

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON JANUARY 24, 2017
FROM:	VERONICA MCALEA MAJOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES AND CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER
SUBJECT:	ALTERNATIVE FORMATS FOR COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS TO SUPPORT GREATER PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Corporate Services and Chief Human Resources Officer, the attached Report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

None

BACKGROUND

On December 19, 2016, Municipal Council resolved, in part, the following:

18. That the following actions be taken with respect to public transportation:
- e) that Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to report back to the next meeting of the CPSC on steps that can be taken to provide Council and Standing Committee Agendas in alternative formats, including braille, in sufficient time to permit members of the public an opportunity to review the documentation and to fully participate in local government;
 - g) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to provide a copy of the draft report(s) that will be prepared to respond to e) ... above to the Accessibility Advisory Committee;

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, organizations are required to provide or arrange for the provision of documents in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, upon request. This requirement would include the production of Council and Standing Committee Agendas in an accessible alternative format.

Alternative formats need to take into consideration the person's individual accessibility needs. Organizations are required to consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible alternative format as well as notify the public about the availability of accessible alternative formats.

CURRENT PROCESS

The Corporation of the City of London has a current process in place to ensure persons requesting documentation in an accessible alternative format, as required under the AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards, are provided in a timely manner. The current process is documented on

the City of London's website (see Appendix "A"). Some examples of accessible alternative formats may include, but are not limited to:

- Accessible electronic formats such as MS Word, PDF or HTML
- Braille
- Large print
- Audio formats

TIMELINES OF COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

In order to ensure agenda are prepared and issued in a timely manner, there are deadlines established for the submission of reports and communications for Standing Committees and Council.

For weeks where there is a Standing Committee meeting, documents are required to be submitted by 9:00 AM on the Monday the week before the meeting. Agendas are typically prepared Tuesday and made available to the public on the Wednesday during the week before the meeting. The Added Agenda deadline for Standing Committee meetings is 9:00 AM the day before the meeting.

The Agenda deadline for Municipal Council is 9:00 AM on the Wednesday of the week before the meeting. Municipal Council Agendas are circulated on the Friday of the week before the meeting. The Added Agenda deadline for Municipal Council meetings is 9:00 AM the day before the meeting.

CONVERSION OF DOCUMENTS INTO ACCESSIBLE ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

The conversion of documents into accessible alternative formats is dependent on a variety of factors which impact the timeline for conversion. Major factors that impact the timeline for conversion include:

- The format of the original source file. Documents that are available on historical formats, handwritten, scanned etc. can be more complex to convert to accessible alternative formats.
- The complexity of the original source file. Documents containing tables, graphs, charts are more complex to convert and may require a combination of accessible alternative formats to communicate the information.

Some documents or portions of a document may not be convertible because the technology doesn't exist to convert the information into the accessible alternative format requested. In these cases, the City of London must consult with the person making the request.

Conversion of documents into accessible alternative formats can be a complex process where the typical timeline for turnaround with specialized service providers can range from 4 to 30 (or more) business days, depending on the factors outlined above. In some instances, shorter timelines can be achieved. These circumstances are assessed on a per-project basis with the service provider to assist in meeting a specific timeline outlined by the person who initiated the request.

Where a request has been submitted for an accessible alternative format document before a specific date which cannot be fulfilled by the Corporation through the service provider(s), Corporation representatives will consult with the person making the request. The consultation will include the earliest timeline practical for the delivery of the requested accessible alternative format and additional options for providing the requestor with the information needed by the date specified. Additional options may include; providing the person with a summary of the information requested, reading/communicating the information requested in person or over the phone, or other means as appropriate for the person.

NEXT STEPS

To further assist in providing accessible alternative format of documents in sufficient time to permit members of the public the opportunity to review the documentation and to fully participate in local government, Civic Administration is currently researching and exploring additional options such as:

- Introducing new enhanced accessibility templates for staff reports, agendas, and minutes that could be used for Council and Standing Committees, noting that the templates must be compatible with our current electronic agenda system.
- Making note on the Council and Standing Committee webpage and/or documents that accessible alternative formats of the documentation are available upon request, similar to what is currently located on the “Accessibility London” page of www.london.ca.
- Exploring options for obtaining service contracts with service providers capable of creating accessible alternative formats, with the goal of enhancing service turn-around times and quality assurance.

Providing documents in accessible alternative formats upon request is key to ensuring we meet our legislative requirements as well as our Strategic Area of Focus of Strengthening Our Community - Healthy, safe, and accessible city. Civic Administration will explore options, including those noted above, and consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and report back with respect to options to further assist in providing accessible alternative formats of documents in sufficient time to permit members of the public the opportunity to review the documentation and to fully participate in local government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Report was reviewed by and prepared with assistance of the City Clerk.

PREPARED BY:	PREPARED BY:
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	RECOMMENDED BY:
	VERONICA MCALEA MAJOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES & CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Appendix A City of London Website – Accessibility Page

(<https://www.london.ca/city-hall/accessibility/Pages/Accessibility-at-the-City-of-London.aspx>)



The official website of the City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
519-661-4500

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Accessibility London

The City of London is committed to providing quality goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve and in a manner that respects dignity and independence. We will meet the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment, and transportation.

We are committed to the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity, as described in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

Alternate Formats or Communication Supports

Please contact us if you need information in an alternate format, or require the assistance of a communication support. Arrangements are made upon request by submitting a [Customer Accommodation Request Form](#), and at no additional cost.

Image of the [Accessibility London webpage](#) that outlines the process for requesting alternate formats of documents.

Excerpts from the [Accessibility London webpage](#) read:

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