects is overseen by the Standards and Quality Management branch, situated within the Infrastructure and Water Services Department (IWSD). The AO is also included in this process and reviews projects to assist in increasing awareness of the legislation and mitigating possible barriers created by these deviations where possible. Other departments participate in the IWSD process or follow a similar deviation process. Consultation with the AAC may occur for these projects. There were three non-compliances to the ADS recorded in 2023.

These included:

- Ray Friel Ramp Slope: The ramp from the facility's new changerooms to the pool deck meets the Ontario Building Code requirements regarding ramp slope but does not meet these same requirements in the City's ADS, which go beyond minimum legislative requirements. The ramp cannot meet the ADS's slope requirements due to space constraints on the pool deck.
- Kodiak Street Ramp: Roads Services implemented curb depressions and Tactile Walking Surface Indicators at the multi-use pathway on Kodiak Street. While the ramp slope currently does not meet the requirements in the ADS, this will be fixed in 2024.
- The temporary hotline phone at 1500 St. Laurent Blvd.: The phone in place in the lobby of the OC Transpo Facility at 1500 St. Laurent Blvd. is a temporary solution for customers who visit this building. While this facility is not identified as a public customer service location for OC Transpo customers, residents still enter and wish to speak to a customer service agent. As such, to provide residents with the convenience to still address the reason for their visit, staff have installed a Cisco phone in the lobby which connects them to an OC Transpo customer service agent. While this phone is a City standard-issued phone used currently in all City facilities, it is not consistent with the principles of Universal Design as identified in the ADS. Staff will continue to search for a phone that is compatible with the City's phone system and that meets the ADS requirements.

The Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development (PRED) Department made progress towards the update of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in 2023, and all policies and active transportation projects were approved by Council. This included policies to support accessibility in the built environment, and new "standalone" active transportation projects that will involve construction and reconstruction of sidewalks, pathways, cycling facilities and intersections to meet current accessibility standards.

The Origin-Destination (OD) Travel Survey, a key supporting element of the TMP, was successfully completed in the Fall of 2022, and included a question related to disability. The data collected from the OD Survey will be shared in Q1 2024 and used to develop the TMP Capital Infrastructure Plan, expected to be completed in 2025. Work is also underway to update the City's Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS) guidelines and right-of-way requirements for selected arterial roads. The AO has participated in meetings and reviews for these guidelines and has provided feedback.

Finally, the TMP team is exploring new tools to better reach equity-deserving groups as development of the TMP Capital Infrastructure Plan moves forward.

As previously reported to Council, the Protective Intersection Design Guidelines were completed in 2021, and included input from the AO, City's AAC, and community stakeholders. Staff in IWSD completed the work with the development of the Sidewalk and Cycle Track Delineation Design Elements project, which was presented and approved by Council in early 2023. This project's aim was to provide a clearer distinction between sidewalks and bike lanes, which includes the installation of half-height curbs to separate pedestrian and cycling facilities, as well including "attention" Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI) where pedestrians cross cycle tracks, as well as "guidance" TWSI's to act as wayfinding cues to assist pedestrians in finding crossings. This work resulted in the approval of fifteen new standard drawings related to the design of cycling facilities, protected intersections, and half-height curbs to delineate between cycle tracks and adjacent sidewalks. In 2024, Transportation Engineering Services will start work on a "Roundabout for Complete Streets" design guideline, which will include a task to determine the recommended accessibility treatments at roundabouts.

Some examples where this newly developed standard has been applied to City projects in 2023 includes:

- The Bank Street bridge reconstruction project, which incorporated new bike lanes delineated with the sidewalk by these new half-height curbs.
- The intersection at Borrisokane Rd. and Strandherd Dr. in Barrhaven, which featured new guidance TWSIs.

The Council-approved 2023 budget for the Accessibility Barrier Removal Program was \$2.59 million, which is currently managed by IWSD. This budget is used to enhance accessibility features at City facilities, as identified and prioritized through accessibility audits. Funding is also used to conduct accessibility audits, in compliance with the ADS, and to address the removal of barriers as requested by client groups and the general public. Work completed under this program includes the installation of ramps, elevators, power door operators, signage, handrails in arena stands, exterior and interior paths of travel, parking lots, and washroom/changeroom/kitchen remediation work.

Staff made significant progress last year on the remaining accessible elements in recreational facilities. A total of 21 accessibility audits for City facilities were completed. Some of the facilities included in this audit were the Nepean Creative Arts Centre (North

and South), the Carlington Community Centre, the Tony Graham Recreation Complex (formerly the Kanata Recreation Complex), and the Overbrook Community Centre.

In 2022, PW staff consulted the public as part of their Winter Maintenance Quality Standards Review. Given the positive changes and increased accessibility considerations previously made, the focus in 2023 was on the ongoing awareness campaigns, created for front line staff and supported by resources in the AO, to increase awareness and education on accessibility issues in snow-removal operations. Additionally, PW staff work in collaboration with staff in TS to identify “hot spot” bus stops where accessibility is an issue because of winter maintenance. This work to increase accessibility awareness through staff training is ongoing.

In 2023, the Integrated Street Furniture (ISF) Program resumed installing new accessible benches and accessible three-stream waste receptacles. This new furniture incorporates universal design and is accessible to everyone. Furniture is placed to ensure adequate clearances for mobility devices and snow removal vehicles. The bases are also cane detectable, and selected to ensure colour contrast with the surfaces on which it is placed. All benches include back support, and seat depth and height meet the requirements in the ADS. All benches include a third arm located one seat-width from an arm at the end of the bench to assist people with disabilities and older adults who require additional support in sitting or getting back up. Waste receptacles have side openings at accessible heights and also use colour, images and text to explain the purpose of each compartment.

Based on accessibility concerns and feedback previously provided by the AAC regarding the design and placement of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers, the AO continued to work closely with staff in PRED throughout 2023 on the development of this environmental initiative. This included providing recommendations for the installation of accessibility features at four EV charging spaces in the parking lot of a City facility, including curb cuts and access aisles. The AO also remains engaged with staff on the updates to the Corporate EV Charging Policy, as well as the City’s Personal EV Strategy, both expected to be presented to Committee and Council in the Fall of 2024.

Additionally, the AO remains engaged with several other members of ONAP to share best practices and resources in the development of their municipal EV policies and strategies in the absence of any Federal or Provincial accessibility-related legislation regarding the design, placement and accessibility features of EV chargers.

The City abides by clause 80.44 of the IASR regarding procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures in

dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. In City facilities, this is overseen by RCFS. In parks and outdoor spaces, accessible elements are maintained by PW.

The Parks Maintenance team conducts maintenance with an accessible lens to ensure debris and obstructions are clear from accessible routes to the City's parks and playgrounds. This is done in a variety of ways with regular preventative maintenance on the pathways such as sweeping, trimming of tree branches, and ensuring shrubs do not interfere with a path of travel. Asphalt and stone dust pathways are maintained to prevent barriers. Parking lots are maintained in the same manner to ensure spaces are accessible. Potholes and cracks are identified during park inspections and, if determined a hazard, they are repaired as soon as possible. When staff conduct park inspections, they look for uneven surfaces caused by large cracks, gaps, holes, and wash outs due to flooding or heavy rain. The Parks team also looks for uneven slabs, curbs, ramps or bridges with uneven cladding that may require repair.

Additionally, a temporary Emergency Planning and Response unit was established in PW in 2023, which included an area manager and is dedicated to planning operations and providing response support where required. PW is continuing to identify additional leaders to support future operations and will be expanding emergency awareness training through 2024. The 2023 summer tornadoes and windstorm allowed for the exercising and early establishment of PW's structured response with, and independent of, OEM's involvement. Progress included the completion of PW's operational debriefs for freshet and recent severe wind events. Incident response plans are being updated regarding freshet and are currently being developed for severe wind events. The terms of reference are being finalized to establish PW as the lead on annual freshet operations up until escalation of OEM is required, and the 2024 freshet response planning is already underway.

Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program

The AO continued to work with staff in 2023 concerning the continued electric kick scooter (e-scooter) pilot program.

Staff presented an update on the 2022 pilot to the AAC in February 2023. Improving safety and accessibility was a priority in 2022 season, and all improvements continued in 2023. As such, the accessibility requirements and technological features and restrictions were maintained as part of the procurement selection process.

Due to the continued commitment to accessibility and these maintained procurement selection requirements, the AAC rescinded its 2022 motion (AAC 2022 1/20), which did not support the continuation of another e-scooter pilot and proposed a new motion (**see Document 11**) in support of the continuation of the pilot in a manner that ensures safety and accessibility for people with disabilities, which was carried three to two. The motion emphasized the importance of various accessibility considerations and restrictions that the 2023 e-scooter pilot should:

- Only allow the use of shared e-scooters by qualified providers;
- Require qualified providers to use accessibility barrier-preventing technologies on their shared e-scooters; and
- Dedicate adequate resources to monitoring and enforcing the rules of the pilot, including a fifteen-minute response window or complaints, and adequate deterrents and consequences for misuse of e-scooters.

The motion also encouraged City Council to work with the Province of Ontario to develop rules, requirements, and regulations for private consumer e-scooters to contain these same barrier-preventing technologies.

Staff remained committed to addressing safety and accessibility issues throughout the 2023 season, which ran from May 15 to November 15, and saw continued improvements to reduce barriers to persons with disabilities. Originally introduced in the 2022 season, the streamlined complaints process with 311 to By-law continued, with increased resources to address issues quicker. Most issues reported were related to mis-parking and sidewalk riding, and the majority were addressed in under 30 minutes.

The fully restrictive parking model, which was also introduced in 2022 and continued this past season, identified approximately 600 in-app parking locations users could park their e-scooters after their rides. There was also an increase of 13 to 22 physically signed e-scooter parking areas along key e-scooter corridors. Additionally, continuous sound emissions when an e-scooter is in use was another mitigation measure introduced in 2022. Although a consensus was not reached with respect to the most appropriate sound, stakeholders provided feedback that will be considered for future recommendations. Providers have expressed a commitment to continuing to test and refine this innovation.

To deter sidewalk riding, the same detection technologies introduced in 2022 were also used to safely bring e-scooters to a stop by disengaging the throttle on sidewalks. The

e-scooters alert the rider they have entered a restrictive area by speaking or beeping to the rider.

Finally, while the City has no jurisdiction over the private sales of e-scooters, staff were proactive by providing slips, which included the rules of the road for e-scooter users, to retailers who sell or rent e-scooters to hand out as part of the sellers/renters packages.

Staff presented these updates to the AAC in February 2024 and members continued to express their concerns regarding the safety of persons with disabilities and e-scooter users. The AO will continue to work with both staff, stakeholders and AAC members to ensure that the improvements introduced previously will remain in the 2024 season. Additionally, the AO will remain engaged in discussions regarding the future of the program as 2024 is the fifth and final year of the Provincial pilot.

2023 Customer Service Initiatives

To reinforce Council's priority of a city that "is more liveable for all," staff in CSS manage various programs that are instrumental to residents with disabilities. This includes the Snow Go Program, which provides a matching service to those who need to find a contractor or community member for snow removal, and the Snow Go Assist Program, which provides older adults and people with disabilities on a low-income with financial assistance for snow removal services. Both continue to be highly utilized programs. In 2023, \$145,568 was allocated to nine agencies to provide snow removal services to applicable residents, an increase of over \$5 thousand from 2022. Additionally, staff responded to 1,388 requests from older adults and people with disabilities in the 2022-23 winter season, and 596 subsidies were issued to Ottawa households for help with snow removal.

In Children's Services, children with disabilities have been identified by families and service providers as an area requiring significant investment. As a result, Children's Services continues to work closely with Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS) to ensure that children with disabilities are supported and that inclusion is prioritized. In 2023, Children's Services provided funding to help support approximately 1,356 children with disabilities in licensed child-care in Ottawa.

In March 2022, the Provincial and Federal Government reached an agreement to include Ontario in a National Child Care Plan, called the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The new CWELCC system aims to support improved affordability, responsiveness, access, and inclusion for families of children aged zero to six. As part of this transformational sector change initiated in 2023, the

Province created an Access and Inclusion Framework. It aims to support service system managers in developing and implementing local service system plans with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion so that all children in licensed childcare can participate and collaborate in meaningful ways and form authentic, caring relationships.

Children's Services will continue to implement priorities in support of children with disabilities and actions/priorities will be reflected in the upcoming Service System Plan update, which will be presented to Council in late 2024.

Employment and Social Services (ESS) worked to encourage and support residents receiving Ontario Works to use and register for the Province's MyBenefits tool. In 2023, 39 per cent of Ontario Works recipients were registered for or in progress of registering for MyBenefits, which provides clients the ability to report information or make changes to their file, access payment and benefit information, update their contact information and communication preferences at anytime, anywhere and on any device. The Province continues to ensure the service is accessible.

ESS continues to offer programs and services virtually, by phone and in-person, providing residents with the choice of how they wish to receive services. Technology enhancements, such as eSignature, benefits residents whose preference is to access services virtually by providing the ability to electronically sign specific forms and documents related to financial assistance. Where there are technology barriers or for those who prefer in-person service, staff respond to the resident's needs.

In 2023, the Ottawa Paramedic Service worked with PIMR to highlight Service Policy 1.8, Transporting Passengers in Emergency Vehicles, and the inclusion of support persons and animals.

To achieve this, in April and July 2023, the Paramedic Service hosted a training event at Paramedic headquarters in partnership with Sit 'n Stay, an Ottawa-based organization that provides service dog training. This event provided an opportunity for the service dogs in training to become familiar with loud noises, paramedic equipment, and bright lights from emergency response vehicles. As well, the events provided the Service with learnings on how to better integrate service animals into patient care plans. The events were promoted via both organizations' social media accounts including Facebook and Twitter. One of the events was promoted via a YouTube video shared internally across the corporation and another received media coverage from Radio-Canada.

Throughout the year, OPH continued to analyze social determinant data of clients to offer tailored programs and services. In partnership with Peel Public Health and the Upstream Lab, OPH was successful in their application for funding from Public Health

Ontario's Locally Driven Collaborative Project program. The research project titled, Lessons learned from the collection of sociodemographic data (SDD) during the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to document the experiences of public health units in the collection of SDD during the pandemic, and to identify a set of recommendations for scaling SDD collection beyond COVID-19.

An OPH Policy for the collection, use and disclosure of SDD, developed over the course of 2022, was endorsed by Senior Leadership. An online education session was held on October 27 to mark the official launch of the policy; approximately 90 staff participated in the session and feedback was positive. A MyOPH SDD Resource Page was also created to house the policy and all supporting resources.

Several OPH teams initiated or continued their efforts to collect and use SDD, including Healthy Babies Healthy Children (Home Visiting Program), Immunization, and Infectious Diseases. Work continues in 2024 to improve data collection practices, analyze data collected to date and engage with community partners.

Throughout 2023, progress was made towards the objective of providing high quality and safe RCFS programming to individuals with disabilities. RCFS is proud to report that 2023 was the first full year of pre-pandemic program offerings.

In 2023, the City's Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) program, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health East, launched the post-concussion expansion, the ABI Link program. The goal of the ABI Link program is to reintegrate residents who have suffered a brain injury back into the community by creating targeted programming and community connections. After consultation with community stakeholders, an opportunity was identified to provide support to the underserved population who have residual concussion symptoms. This program addresses the specific difficulties that an individual with post-concussive symptoms may experience, such as sensitivities to light and noise, and works to increase self-awareness and build coping skills to increase a person's tolerance and ability to manage daily tasks. The program strives to promote independent community-based recreation and leisure involvement to improve quality of life.

RCFS continued to offer four weeks of Summer Plus adult programming in July, and six weeks of Summer Camp was offered to children and adults who are medically fragile and/or technologically dependent (Spirit and Rock Rattle and Roll Camp). RCFS increased their Shared Care 1:1 integration support for children with disabilities to integrate into summer camps. There were 16 integration support workers, and seven Inclusive Recreation mentors across the four districts within the City. In response to

lessons learned in 2022, summer integration support staff was increased by 50 per cent, compared to the previous year.

Consultation Plan for 2025-2029 COMAP

Under Section 4.1 of the IASR, obligated organizations, including the City, must “establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation. This plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years, in consultation with persons with disabilities, and a City’s Accessibility Advisory Committee.”

The AO has identified three primary objectives regarding the development of the next COMAP:

- To both determine the status of accessibility and/or existing barriers within the City’s programs, services, goods and facilities, as well as address strategic priorities as part of the new plan
- To assess how the City has worked towards the AODA’s purpose of “developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards [...] for Ontarians with disabilities [...] to become fully accessible on or before January 1, 2025
- To present the new 2025-2029 COMAP to Council for approval in Q4 2024

When the AODA was enacted in 2005, it set-out the goal of making the Province of Ontario fully accessible by 2025. With this deadline quickly approaching, it is a time for the Province and obligated organizations, such as the City, to assess the impacts of the legislation. The new 2025-2029 COMAP will align with any possible legislated changes at both the Provincial and, if applicable, Federal levels. Staff in the AO regularly engage in environmental scans, discussions with members of the ONAP, as well as maintain a close working relationship with staff with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to ensure decisions are made in alignment with a changing political climate, and the needs of the community. As previously mentioned in this report, a “crisis” was declared by Rich Donovan, the fourth legislated reviewer of the AODA, due to the lack of progress made towards an accessible Ontario.

Additionally, Statistics Canada released new data from the Canadian Survey on Disability in December 2023, which found that the number of Canadians aged 15 and older with disabilities has increased to 27 per cent, five per cent higher than five years ago. Of these Canadians, 72 per cent reported experiencing one or more types of barriers to accessibility. As such, it is more important than ever for the City to identify

and remove all existing barriers to our programs, services, goods and facilities to ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

In order to ensure the greatest diversity of feedback, the consultation process will utilize the City's Equity and Inclusion Lens to identify groups that may be at risk of exclusion and ensure a targeted communications plan to seek feedback from these groups. This will include seeking feedback from people with disabilities that fall into other intersectional identity groups, such as Francophones, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, racialized people, older adults, women, and those living in rural settings.

To support gaining input from these diverse individuals, a variety of consultation methods and tools will be used, including in-person and virtual sessions, online surveys, and the development of a community consultation toolkit. Accessibility supports will also be actively offered, including, but not limited to, sign language interpretation in both ASL and LSQ, closed captioning, ensuring the accessibility of any in-person venues, and the use of Personal Support Workers. All presentation materials will be available in accessible formats, as required. Opportunities to provide feedback will be shared through the City's social media channels, Engage Ottawa, through the Accessibility Spotlight e-newsletter, and by leveraging the relationships that the AO has established with community partners. City staff across the organization, including extensive collaboration and coordination with AWG members, will be included in the development of initiatives within the 2025-2029 COMAP.

Conclusion

As described in the many initiatives identified in this report, the City remains committed to ensuring the accessibility of all programs, services, goods and facilities. The AO continues to work closely with staff across the organization to provide expertise regarding the legislated requirements of the AODA, and to ensure an accessibility lens is incorporated into all City services, programs and facilities.

As noted throughout this report, the City continues to prioritize consultation with people with disabilities, including the AAC and other disability community stakeholders. These relationships remain critical to ensuring all City programs, services, goods and facilities are accessible and free of barriers for residents, employees and visitors.

Additionally, the City continues to prioritize its professional relationships with provincial, federal and international networks to ensure Ottawa remains current on innovative

approaches and best practice regarding accessibility, and promote and share resources, knowledge and successes on initiatives where the City is a leader.

Finally, the AO will continue to provide transparent and accurate updates to the Province, Council, the AAC and the general public on the status of the City's compliance with the AODA and the accessibility of its services, programs and facilities through these annual updates.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments associated with Committee and Council's approval of the recommendations of this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a City-wide report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

The Accessibility Office (AO) consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) on the content of this report at their meeting held on April 16, 2024. Overall, the AAC is pleased with the City's commitment to ensuring accessibility in its programs, facilities, and services. However, some members continue to express serious concerns about existing accessibility-barriers, including the continuation of the e-scooter pilot, the challenges related to on-street parking, public transit and the accessibility of public events and festivals.

The AO provides an update on general accessibility matters at most regular AAC meetings. The AO remains committed to working with AAC members and City staff to address these ongoing concerns and develop effective mitigation solutions.

CONSULTATION

Thorough consultation was conducted to develop the current 2020-2024 COMAP. More information on these consultations can be found on this in the

[2020 COMAP Report](#). As stated in the report, the AAC plays an important role in providing accessibility feedback on City initiatives. Throughout the year, they are consulted on many projects, services and programs. As requested by the AAC, the entire Committee is consulted on this report and have had the opportunity to provide feedback as captured in the Advisory Committee Comments.

The AO also regularly consults with community stakeholders, including certain projects and initiatives contained in this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

All information and initiatives outlined in this report aim to remove or reduce barriers to accessibility in the areas of customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and procurement of the *IASR* of the *AODA, 2005*. The numerous initiatives in this report all aim to positively impact a wide range of persons with disabilities, and diverse persons with disabilities, including visible and non-visible, temporary and permanent disabilities.

Each year, the City demonstrates its commitment to accessibility by consulting with the AAC on City projects that advance the accessibility agenda for City residents, visitors and employees in line with Council's Strategic Priorities.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Many of the initiatives in this report positively affect the City's built environment and apply the City's Comprehensive Asset Management Policy Guiding Principles. They are customer focused and better enable its assets to meet future challenges, including changing demographics and populations, customer expectations, legislative requirements, technological and environmental factors. COMAP initiatives continually improve City assets to meet the needs of the City's residents, visitors and employees with disabilities. Work undertaken follows the City's ADS.

Comprehensive Asset Management (CAM) is an integrated business approach involving planning, finance, engineering, maintenance and operations geared towards effectively managing existing and new infrastructure to maximize benefits, reduce risk and provide safe and reliable levels of service to community users. This is accomplished in a socially, culturally, environmentally and economically conscious manner.

The initiatives documented in this report are consistent with the City's CAM Program objectives. The City of Ottawa's Municipal Accessibility Plan supports a forward-looking approach to meet future challenges, including changing demographics and populations, legislative and environmental factors.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

Accessibility considerations are reviewed for projects that can positively affect the climate. Examples for 2023 include the AO's involvement in the development of the Corporate EV Charging Policy and Personal EV Charging Strategy, as well as the AO's feedback and review of the Climate Change Resiliency Strategy. Reviewing accessibility and environmental impacts in a coordinated way ensures a better, more inclusive and environmentally sound product and service to all residents.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

As per the [Delegation of Authority By-law](#), the City Clerk is authorized to execute and file with the designated Provincial authority all accessibility reports and other information required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Additionally, the City Clerk is authorized to execute and file with the designated Federal authority all accessibility reports and other information required under the Accessible Canada Act.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no economic impacts associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The AODA, which governs the work outlined in this report, has specific and general exceptions in the DOPS of the IASR, which protect the environment as described below:

Clause 80.15 Exceptions, general:

Exceptions to the requirements that apply to recreational trails and beach access routes are permitted where obligated organizations can demonstrate one or more of the following:

1. The requirements, or some of them, would likely affect the cultural heritage value or interest of a property identified, designated or otherwise protected under the Ontario Heritage Act as being of cultural heritage value or interest.
2. The requirements, or some of them, would affect the preservation of places set apart as National Historic Sites of Canada by the Minister of the Environment for Canada under the Canada National Parks Act (Canada)
3. The requirements, or some of them, would affect the national historic interest or significance of historic places marked or commemorated under the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (Canada).
4. The requirements, or some of them, might damage, directly or indirectly, the cultural heritage or natural heritage on a property included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage List of sites under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
5. There is a significant risk that the requirements, or some of them, would adversely affect water, fish, wildlife, plants, invertebrates, species at risk, ecological integrity or natural heritage values, whether the adverse effects are direct or indirect.
6. It is not practicable to comply with the requirements, or some of them, because existing physical or site constraints prohibit modification or addition of elements, spaces or features, such as where surrounding rocks bordering the recreational trail or beach access route impede achieving the required clear width. O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Indigenous Implications

Through discussion with the City's Indigenous Relations branch, the AO has learned that their research shows that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately likely to experience disability, including mental health disability, in comparison to the general

population. In our work to increase accessibility for all, the City strives to be mindful of Indigenous peoples, and work to build relationships to ensure the full inclusion of Indigenous persons with disabilities. This is reflected in the 2020-2024 COMAP as part of our commitment to an inclusive accessibility plan.

In developing the 2020-2024 COMAP, the AO included Indigenous organizations in its outreach. To promote sharing information and communications with Indigenous organizations, the AO has also sought advice from staff in the City's Indigenous Relations branch on how to develop relationships with organizations and communities that support Indigenous persons with disabilities. These efforts will continue in the development of the new COMAP.

Gender and Equity Implications

The AO recognizes that emergency situations have disproportionately impacted people with disabilities, and these impacts are even greater for women and gender diverse persons, as well as other equity-deserving groups. When communicating with the public, the AO ensures that community organizations representing women and gender diverse persons with disabilities are included. Information is shared through social media, by email and through community organizations to ensure a broad outreach.

The AO participates on the cross-departmental Equity and Inclusion Interdepartmental Team, to ensure that women and gender diverse persons with disabilities are represented in the Women and Gender Equity Strategy.

The AO continues to work closely with the AAC, which includes diverse gender representation amongst members, to inform our work.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risk implications with this report are associated with non-compliance with the AODA legislative obligations.

The AODA states that if it is found that a person or organization has contravened a provision of an accessibility standard or of any other regulation, the director may, by order, require the person or organization to do either or both of the following:

1. Comply with the accessibility standard or other regulation within the time specified in the order.
2. Subject to subsection (6), pay an administrative penalty in accordance with the regulations.

If a person or organization fails to comply with an order and no appeal of the order is made within the time specified, a director may, make an order requiring the person or organization to pay an administrative penalty in accordance with the regulations.

Every person who is guilty of an offence under the AODA is liable on conviction,

- (a) to a fine of not more than \$50,000 for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues to occur; or,
- (b) if the person is a corporation, to a fine of not more than \$100,000 for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues to occur.

As stated above, the City has reported non-compliance to the Province with respect to Section 14, Websites and Web Content, of the IASR in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023. The City updated its compliance plan agreement with the Province in 2020. The 2020 WCAG Compliance Plan Agreement is included in **Document 6** of this report and an update was provided in 2023 (**Document 7**). The agreement outlines the measures that the City is taking to meet the legislated requirement.

Additionally, in 2023, the City also reported non-compliance with Section 80.5 of the IASR and submitted another Compliance Plan Agreement related to the Design of Public Spaces (**Document 9**), which also outlines the measures the City is taking to meet the legislated requirements and fix the non-compliant locations.

All General Managers have been made aware of this risk.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The initiatives in this report have a positive impact on people with disabilities across the City. Many initiatives contained in this report also benefit rural residents. Rural facilities

are included in the City's Retrofits program which allows for upgrades to accessibility features.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

As described in the WCAG sections of this report, technology plays a significant role in providing the City with the ability to meet the AODA accessible websites and web content clauses. The dedicated resources of the Technology Branch and the Web Services Branch are invaluable to the corporation in meeting and maintaining compliance with Section 14 of the IASR. All City departments are engaged in the WCAG Implementation Strategy which strives to meet AODA compliance as soon as practicable given COVID 19 complications.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The City of Ottawa accessibility initiatives outlined in this report directly impact and support Council's Strategic Priorities. All departmental initiatives are designed to advance equity and inclusion for the city's diverse population through continuous planning and execution of barrier removal in all City programs, services, and facilities. Intersectionality also is considered in accessibility plans ensuring alignment with other City efforts included but not limited to the efforts of the Women and Gender Equity Strategy, the Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Reconciliation Action Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: COMAP 2024 Resident Facing report

Document 2: 2020 – 2024 COMAP Department Initiatives

Document 3: 2025-2029 COMAP Consultation Plan

Document 4: Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiry Procedure

Document 5: Amendments to Accessibility Policy

Document 6: City of Ottawa WCAG Compliance Plan Agreement

Document 7: 2023 WCAG Compliance Plan Agreement Update

Document 8 : Tracking of Traffic Control Locations for AODA Compliance

Document 9: 2023 DOPS Compliance Plan Agreement Update

Document 10: Standards Development Committees Recommendations

DISPOSITION

The City of Ottawa's efforts to meet its legislated accessibility requirements under the AODA and IASR is a corporate wide effort coordinated through the Corporate AO. Specific initiatives, goals and programs outlined in the five-year plan have been assigned to operational departments and progress is monitored by the Office of the City Clerk. All City departments are responsible for the implementation of the City's COMAP plan and for compliance with the AODA and the IASR.