GRANT GROUP OF COMPAINES ACCESSIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT 2024

Encompassing Active Transport Inc., Empire Transport Ltd., Hutton Transport Ltd., John Grant Haulage Ltd. And Wayfreight Services Ltd.

GGC - GRANT GROUP OF COMPANIES
2024-2025 ACCESSIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT

GENERAL

GGC - Grant Group of Companies is dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusivity and accessibility, which is a fundamental aspect of our corporate values. We recognize that ensuring access for all is essential, not only for the advancement and competitiveness of our organization within the transportation industry, but also for contributing to a barrier-free Canada for all citizens.

To this end, we are in the process of establishing an accessibility framework aimed at enhancing the experiences of both our employees and the public in relation to our services, products, and facilities. We understand that the journey towards a barrier-free environment is a gradual one, and we are committed to continuous efforts to identify, eliminate, and prevent obstacles.

Our initial Accessibility Plan, created in accordance with the Accessible Canada Act, will act as a roadmap to fulfill our accessibility obligations and cultivate a culture that is confident in its commitment to accessibility. We appreciate the significance of comprehending the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Consequently, we have engaged employees who identify as having a disability in the formulation of our plan through an anonymous company-wide survey tailored for employees with disabilities and their allies, as well as through one-on-one interviews with those who self-identify as having a disability.

This accessibility plan is available in any of the following formats upon request:

- Print.
- Large print.
- Audio; and/ or Electronic.

GGC - Grant Group of Companies, values the input of the public, stakeholders, and employees regarding our Accessibility Plan. Your feedback is crucial to our efforts in promoting accessibility and inclusivity. Please utilize one of the contact methods below to provide your inquiry or feedback. We will promptly respond to all feedback received. If you require assistance while submitting your feedback, please inform us, and we will strive to accommodate your requirements.

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DEFINITIONS

Accessibility: Refers to the needs of people with disabilities being intentionally and thoughtfully considered when products, services and facilities are built or modified so they can be used and enjoyed by all.

Barrier: The *Accessible Canada Act* defines a barrier as "anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation."

Disability: The *Accessible Canada Act* defines a disability as "any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society."

In accordance with the Accessible Canada Act, we have thoroughly assessed our organization to identify obstacles that impede accessibility in the critical areas specified in the ACA. Upholding the principle of equal access and participation, we are committed to implementing proactive strategies to eliminate these barriers and foster an inclusive environment for all individuals.

Employment at the GGC

Barrier 1: Our organization has recognized an important barrier concerning the insufficient representation of employees with disabilities within our workforce.

Feedback: While we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment, we acknowledge the necessity of actively tackling this issue to ensure equitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

- We will provide training for hiring managers inclusive and accessible recruitment practices.
- We will adopt language that is inviting and supportive of individuals with disabilities in our job postings, highlighting our dedication to equal opportunities and reasonable accommodations throughout the hiring process. This commitment will be prominently displayed at the beginning of all job advertisements.
- We will establish a designated point of contact within our organization to facilitate requests for accommodations from applicants with disabilities during the application and interview processes. This individual will possess expertise in accessibility and be equipped to address specific needs.
- We will promote the practice of remote interviews among hiring managers as a standard procedure. This method will enhance flexibility and accessibility, enabling candidates to participate in the hiring process from their preferred locations.

Barrier 2: Acknowledging the significance of transparency and clarity, we recognize the necessity to enhance our communication practices to ensure that individuals are fully informed about the wide array of accommodations accessible to them.

Feedback: In response to this barrier, we are implementing proactive measures to improve our communication strategies, guaranteeing that individuals with disabilities receive thorough information regarding accommodation options and the associated processes.

- We will perform a comprehensive evaluation of our current accommodation procedures, scrutinizing each phase to pinpoint areas that require enhancement. This assessment will involve soliciting feedback from employees, disability advocates, and pertinent stakeholders, allowing us to identify potential gaps or obstacles.
- We will create detailed guidelines and documentation that explicitly delineate the accommodation process, encompassing the required forms, timelines, and responsibilities of all involved parties. This resource will act as an essential reference for employees, managers, and HR personnel, ensuring uniformity and clarity throughout the accommodation process.
- We will revise our welcome packages to include a specific section dedicated to accommodations. This section will provide clear and succinct information regarding our commitment to offering reasonable accommodations, our accommodation policies, the procedure for requesting accommodations, and the resources available to assist employees during their accommodation journey.

Environment

Barrier 3: We have recognized the lack of automatic doors in our accessible washrooms. This shortcoming restricts the ease of access for individuals with disabilities, thereby affecting their autonomy and overall experience.

Feedback: Acknowledging the significance of fostering fully inclusive environments, we are dedicated to overcoming this barrier and improving accessibility in our washroom facilities.

- We will undertake a thorough accessibility assessment of our washroom facilities, with a particular emphasis on the accessibility of washrooms. This assessment will evaluate the current accessibility features, including the absence of automatic doors.
- We will review the installation of automatic doors in our accessible washrooms
- We will ensure that clear signage is displayed to indicate the presence of automatic doors in the accessible washrooms. This will serve as a visual indicator for individuals with disabilities, confirming that the washrooms are adequately equipped to cater to their needs.
- We will establish a routine maintenance and accessibility inspection program following the installation of the automatic doors.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Barrier 4: The IT team possesses limited expertise in accessibility, which restricts their capacity to adequately support individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Feedback: Recognizing the significance of a well-informed and proactive IT team, we are committed to overcoming this barrier and enhancing our proficiency in accessibility technology.

- We will review the implementation of extensive training and educational programs for our IT team members, to determine the value to the current employee team at this time, and for future employment. These programs should encompass a wide range of topics related to accessibility technology, such as assistive devices, adaptive software, and best practices in accessibility.

Barrier 5: We have recognized the insufficient utilization of accessibility features within the tools and software at our disposal.

Feedback: Although these features are available, their capacity to enhance inclusivity is not being fully realized. Acknowledging the significance of utilizing technology to empower all individuals, we are committed to overcoming this barrier and fully harnessing the accessibility capabilities of our tools and software.

- We are reviewing the development of a comprehensive set of accessibility evaluation criteria that all prospective technology acquisitions must satisfy. These criteria will be aligned with established accessibility standards, such as WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), and will cover various dimensions, including usability, compatibility with assistive technologies, keyboard navigation, visual design, and content clarity.
- We will ensure that potential vendors supply detailed documentation regarding the accessibility features of their products. This documentation should specify the accessibility functionalities and attributes of the technology.
- We will perform rigorous accessibility testing and validation for any potential technology purchases.
- We will establish a framework for continuous monitoring and assessment of the accessibility of the technologies we acquire. This will involve regular reviews, mechanisms for user feedback, and ongoing evaluations to ensure sustained adherence to accessibility standards.

Barrier 6: Our organization currently lacks a uniform procedure to ensure the prompt availability of alternative communication formats for employees and stakeholders.

Feedback: We are dedicated to addressing this issue by establishing a system that guarantees accessible communication options as required.

- We will identify appropriate service providers and formalize contracts or agreements with them.
- We will create comprehensive procedures to standardize the process of delivering alternative communication formats. These procedures will provide explicit guidelines for recognizing the need for alternative formats, initiating requests, and ensuring timely provision.
- We are committed to the ongoing assessment and enhancement of our alternative format communication processes. This will include gathering feedback from employees and stakeholders, conducting regular audits to evaluate compliance with accessibility standards, and keeping abreast of emerging technologies and best practices.

Barrier 7: We have recognized a lack of plain language in our communications.

Feedback: This issue restricts accessibility and understanding for individuals with diverse literacy levels, cognitive impairments, or those for whom the primary language used in our communications is not their first language.

- We will undertake comprehensive research and analysis to thoroughly understand the principles and best practices of plain language.
- We will create plain language guidelines specifically designed to meet the communication needs of our organization. These guidelines will offer clear directions on simplifying language, organizing information, and ensuring clarity and accessibility in both written and verbal communications.
- We will implement targeted training and educational programs for our communication teams and relevant stakeholders. This training will emphasize the significance of plain language, enhance skills in plain language writing, and promote a culture of clear and accessible communication.
- We will review our current communications to identify areas where plain language can be effectively integrated.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

We have not identified any barriers in our procurement practices that hinder accessibility.

> No obstacles have been detected in our procurement practices that impede accessibility. We will persist in evaluating and enhancing our procurement policies to emphasize the necessity of considering accessibility in the acquisition of goods and services. By actively incorporating accessibility criteria into our procurement policies and guidelines, we bolster our dedication to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Barrier 8: There is an absence of a uniform metric to evaluate the accessibility of our internal and external programs, events, and engagements.

Feedback: Our objective is to establish a reliable framework for assessing the accessibility of our initiatives, thereby enabling individuals of all abilities to fully engage with and benefit from our offerings.

- We will create an accessibility checklist, which will act as a practical resource to facilitate our evaluation process, ensuring that we consistently consider essential accessibility factors.
- We will conduct regular reviews and updates of the accessibility checklist.
- We will provide training for those involved in the development of programs, processes, and procedures on the Accessible Canada Act and its regulations to foster inclusivity and ensure compliance.

Transportation

Barrier 9: The act of accessing a transport truck can present difficulties for drivers because of the repetitive actions and the elevation of the steps required.

Feedback: This situation creates a significant obstacle for those with motor-related disabilities, potentially hindering their capacity to carry out their job responsibilities efficiently.

- We will implement and install extended tractor steps or folding steps, as appropriate, to minimize the distance required to enter truck cabs.
- We will also install swivel seats, where suitable, to enhance accessibility to truck cabs.

CONSULTATIONS

In accordance with the commitment of GGC - Grant Group of Companies to fostering an inclusive workplace, we have collaboratively crafted our Accessibility Plan through comprehensive consultations with our employees, including those with disabilities and their allies.

This approach guarantees that their essential perspectives and insights are integrated into our initiatives aimed at making our workplace accessible to everyone.

We collected feedback and input from our team members through two distinct methods:

- **Anonymous Company-Wide Survey:** We conducted a thorough survey distributed to all employees, inviting participation from individuals with disabilities and their allies. The survey addressed various dimensions of accessibility and garnered responses from 350 participants. This process enabled us to capture a wide range of perspectives and valuable insights regarding accessibility challenges and potential solutions within our organization.
- **1:1 Interviews:** We engaged with employees who have self-identified as individuals with disabilities and conducted personalized interviews with those who volunteered to share their experiences within our organization.

These meaningful discussions have equipped us to formulate targeted strategies and initiatives that cater to the specific needs of our employees with disabilities. To monitor our progress and ensure the effective implementation of the changes outlined in our Accessibility Plan, we will sustain an ongoing survey initiative that includes all employees.

Furthermore, to enhance awareness of accessibility and encourage feedback, members of our HR and leadership teams will incorporate a link to the Accessibility Plan and the feedback form in their email signatures. This will provide all employees with easy access to the plan and facilitate the submission of input and suggestions to further improve accessibility within our organization.