



Staff Report

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Report To: Joint Committees

Date of Meeting: February 27, 2023

Report Number: CAO-004-23

Reviewed By: Mary-Anne Dempster, CAO

By-law Number:

File Number:

Resolution#: JC-034-23

Report Subject: 2022 Annual Accessibility Update

Recommendation:

1. That Report CAO-004-23 and any related communication items, be received.
2. That Report CAO-004-23 be placed on the Municipal website to meet AODA requirements; and
3. That all interested parties listed in Report CAO-004-23 be notified of Council's decision.

Report Overview

The [Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations](#) (IASR) outlines a requirement for Municipalities to provide an annual status report. The report is intended to report on measures taken to develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the Municipality of Clarington achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements outlined in the IASR.

There are five standards that support the creation of an accessible province by 2025:

1. Customer Service Standards
2. Information and Communications Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard

This accessibility annual status update provides an update on the Municipality of Clarington's progress and commitment to ensure compliance with all five standards and associated requirements.

As outlined in this report, the Municipality is committed to the financial and staff resources needed to address necessary accessibility improvements. Improvements to municipal services and spaces for the collective benefit of staff, community partners, and residents.

1. Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC)

- 1.1 The Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) is a citizen committee legislated under Part VII of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). 2022 was the final year for the four-year term for all CAAC members. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges to in person meetings and the committee continued to meet virtually, moving to hybrid meetings later in the year. The hybrid option provided people to attend in person at the Municipal Administrative Center or online through Teams. This new system will be maintained as it removes barriers for committee members to continue to perform the important work they undertake.
- 1.2 The CAAC and its site-plan subcommittee were integral in providing advice on key initiatives and other legislated requirements undertaken by the Municipality. In 2022 the Committee reviewed 30 site plan applications, 4 municipal projects including the Clarington Waterfront Strategy, the Newcastle Arena Refurbishment, the Ground Floor Customer Centric Service area at MAC, and upgrades to 6 municipal playgrounds.

- 1.3 The CCAC also Collaborated with the Municipality of Clarington on social media campaigns to recognize and promote National AccessAbility Week, proclaimed National AccessAbility Week by hosting a flag raising to raise awareness, participated in Applefest to engage with residents about the work of the Committee and display the importance of creating an accessible community.
- 1.4 The CCAC continue to work with the community and made recommendations to local businesses on how to improve accessibility which led to the installation of a power door at a local grocery store. Lastly, CCAC nominated a local business owner for the Durham Region Accessibility Awards for their commitment to accessibility and a resident for the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility - employee engagement category. Both nominations won the respective awards.

2. General Requirements and Governance

- 2.1 The Accessibility Coordinator acts as a resource for all municipal service areas and monitors compliance with the AODA. In 2022 the Accessibility Coordinator joined the newly created Corporate Performance and Innovation Division in the Office of the CAO. This change further demonstrates the corporate commitment to supporting initiatives that increase accessibility and inclusion across the workplace and community.
- 2.2 The Accessibility Coordinator provides legislated, mandatory training for all employees and volunteers on providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. In 2022, AODA training was delivered to 47 staff and volunteers. In addition, training on Accessible documents was provided to 2 staff members. This supports the Information and Communication Standard.
- 2.3 In collaboration with Trent University, the training for accessible document was updated to be delivered in a self-serve online format and rolled out in January 2023 to staff. While supporting the Information and Communication standard, this continuous improvement will also free up approximately 10-30 hours a year of capacity for the accessibility coordinator, not having to deliver training in person.
- 2.4 Staff were provided with the opportunity to attend 2 workshops regarding inclusive hiring practices and diversity and disability within the workplace. The workshops were conducted by the DiscoverAbility Network and the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work. Additional workshops and learning opportunities were promoted publicly throughout the year. The training actions support the Information and Communication Standard.
- 2.5 Annually, various grants are applied for to offset the costs of completing accessibility upgrades across the Municipality. Most recently, an application was submitted to the Enabling Accessibility Fund grant. If successful, this funding will support accessibility upgrades at the Newcastle Memorial Arena. The decision on this grant is pending, and supports the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

- 2.6 The Municipality was successful in receiving \$95,000 from the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative to fund the construction and installation of accessible outdoor fitness equipment with rubberized flooring at Soper Creek Park in Bowmanville. This supports the Design of Public Spaces Standard and staff are currently working on procuring equipment and planning the installation of the equipment in the spring/summer of 2023.
- 2.7 As required under the AODA, the Municipality is required to submit a bi-annual Accessibility Compliance Report to the province. The Municipality had to submit this report by January 7, 2022. Staff ensure the report accurately reflects the state of accessibility in Clarington across the required standards. The report indicated full compliance with the AODA and its Standards.
- 2.8 Lastly, in 2022, the Municipality partnered with the DiscoverAbility Network from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. This initiative's goal was to post municipal job opportunities on their job board. Posting in novel areas like mentioned above, provides an opportunity to reach a demographic of people who identify as having disabilities. This helps to achieve diversity in the municipality's workplace supporting recommendations contained within the Leading Equitable and Accessible Design (LEAD) Process and supports the IASR Employment Standard.

3. 2023 Initiatives and Work Plan

- 3.1 Ensuring accessibility is a consideration in all processes and services and is the duty of all staff. The Municipality of Clarington is committed to exceed the legislation, where possible, to ensure a barrier-free Clarington. These initiatives and goals are set out in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be updated in 2023, and will include consultation and engagement with the CAAC, staff and residents.
- 3.2 Staff are working towards the development and implementation of a Universal Design Standard for the Municipality. This will create a standard that informs that the construction, retrofits and maintenance of municipal facilities, align with the goal of creating a more accessible and barrier free environment for the community.
- 3.3 Staff will continue to implement the multi-year recommendations of the LEAD Improvement Plan. There are 42 actions identified under the work plan for 2023. These action items are cross-departmental and are sorted by medium-term and long-term actions. Completion of these items will be achieved within 1-3 years or 3-5 years. Due to the nature of the multi-year action items, each item will have a project plan created along with associated reporting milestones.
- 3.4 Staff recognize an alignment between the work completed within the Accessibility roles and that of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (IDEA) portfolio. As such, staff continue to seek opportunities for alignment with Clarington's Diversity Advisory Committee and IDEA workplans to ensure consistency and avoid duplication of efforts.

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- 3.5 The Accessibility coordinator will continue to support and educate staff on creating accessible documents, how to promote accessibility through daily work, and respond to requests for information in an alternative format from residents.
- 3.6 One key initiative to be completed within 2023 is to conduct facility audits with the Rick Hansen Foundation. The recommendations arising from these audits will form the basis for future facility improvements that will form future capital and operating budget planning. Further, this will create a list of “shovel ready” projects that better positions staff to take advantage of funding opportunities and increases the opportunity for success.
- 3.7 Staff will continue to leverage national awareness events like National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) as a way to celebrate and recognize accessibility in Clarington, and to bring an awareness to the importance of a barrier free environment.

4. Financial Consideration

Not Applicable

5. Concurrence

- 5.1 Not Applicable.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report provides and update on achievements on accessibility in 2022 as outlined in the Multi-year Accessibility Plan and legislated requirements in the AODA. The main goal in this portfolio is to achieve an accessible Ontario by 2025. With the valuable contributions of staff, Clarington’s Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the ongoing support of Council there will be many more accomplishments seen over the next few years.

Staff Contact: Laila Shafi, Temporary Accessibility Coordinator, lshafi@clarington.net or Lee-Ann Reck, Manager Corporate Performance and Innovation, lreck@clarington.net, Office of the CAO.

Attachments:

Not Applicable

The following interested parties will be notified of Council's decision:

Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee