

1. CITY OF OTTAWA MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – ANNUAL UPDATE (2021)
LE PLAN D'ACCESSIBILITÉ MUNICIPAL DE LA VILLE D'OTTAWA (PAMVO) – COMPTE RENDU (2021)

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Receive the 2021 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Update Report;
2. Approve the amendments to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy and the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures to include the provision of American Sign Language (ASL), *Langue des signes québécoise* (LSQ) and live captioning for communications associated with state of emergencies, without requiring a request, as recommended by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and as found in Document 2 and Document 3; and
3. Approve the proposed one-year pilot to permit Members of Council to access the Council Administration budget to provide Accessible Formats and Communication Supports, including interpretation services such as ASL/LSQ, to residents with disabilities, as described in this report.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU COMITÉ

Que le Conseil :

1. prenne acte du rapport d'étape 2021 sur le Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la Ville d'Ottawa;
2. approuve les modifications apportées à la Politique sur

l'accessibilité et aux Procédures concernant les formats accessibles et les aides à la communication de la Ville d'Ottawa afin que soient offerts l'interprétation en American Sign Language (ASL) et en langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) ainsi que le sous-titrage en direct pour les communications concernant les états d'urgence, sans qu'il faille en faire la demande, comme le recommande le Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité (voir documents 2 et 3); et

- 3. approuve le projet pilote d'un an pour permettre aux conseillers d'accéder au budget administratif du Conseil afin d'offrir des formats accessibles et des aides à la communication, entre autres des services d'interprétation en ASL et en LSQ, aux résidents ayant un handicap, comme il est expliqué dans le présent rapport.**

DOCUMENTATION/DOCUMENTATION

1. Program Manager's report, Office of the City Clerk, dated April 23, 2021 (ACS2021-OCC-GEN-0011)

Rapport de la Gestionnaire de programme, Bureau du greffier municipal, daté le 23 avril 2021, (ACS2021-OCC-GEN-0011)

**FINANCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
REPORT 25
26 MAY 2021**

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**COMITÉ DES FINANCES ET DU
DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE
RAPPORT 25
LE 26 MAY 2021**

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Finance and Economic Development Committee
Comité des finances et du développement économique
18 May 2021 / 18 mai 2021**

**and Council
et au Conseil
26 May 2021 / 26 mai 2021**

**Submitted on April 23, 2021
Soumis le 23 avril 2021**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

**Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure, Program Manager, Accessibility/Gestionnaire de
programme, Accessibilité, Office of the City Clerk/Bureau du greffier municipal**

**Contact Person
Personne ressource:**

**Megan Richards, (A) Corporate Accessibility Specialist/Spécialiste de
l'accessibilité (par intérim) , Office of the City Clerk/Bureau du greffier municipal
(613) 580-2424 X 12752, megan.richards@ottawa.ca**

Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2021-OCC-GEN-0011

**SUBJECT: CITY OF OTTAWA MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – ANNUAL
UPDATE (2021)**

**OBJET: LE PLAN D'ACCESSIBILITÉ MUNICIPAL DE LA VILLE D'OTTAWA
(PAMVO) – COMPTE RENDU (2021)**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommend that
Council:**

1. Receive the 2021 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Update Report;
2. Approve the amendments to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy and the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures to include the provision of American Sign Language (ASL), *Langue des signes québécoise* (LSQ) and live captioning for communications associated with state of emergencies, without requiring a request, as recommended by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and as found in Document 2 and Document 3; and
3. Approve the proposed one-year pilot to permit Members of Council to access the Council Administration budget to provide Accessible Formats and Communication Supports, including interpretation services such as ASL/LSQ, to residents with disabilities, as described in this report.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

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

1. de prendre acte du rapport d'étape 2021 sur le Plan d'accessibilité municipal de la Ville d'Ottawa;
2. d'approuver les modifications apportées à la Politique sur l'accessibilité et aux Procédures concernant les formats accessibles et les aides à la communication de la Ville d'Ottawa afin que soient offerts l'interprétation en American Sign Language (ASL) et en langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) ainsi que le sous-titrage en direct pour les communications concernant les états d'urgence, sans qu'il faille en faire la demande, comme le recommande le Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité (voir documents 2 et 3); et
3. d'approuver le projet pilote d'un an pour permettre aux conseillers d'accéder au budget administratif du Conseil afin d'offrir des formats accessibles et des aides à la communication, entre autres des services d'interprétation en ASL et en LSQ, aux résidents ayant un handicap, comme il est expliqué dans le présent 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 19th annual report, which provides a status update on the corporation’s progress in 2020, 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: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Design of Public Spaces, and Transportation (**Document 1**). 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. A plain language, resident-facing version of this update report can be found in **Document 7**.

City services have an impact on the daily lives of residents. While COVID-19 abruptly halted the City’s usual way of doing business, Senior Leadership and staff were able to pivot and reimagine strategies to continue serving residents. Despite the challenges associated with COVID-19, in 2020, the City remained a leader in accessibility across the Province. The City was able to quickly shift priorities to provide sign language interpretation for emergency communications, to create the Human Needs Task Force, to continue to engage with our Accessibility Advisory Committee through accessible, virtual meetings, and continuing to pursue adherence to all requirements of the AODA.

The City is required to submit an AODA Compliance Report to the Province every two years. In 2019, the City reported non-compliance with the Information and Communications Standard, related to Web Accessibility, and the Design of Public Spaces Standard, related to one accessible parking space. The next compliance report will be submitted to the Province before December 31, 2021. Details about the City’s

progress towards compliance with section 14 of the IASR, respecting Web Sites and Web Content, is provided later in this report.

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 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and the community to implement the legislation and identify and remove barriers to City services.

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

The provisions of the AODA and particularly its Transportation Standards do not apply to the City of Ottawa's conventional bus service, Para Transpo service and rail service managed by the Transportation Services Department (TSD) 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 TSD adheres to Provincial regulations for its other services including Transportation Planning and Traffic Services and has undertaken several initiatives towards that objective, as outlined in this report.

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 came into effect in 2012. This is the first update on the 2020-2024 COMAP, and the City's 19th annual accessibility report.

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 Accessibility Office (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

In March 2020, the City of Ottawa entered into a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic which had a great impact on the City's planned business for the year, including accessibility initiatives. While some priorities were put on hold due to staff being redeployed and departments adjusting to make services available online, other accessibility initiatives were identified to assist residents with disabilities with barriers created by the pandemic.

Specifically, through OPH's engagement with the community through online surveys, the following impacts were identified for persons with disabilities:

- Almost half (45 per cent) of Ottawa residents avoided getting health services for something they normally would have sought care for before the pandemic. This was more likely among those with a disability (65 per cent);
- 28 per cent of Ottawa residents felt the disruptions in access to health services had a negative impact on their health. This was particularly notable among those with a disability, with 17 per cent reporting significantly worse health and 32 per cent somewhat worse health;
- Ottawans who identify as living with a disability are two to three times more likely to identify difficulty in all areas of preparing for when they, or someone in their household, become ill, compared to those not living with a disability;
- Over half of people living with a disability are worried about physical and mental health (50 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively); and

- Groups that appear to be most impacted by income loss and the ability to pay for basic living costs (housing, food, utilities) include visible minorities and those with a disability.¹

This information has been shared widely and used to develop the City's response to addressing these emerging needs.

On March 20, 2020, a Human Needs Task Force (HNTF) was announced as part of the of the City's Emergency Management Plan and emergency response to COVID-19, to ensure the City remained responsive to emerging needs from the community, particularly for residents who may be vulnerable to the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

This task force brought together partners from all sectors, including United Way Eastern Ontario, Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing, Ottawa Food Bank, The Good Companions, Canadian Red Cross, the Salvation Army and Ottawa Inner City Health, in addition to representatives from City departments and OPH.

The scope of the task force is to:

- Plan for future scenarios, with considerations related to food security and vulnerable population needs, including housing, shelter and psychosocial supports;
- Coordinate service sector information related to services being provided, changes to services and emerging issues and needs; and
- Raise issues, service gaps and community concerns to staff within Community and Social Services, other City departments and community partners for resolution.

¹ This information and more on "What we heard" through these surveys can be found on the OPH's [Engage Ottawa](#) webpage.

Staff from the Community and Social Services Department (CSSD) have been working with the City's 81 funded community agencies to obtain service delivery updates, assess needs and identify concerns for escalation to the HNTF.

The task force supported numerous activities in 2020 and continue to function as COVID-19 continues into 2021. Some highlights of the work include:

- In 2020, 152,254 cloth masks were distributed to vulnerable communities. Many of these came from the United Way Facing Forward Campaign. Additionally, 494,560 disposable masks were distributed to the community. Many of these were distributed through OC Transpo;
- The HNTF engaged the Red Cross in planning with Ottawa Community Housing, OPH and additional community partners to assist with wellness visits for isolated and vulnerable populations within several communities around the city;
- Throughout 2020, the HNTF has supported ongoing respite centres across the City for our most vulnerable residents. In December 2020, centres were open in three locations: Tom Brown Arena, Bernard Grandmaître Arena and St. Paul Eastern United Church Respite Centre. Services include crisis intervention and harm reduction services. Meals, showers, washrooms, rest areas, toiletries, food, clothing, and referrals and links primary care services are also provided;
- Physical distancing and isolation centres have been operating to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure people experiencing homelessness are supported; and
- Portable toilets have been deployed in key areas of the city.

The City received funding from the Federal and Provincial governments to offset the costs of COVID-19. Some of the funding received has been distributed to community organizations. Of note, the City provided funding to ABLE2 Support for People with Disabilities to provide a virtual/phone support program and United Voices for Autism to provide online counselling, tutoring and educational programs. Also, some of funding from the Federal Reaching Home Program was invested in the City's emergency

shelters for capital improvements and purchases to meet new shelter standards, including accessibility enhancements.

All City departments have been assisting with the COVID-19 response. A virtual service delivery and operational model was implemented to continue to deliver services to residents. OPH, CSSD, and the AO from the Office of the City Clerk (OCC), worked collaboratively to address the specific COVID-19 related concerns of persons with disabilities.

When masks became mandated, OPH ensured that the City's Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law included provisions for persons who could not wear masks and are protected by the AODA and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, including, "individuals with medical conditions including breathing or cognitive difficulties, or a disability, that prevents them from safely wearing a mask." This information was also shared with businesses.

Recognizing that masks may cause communication barriers for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing, OPH also shared information on their website for businesses and the community. This included suggestions for alternate communication, including:

- Using the written word such as text, pen and paper;
- Using a phone or on an online app such as a voice to text app; and
- Sharing information through signage and visual tools.

This information was also shared widely internally with City staff, through management bulletins and staff communications. The Emergency Operations Centre procured a stock of clear masks to accommodate staff requests in some service areas. However, OPH did not deem these masks to be as protective as other medical or cloth masks, and thus other additional precautions for wearing a clear mask were recommended. This was also communicated with staff.

Based on feedback from the community, OPH also developed information for businesses, sighted guides and the public on how to support persons who are blind or partially sighted, including:

- Providing verbal direction;
- Understanding that guide dogs are not trained in physical distancing; and

- Taking extra precautions for sanitization, as some people rely on touch to obtain information.

OPH developed a position statement on stigma and COVID-19, which was shared widely with the public and through media. This statement recognized that some groups of people are disproportionately impacted by stigma surrounding COVID-19, including but not limited to persons with mental health conditions or substance use concerns.

Based on ongoing feedback from persons with disabilities about being excluded from Federal funding programs, in July 2020, Mayor Jim Watson sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, urging the Federal government to put financial programs in place to lessen the financial strain for persons with disabilities, including the recommendation to:

- Explore ways to provide financial support for persons with disabilities during COVID-19;
- Separate section 3 of Bill C-17 to solely debate financial support for persons with disabilities; and
- Evaluate alternatives to using the Disability Tax Credit as an eligibility measure to ensure all Canadians with disabilities can access the benefit.

Emergency Communications During the Pandemic

Early in the pandemic, based on a significant amount of feedback from the community, it became apparent for all levels of government that not providing American Sign Language (ASL), *Langue des signes québécoise* (LSQ) and captioning during live updates created a significant barrier to Deaf residents. Both ASL and LSQ are deemed “recognized” languages under the *Accessible Canada Act*. The AAC recommended that although the City’s Accessibility Policy states that communication supports such as ASL, LSQ and captioning services are provided upon request, that these services be added to all COVID-19 updates during the pandemic. In addition, due to the high demand, the City was lobbied by the Sign Language Interpretation Associates of Ottawa (SLIAO) to provide this service, which is captured in the City’s Lobbyist Registry. Based on these events, the AO, through the City Clerk, quickly changed its business continuity plan to include supporting the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), Public Information

and Media Relations (PIMR), and OPH by coordinating these services for all COVID-19-related media, town halls, and other virtual events.

As a result, in 2020, the City procured ASL and LSQ services for all communications related directly to COVID-19. The cost of these services for COVID-19 related media availabilities and virtual town halls was \$74,200. This amount includes ASL and LSQ translations of COVID-19 related instructional videos relaying critical information related to COVID-19 such as instructions for hand washing, mask wearing, and mental health support information. Combined, these efforts significantly contributed to reducing communication barriers for the Deaf community.

As a result of this identified gap in service, staff reviewed the City's practice. The provision of communication supports such as ASL, LSQ and captioning services in live verbal communications is legislated by the Province and as such, municipalities are required to provide these services, upon request. Specifically, section 12, Accessible formats and communication supports and section 13, Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information of the IASR states that the City shall:

Upon request provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,

(a) in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and

(b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

In addition to its obligations under section 12, if an obligated organization prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, the obligated organization shall *"provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request."*

These requirements are reflected in the City's Accessibility Policy and in the City's Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures.

The procedures, which applies to City employees, volunteers and other persons or organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City include step by step instructions and a form to be submitted to request accessible formats. These procedures do not apply to Council.

The procedures further state that each General Manager is responsible for:

- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination toward persons with disabilities;
- Budgeting for the costs associated with accessible formats and communication supports of materials originating from their departments; and
- Monitoring situations where requests for accessible formats and communication supports have not been provided and determining ways to make the information more convertible in the future.

In recognition of the barrier in service for the Deaf community, the identified gap in the City's policy and procedures and the AAC's request, Recommendation 2 of this report requests that Council approve the amendment to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy (**Document 2**) and the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures (**Document 3**) to proactively include the provision of ASL, LSQ and live captioning for communications associated with states of emergency, without requiring a specific request from a member of the public.

Furthermore, whereas the City's Accessibility Policy and the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures do not apply to Council, and that Council Members often meet with and provide state of emergency information to their constituents, Recommendation 3 of this report requests that Council approve a proposed one-year pilot to permit Members to access the Council Administration budget to provide Accessible Formats and Communication Supports, including interpretation services such as ASL and LSQ, to residents with disabilities.

Specifically, \$10,000 from the Council Administrative Budget will be made available on a first-come-first-served basis to assist Members of Council to provide accessible formats and communication supports when communicating with their constituency.

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 ASL and LSQ;
- Personal Support Workers (live events);
- Braille Translation;
- Creating Accessible Word, PDF and Power Point documents; 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](#).

In 2021, the fund would be prorated to the date at which it is approved by Council. 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. The most recent compliance report was submitted in 2019 and details of this report were provided in the 2020 COMAP Update report approved by Council on November 25, 2020.

In all compliance reports since 2015, the City has reported that it is compliant with all provincially legislated requirements except for section 14 (4) of the IASR respecting the 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 has made significant progress on this requirement since 2015. Most significantly, the City implemented a Web Accessibility Policy, which provides corporate direction and indicates that all the City's web assets *"shall conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA unless not practicable to do so, and where not practicable to do so, that it meets as many success criteria as is practicable."*

The City's Policy established a standard to Level AA from the beginning, unlike the way it is captured in the IASR with two different compliance timelines. This was a strategic decision to:

- avoid the confusion of monitoring two standards with complimentary requirements;
- find efficiencies by working on conformance with both WCAG Levels simultaneously;
- avoid slowing down progress as many Level A requirements are more difficult to meet than Level AA requirements; and
- ensure City web assets became as accessible as possible in the shortest timeline.

The City has prioritized its main website, Ottawa.ca, which contains approximately nine thousand pages of web content and it is currently very close to conformance with both Level A and Level AA. SiteImprove, an industry leading Quality Assurance and Accessibility reporting solution grades ottawa.ca at 96 out of a 100, compared to an industry (government) average of 75. Currently, more than 99.5 per cent of pages of Ottawa.ca have no issues. With daily changes to content, errors can occur. These errors are monitored closely and corrected weekly to maintain this level of compliance.

Ottawa.ca, however, is only one of the many City of Ottawa web assets. Various departments own and maintain more than 80 other public-facing web applications and websites. Departments responsible for each Uniform Resource Locator (URL) have developed remediation plans to guide them as they work with their vendors to meet compliance at different times, based on the magnitude of the issues. Some departments

have determined that their apps/website cannot be remediated to meet the standard. In these cases, a departmental budget is established to replace them. Departments are responsible for reporting the compliance status of each web asset, to the Office of the City Clerk annually through departmental AODA Compliance Attestations. Currently, departments report that 30 per cent of these web assets are certified as compliant with both Level A and Level AA and departments maintain the certification records. Departments are provided support from the Information and Technology Branch and the Web Services Branch of the Innovative Client Services Dept (ICSD) to assess the degree of compliance of their web assets with WCAG 2.0 Level AA and the AO maintains a master list of City web assets as reported by departments and monitors compliance and progress.

Due to the City's non-compliance status with these requirements, the City has entered an AODA Compliance Plan Agreement with the Province and must provide annual reports on its compliance. The last Compliance Plan Agreement update which contained the information above, was sent to the Province on December 21, 2020 **(Document 4)**.

For the reasons outlined above, the City will continue to answer "No" to the question about compliance with section 14 (4) web conformance on its by-annual AODA Compliance Reports. It will also be reporting non-conformance with the January 1, 2021 requirement (1) web conformance on its by-annual AODA Compliance Reports:

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).

Despite the City's current non-compliance status with these requirements, the City remains committed to reaching compliance as soon as possible. However, with so many separate remediation plans being executed across the corporation, procurement processes being undertaken and resources being re-deployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to establish a date when all the City's web assets will fully conform to the WCAG Level A and Level AA requirement and thus be compliant with section 14 of the IASR. Reaching compliance and maintaining compliance with these standards relies heavily on each department's continued effort and the corporation

maintaining specific staff resources within the Technology branch and the Web Services branch of the ICSD.

Update on Provincial Accessibility Legislation and Regulation

In 2020, the Provincial Information and Communications Standards Development Committee submitted their final recommendations to the Province, following public consultation to review the Standard. The City submitted feedback as part of this review in September 2019, which was highlighted in the previous annual report. Of particular note, the City requested that the Province provide greater clarity and support for the WCAG 2.0 AA requirement.

In the Spring of 2020, at a meeting with the Province and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals, the Province stated that the recommendations of all the Standards Review Committees would be looked at together, rather than each Standard individually. This would allow for changes to be made to strengthen the legislation, though it is unknown what changes will be implemented at this time.

No other standards were reviewed in 2020. The remaining Standard to be reviewed is the Design of Public Spaces Standard. The Province has not indicated when this Standard Review process is expected to begin.

Update on the Accessible Canada Act

In 2020, the Federal government furthered its progress on the *Accessible Canada Act* (2019) by continuing to engage with the public to determine priorities for moving forward. Additionally, in February 2021, the Federal government published a proposed Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations.

A review was undertaken with respect to the new Federal [Accessible Canada Act](#) and the proposed Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations to determine its application to the provision of goods, services and facilities by the City. While the Accessible Canada Act applies to federally regulated undertakings, such as OC Transpo services, the proposed Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations will not apply to OC Transpo services.

Although the provisions of the Accessible Canada Act do not apply to other City service areas, there is an opportunity to learn about the legislation and its requirements as we strive to become accessible for all. Of importance to the City is the Federal

government's stance, "Nothing about us without us," which supports the inclusion of persons with disabilities in planning and decision making. The practice of consulting with people with disabilities has been embedded in the 2020-2024 COMAP and will guide accessibility at the City for years to come.

The Federal government has identified seven priorities in which Standards will be developed:

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

Some Technical Committees were formed in 2020 to begin to develop these Standards. The City will continue to monitor these Committees for opportunities to participate and inform the City's accessibility plans.

City of Ottawa Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AAC held seven meetings in 2020. Six of these were held virtually, including three Special AAC meetings. Ottawa was among the first Ontario municipalities to host an AAC meeting online, and information on our success was shared with municipalities to encourage their hosting of virtual meetings as well. Due to the Duty to Consult under the AODA, the AAC was the first City of Ottawa Advisory Committee to meet virtually using Zoom. Virtual meetings in 2020 were supported with captioning in English and French and American Sign Language, based on requests from Members. Other supports were actively offered upon request.

In 2020, the AAC received 35 requests for feedback on various city projects through various processes, not including site plans. These requests included:

Seven projects were presented at the four regular AAC meetings:

1. Report on Confederation Line;
2. Kick Electric Scooter Strategy and Pilot Project (February, September and at a Special meeting in December);

3. Motion - Streamlining the Consultation Process;
4. Stage 2 Light Rail Transit (LRT) Accessibility Update;
5. Bank Street Canal Bridge;
6. Ottawa Public Library - Universal Design: Key Accessibility Features;
7. 2021 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets; and
8. Three Projects were presented at the three special AAC Meetings (Kick E-Scooter, COMAP and Duty to Consult).

Consultation for applicable 2020 and all 2021 capital projects included:

- Exterior Paths of Travel (Rest Areas);
- On-Street Parking Spaces;
- Outdoor Play Spaces;
- Recreation Trails; and
- 2020-2024 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan.

10 requests were received through the AAC consultation process:

1. Viewing Platforms - Osgoode Arena (renamed Stuart Holmes Arena);
2. Amiens And Provence Traffic Calming Measures;
3. Bronson Avenue and Lakeview Terrace Traffic Signal;
4. Expanded Patios in Right-Of-Ways;
5. Street Furniture Accessibility and 3rd Arm Options;
6. Albion Falls Park;
7. Spring Valley Trail Subdivision – Secondary Pathway;
8. Albion Traffic Study – Public Working Group;
9. Alta Vista Drive Functional Planning Study; and
10. Lowertown Bikeways - Detailed Design Survey.

13 requests were completed by email:

1. City of Ottawa Accessibility Workshop: Continuous Footways;
2. Bank Street Renewal Working Group;
3. Delineation Workshop / Site Visit - Protected Intersection Design Guide;
4. Ottawa.Ca Project Page for Resources for Landlords and Tenants under our new Rental Housing By-Law 2020-255;
5. Winter Maintenance Quality Standards (WMQS) Review Project;

6. AccessAbility Day;
7. Connecting Public Transit Between Gatineau and Ottawa;
8. Barrhaven LRT;
9. Blair LRT;
10. LRT – Trillium Line;
11. Para Transpo Online Services Working Group;
12. Parking Stakeholder Consultation Group; and
13. Transit Service Recovery Plan.

Site plans are also reviewed by the Committee. 63 site plans were submitted to the AAC for comment in 2020.

At their May 2020 meeting, the AAC voted unanimously to pass a motion on multi-use pathways and their implications for people with disabilities (**Document 5**). This motion recognizes that conflicts between pedestrians and people with disabilities may occur on shared paths of travel, such as multi-use pathways. The resolutions of this motion were:

- That the AAC formally recommends that staff design and construct Multi-Use Pathways and other transportation projects in a manner that prioritizes the safety and accessibility needs of seniors and persons with disabilities;
- The AAC intends for the safety and accessibility needs of seniors and persons with disabilities to prevail over the needs of other users on Multi-Use Pathways;
- That the AAC formally recommends that staff design and construct Multi-Use Pathways in a manner that respects all standards set out in the *Human Rights Code*, the AODA, the Accessibility Policy, the Accessibility Design Standards and that the City's Equity and Inclusions Lens be applied to ensure the spirit and goals of these authorities also be respected and achieved;
- That the AAC formally recommends that staff consult with the Committee and other groups of persons with disabilities to determine best practice for the design of Multi-Use Pathways that ensures safety and accessibility for persons with disabilities and seniors; and

- That the AAC formally recommends increased communications to residents about safety and proper protocols for Multi-Use Pathways (e.g. when to dismount and walk a bicycle on a multi-use pathway, speed limits, using a bell, etc.).

As requested by the AAC, this motion was circulated to all staff involved in the design and construction of Multi-Use Pathways in the TSD and Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department (PIED). The AAC also requested an update on the results of this motion.

The General Manager of PIED has been delegated authority to approve technical changes or clarifications to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards. These are reported to Council through the COMAP update report. As part of this update, we ask Council to receive the Technical Bulletin ISTB-2020-03: Revisions to City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards (ADS) as **Document 6**, in accordance with the ADS' delegation of authority process for technical changes or clarifications. The bulletin includes interim solutions until other standards and guidelines are developed by the City. Accessibility stakeholders were consulted to develop this Technical Bulletin, and an accessibility consultant supported the work. An update to the AAC is planned for April 2021.

The Bulletin provides direction on the design and installation of accessibility measures where a cycle track or multi-use pathway approaches an intersection, to achieve accessible design. It addresses several areas including: delineation between the sidewalk and cycle track; application of tactile walking surface indicators; straight path of travel; and, accessibility measures at multi-use pathways approaching a signalized intersection. It also includes some general information on how pedestrians with vision loss negotiate a road right-of-way.

In 2021, the City will continue to work on developing further guidance on accessibility measures at intersections with cycle tracks. Transportation Planning and other City staff will be examining various delineation techniques for separating pedestrians and cyclists, including vertical separation, curbs, at-grade delineation methods, and the use of directional or positive guidance tactile pavers. This effort will be part of a project to further develop design guidance on the functional design of protected intersections

under a variety of different contexts. The project will include consultation with a wide array of City and accessibility stakeholders.

The City recognizes the hard work and achievements of this valuable volunteer group. Their knowledge and expertise continue to benefit many projects. In 2021, the AO will undertake a review of the:

- Process for Consultation with the AAC;
- The ADS Variance Process; and
- Instructions for writing Accessibility Impacts into Council reports.

These will be conducted with the AAC itself, the Committee Coordinator, the Accessibility Working Group (AWG), staff who consult with the Committee and report writers. These reviews will lead to process improvements that streamline requests to the Committee and an increase in the quality of information provided to Council including how accessibility of their services was increased through their various projects.

Accessibility of 2020 Cumberland Ward By-election

The City of Ottawa was one of the first municipalities to hold a By-election during COVID-19, on October 7, 2020. The Elections Office worked with several City departments to ensure a safe and equitable election experience for the 2020 Cumberland By-election. The Elections Office worked with OPH to establish safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They also partnered with Information Technology Solutions branch of ICSD to ensure electors could cast their ballots at any of the voting places on the two Advance Vote Days and on Voting Day.

A first for Ottawa, the Elections Office also introduced a new way to vote by Special Mail-in ballots. Once the elector's application for the Special Mail-in ballot was processed, the Elections Office would send them a Special Ballot Voter Kit that contained:

- step-by-step instructions on how to vote;
- a voter declaration form;
- a ballot and secrecy envelope; and
- a prepaid return envelope.

The successes and lessons learned during the By-election will help inform processes as the Elections Office begins to prepare for the 2022 Municipal Election.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Elections Office ensured that accessible practices were implemented for all voters, including the use of the same tools and services that were available to electors and candidates during the 2018 Municipal Elections as well as the 2019 Rideau-Rockcliffe By-election. Accessibility services were advertised to voters, including the availability of accessible vote tabulators in accordance with the [City of Ottawa 2020 Cumberland By-Election Detailed Accessibility Plan](#).

Partnership Development

ONTARIO NETWORK OF ACCESSIBILITY PROFESSIONALS (ONAP)

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.

Additionally, in 2020, the City held the Fall ONAP conference. This conference included presentations and discussion on the following:

- AODA Compliance and Enforcement, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility;
- Web compliance;
- Virtual meeting tools and accessibility; and
- Software or programs aimed to improve web and web content accessibility.

CANADIAN ACCESSIBILITY NETWORK (CAN)

In the winter of 2019, City staff were approached by Carleton University to join CAN, a READ Initiative (Research, Education, Accessibility and Design). As a result of

Accessible Canada Act, CAN strives to bring organizations together to facilitate partnerships in specific collaboration areas under five overarching domains:

- Community Engagement;
- Education & 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.

In March 2021, the City submitted an expression of interest to become a CAN Collaborator, and it was accepted by the CAN Governance Council on April 7, 2021. As such, the Program Manager, Accessibility, Lucille Berlinguette-Saumure will represent the City on the CAN Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council (AC) 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, from the east coast to the west coast, provide advice and recommendations to the Governing Council (GC) on behalf of partner organizations with a focus on:

- ensuring that the GC and the Domain Area Committees (DACs) 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 GC and DACs;

- informing the efforts of the DACs 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.

There is also an opportunity for the City to participate on one of the DACs.

This opportunity for collaboration directly supports the City's Strategic Plan and specifically assists the City in advancing Council's Strategic Priorities. It has the potential 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 will showcase the innovative work of your 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.

In addition to its partnership with Carleton University on the CAN Initiative, in 2021, the City is partnering with Carleton on the READ Initiative's Enable Ottawa conference, held during National AccessAbility Week.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ACCESSIBILITY PROFESSIONALS

The City has also become a member of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). The association 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.

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

The City of Ottawa is a leader in many areas of accessibility and as such it ensures that all accessibility policies, procedures and trainings are available through Ottawa.ca.

Although they report separately to the province, the City provides accessibility support to Ottawa Police Services (OPS) regularly by sharing resources as requested, and assisted OPS to complete a Provincial accessibility audit in 2020.

Staff participate in panel discussions and in dozens of one on one meetings with municipalities across Ontario to share accessibility best practices, training and resources to assist them to become compliant with the AODA.

Additionally, City staff presented to an inter-departmental working group of Federal staff in the Fall of 2020 on the Accessibility Impacts section of Committee and Council reports and on community engagement at the City. City staff also provided expertise and shared resources with municipal staff in other Provinces, including the City of Vancouver.

The AO continues to share relevant workshops, trainings and materials through the AWG, and through its membership in the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals. In 2020, this included Carleton University's virtual Enable Ottawa conference, materials related to barriers created by masks for people who lip read, including suggestions to

safely enhance communication, a presentation by the Honourable David Onley, and others.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Following the lead of the Federal “Nothing without us” campaign, engagement with persons with disabilities is a primary focus of the AO in the 2020-2024 COMAP.

In 2020, City staff held three meetings with representatives from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Canadian Council for the Blind and the Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians. During these meetings, City staff answered questions and addressed concerns from the community regarding City infrastructure, programs and services. One of these meetings was to consult with the stakeholders and answer questions regarding Phase 2 of the City’s LRT project. The City has a strong relationship with representatives from these organizations and engagement will continue to occur over the coming years.

2020 Departmental Accessibility Achievements

Highlights of various accessibility initiatives and actions undertaken across City departments and service areas throughout 2020 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 2020. A full listing of all 2020 accessibility initiative outcomes is available in **Document 1**. Due to the City’s ongoing response to COVID-19, some non-essential initiatives were put on hold in 2020. It is anticipated that these initiatives will continue once the City is no longer in a state of emergency.

ACCESSIBILITY EVENTS

While COVID-19 prevented the City hosting in-person events in 2020, the AO demonstrated agility to celebrate two major events. Mayor Watson proclaimed May 28, 2020 as AccessAbility Day in Ottawa, as part of National AccessAbility Week. A video highlighting some of the City’s accessibility achievements, including a proclamation of the day, was shared widely through social media, ottawa.ca and through the *Accessibility Spotlight* e-newsletter. The video included captioning in English and French, ASL and LSQ. The day was also highlighted to staff through internal

communications. The AAC contributed to the day by sending a photo of themselves to be included in a photo collage, with signs that spelled, “Disability is an essential part of human diversity,” which was included in communications recognizing the day.

On December 3, 2020, the City also pivoted its plans to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This was a one-hour event held virtually over Zoom, with over 100 people in attendance. The Mayor, members of Council, Senior Leadership, the AAC and members of the public attended. The event celebrated the contributions of our AAC, and the engagement of people with disabilities in supporting decision making and planning at the City.

The event included:

- A speech by Mayor Watson, who proclaimed the day as International Day of Persons with Disabilities in the City of Ottawa;
- A video address by the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion;
- Remarks on the achievements of the City’s AAC by Councillor Luloff;
- A speech by the Chair of the AAC, Phillip Turcotte, on the Committee’s involvement with the City;
- A presentation by Marnie Peters, Accessibility Consultant, on her work supporting several City projects;
- A presentation by Kathleen Forestell (Canadian National Institute for the Blind), Kim Kilpatrick (Canadian Council for the Blind) and Wayne Antle (Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians) on ways their group has engaged with the City; and
- An overview on ways to provide accessibility-related feedback to the City by the AO.

AODA GENERAL 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.

As of November 2020, 89 per cent of City staff have completed the Corporate-wide AODA: Accessibility for All training. New staff are trained as soon as practicable, and in 2020, 1,728 staff completed this training by attending one of five in-person training sessions between January and March, or by completing the training online.

In April of 2020, in order to help protect the health and wellbeing of the community from COVID-19, accessibility training for the City was altered, and in-person trainings were moved to an online format for the remainder of the year.

It is important to note that the above compliance rate is 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 been 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.

There are several options for staff to receive their training. The first (temporarily on hold due to COVID-19), is the in-person corporate training: "AODA: Accessibility for All;" provided to full-time employees and summer students as part of the full day new employee orientation. The orientation is rooted in the adult learning principle of "experiential learning," whereby participants are guided through hands-on practices by the corporate trainer, to collectively reflect on, learn from, and learn through taking new actions based on their unique life experiences. Through a variety of mechanisms, including presentations, dialogue, and group work, participants can have questions addressed in a collaborative context, and leave the session with understanding and confidence regarding their rights and responsibilities under the AODA. Beginning in 2019 and continued in 2020, the trainings moved to twice monthly sessions, with a smaller group capacity. This allows for greater interaction and has resulted in positive feedback.

In 2020, evaluations received for the trainings were largely positive. On a rating scale from one to six, with 1 being Very Unsatisfied and 6 being Very Satisfied, 98 per cent of participants gave it a four or above. For quality improvement, the continuous feedback provided through the training evaluations is incorporated into the training when possible.

A selection of comments received from the evaluations included:

- Great reminder of how to use appropriate language.
- I am super interested in AODA and would love to be doing my part someday.
- Great course. Megan was amazing, she has an amazing knowledge of information and a love for what she's teaching.
- Eye opening.
- Nathan is a great speaker and keeps people engaged. He is very knowledgeable and gives good examples.
- I liked that there were many forms of presentation (videos, group discussion, filling out the booklet).
- Very friendly, knowledgeable and inclusive.
- Megan is an engaging, passionate and approachable facilitator. She made the material interesting and applicable to the wide audience in the class.

The City remains 100 per cent compliant with the training of its volunteers. In 2020, 132 new volunteers completed the online accessibility training.

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.

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 2020, however, over 900 employees have attended this workshop to-date. Accessible procurement resources continue to be shared by the AO on a regular basis, to staff who are required to complete the accessible procurement tracking.

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

administer and embrace compliance to the regulation, and to ensure they and their staff meet the requirements of the AODA. In 2020, 10 Managers and Supervisors attended this training, which was delivered in February, by the AO. Overall, 603 Managers and Supervisors have attended this training since it was offered in 2013. Evaluations from the Management Compliance training continue to be overwhelmingly positive. On a rating scale from one to six, with 1 being Very Unsatisfied and 6 being Very Satisfied, 100 per cent of participants gave it a four or above. Feedback from several participants noted that the information provided was very helpful and answered specific questions they had about the legislation (e.g., service animals, scented products, etc.). In 2021, the AO will explore ways to hold virtual trainings for Management Compliance and Accessible Procurement with the Learning Centre.

Training on how to develop accessible Word and PDF documents is offered by the Web Services branch of the Innovative Client Services Department. These workshops give staff the tools to create accessible documents for Committee and Council reports, and documents that are available to the public online. The training teaches staff how to create documents with the appropriate headings, structure and other accessibility features that allows for equitable access to City information. In 2020, training continued through virtual, small group sessions but was affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Seven staff were trained in CommonLook Office, 32 staff were trained in CommonLook PDF, 31 staff were trained in accessible Word documents, six staff within the PIED department were trained in PDF accessibility and approximately 10 staff received one-on-one training for advanced PDF accessibility. Web Services has pivoted their training plan to continue to include the delivery of virtual, small group sessions in the coming year to ensure that staff are supported in the creation of accessible documents.

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. Prior to COVID-19, this required network access to

complete, therefore, to ensure all staff can complete monthly tracking, a new tracking system was developed using Office 365 tools making it accessible to all employees.

2020 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 our residents and subscribers informed. Spotlight articles for 2020 included but were not limited to the following subjects:

- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Consultations;
- City providing Emergency Response Information in ASL and LSQ;
- City establishes HNTF to support community during COVID-19;
- City celebrates AccessAbility Day amid COVID-19;
- Keeping everyone as safe as possible on OC Transpo;
- Accessible water wheelchairs available at City beaches;
- OPH resources in ASL and LSQ;
- Taking care of your mental health;
- Voting in the 2020 Cumberland By-election;
- Virtual & Accessible Employment Information Sessions;
- Inclusive virtual activities; and
- OPH Engagement Survey.

In 2020, the newsletter was distributed to subscribers in 10 countries; with 2483 subscribed to the English version, and 154 to the French. 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.

In 2020, Finance began a review of the Water Utility Bills and Taxes pages on ottawa.ca to improve the layout and simplify written processes/instructions for the various payment options. These pages were updated at the end of the year. In 2021, Finance will share the information with the AAC and will include the feedback received in future page reviews to ensure the pages are fully accessible and useable by people with disabilities.

Under the AODA's Information and Communication Standard, the City was required to ensure all its websites, web content and apps, met the Web Content Accessibility

Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021. Tremendous work has been done to ensure Portable Document Format documents (PDFs) on the City's websites meet this requirement. At the end of 2020, 78 per cent of the City's over 7800 PDFs were compliant. Web Services also continue to support staff with new PDFs. This work is ongoing. Work to ensure that content is accessible before publishing and for applications is also ongoing.

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 over 100 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 those individuals with disabilities.

The City has dedicated a tremendous amount of staff hours to ensure new and existing applications meet 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.

In 2020, the QA team worked with a company that employs people with disabilities to do digital product testing on two projects, geoOttawa and the City's Grants Application. These reviews by testers with disabilities has allowed the City to build useable, accessible experiences for users. The City looks forward to continuing to conduct user-testing with people with disabilities on projects in the future.

The City is committed to providing accessible communications for people with disabilities. In 2020, Public Information and Media Relations developed a virtual method to reach residents through new channels to disseminate important information, such as COVID-19 updates. Virtual media availabilities and information sessions are broadcast on YouTube, which provides residents with information on COVID-19. This has also allowed the City to provide interpretation in ASL and LSQ in state emergency communications without a request, for the first time. This work will continue in 2021.

All Committee and Council meetings moved to a virtual format in 2020. 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.

The AO continued to share information with staff and Management through internal communications in 2020. This included updates on accessibility during COVID-19, as well as the City's continued commitment to its legislative responsibilities.

2020 EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

The City has made improvements to our Inclusive Hiring Practices. Some examples include the prompting of candidates during interviews and providing a copy of interview questions 15 minutes in advance of the interview. This supports many potential employees, including people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions. This is in addition to providing accommodations to applicants upon request.

As the City moved to virtual interviews during COVID-19, a Virtual Interview and Assessment Guide was created. This included considerations for advanced preparation of the interview panel, sharing interview questions in advance of the interview, posting questions in the chat box, providing information about the process to candidates and ensuring proper lighting and background contrast for interviewers. Human Resources (HR) is collaborating with CSSD to develop procedures supporting implementation of LEAD IT, a strategic and comprehensive hiring process that aims to increase representation of the City's workforce by using a comparative merit model for Management and Professional Exempt (MPE) positions and a designated positions program.

In 2020, HR made many adaptations to support employees to work from home, including the development of work-from-home guides focused on productivity, performance, working in virtual environments, managing virtual check-ins and supporting teams. Safety policies, guidelines and support resources were developed to support managers and employees. Training was developed and two specific SharePoint sites developed with dedicated information that is updated regularly. Ongoing support was offered to support staff accommodation requirements, including working with managers, service providers and staff members as needed, with a focus on flexibility.

Throughout COVID-19, many initiatives have been implemented to support employee wellness and mental health. This includes a Share Point site dedicated to wellness which includes a significant number of articles and supports for employees, and many communications from the Senior Leadership Team informing staff of resources and supports. The City launched a new Employee and Family Assistance Program with

Morneau Shepell and launched LifeSpeak's digital wellness platform. The City has also partnered with our vendors to ensure access to a wide variety of webinars, podcasts and training materials to enhance their wellness and mental health. A corporate-wide conference was organized 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 wellbeing 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.

CSSD has developed and launched Affinity Groups for diverse groups of staff. A Share Point page allows staff to create groups, sign-up and post events. For the Affinity group of staff with disabilities, it is hoped that this will promote a sense of belonging and inclusion and increase retention. Specific goals of the group are to be set by its members.

The Diversity and Inclusion Unit works closely with Human Resources Innovative Client Services to track, monitor and report on workforce demographic representation including persons with disabilities. In 2020, a digital self-identification form was created and included an expanded definition of disability to include invisible disabilities, such as addictions, chronic conditions and learning disabilities. It is hoped that this will provide a more accurate picture of the range of disabilities that employees may identify with. An awareness and communication campaign about the new self-identification form will be launched in 2021. In addition, the launch of CSSDs Count Me In! program that is planned in 2021 will support a refresh of the demographic information for employees across the City.

2020 TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

The Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund aims to address the reality that many Private Transportation Companies (PTCs), such as Uber Canada, cannot currently accommodate persons who use mobility devices including power wheelchairs and scooters.

Emergency and Protective Services is continuing to use these funds to improve accessible transportation in the City of Ottawa. The City has renegotiated this levy with

licensed private taxi companies and the outcomes of this will be reported on in 2021. This is a voluntary levy negotiated with the City. It is not mandated by legislation.

In 2020, \$69,166 was allocated for the taxi coupon program, \$41,250 for discounted taxi coupons and \$150,000 for rural transportation.

Overall, OC Transpo experienced a significant decrease in ridership in 2020 due to COVID-19. This is consistent across OC Transpo busses, LRT and O-Train and Para Transpo.

In 2020, 1,001 Para Transpo customers purchased 13,619 taxi coupon books. These numbers were lower than in previous years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, TSD completed the preliminary design review and continued the final design review of Stage 2 Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations. Consultation with stakeholders such as the AAC and other community organizations was conducted. In 2021, the final design review will be completed, and construction of the stations will continue. These stations will be constructed to be fully accessible to customers, meeting or exceeding the requirements of the AODA, Ontario Building Code and the City's Accessibility Design Standards. Designs for new stations include the same accessible features in the Stage 1 stations, including: tactile directional wayfinding; dual elevators serving station platforms; tactile/Braille signage; as well as fully accessible public washrooms at six stations.

With the opening of Stage 1 LRT, TSD implemented the O-Train Ambassador program. O-Train Ambassadors or "red vests" have been on-site at all train stations since the launch of Line 1 in 2019. These staff provide assistance with trip planning; using the ticket machines; entering and exiting fare gates; finding their way around the stations and bus platforms; and, responding to questions. This program was extended in 2020 to continue to assist customers. In 2021, this program will transition into a new permanent Station Attendant program. Moving forward, Station Attendants will always be on the O-Train Line 1. They will be positioned at high-volume locations and will visit different stations during their shifts to provide additional resources focused on customer service.

Transportation Services has committed to maintain pedestrian connections during construction of Stage 2 LRT infrastructure, consistent with the City's Accessibility Design Standards. In 2020, the City engaged the public and accessibility stakeholders

in a review of Stage 2 LRT station connectivity. Ten public advisory committee meetings were held to review and provide feedback on ways to improve connectivity for cyclists, pedestrians and persons with disabilities. In 2021, the Connectivity initiative will continue working with the public, stakeholders and Councillors as required. Pedestrian and cycling connectivity enhancements identified through the public advisory committees will be considered and implemented where possible.

Wayfinding and digital navigation technologies for persons who are blind or partially sighted have advanced over the last years. TSD and the City continued to monitor emerging trends and developments in wayfinding and digital navigation technologies and solutions for persons who are blind or partially sighted in 2020, which includes discussions with representatives of the CNIB, the Alliance for the Equality of Blind Canadians and Canadian Council of the Blind. However, stakeholders do not have consensus on which technologies are the most beneficial at this time, but these will continue to be explored. In 2021, OC Transpo will develop text descriptions of transit stations. These will be available to customers in 2022.

In 2020, OC Transpo added 74 new 40-foot buses and 19 double decker buses to its fleet. These buses are all fully accessible, including features such as allocated spaces for customers using mobility devices, equipped with “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. In 2021, four electric busses will be added to the fleet, which include the same accessibility features currently available.

OC Transpo partners with Community Support Service (CSS) agencies to provide service to seniors and people with disabilities in rural areas. In 2020, this funding was increased as per Council approval. However, rural transportation also experienced a decline in ridership due to COVID-19. These agencies provided 4,724 one-way trips in 2020, a decrease of 63 per cent compared to 2019. The agencies were able to meet about 96 per cent of all trip requests.

In 2020, TSD improved accessibility at about 106 on-street bus stops. Enhancements included the installation of new level bus pads, shelters, benches, connections to adjacent sidewalks and pathways, larger boarding areas, and curb ramps in locations where no adjacent pedestrian connections existed. Several of these improvements were

made around Community and Recreation Centres and Retirement Homes. This work will continue in 2021.

TSD made several improvements to universal access to transit stations and Park & Rides in 2020. This includes the planning and design for an additional elevator at Blair Station, resurfacing stairs as well as including tactile warning indicators and high-colour-contrasted nosing strips, and the repair of an exterior pathway at Lycée Claudel Station. These improvements will continue in 2021.

With \$500,000 approved by Council, 10 new Pedestrian Crossovers (PXOs) were installed in 2020. PXOs make it easier and safer for residents, particularly children, older adults and persons with disabilities, to get around their own neighborhoods. They give pedestrians the right of way over vehicles and cyclists, and in many cases, safely reduce walking distances for residents. City Council has approved \$512,000 in funding for new PXO installations in 2021.

OC Transpo has committed to expanding options for customers who wish to book and track their Para Transpo trip online. The Para Transpo online booking web form was available to all customers in February 2020. This first stage of online services allows customers to submit their requests for next-day bookings by filling out a web form on octranspo.com. In 2020, the second stage of online services, My Para Transpo, was also in development. This will include:

- Booking, confirming or cancelling a Para Transpo trip;
- Creating a new subscription for recurring trips;
- Tracking the location of a booked trip and getting an estimated time of arrival; and
- Sending trip reminders to customers by automated phone message, email or SMS text.

In April 2020, an eight-member community working group was created, including stakeholders and customers of all types of abilities, which has been engaged in the development of these online services.

A development site for the My Para Transpo service was created in December 2020, and training was delivered to public and internal working group testers. Testing will be

conducted in 2021, after which the site will be available to customers. Other services will be added to the site as they become available in 2021.

Transportation Services also made improvements for customers who use a Presto Pass on Para Transpo. In December 2020, customers who use a monthly pass can now provide their Presto card number to OC Transpo's Customer Service Centre and provide permission to review their account for the presence of a monthly pass. Once a card number is recorded, customers show their Presto card to the operator or taxi driver for visual verification as they board. Each subsequent valid month's pass will load onto the customer's account automatically once it has been loaded on the Presto card. This has shortened boarding times for customers and removed the need for them to carry a Presto receipt.

The City is developing guidelines to address the design and development of on-street bus stops along corridors where cycle tracks are present or have been planned. In 2020, TSD created a staff working group and developed draft guidelines to address circumstances where bicycle facilities are located next to sidewalks and bus stops. These draft guidelines consider the application of tactile delineation between cycling facilities and bus stops, as well as the application of tactile directional indicators of bus stop boarding locations. Review and consultation of the draft guidelines is planned for 2021.

2020 BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES

The PIED department continues to provide education on the City's Accessibility Design Standards. In 2020, the City partnered with the National Capital Heavy Construction Association (NCHCA) and the Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) to offer the annual Education Series, which included a presentation on "Accessibility during Construction," "Heavy Construction Outlook," "Critical Conversations: Building Trust to Resolve Differences" and "New City of Ottawa Health & Safety Management System Requirements." Education on City standards and best practice will continue.

Presentations on application of Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) were provided to Infrastructure Services Municipal Design and Construction management and staff as well as Consulting Engineers Ontario. With assistance from an external accessibility consultant, the City's Standards Unit participated in reviewing detailed design for 7 projects in construction with integrated cycling facilities at intersections.

In 2019, Ottawa's Integrated Street Furniture Program (ISFP) began rolling out new furniture that elevates the quality of the public realm through the design, installation, and placement of a cohesive network of street furniture.

New furniture is inclusive and accessible to everyone. Placement elements incorporate adequate clearances to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, as well as have bases that are cane detectable. Furniture is selected with colour contrast and slats to ensure transitions at the edges of the furniture. All elements have been placed in a manner that creates a barrier free walkway with special attention given to the height and protrusion of objects into the sidewalk corridor. All benches include back support, seat depth and seat height at the Accessibility Design Standards (ADS) prescribed measurements. All benches include a third arm located one seat-width from an arm at the end of the bench. On a three-seat bench the middle arm is installed at one-third of the width. On a two-seat bench the middle arm is located at one-half of the width. Waste receptacles have side openings at accessible heights and use colour, images and text for each compartment.

In 2019, the ISFP project was initiated. Benches and waste and recycling receptacles selection and installation locations were approved after extensive consultation with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and associated Ward Councillors. 180 accessible benches and 190 accessible waste receptacles were installed in four BIAs. In 2020, the ISFP continued with 150 new waste and recycling receptacles and 50 new benches in eight BIAs.

Staff continue to work to improve the design and function of furniture in public places and public spaces. The goal is to create a safer, more accessible and more attractive pedestrian right-of-way that residents and visitors can use with ease.

COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the opening of Community Gardens later in 2020. Three accessible gardens were opened, with another opening in 2021. The Community Garden Standards is a working document that guides the development of community gardens on City lands. At a minimum, 20 per cent of garden boxes must be fully accessible.

The City recognizes the importance of providing affordable accessible housing options. In 2020, affordable housing projects approved under the City's Action Ottawa program included mandatory accessibility design criteria in addition to providing a minimum of 10

per cent barrier-free dwelling units. In addition, capital repair funding to address accessibility was a priority under the 2020 Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan (HHIP) and Year 2 Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) capital funding programs.

The design phase of the new Central Library continued in 2020. This project is considering innovative accessibility practices, and staff have consulted with the AAC.

Annual updates to the City's Standard Tender Documents allow for improvement of engineering standards and increased accessibility of the built environment. Work on the 2021 Specification Updates began in the Fall of 2020.

The Standards Unit conducts accessibility audits of construction sites to educate and raise awareness regarding the accommodation of pedestrians with disabilities and increased mobility needs through and/or around construction sites of infrastructure projects. These continued in 2020, however, due to COVID-19, fewer visits were conducted. This will continue in 2021.

In 2020, a review of the City's Winter Quality Maintenance Standards was started. This will result in improvements to Winter Maintenance across the City. Due to its impact on people with disabilities, through a Council motion, this initiative was added to the 2020-2024 COMAP. The AO was engaged in discussions about ensuring accessibility during consultations and provided support for residents who needed support to complete the survey. Outcomes of this review and consultations will be reported on in the 2021 COMAP update.

The City continues to abide 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. In 2020, the following maintenance projects were in development or completed by Recreation, Culture and Facilities Services (RCFS):

1. Accessible washroom project at Nepean Sportsplex in public washroom spaces;
2. Accessible viewing platform in the Yzerman Rink at Sportsplex;
3. New parking lot design including accessible layout and barrier free paths and asphalt at the Nepean Sportsplex;
4. Kanata Leisure Centre accessibility upgrades in universal washroom;

5. Richcraft Recreational Complex accessibility upgrades in universal washroom;
6. Greenboro Community Centre washroom and changeroom renovations;
7. Terry Fox North Building accessible washroom;
8. Fully accessible kitchen at Greenboro Pavilion;
9. Front desk improvements at Francois Dupuis Recreation Centre; and
10. Purchase of an accessible stage and ramp for City Hall.

As part of the City Hall Investment Project, in 2020, glass lobby doors were replaced on parking levels 1 and 2 to meet accessibility standards. Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) were installed.

City staff have access to the Active Living Club (ALC) at major facilities. In 2020, upgrades were made to the changerooms of the ALC at City Hall. This includes the installation of accessible stall doors, accessible lockers, accessible benches, accessible paths of travel and accessible washrooms.

The City installed 67 Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) in 2020, bringing the total number of AODA-compliant APS citywide to 270. Currently, 83 per cent of the City's signalized network is equipped with audible signal components. Also, the City equipped 29 traffic signals with Pedestrian Countdown Signals (PCS) in 2020, representing 87 per cent of the City's signalized network. Work on both APS and PCS will continue in 2021.

TSD continues to explore accessible technologies that allow residents to activate APS and PCS remotely. A pilot site at Bank Street and the Transitway continues to be monitored. Enhanced accessible pedestrian signals will be installed along the reconstructed Elgin Street. This pilot project will enable persons with disabilities to activate the APS remotely using either a smartphone app or fob, and to obtain audible information about the intersection and pedestrian countdown signal. This work is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

The Council-approved 2020-2024 Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP) was implemented in 2020. This plan focuses the City's efforts and resources where they would have the greatest impact on reducing collisions that result in serious injury or death, and on the protection of more vulnerable road users, like pedestrians. Actions taken in 2020 included:

- Implementing enhanced high-visibility pedestrian crosswalk markings at 10 high-priority locations; and
- Installing pedestrian signals at two locations.

This work will continue in 2021.

In 2020, TSD continued its review of the City's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), the City's guide for planning, developing and operating Ottawa's walking, cycling, transit and road networks. Consultation in 2020 included a presentation to the AAC, as well as engagement of people with disabilities through the project's Ambassador's Working Group and Community Working Group, which include representatives from the AAC and other accessibility agencies. A third round of consultations is planned for 2021.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses, the City piloted the Patio Innovation Program in 2020, which included measures to encourage 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 Accessibility Design Standards. As part of the permit application process, operators must demonstrate that their patios are accessible. Accessibility is 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. The City was pleased that no negative accessibility feedback was received about the increased number of patios in 2020. This program will continue in 2021 and accessibility requirements will remain in-place.

2020 CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES

As required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the City is continually receiving and responding to accessibility related service requests, feedback and inquiries. The City's AO received a total of 87 accessibility related service requests in 2020. 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 2020 can be categorized into the five accessibility standards, as follows:

- 72 per cent, customer service;
- 22 per cent, built environment;
- Two per cent, information and communication;

- Two per cent, transportation; and
- Zero per cent, employment.

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, the ICSD, through their 3-1-1 call centre, introduced a new communication option for Ottawa residents. This initiative was a result of feedback received from the Deaf community during a targeted consultation in 2019. The service, Canada Video Relay Service (VRS), is a service that 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.

The Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department, through their Accessible Programming, increased participation in recreational programs that accommodate individuals with disabilities by continuing to assess and revise programming options in 2020. One such initiative was the development and delivery of a virtual pilot program for individuals with Acquired Brain Injury or post-stroke, who didn't feel comfortable or couldn't attend in-person programming during the pandemic. They also worked with the City's Service Resumption Working Group to advise on guidelines and procedures to adapt programming, to meet provincial requirements related to COVID-19.

Over the course of 2020, Emergency and Protective Services 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. During the consultations, opportunities, gaps and concerns were raised specifically related to accessibility and persons with disabilities. These comments are being considered with all other feedback received as part of the development of the CSWB Plan. The Plan is expected to be submitted to Community and Protective Services Committee and Council in June 2021.

The Community and Social Services Department, along with several other departments, continues to implement the 2020-2022 Older Adult Plan. While COVID-19 restrictions have impacted operations, as of December 2020, 15 actions were on track and nine action items were deferred to 2021.

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 2020, \$135,000 was allocated to nine agencies for the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist program.

The Ottawa Public Library, to assist the older adult population and those with low vision to read, has continued developing their collection of Large Print books; and will do so as long as the collection continues to be used, and its development continues to be practicable.

The 2020 OC Transpo Travel Training program, in partnership with nearly 100 community agencies, groups and organizations, delivered approximately 2,100 passes. However, due to COVID-19, most partner agencies' travel-training programs were suspended or significantly reduced. The program teaches people with disabilities, seniors, and new Canadians to use transit safely and independently.

Priorities for 2021

Many of the initiatives previously highlighted will be continued and expanded upon in 2021 and will be included in the next annual report. When the City is no longer in a state of emergency, other initiatives will also come back into effect.

COVID-19 has created new challenges for people with disabilities, but it has also provided new opportunities for the City to consider inclusion in our policies, planning and communications. The AO will work with City departments to consider the impacts of COVID-19 and determine what long-term impacts this may have for people with disabilities. Also, while virtual events and meetings may be challenging for some, it has allowed for others who do not traditionally participate to do so within their own homes.

Many of the initiatives arising from COVID-19 will continue in 2021, which impact most City departments. This includes supporting OPH in vaccination planning, and the City's

coordination of the HNTF. We will continue to report on the impacts of these initiatives in the next annual report.

The Process for Consulting with the AAC was implemented in January 2018 as a pilot to:

- Standardize how departments and others consult with the AAC;
- Track which projects go to AAC;
- Standardize the type of information given to AAC; and
- Report back to AAC on how their feedback was incorporated.

The process applies to all Duty to Consult requirements, not including site plans. In 2021, the AO will undertake a review of this process to make improvements as needed.

The AO will also continue work with departments to ensure City staff consult with the AAC on the project which have a duty to consult and projects that will benefit from an accessibility lens.

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.

In 2021, the AO will work with the inter-departmental AWG to examine the process for writing Accessibility Impacts Statements. This will result in process improvements where report authors have the resources and tools that they need to write meaningful impact statements. An update on this review and its outcomes will be included in the 2021 COMAP annual report.

Partnerships will continue to be a focus of the work of the AO in 2021. The AO has joined the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN) Advisory Committee, alongside other public sector and not-for-profit organizations across the country. This will also allow the City to participate in the Domain Area Committees. This will elevate the City’s

accessibility partnerships across Canada and allow for increased collaboration and learning. The City will also continue to coordinate the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), which provides an opportunity to connect with staff working on AODA compliance across the Province.

The AO will also continue to build relationships with community organizations who are run by and support diverse people with disabilities. The AO will also continue to work with and support the City's new Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development Service branch.

Conclusion

As stated above, COVID-19 has changed the way the City has done business in 2020, which continues in 2021. We recognize the unique impacts that the continued state of emergency has on people with disabilities and older adults. Changes and suspensions to programs, services and supports have impacted people with disabilities and seniors physically, socially, mentally and emotionally. While we have pivoted our strategies to continue to support residents, we will continue to reimagine our approaches to ensuring an inclusive City for all residents during this state of emergency and into the future. The City is proud of its continued leadership in accessibility across the Province and the steps taken to eliminate barriers caused by the pandemic. There are many successes to celebrate in 2020, as previously highlighted. We will continue to share our successes with the Province and the public sector, in an effort to contribute to a barrier-free Ontario.

For both planned and unplanned initiatives occurring over the last year, we recognize that much work remains to be done to become a fully inclusive and accessible City. While the 2020-2024 accessibility plan provides a roadmap to that end, 2020 has taught us that we need to remain flexible in our approach. There are still many opportunities to collaborate and learn from others. Part of the City's work will be to recognize how the pandemic has changed City services to be more inclusive and accessible and ensure this progress is not lost as we move forward.

We will continue to update the Province, Council, the AAC and the general public through these annual updates.

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.

CONSULTATION

As stated in the report, the Accessibility Advisory Committee plays an important role in providing accessibility feedback on City initiatives. Throughout the year, they are consulted on many projects, services and programs. A Working Group was formed for consultation on this report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) has been provided with an opportunity to consult with staff from the Accessibility Office in the preparation of this progress report, on the City of Ottawa's Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP), which highlights some of the accomplishments and challenges faced within the 2020 calendar year.

The committee appreciates the City of Ottawa's long-standing and ongoing commitment to accessibility that has been shown by Council, City staff, and particularly the Accessibility Office. We are pleased that accessibility has been incorporated into the everyday operation of the city and that the "culture" is changing whereby accessibility is no longer viewed as an "add-on" feature; but as something that must be fully integrated in all policy and program decisions.

Therefore, we fully support the recommendation to amend the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy and the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures to include the provision of American Sign Language (ASL), *Langue des signes québécoise* (LSQ) and live captioning for communications associated with state of emergencies, without requiring a request. Additionally, the AAC also fully supports the pilot project which allows Councillors to access funding to provide accessible communication supports to residents.

We are in unprecedented times, where the COVID-19 public health emergency has changed our ways of life and has made painfully evident the vulnerabilities faced by

seniors and people with disabilities. We also need to be mindful of the inter-sectional impacts for those who are racialized, experiencing poverty, and all who receive inequitable services. Persons with disabilities and seniors should have equitable access to all supports and services offered by the City.

The committee commends the steps taken by the City to eliminate barriers caused by the pandemic as seen in initiatives such as the creation of the Human Needs Task Force and continuing to engage with the AAC through accessible virtual meetings. 2020 has brought many successes for us to celebrate and has brought many lessons that we still need to learn.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

ONLY LEGAL SERVICES STAFF MAY COMPLETE THIS SECTION. Report writers should provide the general information, details and rationale related to the topic in the Discussion section of the report, as well as any known or previously identified legal issues or concerns. The respective Solicitor will outline the legal impact to the City resulting from the report recommendations in the Legal Implications section. If there are no legal implications, the Solicitor will provide a comment to that effect. To secure the necessary comments and approval from Legal Services, an email request with the RADAR report link should be sent to Lisa Kilner (ext. 14465). Reports cannot go forward without addressing this section and Legal Services must be given a minimum of five (5) working days to review and provide comments.

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.

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 of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards.

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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

All information and initiatives outlined in this report aim to remove or reduce barriers to accessibility in the areas of customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and procurement. 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.

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.*

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 – City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Initiatives

Document 2 – Accessibility Policy

Document 3 – Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure

Document 4 – City of Ottawa WCAG Compliance Plan Agreement

Document 5 – AAC Motion on Multi Use Pathways

Document 6 – Technical Bulletin ISTB-2020-03

Document 7 – City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan Annual Update

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.