



City of Kingston
Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-25-004

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services

Resource Staff: Brandi Timpson, Manager of Administration and Emergency Preparedness

Date of Meeting: March 6, 2025

Subject: Emergency Management Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Corporate business

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

This report provides an overview on how accessibility needs of community members are factored into emergency management planning.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

March 6, 2025

Page 2 of 5

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Neil Carbone, Commissioner,
Corporate & Emergency
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Ian Semple, Acting Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

March 6, 2025

Page 3 of 5

Options/Discussion:

Emergency Management planning is a critical process that ensures communities are prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies/disasters. The accessibility needs of all community members, especially those with disabilities or other mobility, sensory, or cognitive limitations also need to be considered to ensure overall effectiveness of these plans. This report highlights how accessibility needs are factored into emergency management planning at the City of Kingston.

Consideration is given to the unique challenges, needs, and preferred method of communication for vulnerable groups within the community to ensure they are informed, prepared, and safe during emergencies. These groups include but may not be limited to:

- Elderly individuals who may have mobility issues or pre-existing medical conditions that could affect the way they process information including decision making
- Individuals with sensory impairments
- Individuals with cognitive impairments
- Individuals with physical disabilities
- Individuals experiencing language barriers

Effective communication is one of the cornerstones of emergency management and crucial during an emergency or disaster situation. The City makes all attempts to ensure communication is in a format that is accessible recognizing the barriers that may exist for the reader. If at any time an alternate format is required, a request can be made through contactus@cityofkingston.ca or by calling 613-546-0000.

The Emergency Management Office also takes into consideration throughout the year, social media messaging geared towards vulnerable populations and those with accessibility concerns.

Accessibility features have been included in emergency alerts, when activated, to ensure they include both visual and auditory signals in consideration of individuals with hearing or vision impairments to make sure warnings are received in an acceptable format.

It is also recognized that evacuation centres and shelters must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, mobility, cognitive, or sensory limitations. Key considerations the City includes are:

- Transportation to evacuation locations that are accessible for those with mobility issues (e.g. – Kingston Transit, Kingston Access Bus, accessible taxis, or vans equipped with lifts)
- Evacuation centres and shelters, when activated, are free from barriers, equipped with accessible bathrooms, have wide enough aisles to accommodate wheelchair and mobility

March 6, 2025

Page 4 of 5

devices and include ramps to and from the physical site along with trained staff capable of assisting with specific needs.

- Personal support services are made available to individuals who may require assistance getting to the evacuation centre or shelter location(s).

The Emergency Management office also maintains agreements with non-governmental agencies, such as the Canadian Red Cross, which provide accessible and inclusive disaster relief and preparedness services to individuals with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Below are several key ways in which these organizations assist to serve accessible communities:

- Provide volunteers who are trained to assist individuals who may need help evacuating their homes and moving to safe locations during an emergency.
- In certain instances, they help provide financial assistance to individuals who need help securing accessible resources after a disaster like medical devices, interim accessible housing options or mobility aids. This ensures that individuals with disabilities are not left without critical resources in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Provide access to necessary medical supplies including prescriptions, assistive devices, and other medical equipment.
- Provide access to disability-specific items such as hearing aids, mobility aids and personal care items.
- Assist with ensuring evacuation centre and shelter environments are physically and operationally accessible.

During the nationally recognized Emergency Preparedness Week, which traditionally falls during the first week of May each year, the City's Emergency Management Office highlights the importance of emergency preparedness for all residents.

Through public engagement we encourage others within the community to assist and help support those in need during times of crisis.

By including accessibility needs in emergency management planning, it helps to ensure that all members of the community, regardless of their abilities, are supported in times of crisis. By addressing these needs in the planning process, a more inclusive and resilient community is created that is prepared for any emergency situation.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

Accessibility is a key component of IIDEA.

Existing Policy/By-Law

Not applicable

March 6, 2025

Page 5 of 5

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Jen Pinarski, Manager of Communications and Public Engagement, Communications and Customer Experience

Exhibits Attached:

None