



**STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY**

Accessibility Program - 2022 Update

Date: March 27, 2023

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Toronto Public Library Board with an update on Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) Accessibility Program, along with a copy of TPL's 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report.

As required under [section 4](#) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Library must develop, deliver, and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP), outlining how TPL will meet and exceed its legislated compliance obligations. The Library is further required to develop an annual status report on its progress of implementing the initiatives within the Plan.

In June 2022, the Library Board endorsed TPL's [2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

TPL's MYAP aligns closely with the Library's strategic pillars of public service excellence and investing in staff and an innovative service culture. The MYAP is a key initiative to create and animate accessible and inclusive spaces, where everyone feels welcome and has equal opportunity to use and benefit from library spaces. The MYAP also supports the strategic priority to foster diversity among staff, and ensure that staff understand and are responsive to the unique needs of the Library's communities.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report will have a positive impact on persons with disabilities. By demonstrating the actions staff have taken to identify and remove systemic accessibility barriers, the Status Report supports the Library's commitment to providing equitable access to its programs, services, digital and physical spaces, and employment opportunities to staff and customers with disabilities in a manner that meets their individual accessibility needs.

DECISION HISTORY

At its [June 20, 2022 meeting](#), the TPL Board endorsed TPL's 2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Government of Ontario enacted the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#). The goal of the AODA is for Ontario to be accessible by 2025, by removing and preventing barriers so that people with disabilities can participate more fully in their communities.

To achieve this goal, Accessibility Standards were developed and enacted by the Government of Ontario in the following areas:

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

In 2011, the General Requirements and the Accessibility Standards for information and communications, employment, and transportation were harmonized into one Regulation under the AODA. This regulation is known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

In 2016, the previously separate Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (O. Reg. 429/07 under the AODA) were amended and incorporated into the IASR.

COMMENTS

To align with the structure of the MYAP, the status report is organized by the relevant accessibility standards and requirements identified in the IASR under the AODA: General Requirements, Information and Communications, Customer Service, Employment and the Design of Public Spaces.

The TPL MYAP status report was developed in the fourth quarter of 2022, with the content of the report being collected in collaboration with representatives from across TPL.

In 2022, TPL began work on half of the initiatives identified in the MYAP. The following are highlights of some of the key accomplishments so far:

- Adopted TPL's revised [Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy](#);
- Finalized the 2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;
- Launched an organizational training program focused on creating accessible digital documents;
- Established a corporate glossary of inclusive language and terminology;
- Developed new procurement requirements to ensure the Library is acquiring accessible goods, services and products; and
- Developed a new organizational accessibility training curriculum for staff, volunteers, and contractors conducting work on behalf of TPL.

In addition, the status report provides more detail on the work completed and the status of work in progress as of December 31, 2022. Although TPL made great strides in 2022 to develop and deliver on its MYAP initiatives, there is still work to do and the Library is committed to addressing all of the initiatives by 2025.

Going forward, TPL's annual MYAP status report will be brought before the Board as an information item in the first quarter of each year. The 2022 Status Report will be posted to TPL's internal and external websites, and communicated to staff and the public.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report

multi-year accessibility plan 2022 status report



If you identify as a person with a disability or a person who is Deaf, and require this document in an accessible format, please contact accessibleservices@tpl.ca or use the [online form](#) to make a request.

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statement of commitment

Toronto Public Library (TPL) is committed to providing equitable access to library service that meets the changing needs of all Torontonians, including persons with disabilities, in a welcoming and supportive environment. The Library will develop and support a work and service environment where the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in accordance with the principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity, and integration. TPL will meet and exceed the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations.

In developing and delivering services and programs to persons with disabilities, the Library will be guided by the service values of equity and diversity in the treatment of individuals. The Library will establish, implement and monitor policies, services and practices that balance the needs of persons with disabilities and others to support the accessibility standards of customer service, information and communication, employment and the built environment, established under the AODA.



about multi-year accessibility plan

In December 2021, the City Librarian and Directors approved [TPL's 2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(MYAP\)](#). The Board of Directors subsequently endorsed this plan in June 2022.

As a foundational piece of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Program, the MYAP serves to support and foster accessible digital and physical spaces, services, programs and employment practices, and deliver them in a manner that meets the individual accessibility needs of our employees and customers with disabilities.

The MYAP is TPL's long-term accessibility roadmap, outlining our vision, outcomes and actions that will guide our journey over the life of our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan to remove and prevent barriers for our staff and customers with disabilities. Dedicated TPL division(s) will lead the development and delivery of the initiatives over the course of the plan.

To proactively identify and remove barriers and incorporate accessibility best practices at the beginning rather than the end, an Accessibility by Design approach to how TPL plans, develops, and implements its projects and initiatives, including those within the MYAP, continues to be incorporated into TPL's operations and culture.



executive summary

The 2022 MYAP status report outlines our yearly progress on the development and delivery of the various MYAP initiatives to remove barriers and advance accessibility and inclusion throughout TPL.

The report aligns with the structure of [the MYAP](#) with initiatives grouped within relevant accessibility standards and requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA: General Requirements, Information and Communications, Customer Service, Employment and the Design of Public Spaces.

In 2022, TPL began work on nearly half of the initiatives identified in the MYAP. Below are some highlights of what we've accomplished so far:

- ✓ Adopted TPL's revised [Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy](#). (December 2021)
- ✓ Finalized our 2021-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. (December 2021)
- ✓ Launched an organizational training program focused on creating accessible digital documents. (April 2022)
- ✓ Established a corporate glossary of inclusive language and terminology. (May 2022)
- ✓ Developed new procurement requirements to ensure we are acquiring accessible goods, services and products. (June 2022)
- ✓ Developed a new organizational accessibility training curriculum for staff, volunteers, and contractors conducting work on behalf of TPL. (December 2022)

A number of other initiatives are underway and outlined in this document. Although TPL made great strides in 2022 to develop and deliver on our MYAP initiatives, there is still much work to do. TPL is committed to addressing all of the initiatives by 2025.



status of initiatives

This section outlines all of the MYAP initiatives undertaken by TPL's divisions in 2022 to meet our legislated requirements under the AODA. It includes work completed and work started as of December 31, 2022. The initiatives are grouped under the following sections:

- [General Requirements](#)
- [Information and Communication Standards](#)
- [Customer Service Standards](#)
- [Employment Standards](#)
- [Design of Public Spaces Standards](#)

For ease of reference, the numbering of initiatives follows the numbering in the MYAP. Please note TPL has yet to address any initiatives not found in this report.

general requirements

TPL is committed to serving the individual accessibility needs of our employees and customers with disabilities by updating organizational processes, expanding services and building staff competencies in this area. This year we made a number of key advances, including revising our corporate accessibility policy, developing a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and updating our procurement requirements. We're continuing to build on this work with the development of new organizational accessibility training for our staff, volunteers and contractors.

what we've done

- 1 Revise TPL's Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities policy to reflect applicable amendments to legislated compliance requirements, and post it to our external website.**
 - Approved by the TPL Board of Directors on December 6, 2021 and posted on the [Accessibility page](#) of TPL's website.
- 2 Establish, deliver, and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.**
 - Approved by Directors' Committee in December 2021 and posted on the [Accessibility page](#) of TPL's website.
- 4 Incorporate accessibility criteria into all procurement proposals and contracts related to the acquisition of goods, services, products, and facilities.**
 - Developed and incorporated accessibility requirements into current and future procurement documents.
- 7 Establish, maintain, and track training on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities, and provide it to staff, volunteers, and third parties conducting business on behalf of the Library.**
 - Developed a new Accessibility 101 curriculum, with an anticipated launch in January 2023. The curriculum serves as TPL's organizational accessibility training program, and is mandatory for all staff, volunteers and contractors conducting work on behalf of TPL.
The new Accessibility 101 module replaces TPL's prior accessibility training program.

what's in progress

3 Develop and make available an annual status report on the progress of the implementation of the Library's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- Developing the 2022 status report for approval by the City Librarian and Directors, followed by an endorsement by the TPL Board in the first quarter of 2023. Once approved, it will be available on the [Accessibility page](#) of TPL's website.

6 Incorporate accessibility criteria into future procurement processes and documents related to the acquisition of self-serve kiosks.

- Established criteria for all procurement documents at TPL. We have committed to offering the Windows Ease of Access tools when installing new or replacing existing self-serve kiosks in our branches as part of the Public Computing Realignment and Replacement Project in 2023.

information and communication standards

TPL is committed to providing access to information and communications in an accessible and inclusive manner that meets an individual's needs, while building staff knowledge and capacity to support this work. In 2022, we completed some key actions to support staff awareness and education through the introduction of training and resources. We also made progress on a number of other initiatives, including expanding public access to assistive hardware and software in our branches, and improving the accessibility of our webpages and web content.

what we've done

4 Provide continuous training to staff on creating accessible digital documents.

- Launched the Creating Accessible Digital Documents training program in April 2022, which is mandatory for directors and managers, and recommended for staff who create digital documents.
- In 2022, The City Librarian, all directors and more than 150 managers and staff from across TPL completed this training. This program will resume in 2023 to train more managers and staff.

14 Establish a corporate glossary of inclusive language and terminology for use by all divisions.

- Leveraged and shared the City of Toronto's Glossary of Inclusive Terminology with all staff, and continuing to incorporate into internal and external communications.

What's in progress

1 Continue to receive and respond to employee and customer feedback in a manner that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs.

- Continuing outreach to Deaf and disability communities and receiving feedback from individuals and organizations through TPL's Accessibility Services on an ongoing basis throughout 2023.
- Continuing to provide a dedicated public service point for people with disabilities and people who are Deaf to receive support when using library services, experiencing barriers and providing feedback by phone, email or TTY relay.

3 Establish an organizational process for providing accessible formats and communication supports for staff and public meetings, programs, and events upon request.

- Established a new process, and introduced it to management and supervisory staff. It will launch to all staff in the second quarter of 2023.
- Developing resources and supports for all staff, including revised guides to support the delivery of the new process.
- Established Vendors of Record for various accessible formats and communication supports through a formal Request for Proposals process.

5 Provide ongoing staff updates through TPL's internal channels to build awareness of the AODA Program and updates on our progress.

- Implementing our communications plan, which includes leveraging key dates and relevant internal channels to remind staff of the important work under the AODA Program. The plan outlines how the AODA Program aligns with TPL's strategic priorities, and when and how to share progress with staff and the public. As a living document that guides our communications activities, the plan is updated on an ongoing basis.
- Developed and delivered key foundational employee communications, including a communication about the launch of the AODA program, a series of departmental road shows to inform staff about relevant initiatives, and other staff communications on key initiatives and the staff leading this work.

6 Provide automated or live closed captioning for key public and staff meetings and events upon request.

- Providing proactive live closed captioning for monthly virtual staff town halls, Ask Me Anything sessions, TPL Board meetings and key public programs.
- Continuing to respond to employee and customer requests for communication supports, including closed captioning for library programs, meetings and events on an ongoing basis. Requests are booked and delivered through TPL's closed captioning vendor.

8 Establish digital accessibility guidelines for the design and maintenance of the Library's websites, web content, and web-based applications.

- Implementing vendor-developed training and recommendations to improve the overall accessibility of TPL's web-based products.
- Including accessibility best practices at the core of the design and development process for TPL's web-based products.
- Improving the accessibility of key components and structures of TPL's website, including the Contact Us form components and general account features.

11 Continue to provide information related to accessible collections on the Library's website.

- Creating and coordinating [book lists](#) and [blog posts](#) by TPL staff that highlight library collections in accessible formats, and on disability, Deaf culture and accessibility on an ongoing basis.

12 Continue to work with, and promote, the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to provide accessible library collections and services to persons with print disabilities.

Continuing to work with CELA by:

- offering training to all staff through TPL's internal learning management system.
- partnering at outreach events on an ongoing basis.
- promoting CELA collections and services on the [Accessible Collections](#) page of TPL's website.
- assisting TPL customers with registering for CELA on an ongoing basis.
- maintaining a collection of CELA materials in our branches.

16 Incorporate accessibility best practices when adding information into internal document template shells.

- Updated key internal documents to incorporate accessibility best practices. This work will continue throughout 2023. Documents revised so far include:
 - » volunteer and learner forms for Adult Literacy programs
 - » core user education scripts and all new user education documents
 - » Service Committee Terms of Reference and Working Group Mandate templates
 - » meeting agendas and Decision Action Record (DAR) templates

17 Establish a process for identifying, providing, maintaining, and supporting the use of assistive hardware and software that meets the information and communication needs of employees and customers with disabilities.

- Established a process for including TPL's accessibility subject matter experts in projects related to upgrading assistive hardware and software for customers with disabilities. This process was incorporated into three projects in 2022:
 - » The Public Computing Realignment and Replacement project, which provides assistive hardware and software on designated public computers in our Digital Innovation Hubs and Learning Centres, and Neighborhood Tech Kits for outreach and programming. TPL also offers an expanded range of accessibility tools, including Windows Ease of Access, the NVDA screen reading software and Dolphin Easy Reader application on all public computers. Developed helpful resources to support staff with service delivery.
 - » The new Virtual Interview Room service, which offers customers access to a large print keyboard and a large trackball mouse in this dedicated space for job seekers.
 - » The Youth Hub Tech Standardization project, which provides all TPL Youth Hub locations with large print keyboards, large trackball mice and core equipment. Procedures for adaptive gaming were also developed as part of this project.

customer service standards

TPL is committed to offering equitable access to our collections, services, programs and spaces that uphold the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of our customers with disabilities. In 2022, we began updating our Rules of Conduct, and our programming policies and procedures to reflect our commitment to accessibility and support of service animals and support persons in our branches. All of the work in this section is still in progress.

what's in progress

2 Incorporate the Library's Accessibility Statement of Commitment into any revised or newly developed policies and procedures related to customer service.

- On an ongoing basis, incorporating TPL's [Accessibility Statement of Commitment](#) into newly developed:
 - » policies
 - » Standard Operating Procedure documents
 - » staff training documents
 - » customer-facing documents including rental contracts and invoices

3 Update the Library's Rules of Conduct to reflect current legislated requirements for service animals.

- Awaiting approvals on updates to TPL's Rules of Conduct to reflect current legislated requirements for service animals in TPL spaces.
- Developing communications to ensure TPL staff are aware of the updates to the Rules of Conduct and their role in their delivery.

6 Integrate information about welcoming service animals and support persons into any revised or newly developed programming policies, procedures, and/or strategies.

- On an ongoing basis, incorporating information on service animals and support persons into newly developed:
 - » policies
 - » Standard Operating Procedure documents
 - » staff training documents
 - » customer-facing documents including rental contracts and invoices

employment standards

TPL is committed to fostering a welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible work environment for our employees with disabilities, and we're continuing to build on our work in this area by improving our recruitment processes and work programs. TPL is continuing to provide accessible formats and communication supports to employees with disabilities as part of its performance management and career development practices. Much of the work in this section is still in progress.

what's in progress

14 Establish a process for informing employees participating in the performance management program that related documents are available in accessible formats or through an appropriate communication support upon request.

- Creating documents related to performance management in accessible formats on an ongoing basis and ensuring the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered in these processes when providing informal and formal coaching/feedback.

16 Continue to ensure that any position or location changes impacting employees with disabilities are aligned with the requirements outlined in the Library's Collective Agreement, and take into account any documented individualized accommodation plans.

- Working with employees and their supervisors on an ongoing basis to ensure the required accessibility accommodations are in place for the employee's new position and/or location.

design of public spaces standards

TPL is committed to providing open, accessible and inclusive spaces for our employees and customers. We're continuing to incorporate accessibility requirements into capital projects to ensure our employees and customers with disabilities can safely and independently enter and navigate our branches and facilities. Much of the work in this section is still in progress.

what's in progress

- 1 Incorporate the technical requirements established under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated **exterior paths of travel**, including, but not limited to, stairs, ramps, sidewalks, and walkways.
 - On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into newly constructed and redeveloped capital projects, building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects and redevelopment of State of Good Repair projects.
- 4 Continue to incorporate the requirements established under the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines into the planning and design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects.
 - Incorporated these requirements into the redevelopment work at Locke, Pleasant View and Centennial branches in 2022.
 - On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects.
- 7 Incorporate the technical requirements established under the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated **service counters and signage**.
 - On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into the design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects and building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

9 Incorporate the technical requirements into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated **fixed queuing guides.**

- On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into the design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects and building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

11 Incorporate the technical requirements into the design of any future newly constructed or significantly renovated **waiting areas with fixed seating.**

- On an ongoing basis, incorporating these requirements into the design of newly constructed or redeveloped capital projects and building upgrades for Multi-Branch projects.

13 Establish procedures for the ongoing maintenance of the accessibility elements of the Library's branches and public spaces.

- Establishing a program that ensures continuous maintenance of exterior accessibility elements within the built environment to eliminate physical barriers.



conclusion and contact

In 2022, we continued our multi-year journey by working together to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers within our programs, services, digital and physical spaces, and employment opportunities. As we continue to build on the many initiatives mentioned in this report, TPL is continuing to focus on accessibility by ensuring it is a responsibility shared by all staff across the organization.

For questions about TPL's 2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Report, contact:

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Accessibility Program Update

Darren Cooper

Manager, Accessibility

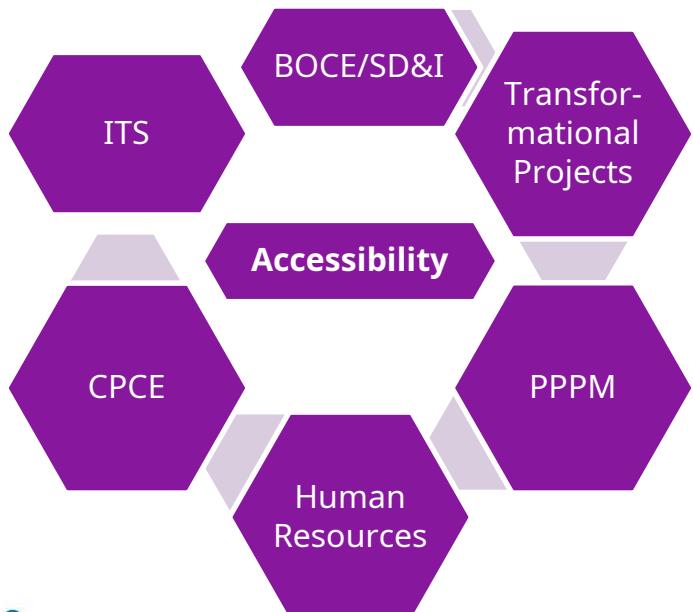
March 27, 2023

guiding principles

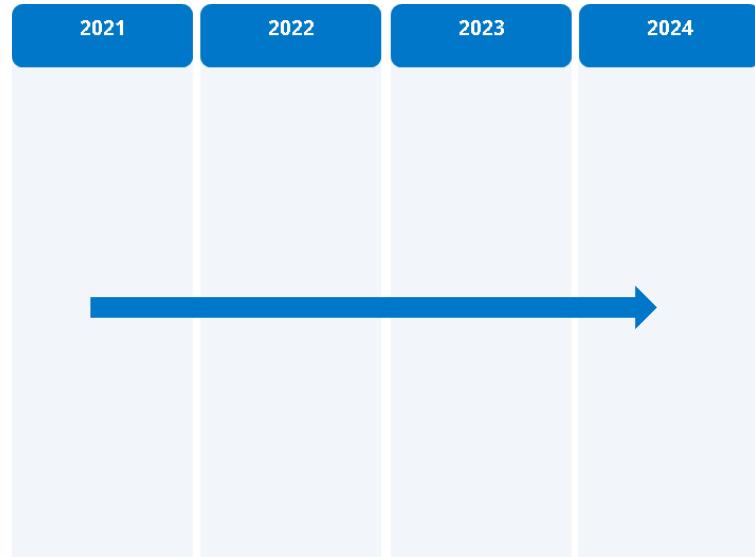
1. Meet and exceed legislated accessibility compliance requirements
2. Remove barriers and advance accessibility and inclusion throughout TPL
3. Create open, accessible, and inclusive spaces for all
4. Incorporate accessibility at the beginning, and every stage, of a project
5. Position TPL as a community and industry leader in accessibility

our approach

integrated



multi-year





accessibility at TPL

AODA program

program goals

- To ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
- To develop, review, and implement system-wide policies, plans, processes, and training that will advance accessibility and inclusion
- To identify, remove, and prevent systemic accessibility barriers

removing barriers and advancing accessibility

accessibility for
persons with
disabilities
policy
(‘the what’)



multi-year
accessibility
plan
(‘the how’)



**removing &
preventing
barriers**

- Enacted in 2011 as a Regulation under the AODA
- Applies to all organizations in Ontario

Accessibility Standards:

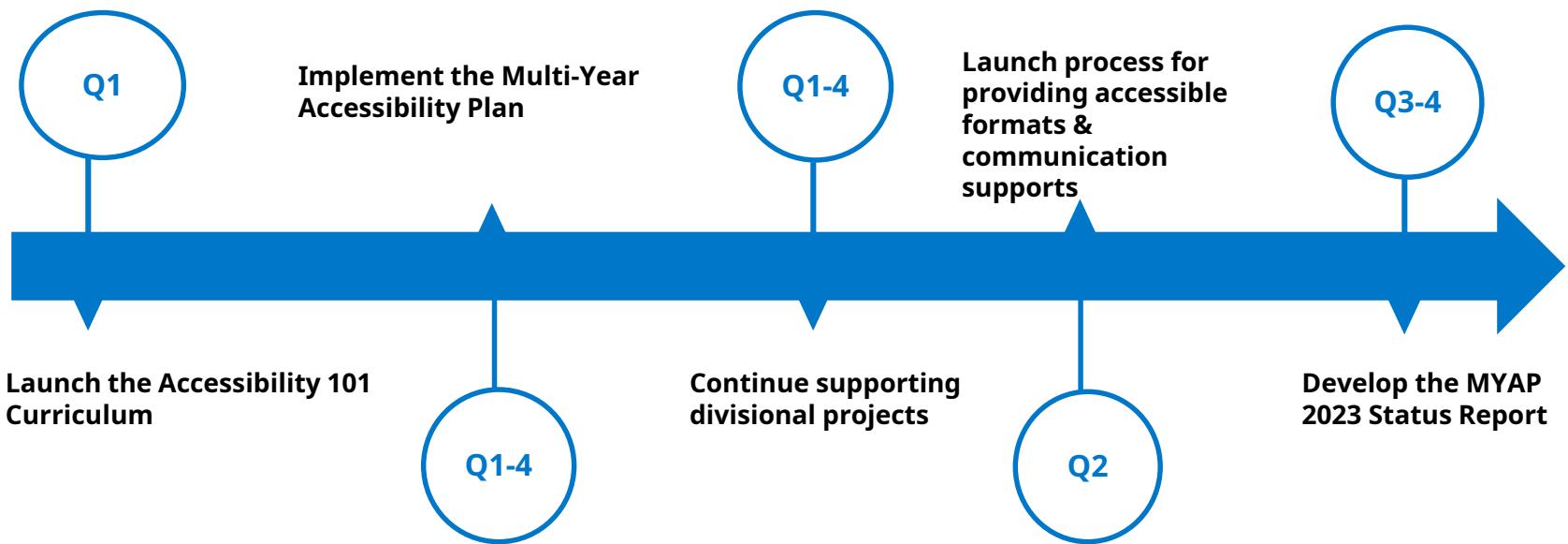
- General Requirements
- Customer Service
- Design of Public Spaces
- Employment
- Information & Communications

2022 accessibility plan status report

- Half of the 64 MYAP initiatives were started, with work continuing in 2023. Six initiatives were completed.
- Developed in collaboration with all TPL divisions.
- Structured by the relevant accessibility standards under the IASR.
- Presented to the Directors' Committee.
- Posted to TPL's website, and communicated to staff and the public.



2023 priorities



the role of Manager, Accessibility

Manager, Accessibility

- Lead the AODA Program
- Implement TPL's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Management and staff contact for accessibility advice
- Lead or contribute to projects, strategies, and plans

Divisional Support

- Apply an accessibility lens
- Advise staff on best practices for advancing accessibility
- Currently supporting 12 projects, led by various divisions