Richmond Hill Public Library Board

2019 ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PROGRAM REPORT
SRLIB20.01

Subject: **2019 Annual Accessibility Policy and Program Report**

From: Mary-Anne Dempster, Interim CEO

Date: January 28, 2020

1.0   Recommendation

That the 2019 Annual Accessibility Policy and Program Report be received; and

That the Library Board approve the Richmond Hill Public Library Board Accessibility Policy dated January 28, 2020.

2.0   Purpose

To provide the Library Board with the policy demonstrating the Library's commitment to accessibility and compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). To provide information regarding the 2019 accessibility program at Richmond Hill Public Library.

3.0   Background

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* which came into effect June 2005, and the subsequent standards for Accessible

Customer Service (2008) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards (2011), the Library is required to ensure that all Ontarians with disabilities have full access to goods, services, facilities, accommodation and employment.

Accessible Customer Service Standard enacted as a Regulation for compliance January 2008

The Accessible Customer Service Standard was enacted as a Regulation on January 1, 2008, with compliance for public sector organizations required by January 1, 2010. One of the requirements under the Accessible Customer Service Standard was to establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities. A second requirement was to train staff, volunteers and associated parties who interact with the public on a number of topics. The Richmond Hill Public Library Board approved its Accessible Customer Service Policy in November 2009 in compliance with the AODA and the Accessible Customer Service Standard and provided the necessary training for staff and Board members.

Integrated Accessibility Standards came into effect July 1, 2011

Following a number of revisions and public consultations, the draft Integrated Accessibility Standards were integrated into one standard and came into effect July 1, 2011. They comprise 4 standards:

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

General requirements for these standards included developing policies, practices and procedures; incorporating accessibility criteria and features, except where

not practical to do so, setting requirements in procuring or acquiring goods or services, and in acquiring self-service kiosks; and training all employees and volunteers on the Standards and Human Rights Code within designated timelines. RHPL has complied and has trained both staff and Board members. Ongoing training in the Integrated Accessibility Standards was implemented in 2016.

Richmond Hill Public Library as an "obligated organization".

Under the Act, Richmond Hill Public Library is considered an "obligated organization" and as such:

- Shall provide access to or arrange for accessible materials where they exist;
- Shall make information about the availability of accessible materials; publicly available and shall provide the information in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request;
- May provide accessible formats for archival materials, special collections, rare books and donations.

It should be noted that there are varying timelines for compliance dependent upon the definition of the designated public sector organization and the individual topic or subject. While the deadlines for compliance are not all immediate, organizations have been advised to consider how they intend to implement the obligations going forward. This will allow for the advance planning and budgeting required ensuring that compliance is achieved by the applicable deadlines. The Library works closely with the City of Richmond Hill and is included in the City of Richmond Hill's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

4.0   Library Design

Libraries have always welcomed everyone. As such, accessibility was part of library design long before the AODA. In accordance with the Design of Public Spaces standard covered in the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Richmond Hill Public Library facilities all have accessible features. The following are examples of accessibility in library design:

- Elevators and ramps provided as needed;
- Automatic doors;
- Accessible self-check units and public workstations;
- Book stack layout design permits the use of wheelchairs and motorized scooters;
- Accessible service desks at Central Library, Oak Ridges Library and Richmond Green Library;
- Adjustable workstations offering specialized software for print disabled customers, including JAWS and CCTV Reading Station access software at Central Library and Richmond Green Library;
- Provision of a Special Needs card for customers with disabilities, which recognizes that disability may lead to difficulties returning materials on time, and waives overdue fines in those circumstances;
- Addition of accessibility assistive software, "Browsealoud", in the Library's new online catalogue and RHPL databases with screen reading and translation tools for customers with reading difficulties, in addition to the website.
- Implementation of MagnusCards, a mobile app with instruction card decks was developed with the Library's digital content to assist people with cognitive special needs to use the Library and its services. The five card decks include:
    1. How to Search the Catalogue
    2. How to Find an Item on the Shelf
    3. How to Check out Library Items

4. How to Return Library Items
5. How to Register for Library Programs

- Design of the new Oak Ridges Library complies with the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard;
- Design and development of a new Library website that incorporates the AODA Standard for Information and Communications;
- Development of Accessible Documents.

5.0   **Key AODA Accomplishments 2019**

Richmond Hill Public Library continues to work with the City of Richmond Hill in regard to the compliance with all AODA standards and requirements.

In 2019 staff complied with the AODA standards and requirements through the following:

1   **Training and Presentations**

- Provided mandatory AODA training through HR Downloads to all new employees;
- Required vendors to provide proof of AODA compliance to be eligible to participate in the procurement process.

2   **Technology Enhancements**

- Refined the Library's website to comply with the specifications of the Web Content Accessible Guidelines (WCAG) and the AODA Information and Communications Standard;
- Ensured all new documents on the website are in an accessible format;
- Introduced accessible kiosks as information/way-finding aids at all sites.

3   **Programs**

- Vision Loss Book Club, for adults with vision impairment;
- The Adult Friendship Club, for adults with developmental or cognitive disabilities;
- Adult Colouring Club for adults with developmental or cognitive disabilities;
- Sensory Story Time for Children with diversabilities.

4   Collections

- Physical large print and Talking (audio) books;
- ebooks and eAudiobooks through various digital platforms;
- French ebooks through Cantook Station;
- Online magazines through rbDigital and PressReader;
- Online music through Freegal and HOOPLA;
- Online movies through HOOPLA;
- Assistance in accessing Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) materials for the print disabled.

5   Visiting Library Service

On average, 75 home bound customers who, due to disability or illness cannot visit the library in person, received 818 visits in 2019.

6   Evacuation Assistance

- RHPL staff with a disability can self-identify that they require assistance upon evacuating any library facility in an emergency.

7   Oak Ridges Library (Design of Public Spaces)

- New Oak Ridges Library is AODA compliant.

6.0 **Key AODA Objectives for 2020**

In 2020 RHPL will continue moving forward to meet all standards and requirements of AODA. Included in this are the following:

- Investigate remote payment of fines, which will benefit individuals who are unable to physically come to the Library;
- Provide ongoing online AODA training for staff;
- Design a consolidated approach to AODA training for volunteers;
- Review remaining service desks for accessibility;
- Investigate the acquisition of an adjustable workstation offering specialized software for print disabled customers, including JAWS and CCTV Reading Station access software for Oak Ridges Library;
- Create seamless ways for customers with print disabilities, such as dyslexia, to easily access materials designed to provide a positive reading experience;
- Encourage persons with disabilities or representatives of persons with disabilities to engage with the Library when community consultations are planned.

7.0 **Alignment with Strategic Plan**

This report aligns with the strategic direction to *Strengthen Your Connections.* By removing barriers to service in accordance with legislation, we move our service interactions to connect with residents in different places and contexts. This direction is in keeping with our Values. We honour the value of *Accessibility*, and offer a welcoming presence and equitable treatment for all.

8.0 **Conclusion**

Richmond Hill Public Library is committed to providing equitable treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of Library services, programs, goods and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence. This commitment extends to residents, visitors and Library staff with visible and non-visible disabilities.

The Library's Accessibility Policy incorporates all approved standards into one over-riding policy. It is consistent with that of the city, adapted for Library specifics and written in clear language.

9.0 Attachment

1.0 *Accessibility Policy,* dated January 28, 2020

Pre-Submission Review

Executive Leadership Team – Thursday, January 16, 2020

Submitted by: Approved by:

"Signed version on file in the Administration Office"

Mary Jane Celsie   Mary-Anne Dempster
Director, Content   Interim CEO