

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, May 13, 2025

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: 2024 ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT

FROM:

Michael Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the implementation of the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, highlighting key achievements, ongoing initiatives and future priorities.

Report Highlights

- 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed to remove barriers, enhance accessibility and foster inclusion across municipal services, infrastructure and digital platforms.
- The 2024 Accessibility Status Report highlights major strides in implementing the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, with a focus on removing barriers, improving services and expanding accessibility initiatives.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee has played a critical role in guiding policy decisions and implementation strategies, ensuring municipal policies reflect the needs of people with disabilities and align with best practices in accessibility.
- The City of Vaughan continues to enhance accessibility across all Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act standards, including general requirements, information and communications, customer service, transportation, employment, and the design of public spaces.
- The City remains at the forefront of accessibility innovation, fostering community engagement, advancing policies and improving infrastructure to create a more inclusive, barrier-free environment for all.

Recommendations

1. THAT the 2024 Annual Accessibility Status Report be received for information.

Background

The City of Vaughan's 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to create a barrier-free and inclusive community.

Developed through extensive consultation with individuals with disabilities, community stakeholders, accessibility professionals and municipal staff, the plan ensures compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act while striving to exceed regulatory requirements. Recognizing that 27 per cent of Canadians have at least one disability, the City continues to prioritize physical and digital accessibility initiatives to enhance inclusion.

Ratified in November 2023, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan launched with a focus on benchmarking progress, identifying key implementation priorities and engaging stakeholders to drive accessibility improvements. The Accessibility Advisory Committee, a statutory body under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, has played a key role in guiding accessibility-related decisions to ensure municipal policies align with the needs of people with disabilities.

As part of its commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement, the City actively participates in regional and provincial accessibility networks, including the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group, the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals and the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. These partnerships support knowledge-sharing, innovation and enhanced accessibility planning across municipalities.

This 2024 Accessibility Status Report highlights the City's progress in the first full year of Multi-Year Accessibility Plan implementation, showcasing achievements in policy development, infrastructure improvements, digital accessibility, community engagement and inclusive programming. It reaffirms the City's commitment to ensuring accessibility remains central to municipal services, facilities and public engagement strategies.

Additionally, the 2024 Accessibility Status Report was shared with and presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee in its April 2025 meeting, ensuring continued oversight, collaboration, feedback and alignment with the City's accessibility goals.

Previous Reports/Authority

[City of Vaughan's DEI Plan \(2022-2026\)](#)

[Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027 Committee of the Whole \(1\) Report
October 31, 2023](#)

[Accessibility Audit Committee September 19, 2022](#)

[Annual Accessibility Status Report 2023](#)

Analysis and Options

In 2024, the City of Vaughan made significant strides in implementing its 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, focusing on removing barriers, improving services and fostering inclusion.

The City continues to make steady progress in implementing the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2024, the first full year of implementation, the City has achieved significant milestones in advancing accessibility across various areas. With a commitment to universal access, the City has worked diligently to remove barriers, enhance services and foster a more inclusive environment for all residents, visitors, businesses and staff.

A key component of this progress is the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, which provides essential guidance on policies affecting people with Disabilities.

Following the new term of Council in November 2022, the committee welcomed seven new public members in 2023. In 2024, the committee held five meetings, addressing critical topics such as intelligent traffic signals, waste management and accessible wayfinding technology. In addition to its advisory role, the Accessibility Advisory Committee has also taken steps to celebrate and promote accessibility efforts in the community through the launch of the Accessibility Champions Awards, which recognize individuals, businesses and non-profits dedicated to fostering a barrier-free Vaughan.

The City advanced accessibility, inclusion and age-friendly initiatives through policy updates, funding programs and strengthened community partnerships.

The Accessibility Technical Advisory Committee continued monitoring the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, while the Inclusion and Community Outreach Unit transitioned to the

City Manager's Portfolio, fostering a corporate-wide approach to accessibility and inclusion. The City also launched new online staff training on the updated Accessibility Policy, Accommodation Policy and Disability Management Program, and approved an updated Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Through the Spirit of Generosity initiative, the City supported more than 200 non-profits, with 12 accessibility-focused organizations receiving grants. The Age-Friendly Community Action Plan gained international recognition with the City's acceptance into the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-Friendly Communities. The City also secured provincial funding through the Seniors Community Grant Program, offering free training and workshops to promote healthy aging.

The City continues to strengthen information and communication accessibility by expanding staff training, assessing web assets, enhancing feedback systems and refining digital content for compliance.

To support this, mandatory staff eLearning training on accessible digital content is now available, supported by an on-demand toolkit. Additionally, Site Improve training was provided to department representatives for website analytics and accessibility monitoring.

To further enhance compliance, the City contracted a vendor to assess its web assets, applications and policies, identifying gaps and guiding implementation plans to integrate best practices and exceed compliance standards.

The City also enhanced its accessibility feedback system, enabling residents to report barriers through multiple formats.

In public spaces, the Recreation Services department completed an audit of community center signage, guiding remediation efforts and new wayfinding standards. The City continues to refine digital content, convert PDFs into accessible formats and expand targeted marketing for inclusion programs.

Vaughan expanded inclusive employment initiatives, workforce training and emergency response planning.

The School Crossing Guard Program, partnered with Jake's House and Ready Willing and Able to enhance recruitment and onboarding, successfully placed one individual. The Recreation Services department secured provincial funding through the EnAbling

Change Program to launch Project NextGen, providing employment skills training for youth with disabilities.

The City updated its Workplace Emergency Evacuation Form process, integrating it into onboarding for all departments, ensuring employees with disabilities receive adequate support in emergencies. The City also launched four new staff training programs, including self-guided courses on accessible document creation and real-time sessions on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The City advanced inclusive customer service through accessible community engagement, recreation programs, events and digital communication.

The Facilities and Parks Delivery department enhanced accessibility in parks planning and capital projects, while the Recreation Services department expanded inclusion programs, increasing services by 40 per cent and participation by 10 per cent, with training for 664 staff and 123 volunteers.

Community events like Vaughan Celebrates and Ontario Culture Days prioritized accessibility, featuring adaptive activities, inclusive performances and improved facilities. The City also updated its Accessible Customer Service Policy and launched a public awareness campaign on accessibility rights, feedback processes and digital inclusivity.

Additionally, the City improved digital accessibility, adding closed captioning to videos, enhancing website content and ensuring accessible formats for City surveys. These initiatives reinforce the City's commitment to equitable and accessible services.

The City enhanced accessible infrastructure, recreation facilities and wayfinding systems to improve inclusivity in public spaces.

The City completed Building Accessibility Assessments for 76 sites, which will guide a long-term remediation plan extending beyond the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The City is also in the process of updating its 2020 Inclusive Design Standards to integrate new accessibility innovations and community feedback.

Recreational facilities saw major accessibility enhancements, including accessible change tables in seven community centers, adaptive flotation devices in pools and accessible ice sledges at three ice rinks. The City installed E-vac chairs in six community centers and City Hall to aid in emergency evacuations and is exploring

hearing loop systems for future improvements. Additionally, City Hall event accessibility was enhanced with a new stage lift and handrails, providing improved mobility access.

The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan introduced improved navigation signage for parks, trails and public spaces. Feedback was collected in 2024 through surveys, advisory groups and public events and will inform refinements before full implementation.

The City of Vaughan continues positioning itself as a leader in accessibility by fostering community engagement, policy advancements and infrastructure improvements.

Looking ahead, the City will continue monitoring the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan's progress, conducting a midway assessment in 2025 to evaluate accomplishments and identify areas for improvement. The City plans to expand the Better Your Business: Tourism Diversity program to include accessible tourism and will further test and refine the GoodMaps wayfinding app through user engagement. Additionally, Vaughan remains committed to investing in accessible infrastructure, digital resources and inclusive programming to solidify its role as a leader in accessibility and inclusion.

Financial Impact

There are no direct economic impacts associated with this report.

Operational Impact

There are no operational impacts to the municipality because of this staff report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no broader regional impacts to the municipality because of this staff report.

Conclusion

The 2024 Accessibility Status Report demonstrates Vaughan's strong commitment to accessibility, inclusion and barrier-free community development. In the first full year of implementing the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the City has made significant progress while strengthening compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act standards.

Through the guidance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, collaboration across City departments and regional partners and active community engagement, the City continues to remove barriers and foster inclusion.

As the City moves forward, it remains committed to enhancing accessibility across all sectors, ensuring that its policies, programs and services reflect the diverse needs of residents, visitors and businesses.

For more information, please contact: An Nguyen, Acting Manager, Inclusion and Community Outreach (an.nguyen@vaughan.ca).

Attachments

1. 2024 Annual Accessibility Status Report

Prepared by

An Nguyen, Acting Manager, Inclusion and Community Outreach