



Halton Region Multi-Year
Accessibility Plan 2018-2023

2019-2020 Update



This document is available in alternate formats, upon request. If you require an alternate format, please call 311 or email accesshalton@halton.ca

Introduction

According to the Canadian Survey on Disability 2017, 24.1% of, or 2.6 million, Ontarians have a disability. People with disabilities are one of the fastest growing sectors of the population. As Ontario's population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase.

Halton Region Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Regional Municipality of Halton (Halton Region) recognizes the diverse needs of residents and works to provide services that are accessible to everyone.

Halton Region is committed to:

- removing barriers to meet the needs of people with disabilities with respect to Regional programs, services and facilities; and,
- meeting the objectives and requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and *Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards* (IASR).

Halton Region Accessibility Progress Report, 2019-2020

The development of multi-year accessibility plans is required by the IASR. The Halton Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2018-2023 sets out how the Region will address compliance obligations under the IASR over the identified five-year time period. It also highlights a number of additional initiatives and projects that Halton will undertake to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities when accessing Regional programs, services, and facilities.

The IASR requires that obligated organizations report annually on their progress toward meeting compliance requirements. This document identifies:

- actions Halton has taken that are specifically focused on meeting compliance obligations in the AODA and IASR;
- Halton-led initiatives and corporate projects, not directly related to compliance requirements, but which improve the accessibility of Regional programs and services; and,
- initiatives directed at supporting people with disabilities such as the Halton Region Community Investment Fund.

This information is set out in Table 1.

Accessibility Legislation Update

Accessible Canada Act

In May 2019, the Federal Government enacted the *Accessible Canada Act* which provides for the development of accessibility standards that will apply to sectors within federal jurisdiction, such as banking, telecommunications, transportation industries and the Government of Canada itself. The Act requires organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the following areas:

- employment;
- the built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication, other than information and communication technologies;

- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and,
- transportation.

The *Accessible Canada Act* will also put in place compliance and enforcement measures, as well as an accessibility complaints mechanism. Accessibility Standards Canada, created by the *Accessible Canada Act*, recently undertook public consultations on research priorities and proposed areas of focus for the development of accessibility standards. Although it appears that neither the Act nor the standards to be developed will impact the municipal sector, Regional staff will continue to monitor their development and report back to Regional Council as required.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

In 2005, the Government of Ontario enacted the AODA. Its objective is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings and premises by 2025. The AODA requires the establishment of accessibility advisory committees, the filing of accessibility reports and the development and implementation of accessibility standards.

To date, accessibility standards have been developed in the areas set out below.

- Customer Service
- Design of Public Spaces
- Employment
- Information and Communications
- Transportation

The standards which are set out in the IASR include a number of requirements that obligated organizations, including municipalities, are required to meet within specified timeframes.

Accessibility Standards Review

The AODA requires accessibility standards to be reviewed every five years. Prior to the last provincial election, the Provincial Government was leading a process to review and update the: Employment; Information and Communications; and, Transportation Standards. In addition, work was underway to develop a new education standard as well as a health care standard. Although it appears that the health care standard will initially only be focused on the hospital sector, this will only be confirmed once a draft standard is made publicly available for review and comment.

The Employment Standards are currently under review. Recommended changes were issued for public review in 2018 and submitted to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility in 2019. However, the Ministry has not provided information on when the revised Employment Standards will be issued.

The Information and Communications Standards are also currently under review. Proposed recommendations were issued for public review and comment in 2019. Halton Region staff provided comments on the proposed recommendations. Comments from the public review were provided to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. However, the Ministry has not yet provided information on when the revised Information and Communications Standards will be issued.

Staff will continue to monitor developments on these and the other standards under review and will update Council as required.

Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC)

The AODA requires that Halton Region have an accessibility advisory committee and that a majority of its members be people with disabilities. The Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC) was established by Regional Council in 2002 and, as required by provincial legislation, provides advice on the prevention and removal of barriers to people with disabilities with respect to Regional programs, services and facilities. Since its establishment, the HRAAC has provided input on a number of Regional initiatives and projects and has supported activities aimed at creating awareness on issues relating to people with disabilities.

The composition of the HRAAC includes a member of Regional Council, Halton residents and a member of Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee. The members bring to the HRAAC a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives related to the challenges faced by people with disabilities and provide invaluable advice and support to Regional staff.

The HRAAC's term coincides with the term of Regional Council. A recruitment process for the 2019-2022 Committee began in April 2019 and members were appointed in June 2019.

Next Steps

Halton Region staff will continue to address compliance, reporting and consultation requirements identified in the AODA and the IASR. Additional initiatives will also be undertaken to improve the accessibility of Regional programs and services. This information is reflected in Table 2.

A copy of this document will be posted on Halton's website and will be made available in alternate formats, upon request.

Table 1

Accessibility Progress Report 2019-2020

Activity	Details
Ongoing Compliance with IASR Standards	<p>General Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training provided to new staff as part of the onboarding process. • Compliance report provided to the Provincial Government in December 2019. • Halton Region Accessibility Policy in place and available on halton.ca.
	<p>Customer Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility procedures and related resources to support staff in providing customer service to people with disabilities including assisting people who require an assistive device, service animal or support person have been developed and are available to staff.
	<p>Design of Public Spaces (DOPS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design specifications related to accessible pedestrian signals, tactile walking surface indicators and curb ramps incorporated into Regional road projects.
	<p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton’s employment page includes information for applicants who require a disability-related accommodation to participate in a recruitment process. • Accommodation planning and other supports to employees with disabilities provided, as required.
	<p>Information and Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing work toward ensuring Halton’s website reflects Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 requirements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removing redundant and inaccessible PDFs as part of the redesign of halton.ca and ensuring that all web content met WCAG 2.0 standards upon the launch of the new halton.ca in February 2019. ○ Prioritizing the remediation of PDFs that contain key public information to support the greatest possible ease of access and transparency during the transition. ○ Providing staff with education and training on digital accessibility, including creating and remediating accessible web content and documents, while continuing to provide guidance to content creators across the organization on digital accessibility. • Members of the public encouraged to provide feedback in ways that work for them.

Table 1

Accessibility Progress Report 2019-2020

Activity	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents and information provided in alternate formats or through communication supports, as required. • Members of the public encouraged to advise of disability-related accommodation needs when attending or participating in Regional events or meetings.
<p>Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC) – Consultations and Networking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current members of the HRAAC were appointed by Regional Council in June 2019. • The HRAAC received presentations and provided input on a number of Regional projects and initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sidewalk Repair and Replacement (Maurice Drive, Oakville) ○ Replacement of stairs (Lakeview Villa, Acton) ○ Bathroom Renovations & Installation of Ramp (Golden Briar Heights, Oakville) ○ Halton Regional Centre Modernization 2022 Project ○ Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities Document ○ Regional Official Plan Review process <p>Consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the HRAAC were advised of opportunities to participate in various initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultations hosted by the Federal Government on areas of focus for the development of accessibility standards under the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>; and, ○ Halton’s Regional Official Plan review. <p>Participation in Annual Joint Meeting of Local Municipal and Regional Accessibility Advisory Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HRAAC and Regional staff participated in the annual joint meeting of accessibility advisory committees in the region. • The event, hosted by the City of Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee, in November 2019, was attended by members of accessibility advisory committees in Halton and a representative from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. • The event provided an opportunity to share information on issues of common interest and hear updates from the committees on work and initiatives underway in their communities.
<p>Networking, Information Sharing and Learning Activities</p>	<p>Halton staff continued to participate in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Municipal & Regional Accessibility Working Group whose membership includes staff from the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville,

Table 1

Accessibility Progress Report 2019-2020

Activity	Details
	<p>the Halton Regional Police Service and the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), an information sharing network with representatives from more than 100 organizations, including municipalities, hospitals, school boards, universities and colleges, and police services. • Regional staff continued to participate in learning opportunities through ONAP and the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.
<p>Halton Region Events - Accessible Customer Service</p>	<p>Rain Barrel Sales Events (2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions taken to provide accessible customer service include: portable signage designating accessible parking spots; tables and chairs provided for individuals who prefer or need to sit; staff available to carry rain barrels to residents' cars; residents given the option of sending someone to the sales event on their behalf or to purchase online if they are unable to attend any of the sales events. <p>Halton Children's Water Festival (2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions taken to provide accessible customer service include: accessible buses for participating elementary students or high school volunteers were available upon request; all-terrain wheelchairs provided for participants or volunteers who require them; accessible change areas provided; and, actions taken and supports provided to ensure children and volunteers with disabilities can participate.
<p>Community Safety and Wellbeing in Halton (CSWB): A Plan for Collaboration and Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSWB Plan was developed to enhance how Halton Region, the Halton Regional Police Service and a wide range of community partners work together on issues that impact safety and well-being. • As part of the operationalization of the CSWB Plan, a number of action tables were identified to be established to investigate issues, develop solutions and implement strategies to address a number of objectives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhancing access to mental health supports for children and youth by making it easier to access the right services at the right time; and, ○ Exploring a Halton framework to more effectively serve youth and young adults who have development and mental health disabilities.

Table 1

Accessibility Progress Report 2019-2020

Activity	Details
Employment & Social Services – Employment Resource Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region’s two Employment Resource Centres continued to offer a number of features to assist job seekers who may have a disability including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ adjustable workstations to accommodate mobility devices; and, ○ screen reader, text magnifier and on-screen keyboard.
Employment & Social Services – Mental Health and Addictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Halton offers supports to individuals with mental health disabilities that may present barriers to employment. The supports include vocational/cognitive assessments, developing case plans based on employment goals, and referrals to community mental health programs. • Employment Halton also offers an Employment and Wellness Program – a 16 week addiction and mental health support program that provides participants with counselling, skills development and job placement opportunities.
Halton Region Community Investment Fund (HRCIF)	<p>HRCIF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HRCIF provides grants to human service programs that enhance the health, safety and well-being of Halton residents. The funding is for periods of one, two or three years. • In 2019, Regional Council approved funding for a number of community programs and initiatives through a number of organizations including the following: Acclaim Health and Community Care Services; Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region Branch; The Canadian National institute for the Blind; and Reach Out Centre for Kids. • In 2020, Halton is making a number of investments in programs and services to support vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HRCIF is funding a number of initiatives including those that provide support to people with disabilities through organizations such as: Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region Branch; Central West Specialized Development Services; Halton-Peel Community Aphasia Programs; March of Dimes Canada, Nelson Youth Centres; Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services; and, the Tetra Society of North America. • The initial intake for 2021 HRCIF funding has closed. In order to respond to community needs, applications will be accepted throughout 2021. This will include applications that assist agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic, address needs identified through the Halton Community

Table 1

Accessibility Progress Report 2019-2020

Activity	Details
	<p>Safety and Well-Being planning initiative, and support other emergent requests that strengthen the health, safety and well-being of Halton residents.</p>
<p>Halton Accessibility Repair Program (HARP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019 and 2020, HARP provided funding to eligible homeowners for home modifications needed to improve accessibility and independent living (e.g., stair lifts, walk-in showers, grab bars, ramps). Funding is made available on a first come, first served basis through a dedicated application process.

Table 2

ISAR Compliance Activities 2021

General Requirements	Actions
Develop accessibility policies Develop a multi-year accessibility plan Complete annual updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing accessibility policy, procedures and other resources will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to the AODA or the IASR. Annual progress reports will be developed and posted on Halton website.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff to continue to receive training as part of the onboarding process. Tools and resources to be provided to staff and volunteers, and updated as required.
Customer Services Standards	
Establishment of policies Use of service animals and support persons Notice of temporary disruptions Training for staff Feedback process Format of documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility policy in place. To be reviewed and updated, as required. Procedures relating to accessible customer service are in place and available to staff (e.g., notification of service disruptions, accessible feedback, provision of accessible formats/ communication supports, support persons, accessing assistive listening system). To be reviewed and updated, as required. Existing accessibility policy, procedures and training materials reflect requirements regarding service animals and support persons. To be reviewed and updated, as required. Service Disruption Notification procedure is in place. To be reviewed and updated, as required. Accessibility training module and supporting resources include information relating to accessible customer service and regulatory requirements. To be reviewed and updated, as required. Accessible Feedback procedure in place. Accessible Formats and Communications Supports procedure in place. Halton's website to continue to provide public notification that accessible formats and communication supports are available. Website to continue to include information for individuals requiring an alternate format or communication support to provide feedback. Advertisements for Halton Region events/meetings to continue to include wording asking residents to advise if they require a disability-related accommodation.

Table 2

ISAR Compliance Activities 2021

Design of Public Spaces (DOPS)	
<p>This section of the ISAR includes a number of technical and consultation requirements related to the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recreational trails and beach access routes • outdoor public use eating areas • outdoor play spaces • exterior paths of travel • accessible parking • service counters, queuing areas • maintenance procedures 	<p>DOPS requirements to continue to be incorporated into the design of construction/ renovation projects. Engineering and Construction Division to continue to incorporate DOPS requirements relating to accessible pedestrian signals, tactile walking surface indicators and curb ramps at intersections under Halton Region's jurisdiction.</p> <p>Outdoor Play Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design requirements as outlined in DOPS will be incorporated when new play spaces (on Regional property) are constructed or existing ones are redeveloped. • Consultations will be undertaken, as required in DOPS. <p>Maintenance Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure on Notification of Service Disruption is in place and includes direction to staff on actions to take for planned and unplanned disruptions to Regional services. • Communication regarding planned and unplanned disruptions is provided through a number of methods. • Daily site inspections are undertaken on the following elements and repairs are done as soon as practicable. These elements are maintained as part of Regional service contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ outdoor public eating areas (on Regional property) ○ exterior paths of travel (on Regional property) ○ off-street parking (on Regional property) • Outdoor play spaces (on Regional property) are inspected as part of daily site inspections. They are inspected and certified annually and maintained as part of a playground inspection and repair service contract.
Employment Standards	
<p>Recruitment, selection and notification</p> <p>Accessible formats and communication supports for employees</p> <p>Workplace emergency response information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton's Employment Opportunities page and job postings to continue to include wording advising that disability-related accommodations are available. • Interview candidates to continue to be advised that disability-related accommodations are available. • Offer of Employment letters to continue to include wording advising that Halton will provide disability-related accommodation. • Accessible formats and communication supports to continue to be provided to employees, as required. • Process in place to provide employees, upon request, with a workplace emergency response plan. Process to be reviewed, as required.

Table 2 ISAR Compliance Activities 2021	
Documented individual accommodation plans Return to work process Performance management, career development and redeployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Management Policy / Work Accommodation Procedure in place. To be reviewed, as required. • Return-to-work process to be reviewed, as required. • Halton Region's Accessibility Policy reflects requirements for performance management, career development and redeployment. To be reviewed, as required.
Information & Communications	
Feedback processes Accessible formats and communication supports Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information Accessible websites and web content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton's website to include information for individuals requiring an alternate format/communication support to provide feedback and public notification that accessible formats/communication supports are available. • Advertisements for Halton Region meetings/events to continue to include wording asking residents to advise if they require accommodation. • Documents to be provided in alternate formats, upon request. • Information on emergencies and people with disabilities to continue to be made available on Halton Region's website. • Work to continue toward achieving WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance.
Compliance Reporting	
Compliance Reporting to the Provincial Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report to be submitted to the Provincial Government prior to the December 31, 2021 deadline

Table 2 – Additional Accessibility Activities 2021	
Additional activities to be undertaken to enhance accessibility to Halton Region's programs and services	
Halton Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC) 2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HRAAC will continue to provide feedback to the Region on the prevention, identification and removal of barriers to people with disabilities. • Regional staff will continue to seek the input of the HRAAC on construction and renovation projects, new leases and other projects and initiatives, as appropriate.
Halton Region Assisted Housing Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document to be reviewed and updated

Table 2 – Additional Accessibility Activities 2021

Additional activities to be undertaken to enhance accessibility to Halton Region's programs and services

Review and Update of Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources providing information on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities will be reviewed and updated.
Review and Update of Resources and Tools to Ensure Alignment with any Changes to Accessibility Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility resources and tools will be reviewed and updated to ensure they are aligned with any changes to the AODA or requirements in the IASR.
Training and Awareness Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton staff will continue to participate in training and awareness activities, as appropriate.
Networking and Information Sharing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton staff will continue to participate in accessibility information sharing and networking groups, i.e., the Local Municipal & Regional Accessibility Working Group and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals
Monitoring Changes to Provincial Accessibility Legislation and the Development of Regulations under the Accessible Canada Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton staff will continue to monitor changes to provincial accessibility legislation and the development of regulations and standards under the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> to determine potential impacts on Regional programs and services.

