

## 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – Annual Status Update for 2024

### Introduction

This report provides an annual update on the progress made and work completed by City staff in 2024 to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11. Work has also been completed above and beyond the legislative requirements to increase accessibility and reduce barriers.

Under the IASR, the City of Kingston is required to develop a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines, over a maximum five-year period, the actions and steps the municipality will take to remove barriers to accessibility. This report acts as a companion to the City's 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based on best practice research, and input from City employees, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC), and Kingston residents, including persons with disabilities. The 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and this report, are organized around the five standards contained within the IASR and the general requirements of the AODA.

The five standards of the IASR are:

1. Customer service;
2. Information and communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of public spaces.

The general requirements of the AODA include:

- Procurement; and
- Training.

2024 was the second year of implementation for the 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The following pages detail the achievements and successes of the City of Kingston and its staff with respect to increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to participation.

## Achievements and Successes

### Customer Service

- Launched the City of Kingston Primary Care Clinic Expansion Grant. The Grant offers a one-time financial contribution of up to \$100,000 for up to six eligible projects, with the goal of empowering existing local primary care clinics to broaden their services through the innovative use of technology, expansion of administrative support to address paperwork burden, and the addition of allied healthcare professionals to the primary care clinic setting.
- Completed a review of the Municipal Fee Assistance Program (MFAP) and launched an improved program in 2024. MFAP offers services such as affordable transit passes, extended health care benefits for vision, dental and prescription medication expenses, vouchers for spay/neutering of pets, affordable recreational opportunities, and access to Grand OnStage and PumpHouse Museum programming.
- In programming for the Grand OnStage series, presented young audience productions with relaxed programs for patrons with sensory sensitivities, and American Sign Language interpretation. Performances were also selected focusing on disabilities, accessibility and inclusion themes.
- Offered options for participants with sensory sensitivities in programming at the PumpHouse and MacLachlan Museum, including dedicated opening times at popular events.
- Included accessible parking and drop-off areas, as well as accessible portable washrooms at all municipal events. Accessible access points and sensory friendly zones and programs, including a sensory skate, were offered at the New Year's Eve K-Town Countdown Event at the INVISTA Centre. Attendance for the event increased 300% from 2023 attendance, thanks to partnership with Bloom Skills Centre.
- 86% of paid performance opportunities at municipal events in 2024 were from equity deserving groups.
- Continued to offer discounted tickets for Grand OnStage shows through the Municipal Fee Assistance Program and the Pay What You Want program. The number of discount tickets sold in the 2024-2025 season to-date (482) has surpassed the 318 discount tickets sold in the 2023-2024 season.

## Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-25-003

- Worked with H'Art Centre to provide accessible arts programming and training for persons with disabilities.
- Dedicated winter control staff with a priority focus on clearing sidewalks and bus pads.
- Completed a review of and provided comments to the provincial government on the Customer Service Standards Development Committee initial recommendations for updates to the Integrated Accessibility Standards.
- Finalized new public skating guidelines with a focus on increasing accessibility and inclusion for skaters using mobility devices.
- Continued partnership with Kingston Community Health Centres and Lionhearts Inc. to provide increased access to high-quality fresh fruit and vegetables within some of the City's 'food deserts'. The Pop-Up Market was available at City facilities like the Rideau Heights Community Centre, Artillery Park and the INVISTA Centre as well as private locations like the Cataraqui Mall, the Canex Mall, Kingston Seniors' Centre and St. Lawrence College.
- Purchased a portable MobiLift unit to make City mobile stages accessible to persons who use mobility devices or have other accessibility needs.

### Information / Communication

- Launched the new City of Kingston website, along with microsites for Kingston Transit and Kingston Airport. Website features include:
  - a modern, refreshed design and a simplified, user-friendly and service-oriented navigation system;
  - an online by-law library featuring HTML versions to increase readability, searchability and accessibility;
  - online form software that is more compatible with assistive technology, increases design options and provides a more positive user experience via integration with the MyKingston portal.

The website meets WCAG 2.0AA standards as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Two rounds of comprehensive user testing were completed focusing on general accessibility compliance and usability as well as areas for future optimization and growth.

## **Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-25-003**

- Coordinated the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Celebrating Accessibility Awards. One community group (Inclusive Play Project), one community member (Rachel Doornekamp), and two businesses (Purely Mobile Hygiene and 4Cats Arts Studio) were recognized for going above and beyond the legislated requirements to make Kingston a more accessible community.
- Updated the Accessible Consultation Process Policy, receiving approval from both MAAC and City Council. The Policy sets out how City staff are to consult with MAAC members, persons with disabilities and the public in general in order to meet the requirements of the AODA.
- Updated the Accessibility Standards Policy, receiving approval from both MAAC and City Council. This Policy sets out how City staff will achieve the requirements of the AODA as well as the highest level of accessibility in providing goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities.
- Continued an educational campaign regarding the rules and regulations for service animals as part of National AccessAbility Week.

### **Employment**

- Participated in Disabilities Mentoring Day on October 30, as well as an additional mentorship day on December 3. Disabilities Mentoring Day is a nationwide event that seeks to build connections between business professionals and diverse talent while providing an experiential learning opportunity and knowledge exchange between mentors and mentees.

### **Transportation**

- Added more frequent service and increased access to employment areas via Transit route changes, including expanding service to the Westbrook community.
- Created a new route offering connection between downtown and all three hospitals (Kingston General Hospital, Hotel Dieu and Providence Care). This route includes a stop on the property at Providence Care, shortening the distance to access the hospital as compared to the previous stop.
- Upgraded all Kingston Transit customers to Transit Royale, a subscription service within the Transit app. Transit Royale provides real-time public transit data for trip planning on Kingston Transit, including route suggestions.

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- Upgraded 25 bus stop locations to improve accessibility, including new concrete pads suitable for bench/shelter installation and improved connections between sidewalks and pathways.
- Upgraded the next stop displays on 17 transit buses. The updated displays include enhanced customer information with route number, destination, the upcoming next four stops, and expected time of arrival.

### Design of Public Spaces

- Worked with the Inclusive Play Project towards the creation of Kingston's first highly inclusive playground. The City provided \$300,000 in funding, as well as offering land at Shannon Park and ongoing maintenance once the park is constructed.
- Implemented a variety of traffic calming initiatives in three neighbourhoods, focused on improving pedestrian safety around schools. Work included lowering speed limits to 40 km/h on all neighbourhood streets and further reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h in front of schools on local roads.
- Completed over 1,000 metres of sidewalk repair and 2,500 metres of sidewalk replacement.
- Conducted public engagement for construction or reconstruction of park features at Frontenac Street Parkette, Crerar Park, Everitt Park, Cecil & Wilma Graham Park, Ronald Lavallee Memorial Kiwanis Park, and Creekside Valley Park and Westbrook Parks.
- Completed reconstruction of Garrigan Park and Rodden Park with features including accessible pathways and play features.
- Completed construction of Waterside Way Park and Trails including accessible pathways and a multi-use trail system with connectivity to existing trail systems.
- Completed review and provided comments to the provincial government on the Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee initial recommendations for updates to the Integrated Accessibility Standards.
- Completed accessible parking stall line and symbol painting at two arenas. At Centre 70 Arena, adjustments were made to the 6 accessible stalls to include, three Type A and three Type B stalls, and added an accessible aisle beside each. Lines and symbols at Memorial Centre were repainted to provide increased visibility.

## Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-25-003

- Installed new outdoor fitness equipment with accessible features at Kingston East Community Centre.
- Increased accessibility features at marinas. At Confederation Basin installed handrails at dock C and D and new signage to identify accessible dock. At Portsmouth Olympic Harbour installed new signage to identify accessible dock.
- Installed graspable handrails on interior staircase in City Hall.
- Installed three wayfinding signs on the exterior of City Hall. Signs include large scale text, Braille and pictograms and denote barriers, accessible entrances and pathways.
- Reviewed City surface parking lots for exterior lighting within lots and associated pathways, as well as for location of accessible parking spaces with respect to payment devices and pathways. The scope of the project included monitoring of frequency of use of accessible parking spots to determine if additional spots were required.
- Investigated the potential creation of a universal washroom including an adult change table in City Hall and Slush Puppie Place.
- Completed the renovation design for the Isabel Turner Library branch, with the project to include accessibility features such as universal washrooms, lower book stacks and an accessible checkout desk.
- Completed the Williamsville Transportation Study, which included the development of increased non-vehicle traffic options through the Princess Street corridor between Division Street and Alfred Street. These options include physically-separated cycle track, transit queue jumps and transit priority lanes.
- Produced an [educational video](#) to increase resident awareness of the rules with respect to pedestrian crossovers in support for Council's strategic priority on pedestrian crossing education.
- Completed pathway improvements on Cataraqi Estate Business Park Trail and K&P Trail to improve drainage and accessibility.
- Continued work on the Bayridge Drive cycling & pedestrian improvement project including the installation of sidewalks and pathways with improved connectivity and safety, separated bike paths and upgraded intersections with increased safety for pedestrian and cyclists.

## Exhibit A to Report Number MAAC-25-003

- Constructed new sidewalks and cycling lanes on Collins Bay Road between Princess Street and Woodbine Road and installed a signalized pedestrian crossing at Collins Bay Road and Humberside Drive.
- Installed an accessible front counter desk at PumpHouse Museum.
- Hosted lived experience workshops with residents to gather diverse resident experiences to inform the Integrated Mobility Plan. The goal of the sessions was to create connections across perspectives and ensure lived experience remains central to project decision making.

### Training

- Developed training sessions for staff regarding the provincial regulations and municipal best practices for providing customer service to customers with service animals.
- Two Facilities Management and Construction Services staff members completed the Rick Hansen Foundation Municipal Cohort Accelerator training, focused on ways to promote, implement and enhance accessibility in municipalities.

### Other success and achievements

The following successes and achievements do not fit within the above categories but contribute to improving accessibility in Kingston:

- Launched the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan, including an affordable rental incentive to encourage the construction of rental units that meet the CMHC definition of affordable for low to moderate income households. Those benefiting from the program require a 15-year commitment to maintaining units at an affordable rate.
- Received Council endorsement for the operational plan at 309 Queen Mary Road. The facility will include transitional supportive housing, a primary health care clinic and community use/programming space, with a focus on vocational programs.
- Partnered with Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Ontario Health Team to encourage residents who do not have a primary care provider to register with Health Care Connect. Health Care Connect is the provincial system that helps people find a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Facilitated a public engagement for the review of the City of Kingston Arts Fund using an adaptive civic lottery process to select members for a community

advisory committee to ensure the City reached diverse groups, prioritizing participants who represent equity-deserving, historically marginalized and vulnerable groups.

## **Conclusion**

The end of 2024 brings the City of Kingston into the final year of the 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Throughout 2025 City staff will be engaging members of MAAC and Kingston residents, in particular those who identify as having a disability, to review the 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Along with reviewing the current plan, engagement activities will be undertaken to determine areas for improvement for the accessibility of City goods, services and facilities. Information gathered through this engagement will be reviewed by City staff and used to inform the 2026 – 2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This Plan will be presented to MAAC for recommendation for Council approval before the end of 2025.

Staff wish to recognize the contributions of MAAC members through their service on the Committee and in providing their feedback and advice directly to City staff on projects.

Information regarding accessibility at the City of Kingston, including the 2023–2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Status Reports, can be found on the [City website](#). This information is available in hard copy and alternate formats upon request by email at [contactus@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:contactus@cityofkingston.ca) or 613-546-0000.