

2015 Progress Report

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2012 - 2017



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Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Regional Municipality of Halton is committed to meeting the:

- objectives and requirements of *Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*; and,
- accessibility needs of persons with disabilities with respect to Halton Region's programs, services and facilities, in a timely manner.

Introduction

The Halton Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2012-2017 sets out how Halton Region intends to address requirements in the IASR and also identifies other initiatives aimed at removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities. This document provides an update on the work undertaken in 2015 toward meeting the requirements in the IASR.

This document responds to section 4(3) (a) of the IASR which requires obligated organizations to prepare an annual status report on the progress achieved on their multi-year accessibility plan. It also addresses section 11 of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* which requires municipalities to develop an annual plan describing how barriers to people with disabilities have been and will continue to be identified, removed and prevented.

Status of Accessibility Legislation in Ontario

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

In 2001, the Government of Ontario enacted the ODA. This Act required organizations within the public sector (the provincial government, municipalities, hospitals, educational institutions and public transportation providers) to undertake activities aimed at reducing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities. It also required municipalities with populations of over 10,000 to appoint accessibility advisory committees (AACs), develop annual accessibility plans and seek the advice of AACs on certain matters.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

In 2005, the Provincial Government passed the AODA. The purpose of the AODA is to develop and implement accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

The following standards have been developed to date:

- ***Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*** which sets out what organizations must do to make the delivery of their goods and services more accessible to people with disabilities. The Provincial Government has given notice that it intends to amend *Ontario Regulation 429/07*. Proposed amendments were issued for public review and comment in 2014. However, it is unknown when the Regulation will be amended and when any changes may take effect.
- ***Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards*** which provides a number of general and specific requirements in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces.

Although the AODA was proclaimed in force in 2005, the ODA was not revoked. The Provincial Government has indicated that the ODA will be likely be repealed, however, no definitive timeframe has been provided. As a result, municipalities are still obligated to adhere to the requirements of the ODA.

Accessibility Enhancements to the Ontario Building Code

In December 2013, the Ontario Government introduced accessibility amendments to the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The amendments are aimed at enhancing accessibility in newly constructed and existing buildings that are undergoing extensive renovations. Existing buildings, where no work is planned, are not affected. The effective date of the amendments was January 1, 2015 and they reflect new requirements relating to a number of elements including: visual fire and smoke alarms, elevators, power door operators, barrier-free washrooms, and seating in public assembly buildings.

Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

In 2002, Halton Region established the Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC) as required by the ODA. The HRAAC is a citizen committee that acts as an advisory body and reports to Regional Council through the Administration and Finance Committee. Its mandate is to advise on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities with respect to Halton Region facilities, programs and services.

Since 2002, the HRAAC has provided input on a number of Regional initiatives and projects and has supported activities aimed at creating awareness on issues relating to people with disabilities. The members bring to the Committee a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives related to the challenges faced by people with disabilities. They provide invaluable advice and support to Halton Region as it continues to work toward the identification and elimination of barriers.

Following the municipal elections in 2014, the 2015-2018 HRAAC was established. In addition, the HRAAC's terms of reference were amended to reflect new requirements in the IASR.

IASR Compliance Activities

Since the enactment of the IASR, Halton Region has undertaken a number of activities to respond to its requirements. The IASR's requirements and the actions undertaken to address them are set out in Table 1 – IASR Compliance Activities.

Additional Accessibility Initiatives

During 2015 a number of initiatives, not directly related to the IASR but which were aimed at improving access to Regional programs and facilities, were undertaken. Members of the HRAAC and Halton staff also participated in a number of events aimed at information sharing and creating awareness of issues facing people with disabilities. These activities include the following:

Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (2015-2018)

- In keeping with requirements in the ODA and the AODA, input from HRAAC was sought on a number of Regional initiatives, projects and topics including the renovation of showers and washrooms in the fitness area of the Halton Regional Centre, the Halton Region Museum's "Dogs in our Service" exhibit, and an update to a staff resource on accessible meetings and public events.

Built Environment / Design of Public Spaces

- Construction of a new vestibule and enhanced patio space at the South Auditorium Entrance at the Halton Regional Centre was completed. This included the creation of a wider and more accessible entrance with automatic sliding doors and an improved concrete patio area.
- A renovation to the Sedgewick Crescent Child Care Centre included accessibility improvements to a staff washroom.

Halton Region Events

Actions taken to provide accessible customer service at these events include the following:

- Rain Barrel Sales - portable signage is used to designate accessible parking spots, tables and chairs are provided for individuals who prefer or need to sit, staff are available to carry the rain barrels to residents' cars, residents are given the option of sending someone to the truckload sales on their behalf or to purchase online if they are unable to attend any of the sales events.
- Children's Water Festival – accessible buses for students are available upon request, all-terrain wheel chairs are provided for participants or volunteers who require them, accessible change areas are provided, and actions are taken to ensure that children and volunteers with disabilities are able to participate.

Ongoing Awareness, Education and Training

- A training resource booklet that sets out information on accessible customer service, the IASR and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* was provided to the newly appointed HRAAC, other Regional citizen advisory committee members and following the 2014 municipal election, newly elected Regional Council members.

- As part of Halton's orientation process, new staff were required to complete an online training module on *Ontario Regulation 429/07-Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, the IASR and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- Information and presentations on compliance requirements under accessibility legislation and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* were provided to various staff groups within Halton Region.
- Staff in the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) attended a workshop on accessibility requirements and their application to, and impact on, clients of the SBEC. SBEC materials were revised to include updated information on accessibility legislation.
- Halton staff participated in webinars, hosted by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, which provided information and guidance on the following topics: accessible and inclusive meetings and public events, the implementation of accessibility requirements related to the design of public spaces, and accessible websites.
- Halton Region staff, representing various program areas, and members of the HRAAC attended the 2015 Halton Community Resource Fair.
- Halton staff met regularly with accessibility staff in the Local Municipalities to share information and identify best practices and training opportunities for program staff responsible for implementing accessibility requirements.
- Staff and members of the HRAAC attended the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) celebration event in honour of the AODA's 10th anniversary.

Next Steps

Throughout the remainder of 2015 and in 2016, Halton staff will continue to work toward meeting the requirements of the IASR and undertake other activities aimed at eliminating barriers to people with disabilities. These activities include the following:

- Completing and submitting a compliance report, as required by the Provincial Government, in advance of the December 31, 2015 deadline.
- Responding to Requests for Documentation from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, as required.
- Continuing to address accessibility requirements in the ODA, the AODA and their Regulations and supporting Halton's program areas in implementing and complying with those requirements
- Continuing to provide training to new staff on *Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, the IASR, and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as part of Halton's orientation process.
- Reviewing and updating, as required, procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces.
- Seeing input from the HRAAC in identifying and removing barriers to people with disabilities with respect to Halton's programs, services and facilities, including accessibility considerations relating to office and workstation furniture.
- Undertaking the required consultations related to the design of public spaces as set out in the IASR on the Burloak Regional Waterfront Park and the Burlington Beach Regional Waterfront Park projects.
- Monitoring changes to *Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* and other accessibility standards to determine if Halton's policies, procedures and training materials will require changes.
- Providing input to the Provincial Government, as required, on the proposal to establish a voluntary certification program similar to the LEED designation program to recognize organizations that have championed accessibility.

- Continuing to work and share information with Local Municipal accessibility staff in Halton, the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), AMCTO and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Table 1 – IASR Compliance Activities

Part I – General Requirements		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
<p>Develop accessibility policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement and maintain accessibility policies, including a statement of organizational commitment • Make policies publically available 	January 1, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halton Region Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy developed and approved by Regional Council in November 2012. Policy posted on Halton website. ✓ Policy amended in November 2013 to reflect requirements in Design of Public Spaces Standards.
<p>Develop a multi-year accessibility plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan 	January 1, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halton Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2012-2017 approved in November 2012. Posted on Halton’s website.
<p>Report annually on the multi-year accessibility plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare annual status report on progress of measures in multi-year plan, post on website, provide in an accessible format, upon request 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2013 and 2014 progress reports developed and placed on Halton Region’s website. 2015 progress report has been developed and will be posted on Halton’s website.
<p>Incorporate accessibility in procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so 	January 1, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Accessibility Obligations in Procurement” procedure developed. Requirement addressed in Halton’s accessibility training. ✓ Procurement documents, including the following, identify accessibility requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructions to Bidders ○ General Terms and Conditions ○ Purchase Requisition Forms

Part I – General Requirements		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code is provided to employees, volunteers, persons who participate in developing policies and others who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of organization 	<p>January 1, 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff training completed by January 2014 deadline. ✓ Booklet combining information on the Accessible Customer Service Regulation, IASR and Human Rights Code developed and distributed. ✓ Online module combining Accessible Customer Service Regulation, IASR and Human Rights Code information developed for new staff. ✓ Presentations to a number of divisions on accessibility legislation and requirements and the Human Rights Code took place in 2015. ✓ Staff in Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) attended a workshop on accessibility requirements and their application to clients of the SBEC.

Part II - Information and Communications Standards		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
Feedback processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing/ arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Accessible Feedback” procedure developed. ✓ Halton’s website updated to include public notification on how to proceed if an individual requires an alternate format or communication support to provide feedback. ✓ Halton’s advertisements include wording that asks residents to advise if they require accommodation at Regional events or meetings. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton’s accessibility training information.
Accessible formats and communication supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon request, provide for provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports 	January 1, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Accessible Formats and Communications Supports” procedure updated and made available to staff. ✓ Halton’s website updated to provide public notification that accessible formats and communication supports are available. ✓ Halton’s advertisements include wording that asks residents to advise if they require accommodation at Regional events or meetings. ✓ Upgrade to the assistive listening devices for use in Council Chambers. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton’s accessibility training information.
Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide emergency procedures, plans or public 	January 1, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Documents provided in alternate formats, upon request. ✓ Information on emergencies and people with

Part II - Information and Communications Standards		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
safety information, that are available publicly, in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request		<p>disabilities is available on Halton Region's website. Brochures and information available in a variety of formats.</p> <p>✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.</p>
<p>Accessible websites and web content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New websites and web content on new websites • Websites and web content to conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA 	<p>January 1, 2014</p> <p>January 1, 2021</p>	<p>✓ The Social and Digital Media team continue to work toward ensuring that website content is accessible.</p>

Part III – Employment Standards		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment process • Notify job applicants when selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available • When making an offer of employment, notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halton's Employment Opportunities page and job postings include wording reflecting that disability-related accommodations are available. ✓ When interviews are booked with candidates, they are asked if any accommodation is required. ✓ Hiring managers to advise individuals who are selected to participate in interviews of the availability of disability-related accommodations. ✓ Offer of Employment letters include wording advising that Halton will provide disability-related accommodation. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.
Informing employees of supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform employees of policies to support employees with disabilities 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Offer of Employment letters include wording advising that Halton will provide disability-related accommodation. ✓ Existing employees will be advised of changes to policies through a variety of methods, including the Region's intranet site and email. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.
Accessible formats and communication supports for employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When requested by an employee with a disability, employers shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halton Region Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy reflects requirement ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.

Part III – Employment Standards		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
communication supports for information needed to perform employee's job and/or generally available to employees in workplace		
Workplace emergency response information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, as required 	January 1, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A process is in place for employees to self-identify so that a workplace emergency response plan can be developed. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.
Documented individual accommodation plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work Accommodation Policy is in place. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.
Return to work process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require accommodation to return to work 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Return-to-work process is in place. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training information.
Performance management, career development and redeployment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into account accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans as part of performance management processes, when providing career development opportunities and considering redeployment 	January 1, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halton Region's Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy reflects requirements for performance management, career development and redeployment. ✓ Requirement addressed in Halton's accessibility training.

Part IV.1 – Design of Public Spaces Standards		
Requirement	Compliance Deadline	Actions
<p>Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) (Sections 80.1-80.44) This section of the IASR includes a number of technical and consultation requirements related to the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recreational trails and beach access routes • outdoor public use eating areas • outdoor play spaces • exterior paths of travel • accessible parking • service counters, queuing areas • maintenance plans 	<p>January 1, 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Requirements reflected in Halton’s Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and accessibility training module. ✓ Resources and materials on the requirements and their implementation (i.e., “Illustrated Technical Guide to the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces” and “A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation”) provided to Regional staff. ✓ Along with staff from the Local Municipalities, Halton staff participated in meetings with representatives of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and a training seminar on the requirements of the DOPS and their interpretation, application and implementation. ✓ A number of requirements set out in the DOPS were incorporated into the design of Regional construction and renovation projects (i.e., Halton Regional Centre-South Parking Lot). ✓ The Region’s Engineering and Construction Division has begun implementing the DOPS requirements relating to accessible pedestrian signals, pedestrian curb ramps and depressed curbs at intersections under Halton’s jurisdiction.



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