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## **2018-2022 Accessibility Plan**

***Updated: October 1, 2019***

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## 1.0 Introduction

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The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) 2001 was passed by the Provincial Government in December of 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005 was passed in June of 2005. The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation, and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new Act.

Under the AODA, the Province has developed regulations to ensure that standards are developed to address accessibility within the areas of customer service, transportation, employment and Information & Communication. Requirements within these regulations and methods of addressing these requirements have been identified within the Town of Huntsville's 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan.

On January 1, 2013, the Government of Ontario achieved another milestone in implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) was amended to include accessibility requirements for the Design of Public Spaces (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment). Beginning in 2015, public and private sector organizations will have to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas for public use
- Outdoor play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on and off street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

The Town of Huntsville is committed to meet the obligations outlined in the amended regulation and will work towards incorporating these requirements into the Town of Huntsville Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of these Acts is to improve the opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their participation in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province.

The Municipal obligations under the ODA include the following:

- All Municipalities are required to prepare an updated Accessibility Plan on an annual basis. It is a public document and is used to consult with persons with disabilities;
- Municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish Accessibility Advisory Committees and a majority of their Members must be people with disabilities.

The purpose of preparing an Accessibility Plan is to highlight the measures the Town will take during the coming year, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. The measures that the Town has taken to reduce these barriers to date can be found in the “Accessibility Accomplishments to date” document.

The content of an accessibility plan must include these five requirements:

1. Report on the measures the organization has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.(Found in the “Accessibility Accomplishments to date document”)
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the organization assesses it acts/by-laws, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the policies, programs, practices and services that the organization will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the organization intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

Further to these requirements under ODA, AODA stipulates that the Accessibility Plan must be:

- A multi-year document
- Posted on the Town's website
- Provided in an accessible format upon request
- Reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

The Town of Huntsville has committed to a five year plan that is reviewed annually as recommended by the AAC.

## **1.1. Barrier Recommendations**

This Accessibility Plan includes the recommendations proposed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) as well as any legislative requirements. Each item identified within the plan is subject to budget approval.

## **1.2 Key Contact**

Crystal Best-Sararas, Deputy Clerk

- Telephone: (705) 789-1751 Ext. 2258
- Fax: (705) 789-6689
- E-mail address: [crystal.best-sararas@huntsville.ca](mailto:crystal.best-sararas@huntsville.ca) or [accessibility@huntsville.ca](mailto:accessibility@huntsville.ca)

## 2.0 Organization

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The Town of Huntsville organizational structure is similar to those adopted by most municipalities throughout Ontario and allows the Town to ensure that the Corporation can meet the needs and expectations of the community.

To view the organizational structure or for further departmental information, please visit the Town of Huntsville website at [www.huntsville.ca](http://www.huntsville.ca)

### 2.1 Services Provided by Other Levels of Government

The Town of Huntsville is a lower tier municipality within the District Municipality of Muskoka. As a result, the District Municipality of Muskoka delivers certain services on behalf of the taxpayers of Huntsville which include, but are not limited to:

- Ontario Works
- Social Housing
- Children's Services
- Land Ambulance and Emergency Planning and Police Services
- Homes for the Aged
- Health Unit Matters
- Water and Sewer Services
- Waste and Recycling Services

As required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the District Municipality of Muskoka will prepare its own Accessibility Plan covering those services delivered by the District.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Community and Social Services is responsible for the delivery of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The ODSP is intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities and to help them become more independent. The ODSP has two parts:

1. Income Supports provides financial assistance to eligible people with disabilities.
2. Employment Supports provide people with disabilities the support needed to acquire and retain employment.

### **3.0 Plan Consultation**

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The Accessibility Plan has been developed and updated by Town Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Plan is reviewed annually in conjunction with the Budget process to ensure adequate funding is available for mandatory projects. The Staff member who can be contacted regarding any questions on this plan is Crystal Best-Sararas, Deputy Clerk. Please refer back to 1.1 Key Contact for further contact information.

### **4.0 Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**

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Along with the legislative obligation, Huntsville formed its AAC in the spring of 2001. This Committee has been assigned the task of advising Council on all matters pertaining to persons with disabilities.

#### **4.1 AAC Vision for 2018-2022**

To advise the Town of Huntsville in its quest to become a place to visit, work and live that is accessible to all by continuing to:

1. Promote and educate the business community on the current five standards and the upcoming new standards that will be developed in the next five years under AODA, by:
  - Remaining current with respect to any changes or revisions to the standards as mandated by the AODA;
  - Liaising with the Business Improvement Area, the King William Group and the Chamber of Commerce;
  - Remaining current with all funding initiatives such as the Federal “Enabling Fund” offered to municipalities and to the private sector;
  - Making use of the media;
  - Offering to speak to clubs, staff and volunteers;
  - Assisting in workshops for small business, if requested.
2. Promote accessible housing and accessibility for business construction by:
  - Reviewing and making recommendations based upon Universal Design for all municipal Site Plan Applications for multiple residential, institutional, industrial and commercial development;

- Remaining current with respect to accessible affordable housing initiatives (e.g. the Affordable Housing Plan in Huntsville, etc.);
  - Providing input on the Town's Site Plan Guidelines and accompanying accessibility checklist to be used by the Town of Huntsville; and
  - Educating local builders, architects, planners and designers on the concept of Visitability, Flex Housing and Universal Design.
3. Promote accessible transportation throughout the Municipality by:
- Working with the provider and Town Staff to assess transit service to ensure that all potential riders have access;
  - Working with Town Staff to implement the recommendations and/or pilot projects, in relation to accessibility, resulting from a public transit review;
  - Working with the local taxi companies and Town Staff to work on a plan to provide accessible taxi's; and
  - Working with Town Staff on the completion of sidewalk repairs as identified by the Accessibility Advisory Committee in the Town's Sidewalks Needs Assessment Study, and updating the Sidewalk Study as required;
  - Working with Staff to assess all bus stops for accessibility and establish guidelines for design and practices for year round maintenance as mandated by AODA.
4. Promote accessible recreation by:
- Supporting the concept of playability for accessible play spaces;
  - Researching the possibility of alternative funding for the necessary accessibility improvements to accommodate regarding sledge hockey improvements at the Don Lough Arena;
  - Providing input, in regards to accessibility, on the Municipality's Leisure Guides and provide information on the transit system, the audible lights, and accessible features of all municipal buildings;
  - Working with Town Staff to assess whether there is a need to provide alternative recreation programming for people with a disability;
  - Working with Town Staff to ensure that all existing and any new programs are assessed for inclusiveness; and
5. Support the initiative for subsidized recreational programs being considered by all Muskoka municipalities, and to ensure the all programs take into account the needs of

persons with disabilities and those living in poverty. Promote inclusion by educating to help change attitudes, values and behaviour towards accessibility and disabilities by way of:

- The media such as radio interviews, written newspaper articles, etc.; and
- Presentations to groups

6. Promote the removal of all barriers by:

- Participating in the preparation of the Town's Accessibility Plan 2018-2022, and monitoring the completion of projects as specified in the plan;
- Participating in the preparation or review of other Accessibility Plans such as the District of Muskoka's Accessibility Plan;
- Monitoring the completion of various Ontario Municipalities Accessibility Design Guidelines in anticipation of adopting them for Huntsville. The Committee shall promote the adoption to municipalities within the District of Muskoka.

## **5.0 Identifying Barriers**

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This section of the Plan is dedicated to the identification of Barriers within municipal facilities and access to all municipal goods and services.

### **5.1 Barrier Identification Process**

Barrier identification is through any process of methodology used to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Examples of a barrier identification process include review of documents and publications, conducting public meetings, surveys and/or audits, the use of customer feedback forms and other mechanisms.

### **5.2 Types of Disabilities**

Barriers exist as a result of various forms of disability. In developing this Plan, the Town has considered the functional limitations associated with several different kinds of disability and the effects of these limitations on an individual's ability to perform everyday tasks:

- Physical Impairment
- Hearing Loss
- Speech Loss
- Vision Loss
- Deaf-blind
- Smell
- Taste Limitation
- Touch
- Intellectual
- Mental Health
- Learning
- Other – resulting from accidents, illnesses, and diseases

### **5.3 Types of Barriers**

AODA defines a barrier as: “a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people apart. For people with disabilities, barriers can take many forms including attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation”.

Some barriers and an example illustrating that barrier follow: (Prepared by Jennifer Miller for AMCTO, 2007)

**Architectural Barriers:**

- Includes building design, shape and dimensions of rooms, width of doorways, stairways, inaccessible bathrooms.

**Attitudinal Barriers:**

- Inaccurate beliefs or perceptions about a person's ability;
- Someone who is abrupt, insensitive, impatient and uncomfortable with people slowed by a physical, language or developmental disability;
- Receiving WSIB (formerly known as WCB) is to be considered a disability.

**Communication Barriers:**

- The process of providing or sending, or receiving information such as difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone;
- Someone who speaks too quickly or unclearly;
- Use of language that is not understandable such as the use of complex words or jargon.

**Information Barriers:**

- Information is not available in an accessible format – large print, audio video, plain language, Braille, closed captioned video or computer diskette;
- Inadequate or incomprehensible signage – font, size, colour, location, or faded.

**Physical Barriers:**

- Additions to an interior or exterior environment such as doors, windows, furniture, planters, hardware, recreational or playground equipment, lighting, signage, use of colour, materials, etc.

**Systemic Barriers (Policies, procedures and practices):**

- Occur when practices or policies restrict participation. Often done unintentionally;
- Needing to fill out a (complex) form to get a service & not being able to because of a disability.

**Technological Barriers:**

- When a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices;
- Lack of visual alarms;
- Lack of TTY machines;
- Website is not accessible – no colour contrast or large print options, screen reader, cluttered appearance, difficult to navigate.

## 6.0 Online Accessibility Requirements

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This area applies to the online development and content maintenance of Huntsville's municipal websites and web-based applications.

### 6.1 Online accessibility standard levels

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA standards will be met to ensure equal and inclusive access to online sources of information, in the following areas:

#### **Development of new website and online web-based applications**

- Incorporate online accessibility requirements into procurement of software and development efforts to ensure contractors/owners of sites and applications meet organizational and legislative standards
- Continue to develop new website and online web-based applications at WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- Hold new vendors accountable to the standards set by AODA and Town of Huntsville

#### **Ongoing development of existing website and online web-based applications**

- Work with contractors/owners of sites and applications, as well as their site development team(s) to ensure ongoing maintenance and compliance at level AA
- Ensure accessibility awareness for contractors/owners, especially in cases where the product is not currently meeting level AA standards. Provide with advance notice of requirements in order for the company to comply by December 31, 2020.

#### **Content and documents on new and existing websites and online web-based applications**

- Simplify navigation and content (in all formats) on websites, products, platforms and applications to improve customer service and experience allowing equal access to online information
- Maintain content at level AA immediately, while eliminating the upload of unnecessary documents or products that do not meet compliance standards

- Identify when and how alternate formats are available upon request, and who to contact
- Raise corporate awareness of best practices and standards for online accessibility

### **Content and documents that require an ongoing action plan**

- Online content must be maintained at Level AA
- A plan and solution for the use and display of online PDFs (portable document format) is necessary
- Resources and full commitment to document accessibility will need to be determined prior to 2021
- Until such time that a permanent corporate plan, policy or solution is in place, either a) a request for accessible or alternate format(s) documents would be necessary for the following content or b) a commitment is made to completely remove all of these from our site(s) until they meet legislated compliance levels:
  - Agendas, minutes, bylaws, policies & third party attachments
  - Bid and Tender documents
  - Complex charts
  - Financial and/or budget documents
  - Leisure Activity Guide
  - Maps/Drawings/diagrams
  - Miscellaneous items determined by the content's originating department(s)
  - Open Data in .csv and .xlsx format
  - Plans and Studies or documents provided by consultants/stakeholders
  - Registration for programs
  - Seating Plans and Organizational Charts

### **Legislative Requirements**

- The IASR s.14 (5) states that following the guidelines set within WCAG 2.0 applies to:
  - Websites and web content, including web-based applications, that an organization controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product; and
  - Web content published on a website after January 1, 2012

## 7.0 Town Accessibility/Diversity Barriers to be Addressed Across all Departments

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### 7.1 Community Services Barriers

#### a) Access to MHP - Programs

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Information

Department: Muskoka Heritage Place

Method of Addressing:

- Staff will continue to work with individuals and groups to provide access to information on the site.
- Continue to research alternative methods of programming such as Multi-Sensory Tours as mentioned by John Rae, First Vice President, of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, in the Ontario Historical Society Bulletin.

#### b) Access to the Canada Summit Centre

##### i. Lever style door handles (4 remaining)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: \$22,455.36 (*To be included in the 2019-draft budget*)
- Ongoing operation costs: N/A

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- In 2016, 4 lever style door handles were replaced, and another 4 in 2018. Staff are recommending we budget in 2018 for the remaining 4 to be replaced in 2019.

##### ii. Signage at all designated accessible viewing areas (7)

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Staff is currently working on a Corporate Signage Policy based on CNIB guidelines, the CSA standards and best practices of other municipalities in Ontario.

**iii. Signage for automatic door access to the top level of the Jack Bionda Arena**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Communication, Physical, Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Staff is currently working on a Corporate Signage Policy based on CNIB guidelines, the CSA standards and best practices of other municipalities in Ontario.
- There is currently temporary signage in place.

**c) Access to the Ice at the Don Lough Arena**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Upon funding for total project

Estimated:

- Project costs: \$86,000.00 (2010 estimate)
- Ongoing operation costs: Unknown

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has identified this as a long term vision. Staff will watch for alternative funding for the necessary accessibility requirements (boards, sliders, concrete work, and flooring) to accommodate sledge hockey.

**d) Installation of hand rails along the west side of Town Hall**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be addressed within the 2019 budget
- Ongoing operation costs: n/a

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- The installation of a hand rail has been requested by Club 55. Staff has obtained a quote for installation; however the initiative was removed from the 2018 Town budget.
- Staff are currently in the process of procuring a contractor to install the hand rail

**e) Access to Council Chambers Elevator**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Alternative solutions are being researched, such as the possibility of removing the elevator and installing a lift or a ramp. (Building Department looking to see if this could be done - possibly need professional advice i.e. Architect Engineer.)

**f) Access to Services – Directional Signage**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing as signs are repaired, replaced or purchased new

Estimated Project costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Information

Department: Facility Management

Method of Addressing:

- Staff is currently working on a Corporate Signage Policy based on CNIB guidelines, the CSA standards and best practices of other municipalities in Ontario.

## **7.2 Corporate Services Barriers**

**a) Access to Information & Service - Accessible Websites and Web Content (IASR – Information and Communications s.14)**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2018-2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: \$50,000 to \$100,000
- Ongoing operation costs: \$15,000-\$20,000 annually to maintain technology

Barrier Type: Technological

Department: Marketing

Method of Addressing:

- The Town of Huntsville shall make their internet Websites and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA.
- All new corporate websites will be required by 2021 as the technology that we have to-date will not support AA compliancy.

### **7.3 Development Services Barriers**

#### **a) Site Plan Guidelines**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2020

Estimated:

- Project costs: None
- Ongoing operation costs: None

Barrier Type: Architectural and Physical

Department: Building/Planning

Method of Addressing:

- When updating the comprehensive zoning by-law and site plan guidelines, Staff will consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to insure Accessibility considerations and compliance with the current Ontario Building Code, the Design of Public Spaces - AODA and the Town's Official Plan.
- An accessibility checklist will be developed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to assist staff in their review of all site plans.

### **7.4 Operations and Protective Services Barriers**

#### **a) Access to Sidewalks and Intersections in the Urban Area**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

- Project costs: Per the approved transportation infrastructure budget
- Ongoing operation costs: Per the approved transportation infrastructure budget

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- The Sidewalk Needs Assessment, 2019 as amended, reviewed accessible barriers such as missing curb cuts, trip hazards, heaves, missing sidewalks and other obstructions. These hazards will be addressed by the Roads staff on an ongoing basis.

**b) Access to Service (Transit) – Transit Study**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Currently under Council Review

Estimated Project costs: Varied depending on direction provided

Barrier Type: Physical/ Information & Communication

Department: Public Works

Method of Addressing:

- On October 26, 2017 the Accessibility Advisory Committee supported staff's recommendation to hire a consultant to complete a Transit Review Study.

**c) Access to Service (Transit) – Hours of Service (IASR – Transportation s.70)**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Under review

Estimated:

- Project costs: Varied depending on direction provided
- Ongoing operation costs: Varied

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- This item is currently under Council review. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

**d) Access to Service (Transit) – Duties of Municipalities (bus stops/shelters) (IASR s. 78)**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

- Project costs: Per the approved budget
- Ongoing operation costs: Per the approved budget

Barrier Type: Physical, Communication

Department: Roads

Method of Addressing:

- Consultation with the AAC will take place to identify which bus stops are to be renovated. This item is currently under Council review. Recommended changes will ensure AODA compliance is met.

**e) Access to Town Dock at 20 Park Drive**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Currently under Council Review

Estimated:

- Project costs: None at this time
- Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has made a motion to Council to direct staff to design and construct safe and accessible pedestrian access.
- Council is reviewing the 2011 Memorial park Master plan to address immediate and long term items.

**f) Access to Port Sydney Beach – Mobi Mat**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: When funding becomes available

Estimated:

- Project costs: None at this time
- Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has requested staff purchase and maintain a Mobi Mat for Port Sydney beach when funding becomes available

### **g) Access to Trails – Hunter’s Bay Trail**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: When funding becomes available (to apply under the Trans Canada Trails mandate to improve the accessibility of the Trail across Canada)

Estimated:

- Project costs: None at this time
- Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has passed a motion requesting staff repair the current section at the entrance of Lakeshore Blvd of the Hunter’s Bay trail

### **h) Access to Lion’s Lookout**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Ongoing

Estimated:

- Project costs: None at this time
- Ongoing operation costs: None at this time

Barrier Type: Physical

Department: Parks

Method of Addressing:

- The AAC has passed a motion requesting accessible picnic tables and access to the legend map and view of the Town. Staff will work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to address the barriers.

## **7.5 Human Resources Barriers**

There are no Human Resources Barriers identified at this time.

## **7.6 Huntsville Public Library Barriers**

### **a) Signage Audit of the Huntsville Public Library**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: Undetermined

Estimated:

- Project costs: Unknown at this time

Barrier Type: Information, Communication

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- Staff is currently working on a Corporate Signage Policy based on CNIB guidelines, the CSA standards and best practices of other municipalities in Ontario.
- Library Staff will be auditing all Library facilities and signage will be upgraded as required.

#### **b) Collection Development Plan**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: to be determined.

Barrier Type: Information

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- The Library will be creating a new collection development plan that will include goals for accessible materials. Automatic release plans with materials vendors will be revised to include any amendments to existing plans.

#### **c) Programming Policy & Plan**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: to be determined

Barrier Type: Information, Systematic

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- The Library will be revising the Programming Policy and Programming Plan to include accessibility options for participants of all ages. We will also include a review of marketing plans.

**d) Sign Language**

Recommended Budget Year to be Addressed: 2019

Estimated:

- Project costs: To be determined
- Ongoing operation costs: to be determined

Barrier Type: Communication

Department: Library

Method of Addressing:

- The Library will investigate training opportunities for Library staff to enable them to communicate with users at the central service desk and at programs.