

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (1) – MAY 30, 2023

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Distributed May 26, 2023

SC 1 Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager,
Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief
Financial Officer, dated May 16, 2023.

Subject

2022 Annual Accessibility Status
Report

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Please note there may be further Communications.



**STAFF COMMUNICATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Staff Communication : SC 1
Committee of the Whole (1)
May 30, 2023**

DATE: May 16, 2023

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services,
City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION – May 30, 2023, Committee of the Whole (1)
2022 Annual Accessibility Status Report**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Staff Communication is to provide Mayor and Council with information regarding the 2022 Annual Accessibility Status Report, which is to be posted to the City's external website as per legislative requirements.

2. Analysis

People with disabilities in Ontario face challenges accessing goods, services, facilities, and employment. Demand for accessible services is expected to increase as the population ages. Under the Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), municipalities are legislatively required to create accessible and barrier-free spaces. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) created a framework in 2011 to ensure accessibility in customer service, transportation, information and communications, public spaces, and employment.

The AODA requires municipalities to create a multi-year accessibility plan to set and achieve accessibility goals and prepare annual status reports on progress made in implementing the multi-year plan and the steps taken to comply with Ontario Regulation 191/11. The City is presently working on the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Annual Status Report for 2022, [Attachment 1], showcases the City's ongoing, completed, and in-progress initiatives from its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2019-2022. The City is required to post the annual status reports on its external website.

For more information, contact Zincia Francis, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Ext. 8159.

Approved by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Coroneos'.

Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Attachment:

1. Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022.

Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022

City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada





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INTRODUCTION

The City of Vaughan is dedicated to fostering an equitable, inclusive and accessible community for all citizens and visitors. As a reflection of this commitment to advancing accessibility, Vaughan Council approved the City's [2019-2022 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#), which identifies how the City will create a barrier-free community with universal access to its programs, services and facilities.

The City's goal, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, is to create a fully accessible community by 2025. The 2019-2022 Multi-year Accessibility Plan outlined a path to achieving that goal.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was established to help guide the City in removing and preventing barriers in policies, practices, programs and services in a way that meets the requirements of the AODA. All municipal board and committee meetings are posted to the City's [meeting calendar](#) at vaughan.ca.



ACCESSIBILITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS

Established in 2019 by the City's AAC, the annual [Accessibility Champion Awards](#) honour businesses, groups and individuals helping to create an accommodating and inclusive community for all.

In 2022, Human Endeavour was recognized in the small business category as a non-profit organization developing innovative solutions to promote social and economic well-being for newcomers, people with disabilities and those who confront multiple barriers to inclusion.

In the individual category, Charles Camilleri was honoured for his significant contributions to accessibility and social inclusion, a passion inspired by his lived experience of barriers as a user of a powered wheelchair.

ORDER OF VAUGHAN

Kathy Laszlo, co-founder and Executive Director at DANI (Developing and Nurturing Independence), was awarded the [Order of Vaughan](#) in 2022 for her efforts to advance accessibility. This is the highest civic honour the City bestows on individuals who exemplify extraordinary citizenship and betterment of the community.

SPECIALIZED RECREATION PROGRAMS

The City's Recreation Services department continues to increase specialized services and programs for people of all ages and abilities. This includes programs and camps designed for persons with disabilities, one-on-one swimming lessons and movement fitness classes. To support the needs of persons with disabilities in programs, the department provides one-on-one staff and volunteer support, one-on-one consultation, nutrition counselling and customized personal training based on individual needs and ability levels.

Recreational services are designed with an accessibility lens that addresses AODA requirements based on data collected via surveys, demographics and community needs assessments.

In 2022, more than 800 individuals with disabilities accessed the City's specialized programs for persons with disabilities.



Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is an employment program for individuals with disabilities that provides them with real-life work experience and job training. The program is typically hosted at a business, where participants work in various departments and gain skills through on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

The Project SEARCH model was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996. Currently, there are more than 650 Project SEARCH sites worldwide. The program reports that approximately 75 per cent of students are employed within a year of graduation. This reflects the overall success of the program for graduates and their employers.

An 11-month collaborative Council-approved partnership with Project SEARCH Canada, the City of Vaughan, York Catholic District School Board and Community Living York South was initiated in June 2022. With support from skills trainers, 10 students were immersed in training through internship placements in seven City departments: Animal Services, Facilities Management, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Office of the City Clerk, Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations, Recreation Services, and Transportation and Fleet Management. The students also received daily classroom instruction for employment skills and career exploration. The pilot project is ongoing and will complete its first year in July 2023.

CELEBRATIONS

The City proudly celebrates National AccessAbility Week, Youth Week, Recreation and Parks Month, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities through proclamations, events and programming every year. [Accessible event guidelines](#) are used to ensure City events are accessible to persons with disabilities. To ensure equitable access to City events, accessible transportation and volunteer support are provided. Closed captioning is available for virtual events, and sign language interpreters are provided upon request.



GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Vaughan's commitment to accessibility strives to achieve the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) by continuing to develop, implement and maintain policies and best practices. This includes updating policies and procedures, enhancing the City's capacity to serve people with disabilities, and training staff on the requirements of the standards referred to in the IASR.

TRAINING

Accessibility awareness training is required for all City staff. It is integrated into onboarding processes for new staff, with annual refreshers for all staff. The City implemented mandatory online training for all employees on the AODA General Standard, Customer Service Standard, Employment Standard, and Information and Communications Standard, as well as training on the Ontario Human Rights Code.



	Administrative Services	City Manager	Community Services	Corporate Services	Infrastructure Development	Planning and Growth Management	Public Works
Percentage of staff completing training	80%	81%	56%	96%	84%	74%	70%

AccessForward e-learning

General Requirements	80%	78%	54%	95%	79%	69%	68%
Information and Communications Standard	78%	78%	54%	95%	79%	67%	66%
Employment Standard	79%	79%	55%	95%	81%	67%	67%
Customer Service Standard	80%	80%	56%	96%	81%	71%	69%
Design of Public Spaces Standard*	91%	100%	94%	89%	70%	100%	71%
Transportation Standard*	83%	100%	100%	100%	78%	89%	100%

Ontario Human Rights Commission e-learning

Call It Out: Racism, Racial Discrimination and Human Rights	85%	88%	56%	97%	92%	88%	77%
Human Rights 101 Third Edition (2020)	79%	85%	55%	97%	93%	85%	72%

*Mandatory courses for staff whose services are directly related to the Transportation and Design of Public Spaces Standard.

Through the last quarter of 2022, Recreation Services enhanced staff training and updated the disability awareness training to ensure person-first language and tools to serve and support people with disabilities is used appropriately.

Standardized training on disability awareness, inclusion techniques, program adaptations and behaviour management was delivered to 1,700 staff and 405 volunteers. Inclusion staff were also certified in non-violent crisis intervention techniques to support individuals with behavioural needs. Training is provided annually with refreshers on a seasonal basis.

The Abilities Centre facilitated virtual live training on accessibility and inclusion to the City's Senior Leadership Team and the Technical Advisory Committee in mid-2022.

In response to a general attitudinal barrier that had resulted in a lack of accessibility-related projects, Economic Development designed a full-day Fostering Inclusive Tourism Experiences event as part of the Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity Learning Sessions. The event, promoting equity and inclusion for Vaughan-based small businesses in hospitality and tourism, took place in 2023.

POLICY

The City's [Accessibility Policy](#) was updated and approved by Council in 2022. The policy provides a framework to guide the review and development of other City policies, standards, procedures, by-laws and guidelines to comply with the AODA and the IASR.



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Information and Communications Standards under the IASR require organizations like municipalities to communicate and provide information in ways accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing public safety information, materials, feedback, communication support and website content in accessible formats.



The City has taken steps to update the website and ensure content will comply with World Wide Web Consortium – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA at minimum, working towards Level AAA. The new vaughan.ca launched in early 2023 and includes a cleaner, more welcoming interface and enhanced accessibility features, such as required captioning for all images and a tool allowing users to automatically translate content into 51 different languages widely spoken in York Region.

The new vaughan.ca also uses UserWay. This application allows users to customize the site's appearance with higher contrast colours, larger font sizes, highlighted links and dyslexia-friendly font to make the site more accessible to the individual user. UserWay was also integrated into the City intranet site.

The City initiated an enterprise-wide project to ensure all material posted to vaughan.ca complies with the Information and Communications Standard, and committed funds to train staff in developing the necessary skills to produce and maintain accessible documents.



The Economic Development department has been working on updating the micro-site through which the City's department communicates with Vaughan businesses. The site underwent an audit on WCAG 2.0 AA-level standards and will be updated to reach compliance. The department has also ensured the site includes more information for business owners about accessibility.

The visual design on all digital platforms for Recreation Services is created with accessibility in mind, so communications are clean, including images and copy, and are sized to be responsive to different platforms. In preparation for the transition to the City's new website in 2023 and to reduce barriers, the marketing team responsible for maintaining the departmental webpages received training on the new corporate website management system, Drupal, and on how to create accessible digital documents. The departmental web content has been migrated to the new website and accessibility

plans include converting PDF forms to a web-based model; publications digitized to run on HTML 5 interactive flipbooks; and long-form copy embedded as web copy within accordions/collapsible text features.

Corporate and Strategic Communications (CSC) and Service Vaughan are actively engaged in responding to citizen needs, providing alternative formats for people who have hearing or visual impairments or those who require language interpretation. For example, a certificate for the Accessibility Champion Awards was printed in Braille and placed over the glass pane on the frame to support the specific accessibility request of the recipient. Additionally, CSC is working towards integrating closed captioning as a standard requirement for video recordings. Web Accessibility Guidelines, Web Writing Guidelines and Web Style Standards, as well as training, updated to align with the launch of the new vaughan.ca, are available to all staff publishing content to the website.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The accessible Customer Service Standard aims to ensure people with disabilities receive equitable customer service from all staff. The City's [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy](#) details specific requirements regarding providing goods and services for persons with disabilities.

Service Vaughan has integrated processes for responding to diverse people with disabilities in person, over the phone and by email to facilitate effective client service. This includes

assisting or providing alternative formats for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind and low-vision clients or those who require language interpretation.

RECREATION SERVICES

Recreation Services continues to provide customized training in customer service, disability awareness, inclusion strategies, behaviour management and other relevant training to ensure staff are equipped with



the tools to provide accessible customer service. To further achieve service excellence, the department partnered with community service agencies in York Region to assist with financial support to remove access barriers for those in financial need and strengthen quality assurance protocols for persons with disabilities.

Through accessible customer service feedback, the department continuously evaluates programs, services and equipment to ensure equitable participation of residents and visitors with disabilities in City-operated facilities and programs. Accessible adaptive equipment upgrades, including rope trainers, accessibility sectorized weight equipment, accessible Stairmasters, ellipticals, water wheelchairs and other devices, have been purchased City-wide.

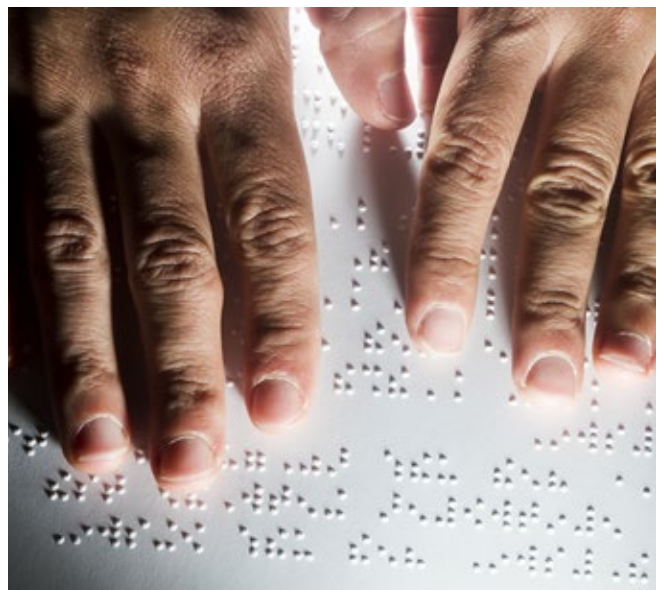
VAUGHAN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS) continues ongoing annual investments into promoting public awareness of fire safety and emergency response. Public education materials are designed to meet corporate accessibility standards, with the last five videos released including captioning. Public education materials are reviewed annually and updated as needed, with new materials produced as needed. VFRS updates their Fire Safety Plan every four years. Plans and practices at emergency shelters were made throughout the pandemic to address physical distancing requirements. In 2022, emergency

shelter plans were further updated based on structural changes to facilities to ensure accessibility needs are met.

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Beginning in 2021 and continuing through 2023, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) is implementing an accessibility promotion plan to raise awareness of the resources and services available to people with disabilities, including Braille and large text collections and a talking book service, as well as other customer service and design features. The plan includes social media promotion of accessible services and supports, and these are also clearly listed by branch after a website update to the [VPL homepage](#) in 2022. The VPL website redesign provided each branch with a page highlighting all accessibility features available at each location.



EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Employment Standards under the IASR require organizations like municipalities to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities. The City considers the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans. The City remains committed to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility relating to employment through training programs, recruitment strategies and employment opportunities. Notably, the City was recognized in the [Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion](#) category of the Canadian Human Resources Awards selected by Canadian HR Reporter and HRD Canada magazines in September 2022.



A comprehensive Alternative Work Arrangements Policy, along with a guide and procedures document, was developed to help position the City as an employer of choice, promoting diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and environmentally responsible and sustainable practices. The City is committed to supporting a flexible work environment that balances the needs of diverse employees and considers job requirements, infrastructure capacity, service excellence, performance and staff engagement.

The City continues to document individualized accommodation plans through the Early and Safe Return to Work program, and gathers input from staff who require accessible support in case of emergency through team leads, following processes and guidelines, and maintaining confidentiality. The Health and Safety team conduct annual site audits, and the City continues to provide information regarding the availability of accommodation during recruitment and onboarding.

DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Design of Public Spaces Standards under the IASR require organizations like municipalities to consult with people with disabilities, AAC members and the public on the following areas: recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel and on-street parking spaces.

Recreation Services partnered with LIV North to create accessible and user-friendly floorplans and layouts to prevent trip hazards and better accommodate people with physical disabilities across all community centres in the last quarter of 2022.

Additionally, the City has obtained four new [**Rick Hansen Foundation certifications**](#) during the reporting period. This includes a Gold Accessibility Certification for the Maple Community Centre, pre-construction Gold Certification for Fire Station 7-12, and

Accessibility Certifications for Fire Station 7-7 and the Bathurst Clark Resource Library.

A plan to upgrade the Woodbridge Library was also developed in 2022, which will enhance the accessibility of the entrance and improve navigation for people using mobility devices in one of VPL's oldest branches. Work on the site is scheduled to take place during 2023.

During the reporting period, the City's central City Hall entrance was under renovation to install new sliding doors to enter the building, a consolidated single-counter information desk, and self-service kiosks with six standard height touchscreens and two at wheelchair accessible heights. The main counter also has one accessible height station.



Throughout 2022, the Smart City Program was exploring a partnership with the CNIB Foundation to implement a wayfinding technology solution pilot in 2023. This wayfinding pilot aims to test technology solutions to help low vision or blind people navigate City facilities independently.

The City's Wet Field Policy Guidelines piloted an automated process to notify appropriate departments about service disruptions. The City's Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations department regularly inspects park sidewalks in winter (November to April) for winter-specific issues, and Transportation and Fleet Management Services conducts recurring inspections in the summer, looking for uneven sidewalks to be shaved down and fixed to remove trip hazards.

VPL developed a plan to improve external signage, which will be rolled out in 2023.

Transportation and Fleet Management Services reviews and ensures pedestrian countdown timers and audible features for pedestrians are in alignment with industry standards on an ongoing basis. A review of all traffic calming devices and pedestrian infrastructure to meet AODA legislative requirements was initiated in Q3 of 2022 and will continue into Q2 of 2023.



Summary of Consultations

As a municipality with more than 10,000 residents, the City consults with the [AAC](#) when updating or building public spaces, like recreational trails, outdoor play spaces and exterior paths of travel, and when reviewing traffic calming plans and other urban areas planning decisions that impact people with disabilities.

In 2022, the City informed or consulted with the AAC on the following items:

- raising awareness about [service animals](#) among businesses and the public
- raising awareness of the City's new [Age-Friendly Community Action Plan](#)
- consultation on the City's submission to the provincial Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility's [Inclusive Community Grants Program](#)
- consultation on Project SEARCH pilot program to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities with York Catholic District School Board and Community Living York South
- the City's [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Multi-year Action Plan](#)
- universal design and accessibility elements relating to the new Peter Rupert Park, now in development
- to develop the City's 2023-2027 [Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#)
- sharing updates to the City's [Accessibility Policy](#) for clarity of scope, roles and responsibilities, language/definitions, etc.
- planning for consultation on [Neighbourhood Area Traffic Calming Policy, Design and Speed Management Plan](#) in 2023
- review of recipients of the [2022 Vaughan Accessibility Champion Awards](#)



Next Steps

The City of Vaughan is in the process of developing its 2023-2027 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. This plan will build on the gains of the [2019-2022 Accessibility Plan](#) and further the City's commitment to creating a barrier-free community with universal access to its programs, services and facilities, while helping ensure people of any age and ability are treated in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The City will conduct robust community consultations to gather feedback from the AAC (past and current), City employees, disability community services and organizations, and most importantly, inputs from diverse communities in Vaughan. This data will inform a forward-looking, comprehensive and inclusive Multi-year Accessibility Plan for the upcoming Term

of Council that emphasizes the priorities of people with disabilities and builds practical and measurable goals to respond to those priorities.

The City's Technical Advisory Committee, composed of staff from all departments, has worked to conduct current-state assessments and stakeholder-mapping to inform the 2023-2027 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. The next plan is expected to reach Vaughan Council in fall of 2023.

If you have any questions regarding this Accessibility Status Report or other matters related to accessibility and inclusion in the City of Vaughan, please contact accessibility@vaughan.ca.





	Unit Price	Price
	273,11 €	273,11 €
	2,52 €	83,16 €
		20,00 €
	16,80 €	273,11 €
		51,89 €
		325,00 €

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