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2012 Report on the Accessibility Plan

Mississauga is becoming a more accessible city.

An accessible city ensures everyone feels they belong.

The City marked the 10th Annual Accessibility Plan this year. That's important, because currently, one in seven people in Ontario have a disability. In Mississauga that means that right now, about 150,000 people could have a disability of some kind. By 2036, as the population ages, the number will rise to one in five.

Mississauga's Accessibility Vision Statement: "*A Great Place to live, work, travel and play for everyone!*" complements the City's vision "*A place where people choose to be*" as outlined in the City's Strategic Plan.

The new Accessibility Vision is an inclusive vision that will be realized by:

- ✓ Mississauga being a leader in accessibility (by meeting or exceeding timelines of legislation)
- ✓ universal mobility for everyone (snow removal, transit, accessible sidewalks)
- ✓ retrofitting for full accessibility (address accessibility in older buildings, including parks and trails)
- ✓ being pro-active about making accessibility a design priority

- ✓ state-of-the-art accessible information and tools (websites, equipment, way finding, voting)
- ✓ a fully aware and educated community (courtesy, better attitudes and understanding)
- ✓ well supported by all levels of government (funding)
- ✓ persons with disabilities well represented in all aspects of society (for example, represented on various committees)

These strategies were developed to overcome obstacles and realize our vision:

- 1 give accessibility a voice everywhere
- 2 do what we know is right through our practices and policies
- 3 partner with other jurisdictions (i.e. government) for synergies and efficiency
- 4 outreach and partner to improve education and awareness
- 5 encourage private sector contributions to accessibility

Legislation

The Ontario Human Rights Code recognizes the dignity and worth of every person in Ontario and provides for equal rights and opportunities, and freedom from discrimination.

Customers, clients and tenants with disabilities have the right to equal treatment and equal access to facilities and services. Examples of facilities and services are restaurants, shops, hotels and movie theatres, as well as apartment buildings, transit and other public places.

At work, employees with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities and benefits as people without disabilities. In some cases, they may need special arrangements or “accommodations” so they can do their job.



The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA, 2001) laid the foundation of accessibility legislation in Ontario. The ODA requires municipalities to prepare annual accessibility plans. Mississauga’s first plan was adopted under this legislation in 2003.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005) further defines accessibility requirements and outlines the path the government will take to achieve an accessible Ontario by 2025. The purpose of the AODA is to:

- A** Develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 1, 2025 and
- B** Provide for the involvement of persons with disabilities, the government of Ontario and representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of accessibility standards.

Customer Service, Information & Communication, Employment, Transportation, and Built Environment Standards

A number of accessibility standards are laid out in regulations made under the AODA. They set out the measures, policies, practices and other steps needed to improve and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

The standards apply to both the public and private sectors. The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service was the first standard to become law as a regulation.

The next three standards — information and communications, employment, and transportation — have been combined under one regulation, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The regulation also includes additional 'general requirements'. It is now law and the requirements are being phased in between 2011 and 2025.



In December 2012, the provincial government amended the IASR to include new standards governing the design of public spaces in the built environment. The standards outline new requirements for municipalities.

Mississauga's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The City's new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2012-2017) and yearly reports demonstrate the City's commitment to making accessibility a part of everyday business.

The plan, approved by City Council in March 2012, identifies accessibility standards and City projects that will ensure the City meets the requirements laid out in the standards.



Achievements

The achievements identified in the 2012 Annual Report presented to Council include:



Customer Service

- ✓ The 2012 Exceptional Accessible Customer Service Award was presented to Terri Dale for her work with the 'Sauga Stroke Breakers, a recreation program for participants who have had a stroke, thus, promoting the value and importance of accessible customer service across the City. The City continues to train all new staff in Accessible Customer Service.



Information & Communications

- ✓ The Mississauga Library added a new web page to help people find accessible services and resources now available.
- ✓ Mississauga's Emergency Plan is accessible and available on the City's website.
- ✓ Accessibility awareness and staff training opportunities were promoted during National Access Awareness Week in June 2012 and International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2012.



Transportation

- ✓ MiWay became accessible in 2012. The City's fleet of buses includes only accessible buses, and transit stops are accessible.



Employment

- ✓ A corporate policy outlining accessibility practices for meeting the needs of employees with disabilities was updated in October 2012.



Built Environment

- ✓ The City has built or renovated a number of facilities and locations in the past few years, greatly improving the accessibility of Mississauga's built environment. Accessible facilities and places with improved accessibility that opened or re-opened in 2012 include:

The Garry W. Morden Centre, Therapy Pool Mississauga Valley Community Centre, C Café Civic Centre, Jon Clipperton Park, Lake Wabukayne trail, Jubilee Garden walkway, Scholars' Green, Meadow Green playground, McKechnie Woods playground, Riverwood Park, and Silverthorne Park.



General Requirements

- ✓ The City's procurement request form was updated in March 2012 to ensure accessibility is considered when purchasing goods, services or equipment for the City.
- ✓ The City's Accessibility Policy was updated in December 2012 to include requirements of all the provincial accessibility standards.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Policy

Mississauga's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) advises, recommends and assists the City in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Mississauga for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility) including persons with disabilities.

The committee reviews municipal policies, programs and services and assists with the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities. It also consults with the City in yearly reviews and updates to the City's Accessibility Plan, as required by the AODA.

The City's new Accessibility Policy ensures that the City continues its progress towards an accessible Mississauga. The policy requires all City corporate policies and procedures, bylaws, standards and guidelines must comply with the AODA's accessibility standards.

The policy also outlines the City's statement of commitment:

"The City of Mississauga is committed to implementing, maintaining and enhancing accessibility with respect to employment and the use of all City goods, services, programs and facilities in a timely manner for all persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- 1 Respects their dignity and independence;
- 2 Ensures reasonable efforts are made to provide an opportunity equal to that given to others; and
- 3 Allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way to others, to the greatest extent possible."



For more information:

To find out more about the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee or Accessibility Plan, visit mississauga.ca/accessibility or contact Diana Simpson, Accessibility Coordinator at 905-615-3608, TTY: 905-615-3411, or accessibility.info@mississauga.ca

