HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY- ACCESSIBILITY REPORT 2012-2013
Updated June 2013

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BACKGROUND

The Hamilton Public Library is committed to providing accessible service for people with disabilities, their families and their caregivers. The Library describes this commitment in its [Accessibility for Customers and Employees with a Disability Policy](#) and reviews the Policy annually to ensure compliance and continued relevance. The Library also has additional internal policies and procedures in place to support employees with disabilities.

As a public sector organization, the library is required to develop and publicize a five (5) year Strategic Plan for Accessibility and to review progress annually.

This report summarizes Library activities relating to accessibility during the reporting period, April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013. All activities relating to accessibility are designed to complement and support the Board's Strategic Priorities.

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION

On May 10, 2005, the Provincial Government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).* The AODA is a provincial law that recognizes the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario and will require the "… development, implementation and enforcement of standards for accessibility to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings, structures and premises for persons with disabilities". The AODA standards apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. Persons with disabilities and representatives of the Ontario government, specific industry sectors and various groups to whom the standards will apply have been involved in the development of the accessibility standards.

Legal obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* remain in force until such time that *Act* is repealed. The Library's *Accessibility for Customers with a Disability Policy* was approved by the Board in November of 2009 to comply with the AODA and the then newly released Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation. It is the intention of the Hamilton Public Library to comply as early as possible with the requirements of the Act and associated regulations in keeping with its Mission and Values and to avoid incurring financial penalties that can be assessed for non-compliance.

The Library's focus currently is on review and implementation of the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation which was enacted July 1, 2011 and which sets out special requirements for four standards in the areas of Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces. As well, general

requirements that apply to all four areas are set out for organizations including the development of policies and plans to incorporate accessibility in their procurement policies, to incorporate accessibility when designing or buying self-service kiosks and to provide training for staff and volunteers.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE AODA AND ITS REGULATIONS

The Library's *Accessibility for Customers with a Disability Policy* was approved by the Board in May 2012 to comply with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service,* O. Reg. 429/07 and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, O. Reg 191/11*.* The *Policy* must be reviewed annually and must be considered as the Library develops or revises its other policies, procedures and practices.

In 2013 the policy was updated to include information pertaining to requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation in the areas of Employment, Information and Communication and Design of Public Spaces and renamed *Accessibility for Customers and Employees with a Disability Policy*.

The Hamilton Public Library continues to be committed to providing library services that are accessible to all persons who wish to obtain and use library services. As policies and procedures were created or updated in 2012-13, accessibility issues were considered and addressed. Activity was focused in the following areas.

Training: The Library reviewed its programs and updated its orientation and training procedures for volunteers and contracted service providers to ensure these groups have necessary awareness and relevant customer service skills. In 2013 the Library will update training to all staff and volunteers on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and deliver training about the Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities.

Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information: The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation added obligations relating to emergency procedures, plans and public safety information and a requirement to make the information available to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request. The City is assisting with this requirement by updating library floor plans and reviewing Fire Plans.

Employment Standards: The Library has reviewed the Standard's expectations of large designated public sector organizations and expects to fully comply by the January 1, 2014 deadline. Some expectations of the standards are long-standing practices at HPL such as the provision of return to work plans, accommodations and job supports for employees. In addition accessibility needs of employees with disabilities will be taken into account in

the areas of career development, performance management and redeployment. For example, the Library has added a statement about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities to its recruitment processes at all stages including advertising, testing and offer letters. Additionally, the Library has provided individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability and, with employees' consent and participation, has created individualized workplace emergency response plans.

Consultation and Feedback: Following the adoption of the *Accessibility for Customers with a Disability Policy,* library staff updated publicity guidelines to include standardized messages about how to make inquiries relating to accessibility and accommodation and developed procedures to facilitate the provision of sign language interpreters or FM sound systems upon request.

Plans for library renovations or construction are reviewed by the City's Access and Equity Coordinator. In the past year the Library received a range of helpful feedback to assist with building and renovation projects including guidance about accessible ramps, barrier free washrooms, sloped walkways and hand rails, barrier free parking and improvements to assist customers with visual impairments.

The City's Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Integrated Standards Subcommittee also provided valuable feedback to the Library. Areas for improvement ranged from suggestions about the Library web site, improving access to audio books, dealing appropriately with service animals and maintaining barrier free facilities.

Website and Communications: The Library is striving to adhere to the standards listed in the Integrated Accessibility regulation as early as possible. There is ongoing review of the website, reduced use of attached.pdf format documents and awareness of contrast, type colour, leading, font family, font style, font heaviness, uppercase, italics, letter spacing, margins, columns, paper finish, watermarks, clear design and simplicity. A plan is in place to completely revise the web site by 2014 and AODA compliance will be one of the highest priorities when the design work is offered for tender.

The Library updated its response guidelines in 2012 to ensure that its e-mail replies to AskHPL customers comply with the Clear Print Guidelines developed by the City of Hamilton in conjunction with the City of Hamilton Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, all written responses to customers from managers or staff are consistently in Verdana 12. This includes correspondence about Interlibrary Loans, room bookings and information questions.

Customer Inquiries: Hamilton Public Library uses Comment Forms to encourage and receive in-person comments from customers regarding services. From our website, customers can use AskHPL to provide feedback through e-mail. All feedback related to access and disabilities is collected and analyzed to ensure that issues are being addressed in a timely way and responses to customers are tracked. During the 2012-13 reporting year, several comments on a variety of accessibility issues were received and the following describes the issues identified and actions taken:

Concerns were raised about the library's selfcheck units. To assist customers in wheelchairs and scooters, library selfcheck units were pulled forward on the desk surface to reduce the "reach" to the touchscreen. In addition staff was reminded to assist customers and check out their items as needed.

As a result of a customer comment to staff in the Local History and Archives Department, a height adjustable table was purchased and installed to improve access to the microfilm reader.

At the Red Hill branch a concern regarding easy access to the automatic door opener was raised. The Library is working with City Facilities to determine the best solution. A similar concern at the Dundas branch is being addressed with the installation of a new side door.

At Central a solution was developed to meet the accessibility needs of one of our regular customers. A limited amount of printing is done ahead of time for the customer and the material is set aside. Additionally our one-on-one Book a Librarian service has been offered.

A customer who has had difficulty with the library's web site has graciously offered to provide feedback as our web site is redesigned.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Information Service: The *Accessible Canadian Library II* provides guidelines for ensuring that customers can access the collection. In situations where the environment cannot be changed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, staff assistance is recognized as an appropriate solution. Library staff routinely provides assistance to locate and retrieve materials from upper and lower shelves as part of our information service. Staff have also been trained to recognize invisible barriers to access, including literacy, and to offer and provide alternate or additional services.

For customers who cannot visit our locations in person, remote information service is delivered through our website, by telephone, by e-mail, and by real-time chat. Remote service is often a good option for customers with disabilities who already have adaptive technologies in use with personal computers or other devices.

Library Collections: The library provides collections in varying formats and customers with differing disabilities can choose a format that best meets their needs.

E-books: Books in this relatively new format are downloaded from the Library's website, and have the potential to meet the needs of a variety of customers with differing disabilities. Depending on the device used, font size, brightness and contrast can be adjusted based on customers' needs.

E-audio Books: Also downloaded from the Library's website, e-audio books are a popular option for readers who have typically used either the large print collection or books on CD.

Large Print Books: These books have a fourteen (14) point typeface to provide access to recreational reading for adults who find regular print a challenge. All library locations have a collection of large print books.

Talking Books: Full-text talking books are provided under a license agreement with the CNIB. The Daisy format was introduced in 2007 with Daisy readers available for 1 month loans. The library abides by CNIB copyright agreements with publishers that restrict the use of these books and readers to persons registered with the CNIB. This service is available to persons who are unable to read or use standard print material as a result of visual disability, physical limitations or a reading disability.

Books on CD and Playaways: These recorded books are available for use by all library customers.

Online Collections: This collection of databases, including magazines and newspapers, can be accessed from any computer including those in homes, schools and workplaces. Often people with vision disabilities have specialized software on their computers that can provide voice and print modifications allowing full access to the Library's online collections.

DVD and CD Collections: These two collections are among the most popular in the library. Some DVDs include audio descriptions, other provide closed captioning for persons with hearing impairment. In addition to the standard music CDs available, customers can also download music for free from the library's website through the Freegal service.

Braille Books: There is an introductory collection of Braille books for children at the Central Library.

Self-Service Check Outs/Returns: Self-service options are being introduced to most library locations to improve speed and privacy and to reduce material handling. At all locations staff are always available to assist individuals who cannot or choose not to use the self-service kiosks. Self-service kiosks guide the user with audio prompts and are provided at two heights to make them easy to use.

Disability Service Helpline (DISH): This telephone information and referral service provides information service to persons with disabilities, caregivers and family. It is operated jointly with Hamilton Health Sciences' General Hospital.

Inter-branch Delivery: The Library delivers materials, upon request, to a location selected by the customer. All customers may use this service and holds on materials may be placed remotely through the Library's website.

Visiting Library Service: Throughout the city, library materials are delivered monthly to homebound individuals who are unable to visit the library. Library staff selects materials and home delivery is done by trained volunteers.

Bell Relay Telephone Calls: The Bell Relay service enables individuals who are deaf or speech impaired to call a single TTY number. A specially trained Operator will make the call on behalf of the individual and relay the information. Library staff received training about how to serve customers using the Bell Relay service.

Furnishings and Equipment: The Library adheres to the guidelines of the *Accessible Canadian Library: a resource tool for Libraries Serving Persons with Disabilities* (The National Library of Canada) to ensure that library facilities, furnishings and services are accessible to all. These guidelines, applied since 1985, are more nuanced than the City *Barrier Free Design Guidelines* as they address conflicts between the needs of different disabilities, provide alternate means of meeting needs, and strive to balance needs within the space constraints of a public library. These guidelines are used to inform decisions regarding the placement and design of furnishings, shelving, service desks, etc., as well as when identifying service improvements. Library staff looks to the guidelines to help optimize services and balance the needs of persons with differing disabilities. As a rule of thumb, the Library applies the City *Barrier Free Design Guidelines* for the building envelope (entrances, washrooms, parking, ramps, etc.) and the *Accessible Canadian Library Guidelines* for the building interior.

Accessible Programs, Publicity and Public Meetings: The Library's *Accessibility for Customers and Employees with a Disabiliy Policy* emphasizes its commitment to accessibility including providing accessible publications, programs and public meetings. Library publicity guidelines were updated in 2012 to include standardized messages about how to make requests relating to accessibility and accommodation. The Library will make sign language interpreters and FM sound systems available for programs and meetings upon request and can provide publicity in alternate formats and through its website.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LIBRARY BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

Buildings and Furnishings: The Library's *Facilities Master Plan* includes an overview of each branch providing information about accessibility issues or noting that the branch meets current standards. The *Facilities Master Plan*, in its Principles section, states that "each branch library must meet all provincial and federal accessibility standards" but the *Plan* also notes that the Board faces significant problems relating to its facilities and states that "insufficient funds have been set aside to correct the library's accessibility issues" and that "some existing buildings cannot be renovated at a reasonable cost to provide adequate library services or to meet accessibility requirements."

In 2012/13 improvements to library facilities occurred in a number of locations. The newly renovated Terryberry branch reopened in July 2012 and includes a barrier free washroom as well as improvements to entrances, service desks and overall layout, exterior sidewalks and parking.

Renovations to the second floor of Central will be completed in 2013 and include improvements to staff work areas, improved accessibility for the DISH office and the installation of a barrier free second floor service desk.

The Kenilworth branch had extensive renovations including a new exterior ramp, new covered entrance, and a more open interior layout to improve accessibility.

A brand new accessible Lynden branch, replacing two inaccessible branches, opened in early 2013. Community feedback has been very positive.

Planning for a new accessible Waterdown branch, replacing two partly accessible branches, is underway. Construction will begin in summer 2013 with completion in 2014.

A 2012/13 study will look at the potential for the expansion/rebuild of the Binbrook branch. Construction is expected to begin in 2014.

Computers: All public computers have been upgraded. Currently there are over 450 public computers that are equipped with accessibility features that include the standard Windows XP accessibility tools Magnifier and On Screen Keyboard as well as two additional tools:

- **NVDA (Screen Reader):** NonVisual Desktop Access (NVDA) is a free and open source screen reader for the Microsoft Windows operating system. Providing feedback via synthetic speech and Braille, it enables blind or vision impaired people to access computers running Windows.
- **DesktopZoom:** DesktopZoom is a zoom/magnify program with lots of options. Users can zoom an area around the mouse, zoom a fixed window or zoom the entire desktop. The mouse can be used inside the

zoomed window and the mouse wheel or arrow keys can be used to adjust the magnification strength.

Additionally, the Library has taken other actions to improve computer accessibility:

- **Size of Monitors:** HPL has replaced all 17" monitors with 19" monitors to improve the viewing experience for all customers.
- **Accessible Keyboards with Trackball Mouse and Headphones:** At each service point where public computers are located, a minimum of one accessible keyboard is available for customers to use. The accessible keyboards are wireless and include a trackball mouse that can be used with any public computer. If required, headphones are also supplied.
- **Accessible Furniture:** The library ensures that there is a combination of stand-up and sit-down furniture for computers, library catalogues and self service equipment.

BUDGET IMPACTS

Many of the budget impacts relating to the full implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* are unknown. It is anticipated that there will be budget implications to create practices or to change current practices. Without further information, projections of those costs are difficult.

RESERVE FUNDS

The library contributes annually to an *Accessibility and Health and Safety Reserve Fund* and in 2012 $100,000 was set aside for AODA initiatives. The *Reserve Fund* allows the library to prepare for possible increased costs in terms of American Sign Language interpreters, conversion of documents to alternate formats and infrastructure improvements. It is difficult to project what operating costs will be incurred as the Library accommodates persons with disabilities making requests for accessible services.

IMPACT ON CAPITAL BUDGET PROJECTIONS

As additional requirements are legislated thru the *Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment* or the *Ontario Building Code* there may be significant budget implications for the Library although currently the magnitude of the budget implications is unknown. As stated in the *Facilities Master Plan,* the Library will ensure that our buildings meet all federal and provincial accessibility standards and the Library will continue to review each location and recommend renovation plans to ensure compliance. However, the *Facilities Master Plan* does identify several Library buildings that cannot be renovated at a reasonable cost to provide adequate library services or to meet accessibility requirements.

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2012-13

Introduction
The Hamilton Public Library is committed to accessibility with respect to the development of services for people with disabilities, their families and their caregivers. This Library system works proactively to address access issues in the built environment, meeting and at times exceeding existing standards. As additional standards are introduced there will be areas for improvement.

Public sector organizations are required to prepare and publicize annual accessibility reports that summarize the previous year's activities as well as accessibility plans for upcoming years. The two charts included below provide a summary of completed projects and a list of current and future initiatives that represent the Library's Accessibility Plan for 2012-16. As a multi-year plan it is dynamic plan and will be amended as new initiatives are undertaken.

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED PROJECTS AS DESCRIBED IN PREVIOUS *ACCESSIBILITY PLANS*

Completed Projects	Relevant AODA Standard / Area	Location / Impact	Details / Date completed
Board Policy to Comply with AODA Standard	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	*Accessibility for Customers with Disabilities Policy* approved by Library Board, November 2009. Reviewed annually
AODA Training for Staff	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Managers, full and part time staff trained, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
AODA Training for Security Guards	*Accessibility Standards for*	System	Central Security Guards trained, 2010

	Customer Service		
Storefront Service Point during Central Renovation	Built Environment	Central Branch	Improved accessibility of service desks and collections, 2009/10 [served customers with limited mobility that might have had difficulty entering the library through the 2nd floor entrance
Sherwood Renovation	Built Environment	Sherwood Branch	Improved accessibility of entrance, service desks, self-service technology and collections Completed 2010
Inventory of Equipment and Services	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Inventory of all equipment and services provided by all library locations completed 2010
Comment Form Review	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	All comment forms regarding AODA are now completed via an electronic incident form. Annually these comments are reviewed, reported on and addressed, 2012
Barton Renovation	*Built Environment*	Barton	Improved accessibility of entrance, service desks, self-service technology and collections, started December 2010 –

			completed in Jan 2011
Red Hill Renovation	*Built Environment*	Red Hill	Improved accessibility of entrance, service desks, self-service technology and collections, started December 2010 – completed in Jan 2011
Hpl.ca Landing Page	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Website redesign underway in 2011-2012 – in progress
Purchasing of Specialized Equipment	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Specialized equipment (e.g. Enhanced Vision Monitors) was purchased and placed at the library locations across the system
Central 1st Floor Renovation	*Built Environment*	Central 1st floor	Improved accessibility of entrance, service desks, self-service technology and collections, completed in 2010
Facilities Master Plan 2011	*Built Environment*	Library Board	The report was updated, presented and approved by the Board in February 2011
Integrated Accessibility Regulation	*Integrated Accessibility Regulation*		Hamilton Public Library submitted a response to the public consultation process for the *Integrated*

			Accessibility Regulation March 2011
Accessible Keyboard and Mouse Provided	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Accessible keyboard, trackball mouse and headset to be provided at all public service points – complete 2011
Saltfleet Renovation	*Built Environment*	Saltfleet	Improved accessibility of entrance, service desks, self-service technology and collections – 2011
Terryberry Renovations	*Built Environment*	Terryberry	Branch refurbished; access to collections improved; new layout and service desks; self-serve technology; barrier free washroom; new parking lot and walkway. Completion July 2012
Kenilworth Exterior Renovations	*Built Environment*	Kenilworth	New exterior ramp; new covered entrance; improved barrier free parking; improved layout, 2011; new service desks 2013
New Lynden Branch	*Built Environment*	Lynden	New branch to be built that will meet all current accessibility requirements. Completion January 2013

Ancaster Front Entrance Improvements- Concrete stairs to be replaced	*Built Environment*	Ancaster	Improvements to entrance stairs. Completion May 2012
Self check units – pin pads added	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Advocate for and monitor the availability of accessibility improvements for self-service kiosks. Pin pads to be installed 2012

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2013-17

UPDATE as of March 31, 2013 showing status of <u>current and future projects</u>

New Waterdown Branch	*Built Environment*	Waterdown	New branch to be built that will meet all current accessibility requirements. Expected completion mid 2014
Public Computing	*Information Communication Technology*	System	Expand the number of public computers, provide enhanced accessibility software on all public computers and ensure special equipment and furniture is available at all locations. The goal for 2012-13 is to complete the public computer rollout at all locations
Collections – Partnership with CNIB	*Information Communication Technology*	System	Currently partnership underway to catalogue donated collections from CNIB(restricted use) Ongoing
Inventory of Equipment and Services	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Continue to update inventory of all equipment and services provided by all library locations annually
Upgrade automatic		Selected	Replace outdated

door openers	*Built Environment*	branches	automatic door openers December 2014
Comment Form Review	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Annually these comments are reviewed, reported and addressed
Prepare for Compliance with Proposed Accessibility Standards	*Built Environment, Integrated, Information and Communication Employment*	System	Monitor progress of standards and regulations to ensure planned compliance
Enhance Training to Volunteers on Customer Service Standards	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Provide additional information and tips on communicating to people with disabilities via newsletter articles. Ongoing
HPL.ca Landing Page	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Accessibility Services page launched 2011. Improvements planned for 2012/13
Staff Training on Accessibility features on Public Computers	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Develop train-the-trainer module through our Tech Liaison Team. Self-directed staff training 2012, Staff Day session 2013
Investigate potential for Binbrook Renovation and Expansion	*Built Environment*	Binbrook	Feasibility study of branch to identify scope of work and constraints. Study complete December 2012. Design in2013.

Investigate expansion of programming for persons with intellectual disabilities	*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*	System	Build on pilot program at one branch. 2013 TE, DU
Staff training regarding Human Rights Code	*Integrated Accessibility Regulation*	System	Planning underway for implementation in 2013
Red Hill entrance	*Built Environment*	Red Hill	Replace door, improve ramp and access to automatic door opener 2013
Dundas side entrance	*Built Environment*	Dundas	Replace door and relocate automatic door opener. 2013
Investigate renovation of Dundas branch	*Built Environment*	Dundas	Feasibility study to be undertaken in 2013.
Central Library 1st floor layout	*Built Environment*	Central	Revise layout to improve accessibility and reduce congestion. 2013
Central 2nd floor service desk and DISH office	*Integrated Accessibility Regulation*	Central	Renovations to include a new barrier free public service points 2013
Central 3rd floor	*Built Environment*	Central	Proposed Phase III Central renovation to include new barrier free public and staff washrooms 2015
Investigate renovation/expansion of the Valley Park branch	*Built Environment*	Valley Park	Coordinate planning with City of Hamilton Recreation to align with redevelopment

			of the Valley Park Community Centre 2015/2016
Facilities Master Plan 2013	*Built Environment*	Library Board	To be updated in 2013

CONCLUSION

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually. The Hamilton Public Library is committed to providing equitable access and removing barriers to services and facilities.