

SUBJECT: City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan – Annual Update (2022)

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Report to Finance and Economic Development Committee on 7 June 2022

and Council 22 June 2022

**Submitted on May 27, 2022 by Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure, Program Manager,
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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE

**OBJET : Le plan d'accessibilité municipal de la ville d'Ottawa (PAMVO) –
Compte Rendu (2022)**

Dossier : [ACS NUMBER]

Rapport au Comité des finances et du développement économique

le 7 juin 2022

et au Conseil le 22 juin 2022

**Soumis le May 27, 2022 par Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure, Gestionnaire de
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REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommend that Council:

1. Receive the City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan – Annual Update (2022) report;

2. Approve the new Process for Consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (**Document 1**);
3. Approve the amendments to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy (**Document 2**);
4. Approve the updates to the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure (**Document 3**);
5. Approve the updates to the Accessibility Impact Statement Instructions (**Document 4**); and
6. Approve the extension of the pilot to permit Members of Council to access the Council Administration budget to provide Accessible Formats and Communication Supports, including interpretation services such as American Sign Language/Langue de signes québécoise, to residents with disabilities, as described in this report.
7. Receive information related to deviations from the Accessibility Design Standards, as detailed in this report.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et du développement économique recommande au Conseil municipal :

1. de prendre connaissance du compte rendu annuel (2022) du Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la Ville d'Ottawa;
2. d'approuver le nouveau processus de consultation du Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité (**pièce 1**);
3. d'approuver les modifications apportées à la Politique sur l'accessibilité de la Ville d'Ottawa (**pièce 2**);
4. d'approuver les mises à jour apportées aux Procédures concernant les formats accessibles et les aides à la communication (**pièce 3**);
5. d'approuver les mises à jour apportées aux instructions concernant l'Énoncé des répercussions sur l'accessibilité (**pièce 4**);
6. d'approuver la prorogation du projet pilote pour permettre aux membres du Conseil municipal d'avoir accès au budget administratif du Conseil afin d'offrir des formats accessibles et des aides à la communication aux résidents en situation de handicap, y compris les services d'interprétation dans le langage des signes américain ou dans la langue des signes québécoise selon les modalités exposées dans ce rapport;

7. de prendre connaissance de l'information relative aux dérogations 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 prevent and remove barriers.” *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 is the City’s 20th annual report, which provides a status update on the corporation’s progress in 2021, towards the goals of the 2020-2024 Plan. This includes details of improvements to City services, programs, information, communications, goods, and facilities, broken down into the five standards of the AODA: Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces and Customer Service (**Document 5**). These improvements demonstrate the City’s commitment to meeting the legislated requirements of the AODA as well as implement non-legislated advancements in accessibility, which support the inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in Ottawa, including residents, employees and visitors. The AO recognizes that this report to Council may include jargon and technical language. For a condensed, plain language, resident-facing update, see **Document 6**.

While 2021 was another irregular business year, the City continues to recognize that its services, programs and facilities have an impact on the daily lives of all residents, including residents with disabilities. With support from Senior Leadership and City departments, including Ottawa Public Health (OPH), strategies were implemented to minimize barriers and consider the needs of persons with disabilities during the City’s continued fight against COVID-19. In 2021, priorities included the development of plans and processes to ensure people with disabilities had equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, the continued provision of sign language interpretation for all emergency-related communications, and engagement with the community and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

The Accessibility Office (AO) also understands that residents with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. As a result, through the valuable feedback from the community and the AAC, the AO has made amendments to several policies

and procedures, as well as introduced other supporting documents (see Report Recommendations) for Council approval to ensure accessibility remains a priority of the City.

The City is required to submit an AODA Compliance Report to the Province every two years. In 2021, the City continued to report non-compliance with the Information and Communications Standard, related to section 14, Web Sites and Web Content. Along with this report, the City reported on its progress towards its Compliance Agreement Plan with the Province, which was updated in 2020, related to this non-compliance. Details about the City's progress towards compliance with section 14 of the IASR, is provided later in this report.

It should be noted that for the purposes of the report, the City will 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.

SYNTHÈSE ADMINISTRATIVE

Selon le Règlement sur les normes d'accessibilité intégrées (RNAI) pris en application de la Loi de 2005 sur l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario (LAPHO), les organisations du secteur public désignées doivent « établir, mettre en œuvre, mettre à jour et consigner un plan d'accessibilité pluriannuel décrivant sommairement leur stratégie pour prévoir et éliminer les obstacles ». 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 rapport d'étape annuel sur l'état d'avancement de son plan pluriannuel.

Le présent document, qui constitue le 20^e rapport annuel de la Ville, fait état des progrès qu'elle a accomplis en 2021 pour atteindre les objectifs de son plan 2020-2024. Il décrit dans les détails les améliorations apportées aux services, aux programmes, à l'information, aux communiqués, aux installations et aux biens municipaux, dans les cinq catégories de normes de la LAPHO : information et communication, emploi, transport, conception des espaces publics et services à la clientèle (**pièce 5**). Ces améliorations témoignent de la volonté de la Ville de respecter les exigences de la LAPHO et de réaliser les améliorations à apporter à l'accessibilité non prévues dans la

loi afin de promouvoir l'inclusion et la participation à part entière des personnes en situation de handicap à Ottawa, dont les employés municipaux, les résidents et les visiteurs. Le Bureau de l'accessibilité reconnaît que ce rapport destiné au Conseil municipal peut comprendre un vocabulaire spécialisé et des termes techniques. Pour prendre connaissance de la version condensée grand public simplifiée de ce compte rendu, veuillez consulter la **pièce 6**.

Si 2021 a été une autre année opérationnelle atypique, la Ville continue de constater que ses services, programmes et installations ont une incidence sur le quotidien de tous les résidents, dont ceux qui sont en situation de handicap. Avec le concours de la haute direction et des directions générales de la Ville, dont Santé publique Ottawa (SPO), nous avons mis au point des stratégies pour minorer les obstacles et tenir compte des besoins des personnes en situation de handicap pendant la lutte que la Ville n'a pas cessé de mener contre la COVID-19. En 2021, les priorités ont consisté à élaborer des plans et des processus pour veiller à ce que les personnes en situation de handicap aient équitablement accès aux vaccins contre la COVID-19, aux services continus d'interprétation gestuelle pour tous les communiqués liés à des urgences et à consulter la collectivité et le Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité (CCA).

Le Bureau de l'accessibilité (BA) sait aussi que les résidents en situation de handicap sont démesurément fragilisés par la pandémie. Voilà pourquoi, grâce aux précieux commentaires de la collectivité et du CCA, le BA a apporté des modifications à plusieurs politiques et procédures, en plus de lancer d'autres documents justificatifs (cf. les Recommandations du rapport) pour les faire approuver par le Conseil municipal afin de veiller à ce que l'accessibilité reste une priorité de la Ville.

La Ville est tenue de soumettre tous les deux ans au gouvernement provincial un rapport de conformité à la LAPHO. En 2021, la Ville a continué de signaler que l'on ne respectait toujours pas les Normes pour l'information et les communications relativement à l'article 14 (Sites et contenus Web accessibles). De concert avec ce rapport, la Ville a fait état des progrès qu'elle avait accomplis dans la réalisation de son Plan de convention de conformité avec le gouvernement provincial; ce plan, mis à jour en 2020, se rapporte à ces cas de non-conformité. Nous décrivons plus loin dans ce rapport les progrès accomplis par la Ville afin de respecter l'article 14 du RNAI.

Il convient de signaler que pour les besoins de ce rapport, la Ville fait appel à un libellé privilégiant la personne quand il s'agit de désigner les personnes en situation de handicap. Or, la langue ne cesse d'évoluer, et de plus en plus, on exprime des préférences pour l'utilisation du libellé privilégiant la situation des personnes en situation de handicap. Bien que le personnel de la Ville soit formé pour suivre l'exemple

et les préférences des personnes en cause, l'utilisation de ce libellé privilégiant la personne dans ce rapport cadre avec le libellé utilisé dans la LAPHO et avec l'avis du CCA. La Ville reste réceptive aux préférences de la communauté des personnes en situation de handicap, ce qui sera évalué et débattu en continu avec le CCA.

BACKGROUND

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 the legislation and identify and remove barriers to City services, programs, and facilities.

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) and 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 has committed to meeting the "spirit and intent" of the AODA.

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 second update on the 2020-2024 COMAP.

In 2021 and continuing into 2022, there have been many changes to City departments. This has impacted the department responsible for some accessibility initiatives, primarily those within the built environment, but not the initiatives themselves. The departments impacted by these changes are:

- Transit Services Department (TSD);
- Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development (PRED);
- Public Works Department (PWD); and
- Infrastructure and Water Services Department (IWD).

For the purposes of this report, and for accountability moving forward, accessibility initiatives are identified within their current departments.

In 2021, due to rebalancing of portfolios, the City of Ottawa Delegation of Authority Bylaw was updated to move the responsibility of the Accessibility Design Standards (ADS) from PRED to Infrastructure. The [Delegation of Authority By-law](#) states, the General Manager, Infrastructure and Water Services, and the Director of Infrastructure Services, individually are delegated the authority to make technical changes or clarifications to the ADS when deemed necessary and shall report back to appropriate Standing Committee and Council annually through the City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP) report, and to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. No changes were made to the ADS in 2021. Many of the initiatives outlined in this report have become part of regular business at the City, integrated in operations, and staff will continue to report on their progress in the 2020-2024 plan as they continue to expand, evolve and increase accessibility.

To develop the 2020-2024 COMAP, the AO consulted widely with persons with disabilities, caregivers, organizations, the 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.

DISCUSSION

Impacts of COVID-19 on Residents with Disabilities

COVID-19 continued to significantly effect City business in 2021. This included additional lockdowns, mask mandates, outbreaks, and many other impacts on people's day-to-day lives. However, this presented continued opportunities for the City and OPH to implement innovative solutions to ensure that people with disabilities continued to be prioritized in the City's emergency response.

In late 2020, the Federal government began distributing vaccines to the provinces for distribution. The Provincial government created a phased vaccination plan to ensure vulnerable persons received early and timely access to the vaccines. Through cross-departmental collaboration, engagement with the AAC and community organizations, the City was able to implement innovative approaches to creating an accessible vaccination plan. Through OPH, a Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) was created with staff from various departments who support vulnerable groups in the City. This included representation from the AO, among other departments, to ensure people with disabilities were considered and engaged in vaccine planning and implementation.

Community engagement, and “nothing about us, without us,” is a central theme in the 2020-2024 COMAP. While priorities of the City required continued pivoting in 2021, ensuring the voices of persons with disabilities were included in the City’s vaccination plan were a key area of focus for the AO.

The CETF was formed with the understanding that COVID-19 has disproportionate impacts on specific communities who have historically faced additional barriers to health equity, and that community-informed approaches can support the improved implementation of public health campaigns and help build this access. The mandate of this group was to plan and coordinate COVID-19 vaccine-related community engagement initiatives in order to build awareness and trust among populations most impacted or at-risk of COVID-19 in Ottawa. Further, informed by community engagement, the group worked to influence City-wide planning efforts to adopt an equity-informed approach for vaccine roll-out. This was with the overarching goal to support increased uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine among populations most impacted or at higher risk of the virus in Ottawa.

Through representatives with the CETF, extensive engagement and information sharing was conducted with persons with disabilities and community organizations. This included ensuring that residents had targeted information about vaccine eligibility based on their disability. The City and OPH held a vaccine forum with the Ottawa Disability Coalition (ODC) for persons with disabilities in March, with over 400 people in attendance. Staff provided information on the City’s vaccination plan and answered questions from many participants. The City and OPH also hosted a vaccine information session with the National Capital Association for the Deaf in May.

The AAC received updates on the City’s vaccination plan at regular meetings in 2021. These presentations included the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions, which were considered as part of the plan. The AO worked with OPH to develop information for persons with disabilities to share on their website and social media. Frequently asked questions were also added to the OPH website to address questions related to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility at the City’s vaccine sites was also a primary consideration in ensuring that all residents had equitable vaccine access. The City’s Accessibility Design Standards (ADS) were used to assess all potential vaccine clinics. These standards include considerations of accessibility under the Building Code, the Design of Public Spaces Standard under the AODA, and other legislation. Site visits were done to make sure that:

- The doors had automatic door openers;
- Washrooms were accessible;
- Ramps were installed where needed;
- Accessible parking was available;
- Seating was available for those who cannot stand for long periods;
- There was designated Para Transpo drop off/pickup locations, with an indoor waiting area; and
- There was promotion of a scent free environment.

Considerations of wide corridors and turning radius were maintained at the clinics. Though residents were asked to bring their own mobility devices when able, standard and bariatric wheelchairs were made available at all clinic sites. Additionally, staff were available at the clinics to assist residents arriving for their vaccinations. Service animals and support persons were welcomed at clinics, though due to physical distancing, residents were asked to limit to one support person where possible. While waiting, residents were seated, and bariatric chairs were available at all sites. Further, low sensory, quiet areas were available at all sites.

A process for requesting and responding to disability-related accommodation requests for vaccine appointments was introduced early in OPH's efforts to vaccinate all residents. Those requesting accommodation could complete an online form or call OPH. These requests included, but were not limited to, sign language interpretation, more time for an appointment, use of a quiet, low sensory area, the presence of more support persons, and navigation support. This process remains in place in 2022 and hundreds of accommodation requests have been met.

Transportation to the vaccine clinics was made available upon request. Residents were encouraged to work with family and friends or use OC or Para Transpo to get to the clinics. If these options were not available, the City partnered with community organizations to provide free transportation. While OPH was unable to provide vaccinations to people in their homes at the beginning of 2021, a plan was developed with the Province to provide this service through OPH's Homebound Team starting in April, which currently remains available. This service was originally for persons who receive homebound healthcare services, identified through the Home and Community Care Support Services or through physician referral; however, it was expanded to other residents requiring in-home vaccination as vaccine supply expanded.

When the pandemic was declared in March of 2020, the City of Ottawa's Human Needs Task Force was established with community partners to support the emergency response efforts in addressing urgent community needs, including opening physical

distancing, isolation and respite centres for residents in need. The Task Force's mandate was to bridge the gaps to ensure the City remained responsive to emerging needs from the community, particularly those who may be vulnerable to the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, many of whom have one or more disabilities. Services such as respite centres were put in place as temporary strategies, with the goal of shifting these services back to community agencies as the emergency situation stabilizes and recovery efforts begin. Prior to this shift, these temporary respite centres provided access to washrooms, a place to rest, and other services to ensure vulnerable residents were supported during the pandemic. These respite centres supported many residents in 2021, averaging over 2000 visits per month.

As the City shifts to its recovery strategy and planning, the current 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan will provide the foundational actions the City will take to improve housing and support services for people in need. Additionally, with Council's approval of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan in 2021, there is work underway to define the priorities of the Plan, such as mental health resources and integration of services, to address ongoing impacts and gaps that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed to at-risk populations, including people with disabilities.

Physical distancing and isolation sites remained open during 2021 and the winter months to support public health guidelines and the community shelters providers to ensure at-risk residents, including those with disabilities, had access to safe, temporary shelter.

An open-air drop-in site was open during the summer in the Murray Street location of the Shepherds of Good Hope. At this location, portable toilets were available, in addition to three other locations in the downtown core. They were removed at the end of October, with the City and community agencies shifting to indoor locations throughout the winter months.

In 2020 and 2021, the City received government funding from various sources and distributed it, through Housing Services and Social Development and Funding, to various community partners and agencies supporting at-risk residents and high priority communities impacted by the pandemic.

When Provincial lockdowns began in 2020, the City was required to close all recreational facilities to the public. This caused many challenges for people with disabilities who rely on City pools for therapeutic purposes. However, in April 2021, the Province allowed municipalities to open pools for therapeutic use during closures. While other recreation programs were suspended due to provincial restrictions, swims for

persons with disabilities were available for reservation at the Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex and the Nepean Sportsplex.

Under provincial restrictions, these facilities were open solely for the purpose of allowing use of the facility by persons of all ages with a disability, within the meaning of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Clients were required to provide written documentation upon check-in at the facility, indicating the requirement for physical therapy in a swimming pool from a regulated health professional to be granted admission.

Emergency Communications during the Pandemic

The City is proud to have provided American Sign Language (ASL) and *Langue des signes quebécoise* (LSQ), both “recognized” languages under the *Accessible Canada Act*, for all media availabilities and emergency-related events since mid-March 2020. The AO continued to support Council, OPH and Public Information and Media Relations (PIMR) with this practice in 2021, with the approval of the updated Accessibility Policy and Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure as part of the 2021 COMAP Annual Update, which includes the provision of these languages during “states of emergencies”. This has also been reflected in the City’s Emergency Plan. Based on feedback from staff, and encouragement from the AAC and members of the public, **Recommendation 2** of this report requests approval to further update the language in the Accessibility Policy and Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure to:

- All verbal (Live and pre-recorded) state of emergency and other large-scale emergency-related communications, as decided by the Office of Emergency Management, Public Information and Media Relations and the Accessibility Office, shall proactively include American Sign Language (ASL), simultaneous English/French interpretation, Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and captioning, as practicable.

This will ensure that accessibility supports can be provided where required, without the need for a state of emergency to be declared.

In 2021, OPH continued to create informational videos related to COVID-19. Essential information continued to be translated in ASL and LSQ, which included all OPH media availabilities. This also includes ASL and LSQ translations of videos related to COVID-19 on OPH’s website, such as symptoms associated with new variants, as well as changes to mandates for isolation and testing.

In 2021, the cost of sign language interpretation services for COVID-19 related media availabilities, events, virtual town halls, and Public Health videos was \$81,770, an increase from \$74,200 in 2020. This represents 192 jobs completed for the City. These efforts contribute to reducing communication barriers for the Deaf community and ensuring all residents in the City of Ottawa have access to essential information.

Due to increased visibility during the pandemic, there has also been an increase in departments providing sign language interpretation for technical briefings and events.

Council Administrative Budget for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

With Council approval of the 2021 COMAP Annual Update, a pilot was approved to allocate \$10,000 from the Council Administrative Budget on a first-come-first-served basis to assist Members of Council to provide accessible formats and communication supports when communicating with their constituency. **Recommendation 3** of this report requests to continue this pilot in 2022.

While the fund was not accessed in 2021, the AO will work with Committee and Council Services to ensure that Members of Council remain aware of this fund. The AO will also serve as a resource to strategize with Members of Council where this fund will have the greatest impact.

This fund can be used when communicating in writing, in person and via video and video conference to ensure their communications are accessible.

These funds could be used for:

- Captioning and transcripts for events/live or pre-recorded video (including the French translation and French captioning);
- Sign Language Interpretation in ASL and LSQ;
- Personal Support Workers (live events);
- Braille Translation;
- Creating Accessible Word, PDF and Power Point documents, including Ward newsletters; and
- Twenty per cent of the fund per year can be used to increase accessibility of their websites and e-documents, such as newsletters, using the services from the City's Standing Offer list.

This budget is managed by the Council Support Services on behalf of the Clerk, under rules previously established by the former Member Services Committee.

Provincial Compliance Reporting

As a designated public sector organization, the City of Ottawa is required to submit an accessibility compliance report to the Province every two years. This report was submitted to the Province in December 2021.

The City is committed to a precise, accurate and truthful reporting process. Each department is responsible for collecting information to submit a workbook and departmental attestation, signed by the General Manager. This information is then compiled into a Corporate response, which is submitted to the Province by the City Clerk, in accordance with the previous authority delegated by Council. Refer to **Document 7** for the 2021 Provincial Compliance Report.

In this report, the City reported that it is fully compliant with all applicable requirements under the AODA, with one exception, related to accessible websites and web content. Since 2015, and continued in 2021, 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 compliance report in 2021 (see **Document 8** for the City's Compliance Plan Agreement and **Document 9** for the 2021 Compliance Plan Agreement Update). This agreement highlights the tremendous amount of work and resources the City has committed towards web accessibility, and the steps the City continues to take towards this goal.

The Province included a new requirement with the reporting question on section 14 (4) in 2021, which was to list all of the City's websites, web content and social media sites. This entailed a thorough scan of all the City's departmental web assets, an exercise that was conducted with staff in all departments, including representatives of the Accessibility Working Group (AWG), departmental Web Leads, Service Ottawa, the Applications team and the AO. As a result, the City included a list of 41 websites and applications, and 84 social media sites as part of the compliance report. The AO will continue to maintain the list.

The City is aware of an unprecedented number of public sector organizations reporting non-compliance with section 14 (4) of the IASR in 2021. Many of these organizations requested information from the City on the steps required to complete a compliance plan agreement. It is unknown how the Province will respond to these numerous non-compliances. The City is also aware of some advocacy by the public sector for the Province to re-examine how web compliance is assessed as a yes or no response. The City has also provided this feedback to the Province, as we believe that the implementation of a plan, policies and training is more beneficial than adhering to rigid standards. The Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), which will be discussed later in this report, will ask for an update from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility Compliance and Enforcement Branch at the Spring meeting.

The City continues to invest a significant amount of time and resources into making the City's websites, web contents and applications more accessible for all residents, including those with disabilities. The City's implementation of WCAG plans, policies and training will be further discussed later in this report.

Update on Provincial Accessibility Legislation and Regulation

Under the AODA, Standards Development Committees are responsible for developing and/or reviewing accessibility standards in Ontario. Each accessibility standard is required to be reviewed five years after it becomes law to assess its impacts and whether changes are required.

The Province has received final recommendations from the Standards Development Committees for the Employment, Customer Service, Information and Communications and Transportation Standards. It is unknown when the Province will review and make changes to the legislation. The AO will remain engaged with the Province to ensure any forthcoming changes will be addressed in City policy and planning.

None of the current Standards of the AODA were reviewed in 2021. However, the Standards Development Committee for the new Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Standard continued to work towards developing their final recommendations to the Province. Additionally, the Province also released the 22 recommendations by the Standards Development Committee for the new Health Care Standard for public consultation. Neither of these new Standards are expected to apply to City services.

In December 2021, the Province announced that Julie Sawchuk was appointed to the role of Chair for the new Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee. In 2022, the Committee will be formed and will include people with disabilities from across the province, representatives from businesses, municipalities, and other

stakeholders. A representative from the Accessibility Office was invited by the Province to participate in this Committee. As with previous Standards reviews, the City will also submit feedback when the recommendations of this Standards Development Committee are released to the public.

Update on the Accessible Canada Act

While the City and its facilities, programs, and services are not legislated under the *Accessible Canada Act*, there is interest in following the development of its Standards, particularly for areas that may go beyond the Provincial legislation. Accessibility Standards Canada, the organization responsible for the *Accessible Canada Act*, is guided by seven principles, very similar to the Standards of the AODA:

1. Employment;
2. The built environment;
3. Information and communication technologies;
4. Communication (other than information and communication technologies);
5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities;
6. The design and delivery of programs and services; and
7. Transportation.

Work is underway on the following standards:

- Technical committee for a model standard for the built environment – accessibility, expected publication Spring 2023.
- Technical committee for emergency egress (exit), expected publication Summer 2023.
- Technical committee for employment, expected publication Fall 2023.
- Technical committee for outdoor spaces, expected publication Summer 2023.
- Technical committee for plain language, expected publication Winter 2022.

Two new technical committees recently underwent recruitment:

- Wayfinding and Signage; and
- Emergency Measures.

A staff representative from the City's Infrastructure and Water Services Department (Standards Unit) is the Co-Chair for the Built Environment Committee.

City of Ottawa Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AAC held five regular meetings, two special meetings and one joint meeting with French Language Services Advisory Committee in 2021, which were conducted over Zoom. As the AAC has requested that these meetings include ASL, this continues to be arranged by staff to increase accessibility. Other support was actively offered upon request.

In 2021, the AAC received 44 requests for feedback on various city projects through numerous processes, not including site plans.

11 projects were presented at the five regular AAC meetings:

- Para Transpo Customer Experience
- Anti-Racism Secretariat's Initiatives
- Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan
- Cardinal Creek Village Community Park
- Affordable Housing Capital Plan 2021
- Pedestrian Wayfinding System
- Low-Speed Vehicles Pilot Project
- Robinson Field: Pathway Rehabilitation
- Accessible Taxicab – On Demand Study
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Stand Alone Washrooms
- 2022 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets

Two special AAC Meetings were held, which included the Duty to Consult meeting and a special meeting to consult on the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program. Hundreds of projects are reviewed as part of the annual Duty to Consult meeting.

Consultation for applicable 2021 and all 2022 capital projects included:

- Exterior Paths of Travel (Rest Areas);
- On-Street Parking Spaces;
- Outdoor Play Spaces;
- Recreation Trails; and
- The City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Annual Update.

Thirty-one requests were received through the AAC consultation process and 13 requests were completed by email. Additionally, the group reviewed 87 site plans, participated in many working groups, as well as provided representatives to take part in city-wide Environmental Assessment Studies and Revitalization Project consultations to provide input and accessibility recommendations.

The AAC remained involved in the City's Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program and held two special meetings to discuss the accessibility concerns related to this project. The AAC's involvement in this project will be discussed later in this report.

At their November meeting, the AAC voted unanimously to pass a Motion related to the 2022 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets (see **Document 10**). This Motion recognized the City's obligations under the AODA to ensure, "a fully accessible Province" by 2025, which will not be fulfilled without resources. Further, the Motion recognizes the City's obligation under the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure, and the Clerk's Term of Council Governance Review. The resolutions of this Motion were:

- The AAC strongly recommends that budget 2022 commits dedicated adequate resources aimed at ensuring that, from now on, persons with disabilities can fully participate, with the appropriate supports, during any meetings of Standing Committees, Advisory Committees, or other meetings where public delegations may be expected to participate, as well as any public or community-based consultations held by City staff with the members of the public, including but not limited to the option to participate remotely, by way of virtual video conference; and
- The AAC strongly recommends that budget 2022 commits dedicated adequate resources aimed at ensuring that the City maintains real-time enforcement capacity to actively respond to accessibility complaints within the City; and
- That AAC recommends that the AO provide benchmarking statistics in advance of the 2023 budget on the current resources aimed at ensuring that the City maintains real-time enforcement capacity to actively respond to accessibility complaints within the City; and
- That AAC recommends that, as part of the 2022-2026 Governance Review, the Office of the City Clerk provide procedural options for Council's consideration for persons with disabilities to continue participating remotely, by way of virtual video conference, during any meetings of Standing Committees, Advisory Committees, or other meetings where public delegations may be expected to participate.

In 2022, the AO will work with the AAC and staff to determine how statistics can be collected to assess the City's capacity for enforcement.

In 2021, the AO collaborated with Committee and Council Services and departments through the AWG to undertake a full review of the Corporate Pilot Process for Consulting with the AAC, launched in 2017. The process assisted departments to

identify projects, programs and services that must or should be reviewed by the AAC. It includes the provision of an electronic request form that departments complete to ensure the AAC receives the appropriate information in a consistent manner. This information allowed the AAC to determine if the issue could be reviewed through email, if it was a larger project that required a verbal presentation at an AAC meeting, or if it was so significant or complex that it required a special AAC meeting. During the Pilot, the quantity of projects reviewed by the AAC increased, but due to the streamlining of the process it allowed for clear and concise presentations and clear questions to the committee that added value and accessibility to City projects. The Process was also presented to other municipalities, some of whom have also adopted it. Due to its success, **Recommendation 2** of this report includes the final Process for Council approval.

The review of the Process started with a discussion with the AAC in late 2020. Early proposed changes were discussed with the Committee Coordinator in the Spring of 2021. Highlights of the changes include:

- Changes to the one-month timeline for reporting back to the AAC. This is to occur within one month, or a date otherwise provided by staff to the AAC at the meeting.
- An updated Monitoring and Contravention section, to ensure consistency with the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Clarifying the role of the Office of the City Clerk.

Other changes address AAC concerns regarding lack of information provided during consultation, and information to answer frequently asked questions by staff. As part of the revised Process, the AO will implement a new consultation request form, which further addresses concerns raised by staff and the AAC. The AO will also promote the new Process through staff communications, training and the AWG.

The City would like to recognize the AAC for their dedication, countless hours of volunteer work, and their invaluable expertise.

Accessibility Working Group

The Accessibility Working Group (AWG) is an inter-departmental working group mandated by Council to monitor the City's Accessibility Plan progress, including compliance with the AODA. All departments, including OPH and OPL, provide a representative from their Business Support Services 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 for their department.

In general, this group meets approximately 10 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 2021 includes, but is not limited to:

- Supported the completion of the Corporate AODA compliance report, including updating the City's list of web assets;
- Reviewed and provided feedback on the new Process for Consulting with the AAC, in multiple phases;
- 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; and
- Served as a resource for departmental staff to engage with the AAC, and apply an accessibility lens to projects.

The AO would like to thank the AWG representatives for their commitment and dedication to increasing accessibility across the organization in 2021.

Partnership Development

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

In 2021, the City hosted two ONAP meetings. In the Spring, this meeting included a presentation and discussion with the Director, Policy and Standards, Ministry of Seniors

and Accessibility. These sessions with the Province are of the utmost importance as they allow the network to remain informed on Provincial direction with the AODA. This meeting also included presentations on the Canadian Accessibility Network and Accessibility Standards Canada, which was delivered by their Chief Executive Officer.

As 2021 was a compliance reporting year, a discussion was held with members at the Fall ONAP. The meeting included a presentation by the City on how staff complete the attestation workbook and a lengthy discussion on web accessibility.

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). CAN strives to bring organizations together to facilitate partnerships in specific collaboration areas under five overarching domains:

- Community Engagement;
- Education and Training;
- Employment;
- Policy; and
- Research, Design and Innovation.

Each partner can identify the area where they have done work or wish to do work, and conversely to identify other organizations with interest in doing work in the same area. 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 [CAN 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 roll 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; and
- providing a forum for partner organizations to come together to learn from one another, engage in collaborative initiatives and network.

The City is a member of the CAN Advisory Committee and the Policy Domain Area Committee. The City also participates in working groups and events as part of CAN.

This collaboration directly supports the City's Strategic Plan and assists the City in advancing Council's Strategic Priorities. 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 the City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan.

As a leader in accessibility, the City continues to showcase the innovative work of our staff, to meet the current and future needs of our diverse communities and leverage partnerships that would support the City's efforts to promote its residents' right to participate in Ottawa's social, political, economic and cultural life without barriers.

As part of the City's partnership with CAN, the City was invited to present and participate in Carleton's annual Enable Ottawa conference. Staff from the AO presented

on innovative practices at the City of Ottawa. Staff hosted another session and provided financial sponsorship to offer sign language interpretation at the event.

International Association of Accessibility Professionals

In 2020, the City became a member of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) and expanded its membership in 2021. The association's mission is to define, promote, improve, and diversify the accessibility profession globally through certification, education, and networking in order 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 of Ottawa with access to accessibility experts, learning opportunities and best practices from around the world to enhance accessibility at the City of Ottawa. The City has already benefited from many learning opportunities through the IAAP. Staff from the AO will also work towards certification through the IAAP, which would positively contribute to City projects and supporting City staff.

Sharing Best Practices

The City is proud to be a leader in accessibility and as such is committed to sharing information on its accessibility policies, procedures and trainings through ottawa.ca. The AO made several updates to its pages on ottawa.ca in 2021 to ensure updated content and easy navigation. This work will continue in 2022.

In 2021, staff participated in meetings with public sector organizations across Ontario to share accessibility best practices, training, and resources to assist them to become compliant with the AODA. Meetings were also held with municipal staff across the country, upon request.

Additionally, AO staff presented to Defense Canada in February 2021. This request came as the department prepares to implement the Accessible Canada Act, and focused on the City's approach to compliance, accessible procurement and engagement with the community.

Training and professional development of City staff is important to continual growth as accessibility leaders. The AO continues to share relevant workshops, trainings and

materials through the AWG, and through its membership in the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals.

Community Engagement

As mentioned above, engagement with persons with disabilities is a primary focus of the AO in the 2020-2024 COMAP.

In 2021, City staff continued meeting with representatives from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), the Canadian Council for the Blind (CCB) and the Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians (AEBC). City staff also re-established regular meetings with the ODC. 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. The City has a strong relationship with representatives from these organizations and engagement will continue to occur in 2022. The City would like to thank these community stakeholders for their time and continued efforts to ensuring our City is accessible for all residents.

2021 Departmental Accessibility Achievements

Highlights of various accessibility initiatives and actions undertaken across City departments and service areas throughout 2021 are summarized below. These initiatives have prevented and removed barriers to accessibility in City services, programs, policies, purchases and projects.

This report does not include all the accessibility initiatives undertaken by the City in 2021. A full listing of all 2021 accessibility initiative outcomes is available in **Document 5**. Due to the City's ongoing response to COVID-19, some non-essential initiatives continued to be on hold in 2021. It is anticipated that these initiatives will resume as soon as possible.

Accessibility Events

AccessAbility Day

The City celebrated its 18th annual AccessAbility day on May 27, 2021. The event's theme was "Barriers and Benefits to Participation in a Virtual World".

During the virtual event, Mayor Jim Watson presented the day's proclamation to Suzanne Blanchard and Tony Labillois of the Canadian Accessibility Network and announced the City's participation in CAN.

Carleton University is recognized as a leader in accessibility advocacy, research, and best practices. The Mayor expressed how fortunate Ottawa is to have Carleton's national leadership on accessibility issues and the City looks forward to the benefits this collaboration will have for residents.

Supporting the theme, the event also featured a community panel discussion about the experiences of people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel discussed new barriers that were created during the pandemic, benefits to accessing services through technology and recommendations for the City and other businesses to minimize barriers.

To promote the inclusion of all participants, various accessibility supports were provided during the event including ASL, LSQ, continuous real-time captioning in English and French, and simultaneous French translation.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

On December 2, 2021, the City of Ottawa hosted their third annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities event virtually over Zoom. While the recognized day itself is observed on December 3, the City held its event the day before to accommodate participants wishing to attend multiple virtual events held across City or around the world. Over 130 participants attended this year's event.

This day aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme for this year's event was "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world" and participants were encouraged to learn about how we can commit to a world characterized by human rights.

The event included a proclamation from Deputy Mayor Laura Dudas, a speech from Councillor Matthew Luloff thanking all members of our AAC for their hard work, as well as a presentation from Dr. Holly Ellingwood and Vania Karam, two members of the AAC.

Additionally, the event featured two speakers, including Jeff Willbond, Director General of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, who provided an update on the Accessible Canada Act, as well as Jeff Poirier, Acting Director of the Policy, Education, Monitoring and Outreach Branch of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, who spoke about the impacts of COVID-19 on people with disabilities and Human Rights in our province.

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.

Departments track accessible procurement under \$15,000 using the Monthly Procurement Tracking form. This form was created in 2020 using Office 365 tools, making it available to all employees without the need for network access.

In 2021, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to seek the provision of software for the creation and/or remediation of accessible PDFs. The software is used by staff to validate PDF files against recognized industry standards for accessibility, such as WCAG and PDF/UA. Additional points were awarded for solutions for MS Office based source file optimization, bilingual and accessible support of the software, as well as the vendor's ability to offer additional services such as website scans and auto-tagging of high volume, templated documents.

Upon review of all submissions, the selected vendor can fulfill all requirements to ensure the continued creation of accessible PDF documents, and can additionally meet the supplemental conditions stated in the RFP.

AODA 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 [...] appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons." 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.

To ensure staff receives training that is, "appropriate to their duties" (section 7.2 of the IASR,) the City also offers several other AODA related trainings. These include, but are not limited to, Accessible Procurement, Management Compliance and Accessible Word and PDF Documents training.

It is important to note that the compliance rates mentioned 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 leave of absences. Non-compliance to 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.

Throughout 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to influence the delivery of accessibility training for City of Ottawa staff and volunteers and all training was conducted virtually. The AO understands the value of in-person training, for targeted discussion and information retention, and looks forward to resuming this in the future.

AODA: Accessibility for All

As of December 2021, 86 per cent of City of Ottawa staff have completed the Corporate-wide AODA: Accessibility for All training. New staff are trained as soon as practicable. During 2021, our e-learning platforms migrated from iLearn (networked) and uLearn (non-networked) to the new Learn (for networked staff) and oLearn (for non-networked staff, contractors, and community partners). A total of 2,544 individuals completed the AODA: Accessibility for All training across these four platforms throughout 2021. The breakdown was as follows:

- English: 2,497
- French: 47

Individuals who complete the training are asked to provide feedback on the course through a survey. Some of the feedback in 2021 included:

- A useful primer on accessibility.
- Although there was a lot of material to digest, it was presented in a meaningful way with a logical flow, breaking down concepts into manageable pieces.
- As a non-citizen, it was great to fully understand the rights of people with disabilities and how to treat others, as I previously did not know before this. Thus, it was great to see the fundamentals and seeing how the city incorporates accessibility into all services.
- I liked the Awkward video. I liked the use of people with disabilities to help present the training information.
- Even though the information was sufficient, I think that the team can explore other ways of making the information more concise, yet informative.
- The presentation was clear and helpful to a new city of Ottawa employee.

- Good information, but too repetitive at times which makes it hard to stay engaged to such an important subject.
- While there was a lot of insightful information presented, I would have liked to hear more about personal experiences of people in my city with disabilities and real examples of accessibility issues in my city.
- I loved the video 'Awkward no more!'. It was very funny and informative. Definitely the highlight of the training module.
- The real-life situations were effective tie-ins to the lesson.
- This type of material can be very dry and thus difficult to absorb but because it was broken up with the short videos - it made it easier to take in.
- Others may say it was too long, but I was happy with the content and the time it took because some of us do not know the foundational information, i.e. the different types of disabilities, etc. So I am glad that everything was covered.
- This is an important topic that takes this length to completely understand.
- It was a longer course, there's no doubt, but it seems worth it the way it was done.
- So long! Much of this information should be broken up and provided to department specific groups, i.e., the built environment.

Feedback is regularly reviewed to make improvements to the course and some changes will be implemented in 2022. In-person training also allows staff to make better connections to their projects and work, as it allows for more targeted discussion.

AODA Management Training

Managers and Supervisors at or above Level 5 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 embrace accessibility and ensure they and their staff meet the requirements of the AODA.

In 2021, the AO facilitated four virtual management training sessions, with a total of 42 Managers and Supervisors in attendance across the four sessions. Since this training was first offered in 2013, a total of 463 managers and supervisors have received this training.

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 highly 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. As a result of COVID-19, no Accessible Procurement workshops were held in 2021; however, 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 the accessible procurement tracking.

Accessible Document Training

Webinar-based training through Microsoft (MS) Teams continued in 2021, though numbers did drop during this year for a number of reasons. COVID-related staff reassignments, spending freezes and a training freeze during the software RFP process were factors contributing to a lower number of staff trained. While the overall number of staff trained dropped, the total number of training sessions did not as the demand for one-on-one mentorship and training sessions rose significantly over previous years. Approximately 30 one-on-one sessions for PDF or accessible documents training were conducted in 2021.

Accessible PDF training was suspended during the latter stages of 2021 during the RFP process for a PDF Accessibility software solution. Training will continue in 2022 and will be conducted by the vendor and be supplemented by in-house workshops offered in-house by ICSD staff. Additional courses related to source document accessibility and PDF accessibility basics will also be offered.

Accessibility Training for Volunteers

The City continues to offer online AODA training for our volunteers. In 2021, 38 new volunteers completed this training.

Accessibility Impacts

In 2011, Council approved a motion that,

- Staff be directed to immediately include a section called “Accessibility Impacts” in all reports to Committee and Council that would describe all actions taken to ensure that staff review proposed projects, prior to

Council approval, for any potential positive or negative impact on People with Disabilities and seniors; and

- That by the end of 2011, the AO staff work with the AAC to develop an “Accessibility Impacts Checklist” to assist staff when writing committee reports to determine the impact of their work on People with Disabilities.

Recommendation 2 of this report is to approve the new mandatory Accessibility Impacts instructions for reports to Committee and Council. These improvements were made as a result of an AAC inquiry in 2020, requesting information on how staff are supported to write this section of reports.

In 2021, the AO worked with the AWG to examine the current process for writing Accessibility Impacts Statements. This review resulted in process improvements where report authors have the resources and tools that they need to write meaningful impact statements. The AO has also been providing enhanced support to report authors by reviewing the legislative agenda on a weekly basis and proactively offering review and recommendations for some reports. Over 30 reports received enhanced support to by the AO to complete this section in 2021. 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 the City’s commitment to accessibility.

This practice has resulted in greater understanding of the section of reports, consultation with the AAC and community stakeholders, information sharing, and support for many projects. This practice will continue in 2022.

2021 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES

The City’s AO releases a monthly e-newsletter to subscribers entitled, “Accessibility Spotlight.” The newsletter provides accessibility articles relating to city services, events, programs, initiatives and other related topics in order to keep residents and subscribers informed. Spotlight articles for 2021 included but were not limited to the following subjects:

- City reviewing its Winter Maintenance Quality Standards
- Introduction of Canada Video Relay Service for residents
- Community and Safety Well-Being Plan
- Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group
- COVID-19 Vaccination forum
- AccessAbility Day 2021

- ENABLE Conference 2021
- Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program
- Council approves updates to the City's Accessibility Policy
- Invitation to Inform Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- City of Ottawa's Anti-Racism Secretariat second phase of action planning initiatives
- Updates to the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Design Standards

In 2021, the AO sent out 11 editions of the newsletter in both English and French, featuring over 38 articles about accessibility initiatives, services, events, and invitations from all departments across the City. The newsletter was distributed to 4,333 subscribers in English, an increase of 1,850 from 2020, and 192 in French, an increase of 36 from last year. The AO is committed to sharing updates and information with the public and will continue to work to find ways to increase the newsletter's subscribers.

The Financial Services Department (FSD) began a thorough review of both the web and print versions of the Water Utility and the Property Tax bills. Finance staff continue to review existing materials to ensure AODA compliance. Updates have been made to the web products, such as the 2021 rate increase insert to provide an AODA compliant web version hosted on ottawa.ca.

During 2021, the City continued to make improvements to the City's main website, ottawa.ca, to become fully accessible. The City remains above the government industry benchmark in overall web compliance, including both HTML based web pages and PDF files. Utilizing the Siteimprove tool to constantly measure the accessibility of our site, the City's Web Leads closely monitor their respective departmental content to maintain compliance commitments. As of March 1, 2022, over 96 per cent of an inventory of 7,300 PDF files were fully accessible, according to Siteimprove's testing algorithms. Of the remaining four per cent, a significant portion of those files are alternatives to accessible HTML content that exists within the site.

The City is proud to note that as a result of its continuing efforts to increase web accessibility, the home page of ottawa.ca retains a position in the top five per cent of WebAIM's accessibility rankings. WebAIM is a non-profit organization based in the Institute for Disability Research, Policy and Practice at Utah State University. It conducts an annual accessibility analysis of the top one million web sites, based on site referrals. In 2021, the home page of ottawa.ca ranked 13,728 of the one million sites analysed. This is the highest known ranking among major municipalities in Ontario. OCtranspo.com also ranks in the top five per cent and was ranked 18,913 of one million in 2021.

The City's Quality Assurance (QA) team assesses both public facing and internal facing applications and web sites for WCAG compliance and usability by people with disabilities. This team has completed hundreds of accessibility reviews using a variety of tools for both automated and manual testing. These staff are fully trained and certified testers who work closely with independent third-party accessibility companies to ensure the most positive user experience for individuals with disabilities.

The City has dedicated a tremendous number of staff hours to ensure new and existing applications meet or exceed current AODA legislated requirements. In addition, this team has been working with software vendors, internal development teams and Procurement to promote the importance of producing accessible applications and web sites.

Information and Technology Services (ITS) continues to implement SharePoint and support the adoption of Office 365 with all City employees with the use of their accessibility tools. A guide on how to make SharePoint content accessible was circulated in Q1 2021 and ITS continues to meet monthly to review AODA issues that must be corrected by Microsoft. Approximately one third of the issues reported have already been resolved by Microsoft and verified by the Quality Assurance team.

The City remains committed to providing accessible communications for people with disabilities. Throughout 2021, virtual media availabilities and emergency information sessions were broadcasted on the City's YouTube channel and Rogers TV, which provided residents with all pertinent information regarding our City.

As previously mentioned, the AO also organized ASL and LSQ interpretation for all media availabilities throughout the year. This work will continue throughout 2022.

All Committee and Council meetings remained virtual in 2021. Accommodations are actively offered through Committee and Council agendas and are provided upon request. Some technical briefings provided to Council included interpretation in ASL and LSQ.

2021 EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Human Resources (as part of ICSD) and the Equity Secretariat in the Community and Social Services Department (CSSD) continue work on the LEAD IT (Leverage Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion Targets) Program. Implementation has been further developed and piloted in four departments, as well as additional competitions within CSSD. This strategic initiative aims to increase representation of employment equity groups across the City. A robust implementation process has been developed that

includes the development of both a sponsors group and a steering committee; working groups focused on the various areas impacted by this work (i.e., change management, training, communications, etc.); as well as the development of policies, tools and supporting resources. In 2021, an evaluation was undertaken of the pilots to inform full implementation to be launched in Q3 2022. Through this work, barriers have been identified and addressed, processes have been adjusted, and continual lessons have been learned to support inclusive hiring that considers diversity as an added value.

The AO continue to share information with employees and management through internal communications in 2021. This included updates on accessibility during COVID-19, as well as the City's continued commitment to its legislative responsibilities. In 2021, the AO published 11 articles in the internal In The Loop employee newsletter as well as 3 articles in Management Bulletins. These included, but were limited to the following subjects:

- Accessibility for Employees during COVID-19
- Accessible formats and communications support updates
- AccessAbility Day 2021
- ENABLE Ottawa conference 2021
- Employees with Disabilities affinity group recognizes Accessibility Awareness Week
- Reminder: AODA training for staff

Affinity groups further developed in 2021, including the Employees with Disabilities Affinity Group. As an employee-led group, its mandate was defined by its membership. Several virtual gatherings were held in 2021 and a virtual learning session was coordinated in response to National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. This event was open to all City staff and focused on accommodation in the workplace. Corporate sponsorship was received from PIED to support the accommodation and promotion of the event. The city currently has 9 active Affinity groups that support various lived experiences and social identities that also consider intersectionality in their membership.

With the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery, additional consideration and support has been given to mental health and required support for staff. Updated information on supports are provided to staff through the SharePoint page and promotion of the tools available through the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) are regularly discussed.

In 2021, the Gender and Race Equity, Indigenous Relations, Diversity and Inclusion (GREIRDI) branch within CSSD updated and digitized the Count ME In! self-identification questionnaire, for employees. This included a robust communications campaign with engagement across the organization. Awareness focused on the importance of identifying lived experiences, benefits to the individual and the organization, as well as how the information is to be used. Overall participation rate rose from 81 per cent to 87 per cent. There was also a marked increase in individuals self-identifying as living with disabilities, moving from 2.5 per cent to 7 per cent post campaign. This speaks to the success of the awareness campaign and the work towards creating an inclusive environment for employees with disabilities and other employment equity groups.

Finally, throughout 2021, many initiatives introduced at the beginning of the pandemic continued in order to support employee wellness and mental health. This includes a Share Point site dedicated to wellness, including a significant number of articles and supports for employees, as well as many communications from the Senior Leadership Team informing staff of resources and supports. The City continued to promote the Employee and Family Assistance Program in corporate communications as a resource for employees needing mental health supports while navigating the various challenges the pandemic caused throughout the year. The City has also partnered with our training vendors to ensure continued access to a wide variety of webinars, podcasts and training materials to enhance employee wellness and mental health.

A corporate-wide conference was also organized in June 2021 by the City's Organizational Development team with three main wellness themes. Departments across the City have been working with HR Organizational Health Consultants to establish and expand Peer Support Programs that aim to promote mental health and well-being through peer-to-peer support for staff who need to talk to someone, connect and debrief on a variety of issues and challenges they may be experiencing.

2021 TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

As directed by Council, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) conducted a study throughout 2021 of the complaints and concerns expressed regarding the quality, availability and costs of on-demand accessible taxi services. The consultant's report was received, and the department is reviewing the recommendations and preparing the staff report, which will be presented to the Community and Protective Services Committee in Q1 2023.

By-law and Regulatory Services also continued their financial support to TSD to provide accessible transportation improvements. This included providing \$74,085 for taxi coupons, \$47,814 for discounted taxi coupons and \$150,000 for rural transportation funding.

In addition to this funding, TSD also provided Community and Social Services (CSS) agencies with \$856,000 in funding last year for the delivery of transportation services to rural seniors and persons with disabilities. \$200,000 of the overall funding 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. Like conventional and Para Transpo ridership, the CSS agencies have experienced significantly decreased demand throughout 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19. However, the agencies provided 6,044 one-way trips in 2021, an increase of 28 percent compared to 2020, when ridership was at its lowest due to COVID-19. The CSS agencies were able to meet about 97 per cent of all trip requests.

Despite the ongoing challenges with Ottawa's Light Rail Transit (LRT), there were numerous positive outcomes throughout 2021 regarding the accessibility of this service. The new permanent Station Service Attendant program launched last year, where Station Service Attendants were available at O-Train Line 1 stations during regular operating hours. Staff are positioned at high-volume locations and visit different stations during their shifts to provide additional resources focused on customer service. They observed and reported on a variety of issues and assisted customers of all abilities during service disruptions and special events. In 2022, TSD will finalize a staffing plan that will be brought forward as part of the 2023 budget process for additional Station Service Attendants to support the system as it expands.

TSD also conducted a best-practice review of OC Transpo's cooperative seating signage on O-Train Line 1 trains. Staff reviewed the priority seating signage installed in the trains of five transit agencies. Staff have summarized the findings in a document and will circulate to internal stakeholders for review and offer feedback. In 2022, the findings and best practices will be reviewed with internal stakeholders for their feedback and recommendations on next steps.

TSD completed the final design review of Stage 2 LRT stations. These stations will be fully accessible, meeting or exceeding the requirements of the AODA, the Ontario Building Code and the City's ADS. Designs for new stations include the same accessible features in the Stage 1 stations, including tactile directional wayfinding, dual elevators serving station platforms, tactile signage, as well as fully accessible public

washrooms at Trim, Place d'Orléans, Moodie, Baseline, Lincoln Fields and Limebank stations. The trains will also be fully accessible.

On the Trillium Line south extension to Riverside South and the airport, construction is underway at all 13 stations, and will continue through to its anticipated opening in 2023. On the Confederation Line east extension, construction started at four of five stations and will continue through to 2024. On the west extension, construction started at four of 12 stations and will continue to 2025. When Stage 2 is complete, the O-Train system will include 64 kilometres of track and 41 light rail transit stations, and 77 per cent of Ottawa residents will live within five kilometres of the light rail system.

TSD continued to update and engage several stakeholders in 2021 regarding the accessibility of the proposed Stage 2 LRT stations and vehicles. This included meeting with representatives in November 2021 from the CNIB, AEBC, CCB and the AO where staff provided a Stage 2 update. Staff also started adding accessibility specific messaging to all Stage 2 public notices, reinforcing the importance of maintaining accessibility during the project's construction phase. In 2022, the Stage 2 LRT communications team will continue to engage stakeholders regarding the accessibility of proposed stations and vehicles. Presentations and consultations will be provided at the community's request, and feedback will be considered and implemented, where possible.

The O-Train Line 1 access and evacuation procedures were also reviewed last year, considering the three primary train evacuation scenarios: train to train, train to station, and train to guideway. This review also included a hazard assessment. Through this review, evacuation procedures were found to be satisfactory, and no updates were made to these procedures in 2021. In 2022, evacuation procedures for tunnels to ensure adequate provisions are in place to accommodate persons with disabilities will be reviewed, while priority will be placed on conducting tabletop and infield exercises on rail evacuations for customers of all abilities.

These evacuation procedures are also now posted on OC Transpo's website. This information identifies the general procedures in the event a train needs to be evacuated and the provisions in place to accommodate persons with disabilities. This content affirms that responders will determine the best evacuation strategy for each situation, dependent on a customer's individual needs. Customers were also provided with contact information should they have questions regarding emergency evacuation procedures for any mode of transportation. In 2022, enhanced information will be made available to customers of all abilities about the existing procedures in place to safely evacuate stations, trains, and buses during an emergency. This information will be

communicated to customers through a variety of channels, including the web site, social media, and public service announcements.

In 2021, TSD completed the acquisition of four 40-foot battery-electric buses. The new buses include the same accessibility features found on the newer buses, which include allocated spaces for customers using mobility devices, “theatre-style” flip-down seats, a second next-stop-announcement sign for customers facing the back of the bus, and better-quality interior and exterior audio speakers. These buses are expected to enter into service in early 2022. Buses will be equipped with sound-emission technology to ensure pedestrians and cyclists can hear the vehicle. Staff will be testing the capabilities of the system and will engage and monitor feedback from both customers with disabilities as well as accessibility stakeholders during this first phase of the battery-electric bus rollout.

Accessibility improvements were also made at on-street bus stops, which included the installation of new accessible exterior benches at two on-street bus stops, while several additional bus stops were identified for bench installations in 2022. As well, several on-street Para Transpo passenger loading zones were formalized through the addition of signage. In 2022, improvements will be completed to the 77 on-street bus stops that could not be completed last year due to issues related to the pandemic. Additional on-street bus stops identified for improvement will also occur throughout this year through various programs. This includes modernizing several older on-street bus stops to meet the City’s ADS. Such enhancements will include the installation of new level bus pads, shelters, seating, connections to adjacent sidewalks and pathways, larger boarding areas, curb ramps in locations where no adjacent pedestrian connections existed and installing new or upgrading existing accessible exterior benches. Additional stops for rehabilitation will also be added, focusing on locations with the greatest need and using data gathered as part of OC Transpo’s on-street bus stop accessibility review.

In 2021, TSD also established the Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group. The purpose of this group is to provide feedback on proposed service improvements and to increase customer engagement. The working group initially consisted of 12 members of the public who were or represented registered Para Transpo customers, including a representative of the AAC. OC Transpo staff met with working group members 12 times in 2021 to discuss a variety of issues. In 2022, staff will continue to engage the Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group in discussions on Para Transpo programs and services.

Throughout 2021, testing of the My Para Transpo online services continued, including online trip booking and cancellation and ride tracking. This testing engaged members of

the Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group, as well as other customers and stakeholders. Throughout this process, feedback has been documented to improve the site and increase its functionality. A web accessibility audit of My Para Transpo was also completed, and the online services are WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant, as required under the AODA.

In 2022, the web site pilot testing will continue for an additional five weeks and increase the number of early adopters, testing the functionality of My Para Transpo to assess its public readiness. More than 50 customers are expected to be involved in using these online services to book trips, and the launch of the initial set of My Para Transpo online services to all Para Transpo customers is expected in Q2 2022. These initial services will include online trip booking, cancellation, and ride tracking. The next release of the My Para Transpo online services, which will include customer notifications and reminder notices for both web app trips and call center booked trips, is anticipated for Q1 2023, and will comply with WCAG 2.1 standards, exceeding Provincial requirements.

In 2021, TSD removed the requirement that restricted Para Transpo customers to booking a maximum of four one-way trips per day. This measure, which was recommended by members of the Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group, gives customers greater flexibility in planning their daily lives. In 2022, staff will look at the feasibility of offering 24/7 service to customers as Para Transpo trips currently can only be scheduled between 6:00 a.m. and midnight. Staff will also re-assess the current requirement that requires customers to make casual trip bookings only one day in advance. All Para Transpo service enhancements and changes will be developed in consultation and collaboration with the Para Transpo Customer Service Working Group. Any required policy changes would be brought to the Transit Commission for consideration.

Work also continued to enhance Para Transpo services and operations, specifically regarding the eligibility of the service to potential customers, as well as improving overall customer service. Such examples include: establishing the independent eligibility appeals panel for applicants who have been denied eligibility and wish to have the decision reviewed; implementing the Para Transpo renewal process, where customers with full and conditional eligibility will have their eligibility renewed and/or re-assessed once every three years; and implementing the late cancellation policy, which will be applied to all Para Transpo trips based on a points system for late cancellations and no-shows. Implementation of these measures has been delayed due to operational requirements of the pandemic; however, the procedures will be finalized in 2022 to formally establish the membership of the independent appeals panel. In late 2022, the

request for public membership will be included in the public member requests for the City's advisory committees. Additionally, the procedures to formally implement the Para Transpo eligibility renewal process will also be finalized, and the updated late cancellation policy will roll out in conjunction with the planned My Para Transpo customer-trip-reminder notices.

Finally, to improve overall access to public transit without financial constraint, Council maintained its freeze to the 2019 level of fares for the Community Pass (for Ontario Disability Support Program recipients), EquiPass (for people with low incomes), and Access Pass (for Para Transpo customers who also use conventional bus and train service). This is the third consecutive year these prices have not increased. Council also directed OC Transpo to implement no-charge fares for children 6 and 7 years old (those five and younger were already eligible for no-charge fares). This new program change is currently being piloted and will be applied to both OC Transpo conventional and Para Transpo specialized services.

2021 BUILT ENVIRONMENT (DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES) INITIATIVES

For staff working in the built environment, education on accessibility legislation and emerging practice continues to be a focus for the City. In 2021, the City partnered with the National Capital Heavy Construction Association and the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies to offer a virtual version of the annual Education Series. This included two presentations on mental health and substance use, as well as emerging design and construction techniques. The second session reviewed the design and construction of protected intersections and raised cycle paths and included an overview of the application of accessibility features in the presence of cycling infrastructure.

Variances to the City's ADS or AODA non-compliance are subject to a deviation process and documented as per the AODA. The City's deviation process for infrastructure projects is overseen by the Standards Unit, which is now situated in IWD. 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 follow a similar deviation process. Consultation with the AAC may occur for these projects. There were seven deviations to the ADS recorded in 2021. These include:

- Entrance railings at Walter Baker Recreation Complex: Due to the width of the stair system (15.2m), four handrails are provided in the centre of the stair system at spacing meeting the ADS requirements. The remaining space is bordered with handrails but does not include intermediate

handrails. This was to provide flexibility for other users, including those with hockey equipment.

- Chapel Hill Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Height of charging stations purchased for site are 20 mm higher than the ADS requirement. There are limited charging station models available for purchase, and charging stations are designed to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, approximately 1220 mm, compared to the ADS requirement of 1200 mm.
- Nepean Sportsplex Steve Yzerman Arena: Installation of accessible viewing area did not meet the ADS requirement of three per cent accessible seating in the arena.
- Tenth Line Multi-Use Pathway Rest Area: The longitudinal slope of the concrete rest area pad was designed to five per cent as it is adjacent to the pathway due to location constraints, exceeding the ADS requirement of two per cent.
- Spring Valley Trail Subdivision Phase 3 secondary pathway: A secondary pathway was required through an open space block to a developer-built park. The grade of the open space block was too steep to accommodate an accessible pathway and stairs were required. There is another fully accessible entrance to the park.
- Kitchissippi Bulbouts: Bulbouts were installed at two locations. While the bulbouts were constructed with concrete, the sidewalks were reinstated using pavers. In one location, the cross slope was 3.7 per cent, which exceeds the ADS requirement of two per cent.
- Tactile Surface Walking Indicators at Pedestrian Crossovers: Two AODA deviations for the installation of Tactile Surface Walking Indicators (TWSIs) at existing depressed curb locations were recorded. Curb and sidewalk modifications were not part of the scope of the work to install Pedestrian Crossovers (PXOs) at these locations. Curb depressions already existed on both sides of the road where crossings were proposed. Given that there was no significant work being undertaken to accommodate the PXOs at these locations, a deviation was recorded.

Within the Community and Social Services Department, accessibility improvements have been completed to the Huron Early learning centre's play yard. The play yard at Foster Farm will undergo upgrades to accessibility in 2022.

In 2021-2022, the Ontario Renovates program was expanded to include social housing providers with accessibility-related repairs and renovations as part of the Year 3 Ontario

Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) funding stream. In addition, social housing providers continued to receive funding to support accessibility-related repair and renovation projects under the Year 3 Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the 2021 Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan (HHIP) capital repair funding streams.

Work began on the 2021 Spec updates in October 2020 with publication in March 2021. These updates included a review of the application and material to be used for improved delineation between pedestrian and cycling facilities. With the publication of the Protected Intersection Design Guide (PIDG) in 2021, an undertaking to address gaps in direction, specifications, standard details, and materials will take place in 2021-2022, with elements incorporated into the Standard Tender documents for Unit Price Contracts as they become available.

The Standards Unit continued to assess the accessibility of construction sites during the 2021 construction season. Site visits were performed bi-weekly with staff from the Standards Unit and members of the project team. Due to COVID-19, members of the community were not included in these assessments in 2021. The purpose of these assessments is to review on-site provisions of accessibility features, confirm contract requirements are in place, and educate and raise awareness regarding accommodation of pedestrians with disabilities and increased mobility needs through and/or around construction sites of infrastructure projects.

The Council-approved 2021 budget for the Accessibility Barrier Removal Program was 2.5 million, which was managed by PIED. This budget is used to enhance accessibility features at City Facilities, which are identified through accessibility audits conducted by RCFS. RCFS also received funding from the Older Adult Plan Advisory Committee to further remove barriers at City Facilities. The following projects were included in this program in 2021:

- Nepean Sportsplex Yzerman Arena viewing platform: Design in progress, gone to tender;
- Nepean Sportsplex Phase 2 barrier removal: 66 per cent complete design phase, construction to be completed in 2022;
- Kanata Recreation Centre barrier removals: Completion in 2021;
- Bob MacQuarrie Recreation Complex accessible change rooms: Will be completed in 2022;
- Walter Baker Seniors Centre paving parking lot and accessible ramps: Parking lot construction phase, accessible ramp design phase;

- St-Laurent Complex, Don Gamble Park replace rooftop chiller and accessible change room: 99 per cent complete design phase;
- Ray Friel Customer Service Centre: Completion in 2021;
- Osgoode Townhall (Library) accessibility retrofits (washroom/kitchenette, exterior path of travel, ramp modification): Construction 2021-2022; and
- Huron Child Care Centre accessible playground: Substantially completed in 2021.

In 2021, the Public Works Department (PWD) consulted the public as part of their Winter Maintenance Quality Standards review. An accessibility lens was applied to this review and to the development of new Maintenance Quality Standards. Additionally, a City staff member was available to support persons with disabilities, as required, to participate in the consultation with appropriate supports. This is the first time PWD provided this dedicated resource during community engagement.

Additionally, PWD engaged with the AO, staff, and members of public in an awareness campaign for staff. A video was created that highlights the impacts of winter maintenance on the mobility, safety, and independence of persons with disabilities in our City.

Staff working on the Integrated Street Furniture Program continue to work to improve the design and function of street furniture in public spaces. In 2021, this Program installed 202 new accessible benches and 360 new waste receptacles which had been previously assessed for accessibility, throughout the City. Since 2019, 694 accessible benches and 1033 waste receptables have been installed City-wide. Accessible benches are also installed throughout the City as part of the Commemorative Bench program.

The City abides by clause 80.44 of IASR for procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order, which is overseen by Recreation, Culture and Facility Services (RCFS). Though there were some delays to planned maintenance in 2021 due to COVID-19, all other planned projects are complete.

The Community Connectivity Program enhances pedestrian and cycling facilities in communities, with a focus on links to schools, recreation centres, and major transit stations. In 2021, the Ogilvie Road multi-use pathway (MUP) was substantially

completed and is now open for use. The Belfast Road MUP is under construction and will be completed in 2022.

The Pedestrian Facilities Program provides new sidewalks, connects existing sidewalks and pathways, and improves pedestrian accessibility to transit, schools, parks, and other destinations. Many planning studies were initiated in 2021, and of these, many projects are anticipated to be in design and construction in 2022.

Many other City programs have an impact on the accessibility of pedestrian paths of travel, cycling and active transportation. This includes the Cycling Facilities Program/Active Transportation Missing Link Program, Development Sidewalks, and Integrated Road Renewal. For a full list of projects related to these programs, see **Document 5**.

The City is in the process of reviewing and updating its Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which provides long-term priorities and guidance for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and roads. The third round of public consultation for the TMP was launched in December 2021. The focus for this consultation is the draft TMP policy document and proposed active transportation projects. Policies related to inclusion and accessibility are included in the draft. This consultation will continue in 2022.

The Protected Intersection Design Guidelines (PIDG) were completed in 2021 (see **Document 11**). These were shared with internal and external stakeholders, including the AAC, and are available on ottawa.ca. The PIDG was developed using an accessibility lens, including an accessibility expert as part of the project team, and incorporates accessibility requirements for the development of protected intersections. This includes the application of a half-height curb to delineate between pedestrian and cyclist paths of travel. This method was tested and chosen amongst a number of options by City staff and community stakeholders with diverse accessibility perspectives. This user testing was supported by OC Transpo, who provided transportation to stakeholders to various testing sites. The introduction of the PIDG will have implications on Technical Bulletin ISTB-2020-03: Revisions to City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards, received by Council as part of the 2021 COMAP Annual Update, which will be assessed by staff as work continues.

Work on these guidelines will continue in 2022. This includes a Sidewalk and Cycle Track Delineation Design Elements study, in partnership with the Standards Unit. The goal of this study is to aid in the application of the half-height curb delineation method by preparing a report to staff with recommended detail drawings and additional guidance for application in various infrastructure or urban design elements.

Additionally, in 2022, the PIDG will be updated to add additional detail where multi-use pathways (MUP) split into cycle tracks and sidewalks, and to provide additional detail on signal design and signal infrastructure placement at protected intersections. An update on the progress of the study and MUP splits will be included in the 2020 COMAP Annual Update.

The City is working to test and pilot accessible technologies that enable customers with disabilities to activate Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) and Pedestrian Countdown Signals (PCS) remotely. This technology allows residents to activate the APS remotely using either a smartphone app or fob, and to obtain audible information about the intersection and PCS. The vendor who was successful in the tender process has experienced delays in providing a product that integrates into the traffic signal controller. It is expected that deployment of the product and pilot phase will begin in Spring/Summer 2022.

As a result of department changes, PRED will now be responsible for the installation of new APS throughout the City (except for LRT projects). In 2021, the City equipped 29 traffic signals with new Pedestrian Crossing Signals (PCS). Currently, out of 1,197 signalized intersections, 1,069, or about 89 per cent, are equipped with PCS, which is an increase from 87 per cent in 2020. Additionally, the City installed 26 new Pedestrian Cross Overs (PXOs) in 2021. These make it easier and safer for residents, particularly children, older adults, and persons with disabilities, to get around their own neighbourhoods. Work to install APS, PCS and PXOs throughout the City will continue in 2022.

The Patio Innovation Program continued in 2021, to support businesses who are impacted by COVID-19, by encouraging new restaurant patios and café seating. All patio applications must maintain a 2-meter clear pedestrian path of travel and must comply with the City's ADS, including cane-detectable delineation around the patio's border. Accessibility continues to be verified by City staff at the application stage. Additionally, when new or expanded patios are considered, every effort is made to maintain a straight pedestrian path of travel. Consideration is given for street furniture and other barriers when ensuring a straight pedestrian path of travel. This Program will continue in 2022 and will include a returning summer student position to provide support and proactive enforcement.

Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program

The City's 2021 Electric Kick Scooter (e-scooter) Pilot season ran from May through November last year. An accessibility lens was applied during the procurement process,

with safety and accessibility being a major component in when weighing the companies' proposals. Accessibility was also considered throughout the season, which included:

- Representation from the AO at weekly meetings with each company, the bi-weekly departmental working group meetings and bi-weekly communications meetings.
- Engagement with an accessibility stakeholder group. This group met more than five times and included representatives from CNIB, CCB, AEBC, ODC, and the City's AAC. Three of these meetings were held outside at various city locations for both braille and sound emission demonstrations with the three e-scooter providers.
- A special meeting of the AAC was held on December 14th, 2021.

Stakeholders were outspoken about the safety and accessibility concerns e-scooters posed by their presence on city streets. Their primary concerns were sidewalk riding and mis-parking of e-scooters. While staff and the e-scooter companies proactively problem solved these issues via technology and staffing throughout the 2021 season, these issues remained. Stakeholders maintained that the risk posed by these devices was unacceptable and strongly recommended e-scooters be removed from the streets. A special meeting with the AAC will be held in January 2022 to ensure the Committee continues to be included in the process, and to help inform Council before making a decision on the 2022 program. The 2022 COMAP annual update report will include information on this meeting and the evolution of this program.

2021 CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES

As required by the AODA, the City is continually receiving and responding to accessibility related service requests, feedback and inquiries. The City's AO received a total of 24 accessibility related service requests in 2021 through 3-1-1. The requests are first received by the AO, and then forwarded to the appropriate department for response, when necessary.

The requests that were received in 2021 can be categorized into the five accessibility Standards, as follows:

- 17 per cent, customer service;
- 29 per cent, built environment;
- 17 per cent, information and communication;
- 29 per cent, transportation; and
- 4 per cent, employment.

In addition to these requests, the AO also received one request (four per cent) for an accessible format and communication support.

The AO also received numerous complaints, questions and feedback from residents in the form of e-mails sent to the Office's general inbox, as well through many phone calls made directly to AO staff members.

Feedback on City services, programs and facilities is extremely important for the City to continue to improve accessibility. The AO will continue to work with the AAC, community organizations, and residents to ensure that accessibility-related feedback is received and responded to appropriately.

In 2020, ICSD, through the 3-1-1 call centre, introduced the Canada Video Relay Service (VRS) for Ottawa residents, as a result of feedback received from the Deaf community. The service allows Canadians who are Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, to make phone calls using internet and cellular phone-based technologies. Callers using VRS are connected with a sign language interpreter who provides real time interpretation for telephone calls. This allows callers to express themselves in their first language, ASL or LSQ, when asking questions or making requests to the City. This initiative is ongoing.

Additionally, ICSD also introduced the City of Ottawa mobile app in January 2021 in both official languages. This app allows residents to access online services from the convenience of their mobile device. Through this app, residents can now report non-emergency issues like potholes, graffiti and problems with garbage collection and save themselves from having to call or travel in-person to a client service centre.

RCFS, through their Accessible Programming initiative, increased participation in recreational programs that accommodate individuals with disabilities by continuing to assess and revise programming options throughout 2021. This included the development and delivery of a virtual "Variety at Home" program for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities when other programming was paused. They also offered adapted summer programs, which provided an opportunity for persons with disabilities to continue recreational activities when community programs were limited. RCFS also adapted the structure of their Inclusive Social Recreation programs to help accommodate demand when recreational facilities were closed during the lockdown period, and also accommodate the reopening of programs to lower the rate of program cancellations.

Over the course of 2021, EPS conducted consultations on the Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plan, which is required under the Province's *Safer Ontario Act*

(2018). Disability-related accommodations and supports were actively offered and provided to participants upon request. Moving forward the Community and Safety Well Being plan will sit with CSSD; however, accessible resources will continue to be offered as part of any public consultations moving forward.

CSSD, along with several other departments, continues to implement the 2020-2022 Older Adult Plan. While COVID-19 impacted the original plans for related initiatives, 24 actions were adapted to meet the intended outcomes. Actions continue to consider the diversity of Older Adults and have accessibility at the forefront.

The Snow Go Program provides a matching service to those who need to find a contractor or community member for snow removal. The Snow Go Assist Program provides older adults and people with disabilities on a low-income with financial assistance for snow removal services. In 2021, \$137,799 was allocated to nine agencies for the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist Programs.

The Ottawa Public Library continues to assist both Older Adults and persons with disabilities through their Homebound services program, a home delivery service providing library materials by request, which continued to run with adjustments due to staff's inability to enter long-term care facilities.

Additionally, through funding provided by the Older Adult Plan and in partnership with RCFS, the Library introduced a virtual workshop series entitled "Wellness Fridays", a weekly program run in English, and bi-weekly in French, featuring activities such as yoga, fitness, tai chi, painting, doodling, and sketching, all adapted to the needs and abilities of seniors. Residents are extremely grateful for these accessible services to allow them continued access to these library resources without having to leave their home.

In December 2021, OC Transpo simplified the requirements for public transit customers who use service animals by no longer issuing or requiring Service Animal Cards. This change better aligns OC Transpo with transit agencies across the province and the AODA. Customers who already carry Service Animal Cards can continue to use them until they expire or use other forms of identification such as: a vest, harness, or other visual indicator that clearly identifies the animal as a service animal; a letter from a regulated health professional confirming they require the animal for reasons relating to a disability; or other forms of identification, such as a guide dog identification card from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney-General.

In 2021, PRED installed 16 accessible benches in 16 wards across the City to continue to increase the availability of rest stops and assist with the improved mobility of older adults and persons with disabilities in the city.

Priorities for 2022

Many of the initiatives highlighted in this report will continue in 2022 and will be included in the next annual report. When the City is no longer in a state of emergency and stable, other initiatives will also come back into effect.

Undoubtedly, the City and OPH will continue to deal with COVID-19 and related public health pressures in 2022. The AO will continue to engage with impacted departments to ensure the City's response is accessible for all residents.

Partnerships and engagement will continue to be a key focus of the AO throughout the 2020-2024 COMAP. The AO will continue to support staff to engage with the AAC and other community stakeholders. The AO remains available to work with new community organizations run by and supporting people with disabilities. The AO will also continue to develop relationships through ONAP and CAN and staff working on legislation at the Federal and Provincial level.

At a 2018 meeting, the AAC passed a Motion related to the availability and protection of accessible parking in Ottawa. This Motion recognized the multiple competing priorities resulting in the removal of designated parking and no-parking spaces across the City, such as cycling infrastructure. Further pressure for these spaces has resulted from streetside patios, which have increased due to COVID-19. The resolutions of this Motion are:

- The AAC requests that the City of Ottawa adopt formal policies and practices that will promote and protect the availability of APP on-street spaces in Ottawa, by, amongst other things,
 - Requiring that usage studies be completed prior to the removal of APP on-street spaces to properly evaluate the impacts of the loss of those spaces on the disability community;
 - Requiring that lost APP on-street parking spaces be relocated to nearby streets; and
 - Requiring that APP on-street parking spaces can be removed only as a last resort.
- The AAC should be consulted prior to the removal of any APP on-street parking spaces, and that such consultation should include

usage study information for the targeted APP on-street parking spaces; and

- That this motion be referred to the newly appointed AAC in 2019.

The AAC continues to express concerns over the loss of on-street parking during consultation. As a result, the AO will work with staff to monitor the number of on-street parking spots and no parking areas that are removed annually, encourage ongoing consultation on this issue, and to review existing By-laws and policies to ensure the protection of parking spaces for people with Accessible Parking Passes.

Training for staff on the completion of the Accessibility Impacts statement for reports to Committee and Council will be developed and promoted in 2022. The AO will also work with staff in ICSD to develop guidelines and training related to accessible social media.

Staff continue to create accessible Committee and Council reports and supporting documents prior to uploading them to ottawa.ca and are expected to verify compliance before submitting them to the Office of the City Clerk. Staff are aware of challenges with this process, and it is currently under review. There are also accessibility issues with the existing SIRE E-Agenda page, used to access Council, Committee and Board agendas and minutes. Committee and Council Services is on track to roll-out a new system in 2022, which will be more accessible and more user-friendly.

In 2022, the City's Web Accessibility Policy will be reviewed. The Policy requires updating to reflect the RFP that took place in 2021, as previously described, with a new contract being awarded for accessible document remediation. As part of these updates, departmental staff, including the AO, AWG representatives, Business Support Services and Web Leads will also have the opportunity to provide feedback. An update on this review will be included in next year's annual report.

2022 Municipal Election

The Elections Office will continue to comply with the *AODA, 2005*, the related standards and regulations, and the accessibility-related provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA).

Bill 181, Elections Modernization Act, 2016 introduced a new accessibility provision to the MEA. Under Section 12.1(2), the Clerk responsible for the election shall “prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.” The Elections Office will consult designated members

of the Accessibility Advisory Committee as the plan is drafted. The plan will be made available to the public on the City's website upon completion.

There will be three separate voting opportunities, with a total of seven in-person voting days, for electors to cast their ballot in the 2022 Municipal Elections. Based on the past success of special advance voting days, the Elections Office expects to expand special advance voting to nine locations over four days from Saturday, September 24 to Tuesday, September 27, 2022. During this voting event, voting places will offer "anywhere voting" which allows electors to attend any voting place, regardless of their address, to cast their ballot. Advance Vote Days will take place on Friday, October 7 and Friday, October 14, 2022, with Voting Day occurring on Monday, October 24, 2022. On these voting days, electors will have the opportunity to vote in their wards. In accordance with the MEA, all voting locations will be fully accessible as further described below.

When choosing voting places for an election, Section 45 of the MEA prescribes that the Clerk has the statutory duty to establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she "considers most convenient for the electors". Pursuant to Subsection 45(2) of the MEA, "in establishing the locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities."

Subsection 45(7) of the MEA mandates that on Voting Day, a voting place be provided on the premise of:

1. An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;
2. An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm; and
3. A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied.

In addition to the provisions of the MEA, the Elections Office considers Ottawa's diverse geography (urban, suburban, and rural) as well as the social and economical makeup of the population to ensure that there is equitable access to all electors in every ward and that no undue hardship is experienced when participating in the democratic process of electing their representatives.

In accordance with the above-noted provisions, staff has identified approximately 681 voting places for the 2022 Municipal Elections. This includes multi-residential facilities

that provide care that do not meet the “bed count” threshold set out in the legislation but have been historically used as voting places in previous municipal elections.

As in past elections, the Elections Office will review the accessibility of every location that will be used as a voting place. Staff will conduct site visits and complete a detailed accessibility checklist to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors and candidates with disabilities.

The accessibility checklist was previously developed in consultation with staff in the City’s Accessibility Office and the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department, and includes the evaluation of features such as elevators, ramps, handrails, lighting, and door widths. The accessible features will be made available to electors on ottawa.ca/vote and on the Voter Notification Letters.

Building on the successful rollout of new technologies during past elections, the Elections Office will continue to make available several online tools on ottawa.ca/vote for the 2022 Municipal Elections. These online tools will allow electors to:

- Verify where they can vote
- Verify if they are on the Voters’ List
- Add themselves to the Voters’ List
- Amend their information on the Voters’ List
- Verify who is running in their ward
- Apply for a Special Mail-in Ballot

An additional online tool will allow members of the public to apply online to work as an election worker in the 2022 Municipal Elections.

To ensure that the in-person voting process is accessible for all electors, the Elections Office will make several accessibility tools available to electors including:

- A large print ballot
- A magnifying sheet
- A Braille listing of candidates
- A Braille ballot template
- A cell phone with elections call centre staff on standby. Electors may use this feature to call elections staff to have their ballot read to them over the phone.

Further, all special advance voting places, advance voting places and voting places in retirement residences and long-term care facilities will offer an Accessible Vote Tabulator (AVT). The AVT allows electors with disabilities to vote privately and independently through the use of its accessible features, which include:

- Bilingual visual support through a 19-inch screen with zoom, high contrast features
- A braille keypad
- Left-right paddles (colour-coded left and right paddles)
- A sip-puff device
- Bilingual audio through headphones

The Elections Office will offer voting options for electors who are unable to attend a voting place in person to cast their ballot. In accordance with Section 44 of the MEA, an elector may appoint a friend or family member to vote on their behalf as their voting proxy. This process involves the prior completion and certification of a prescribed form. In addition, election workers can assist an elector in casting their ballot by their bedside in an institution or in the parking lot outside of a voting place, also known as curbside voting.

Further, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff reviewed the possibility of implementing an alternative voting method during the 2022 Municipal Elections and on March 23, 2022, Council approved the implementation of a special mail-in ballot process for the general election as well as any by-elections that may occur during the 2022-2026 Term of Council. This process will allow eligible electors, particularly those from high-risk groups, including older adults and electors with disabilities who are more susceptible to the effects of COVID-19, to submit an application to the Elections Office to receive a special ballot by mail. This process will allow electors to mark their ballot at home and mail, or deliver, their ballot to the Elections Office (1221 B Cyrville Road), or electors can also deliver their special ballot to Client Service Centres.

It is important to note that this hybrid election approach does not replace traditional in-person voting. Electors will still have the opportunity to vote in-person or by proxy should they choose to do so.

In 2022, approximately 5,600 election workers will be required to complete training, which includes a formal section on accessibility. In addition, every City employee who participates in the 2022 Municipal Elections will have completed mandatory AODA

training. Members of public hired as elections workers will receive accessibility training as part of their election worker training.

The Elections Office is committed to meeting the requirements of the accessible employment standard and ensuring that accessibility is incorporated into its recruitment and hiring practices. The Elections Office will continue to make workplace disability accommodations for all elections workers, as requested.

The Elections Office intends to review its planned accessibility initiatives with members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee in the first half of 2022. In addition, and as noted in the Office of the City Clerk's report titled "[Update on the 2022 Municipal Elections and Amendments to Election-related By-laws and Policies](#)", the Elections Office recognizes the importance of encouraging diversity and inclusion on City Council and will work with internal stakeholders, including the Accessibility Office, and various community groups and organizations, in an effort to provide more information about how to become a candidate in the 2022 Municipal Elections.

Finally, after voting day, the Elections Office will make public a report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities as required by the MEA.

Treat Accessibly

In the fall of this year, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, the Office of City Protocol and PIMR, the City will be supporting the Treat Accessibly initiative through promotion and communications of the annual Trick or Treat with the Mayor event held at City Hall.

Treat Accessibly is a movement that aims to make Halloween accessible for everyone, as well as accelerate accessibility awareness and inclusion by distributing treats at the end of your driveway

This grassroots, family-run program has gained a lot of momentum since its inception in 2017, and last year the City of Toronto joined other Ontario municipalities, including Vaughan, Brampton, Mississauga, Ajax, Hamilton and Oshawa to promote the initiative annually through their corporate communications. They also have obtained three major corporate sponsors, which include Canadian Tire, Remax and Kinder.

Treat Accessibly promotes the movement through various methods, including social media, lawn stakes and flags for participating houses.

Conclusion

As the City continued to be in a state of emergency for the majority of 2021, the AO continued to be responsive and flexible in ensuring residents and staff were supported. We continue to recognize the impacts that the continued state of emergency has on people with disabilities and older adults. Programs, services and supports which are essential to persons with disabilities and older adults have continued to be impacted, resulting in physical, social, mental and emotional impact. The AO will undoubtedly need to remain in its supportive stance for years to come in order to support these continued impacts on vulnerable residents. We continue to envision and work towards a City that is fully inclusive for all residents, during any continued state of emergency and during subsequent times of recovery and healing.

Though we recognize there is still much work to be done, we remain proud of the City's leadership to reduce barriers during the continued state of emergency. Our successes and lessons learned have been shared with municipalities and organizations across the Province and beyond. We will continue to share best practice with the Province and the public sector and work collaboratively towards a barrier-free Ontario.

Though our priorities remain responsive and flexible, the City continues to work towards the goals of the 2020-2024 COMAP. We continue to promote "nothing without us" in City projects, services and programs. Engagement with persons with disabilities is critical in our vision of a fully inclusive and accessible City. We continue to seek opportunities to collaborate and work with others who are leaders in accessibility. Once the City shifts into its recovery phase, there will be many opportunities to reflect on the progress that has been made, and ensure policies and processes are updated to reflect the inclusive practices adopted since 2020.

The City will continue to update the Province, Council, the AAC and the general public on the accessibility of our 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 to Committee and Council's approval of the recommendations of this Report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

Not applicable.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

A special meeting was held with the AAC on April 12, 2022, to consult on the content in this report, which highlights some of the accessibility accomplishments and challenges in 2021. While a formal comment was not received from the AAC, their feedback from this meeting is highlighted below.

The AAC expressed support to continue the pilot project which allows Councillors to access funding to provide accessible communication supports to residents. The Committee requested the AO work with Committee and Council Services to promote this pilot and ensure funds are used.

The AAC is pleased with the City's commitment to ensuring accessibility in its programs, facilities, and services. However, members continue to express that more communication is needed to ensure all residents are informed about accessibility initiatives. Members encouraged the City to consider accessibility in early project development, and to ensure community engagement is accessible for all. They also suggested the City's commitment to accessibility is emphasized in all staff training.

As noted in the report, the AAC also continued to express concerns with the availability of accessible parking on City streets. Competing demands have resulted in a loss of on-street parking spaces and no-parking spaces which are available to people with an Accessible Parking Permit. The AO will continue to work with the AAC and departments whose projects have impacts for on-street parking, to ensure that proper consultation occurs as required by the AODA. The AAC requested the AO consult with other municipalities to develop best practice guidelines.

CONSULTATION

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 as part of a special meeting.

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. Each year, the City of Ottawa 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

Not applicable.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The AODA, which governs the work outlined in this report, has specific and general exceptions in the Design of Public Spaces Standards 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 Policy Considerations

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, we strive 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 many Indigenous organizations in our outreach. We continue to share information with Indigenous organizations in our communications. We have also sought advice from the City's Indigenous Relations

Specialist on how to develop relationships with organizations that support Indigenous persons with disabilities. These efforts will continue.

Gender and Equity Implications

The Accessibility Office (AO) recognizes that COVID-19 had 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 about COVID-related information for events pertaining to people with disabilities, the AO ensured that community organizations representing women and gender diverse persons with disabilities were included. Information was shared through social media, by email and through community organizations to ensure broad outreach.

The AO participates on cross-departmental the Women and Gender Equity 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 standards of the IASR in 2015, 2017 and 2019. The City updated its compliance plan agreement with the Province in 2020. The 2020 Compliance Plan Agreement is included in **Document 4** of this report. The agreement outlines the measures that the City is taking to meet the legislated requirement. 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 major 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 – Process for Consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Document 2 – Accessibility Policy

Document 3 – Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure

Document 4 – Accessibility Impact Statement Instructions

Document 5 – City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Initiatives

Document 6 – City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Annual Update

Document 7 – 2021 City of Ottawa AODA Provincial Compliance Report

Document 8 – City of Ottawa WCAG Compliance Plan Agreement

Document 9 – City of Ottawa 2021 Compliance Plan Agreement Update

Document 10 – AAC Motion, 2022 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets

Document 11 – Protected Intersection Design Guidelines

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.