

Staff Report To Council

From: Melissa Hilgendorff, HR Manager
Date: December 16, 2024
Report: HR-04-24
Subject **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Update**

Recommendation

That Council receive Report HR-04-24 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Progress Report for information purposes.

Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* is an evolving legislation currently comprised of five standards known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11:

- Customer Service Standard
- Information and Communications Standard
- Employment Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard

Under the IASR, designated public sector organizations are required to develop and maintain Multi-Year Accessibility Plans and prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the plans.

Discussion

The following is a summary of the initiatives identified in the Town of Hanover’s 2023-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and progress that was made throughout 2024.

PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	
INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
Review and revise accessibility policies. Note this item also applies to Part IV.2 Customer Service.	Accessibility policies are in place. A comprehensive review and update is pending.
Incorporate accessibility features, criteria, and designs as it relates to accessing goods, services, and facilities.	Accessibility is considered within Requests for Proposals, Building Code requirements, and provision of information and services. (eg. RFP for accessible website, new fire hall built to code with accessible public areas, aquatic programming tailored to individual needs and abilities).

Ensure all staff and volunteers complete accessibility training.	Staff and volunteers complete an online accessibility training course or review a training pamphlet created by the Ministry. Review of accessibility policies and procedures also occurs.
Consider onboarding and training capabilities available within new modules of Dayforce.	Implementation of a Learning Module in the Dayforce “live” environment is in progress. Consultation was completed in the “test” environment in 2024.
PART 2: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	
INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
Respond to all accessibility-related feedback received.	Human Resources monitors accessibility-related submissions received through the Customer Service Portal and through other means. Collaboration occurs with other departments, if required, to address feedback received.
Develop and provide resources to staff to support the creation of accessible documents.	Resources to support the creation and maintenance of accessible documents are in development. eScribe and website default features ensure accessibility. Microsoft office programs include accessibility checkers that staff can use to improve accessibility of documents.
Provide information in accessible formats.	Information is provided in alternative formats upon request. In addition, a number of technological options are available to enhance accessibility of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eScribe publishes information in both PDF and html accessible formats, along with ability to stream meetings and provide closed-captioning. • Cloud Permit provides submission of online applications, permits and correspondence. • The Citizen Request Portal provides an avenue to connect with Town departments electronically. • The Town’s new website supports the provision of accessible information and documents that are compatible with accessibility settings used on personal devices
Develop individual emergency response plans for staff, as required. This also pertains to Part III: Employment.	Formal emergency response plans are established, implemented, and reviewed as required. Policies and procedures are in place to govern these processes.

<p>Provide education to the public on emergency preparedness and safety.</p>	<p>The Hanover Fire Department's trains regularly to aid in the successful rescue of persons of all abilities.</p> <p>Consideration is given to persons of varying abilities during mock training exercises of the Town's Emergency Control Group.</p> <p>Emergency evacuation and safety information remains available to the public on the Town's accessibility webpage.</p>
<p>Ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility requirements.</p>	<p>A new website was established in 2024 that is founded on ensuring content meets WCAG standards. The website also features various accessibility options allowing users to tailor settings to their preferences.</p>
<p>Supply accessible content, formats, and services to patrons of the Hanover Public Library.</p>	<p>The Library works on an ongoing basis to provide accessible content, formats and support to patrons.</p>
PART III: EMPLOYMENT	
INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
<p>Encourage persons with disabilities to apply for employment opportunities with the Town.</p>	<p>All job postings issued throughout 2024 invited persons with disabilities to apply for positions. Applicants are invited to collaborate with the Town regarding their accessibility needs throughout the recruitment process.</p>
<p>Ensure all hires are informed that accommodations related to disability will be provided.</p>	<p>All new hires in 2024 received notification of the provision of accommodations within their offer of employment.</p> <p>As an added proactive measure, new hires also confirm whether or not they require accommodation while completing new hire forms.</p>
<p>Provide accessible and/or alternative formats to staff, as requested.</p>	<p>No requests for information in an alternative format were received by staff in 2024.</p>
<p>Review and update processes related to Individual Accommodation Plans.</p>	<p>A formal policy and guideline related to Individual Accommodation and Emergency Response Plans is in place.</p>
<p>Review and update processes related to Return to Work.</p>	<p>A formal policy and guideline related to Return to Work is in place.</p>

Consider accessibility needs within performance reviews and development plans.	Supervisors and Human Resources work together to ensure effective supports are in place for employees, where applicable. Consideration for accessibility throughout the appraisal and development of an employee has been incorporated into HR-001 Personnel Policy.
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PART IV: TRANSPORTATION

INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
Remain committed to accessibility of transportation services within the municipality.	Hanover does not provide transportation services. The Town provides input through participation on the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for transportation initiatives as they arise.

PART V: DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
Consult the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee when reconstructing or developing public spaces as designated under the AODA.	The Town of Hanover regularly consults with the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for designated projects. In 2024 this included consultation on Community Trail extension and signage, sidewalks on 3 rd Street. and 12 th Avenue, splash pad and Town Park washroom renovation.
Implement the Temporary Service Disruption notification process, as required.	Processes are in place to ensure notices are provided both online and within facilities in the circumstance that accessible features are disrupted. This is addressed within ADM-001 Accessible Customer Service Policy.
Support the accessibility of physical Town facilities.	The Strategic Plan includes a goal to complete a condition assessment and accessibility compliance for all Town-owned buildings. Preliminary discussions around this project have commenced with efforts to continue in 2025.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	2024 PROGRESS
Actively participate in Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (GCJAAC) Meetings.	Human Resources represented the Town of Hanover at various GCJAAC meetings throughout 2024. Various department heads also participated in reference to projects specific to their departments.
Support and promote accessibility within local businesses.	Hanover’s Community Improvement Program provides incentives to promote development and revitalization projects, including assisting local businesses in making accessibility improvements.
Support and promote accessibility within local developments.	The Director of Building & Development/CBO presents site plans to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for development projects not owned by the Town, where possible, in order to share

	accessibility feedback and considerations with developers.
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Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Link to Strategic Plan

This report supports the indicated Strategic Goals and Action Plans of the Town of Hanover.

Goal 1: Safe and Reliable Infrastructure

Build, maintain and continuously improve our municipally owned properties, buildings, and equipment.

Goal 2: Healthy and Welcoming Community

Care for our natural environment and provide an enviable quality of life for everyone who calls Hanover “home”.

Goal 3: Strong and Vibrant Economy

Refresh downtown Hanover and retain and attract local economic investment and jobs.

Goal 4: Balanced Growth

Work together to create a community we can all be proud of.

Goal 5: Open and Responsible Government

Deliver services in a friendly, efficient and effective manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

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CAO