



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Prepared by: Linda Jean, Deputy Clerk

Department: Council Services

Date of Report: January 4, 2024

Report Number: CL-2024-0012024-001

Subject: 2023 Annual Year-End Accessibility Status Report

Recommendation

That the report of the Deputy Clerk dated January 4, 2024 (CS-2024-001) regarding the 2023 Year End Accessibility Status Report be received.

Report

Ontario Regulation 191/11 s.4 requires each designated public sector organization to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Under this same regulation, an annual status report must be prepared to outline the progress made and measures taken to implement this strategy.

The Town of LaSalle's [2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) ("Accessibility Plan") was adopted by the Accessibility Advisory Committee on June 29, 2022. The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to document barriers to accessibility that have been removed to date and identify those barriers that will be removed in the coming years. This report provides information on the status of progress made to date.

The Town of LaSalle has been committed to accessibility planning for many years and is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility to persons with disabilities visiting, living, and working in LaSalle.

This report reflects some of the progress made in 2023. Accessibility is an ever-evolving field and The Town of LaSalle has demonstrated a commitment to reducing, eliminating, and preventing barriers and will continue to strive to reach our Accessibility goals and raise the bar on accessibility.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Initiatives were established with the Accessibility Advisory Committee at the beginning of 2023 to remove barriers for people with disabilities, prevent new barriers, and promote awareness and inclusion in the community.

Steps taken in 2023 include:

- February: An onboarding and orientation session was held outlining the role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee including an explanation of the terms of reference;
- April: A tour of the Waterfront Event Centre, LaSalle Landing was conducted;
- May: The first annual Regional Accessibility Flag Raising was held
- August: Special Guest, David Lepofsky, disability advocate, retired lawyer and chair of the AODA Alliance provided a presentation including a question and answer session; and
- October: Council, LAAC members, and Administration were invited to attend an Accessibility Workshop held by the County of Essex.

Customer Service Standard

Training employees on the accessible customer service standard continued to be a priority in 2023.

- All employees both full-time and part-time complete Accessible Customer Service Training every calendar year.

Feedback continues to be an essential component to help the Town identify and remove barriers. Residents and visitors are encouraged to share suggestions and experiences regarding accessibility.

- The [Accessibility Feedback Form](#) can be found on the Town of LaSalle website.

Information and Communication

Steps taken in 2023 to improve communications:

- Periodically reviewing public-facing documents on the Town of LaSalle website to make them accessible for those requiring navigational aid.
- New information that is uploaded to the website is monitored to ensure broken links are corrected through the use of the Site Improve System.
- Each department has begun to create accessible documents either in house or through the use of a third party.

Under s.14 of Ontario Regulation 191/11, it is a requirement that all public sector organizations ensure that their website and web content are accessible.

Because of this an extensive review of the Town of LaSalle website was initiated in May 2023 to remediate non-accessible PDF documents and improve compliance. Site Improve was a tool used to provide a list of non-accessible documents which flagged approximately 434 items. Two team members were enlisted to manage this project and by August 2023, approximately 357 documents were either removed from the website or remediated. The remaining 77 documents have been flagged for follow up.

The contents of the Town of LaSalle website are continually updated and changing and ensuring legislative requirements are met is vital. To help with this endeavor, Council recently approved the position of an Accessibility Specialist created to assist with document remediation, provide guidance to departments and ensure compliance.

The Town of LaSalle recognizes that removing barriers in communication is an ongoing task that benefits everyone and contributes to providing an overall better user experience. All departments contribute to the sharing and communicating of information and continued work is being done to provide information to the public in an accessible manner.

Programming

A specialized swim time has been added to the recreation program at the Vollmer Recreation Complex. This swim time is geared towards individuals with disabilities and their family members who want to be involved in recreational swimming with other people with similar interests, abilities, and needs. This swim time provides a safe and positive environment and is designed with sensory-friendly considerations including eliminating the use of music, waves, and spray features.

Employment

The Town of LaSalle continues to provide notice of accommodation when advertising for employment opportunities, accommodates applicants by offering virtual interviews, educates successful applicants on current policies regarding accommodation during the offer of employment and orientation, and continues to provide accommodation for employees when needed.

Consultations

Each department was contacted to provide information on accessible initiatives undertaken in 2023.

Financial Implications

None.

Prepared By:



Deputy Clerk

Link to Strategic Goals

1. Enhancing organizational excellence - Yes
2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - Yes
3. Grow and diversify the local economy - Not Applicable
4. Build on our high-quality of life - Not Applicable
5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Not Applicable

Communications

Not applicable.

Notifications

Not applicable.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2023 Annual Year-End Accessibility Status Report.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 25, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Director, Council Services/Clerk

Jennifer Astrologo