

Accessibility Advisory Committee Town Hall 2022

D&I/ANSAIO – Accessibility Advisor Updates

In 2021, I provided you with an update outlining the approval of the HRM Accessibility Strategy and the formation of the internal Accessibility Strategy Task Force. Our strategy was built around the following pillars:

- Public Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure
- Built Environment
- Goods & Services
- Information & Communication
- Employment

Various business units are pulled together to work on the action items. For example, under Public Transportation & Transportation Infrastructure, a lot of work has been done by Transit and other business units. Under Built environment, much work has been done by Property, Fleet & Environment and Public Works, which I will have Darren and Victoria speak about. Under Goods & Services, one of the most recent examples is the new inclusive playground at the George Dixon Centre, which I will have Pat speak further on. Under Communications, we've been doing a lot of work to develop accessible communications internally. For example, I've developed multiple guidelines for staff that improve accessible communication both internally and externally, such as "[Best Practices for Accessible Word and PDF Documents](#)" and "[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Checklist Guide](#)." Under the Employment pillar, through engaging with HR, we are looking at policies that will support equitable employment and inclusiveness in the workplace.

Specifically, four of the five Action Items due in 2022 are on track to be completed by the end of the year. Currently, we are engaging with 24 of the 30 Action Items outlined in the Strategy. I would also like to share a few points with you about outcomes from the completed Action Items in the Accessibility Strategy:

- HRM hired a Duty to Accommodate Specialist in the Human Resources department, who will oversee the development of a Workplace Accommodation Policy as well as the review of Human Resources' accommodation practices.

- The Halifax.ca website was updated to have information available on accommodations for HRM job applicants.
- Halifax Transit completed two major Action Items that aim to increase and streamline accessible transportation in HRM. I will let them elaborate on these accomplishments.

Finally, I'd like to share some general highlights on HRM's progress on accessibility. Over the past year, HRM staff have had more learning opportunities around accessibility through two main sources: a new corporate Accessibility Training and accessibility-related speaker sessions.

- Through the Office of D&I/ANSAIO, we continue to offer internal training entitled "Going from Support to Inclusion: Accessibility Training." This training is offered to staff throughout the year and provides a more general overview of accessibility including best practices for the workplace. In the earlier days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the training was offered online and has since shifted to an in-person format.
- For the speaker's sessions, members of the disability community, including representatives from local organizations, educated HRM staff on specific topics relevant to accessibility and the disability community.

Under my leadership, the municipality continues to identify ways to improve accessibility and inclusion both internally as we work with BUs and externally as we work with, and in, community.

Thank you!