Clear, Accessible and Large Print Guidelines

All City of Hamilton management, staff, Council, volunteers, agents, contractors and consultants, working on behalf of the City of Hamilton are required to produce emails and printed documents or the information contained in the document, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, taking into account the person's disability.

It is important to note that providing documents in multiple, accessible formats are a requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Customer Service Standard and the City's Customer Service Accessibility Policies.

In consultation with CNIB, the City of Hamilton Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) and ACPD Customer Service Sub-Committee, the following Clear, Accessible and Large print guidelines have been recommended and approved for use by the Mayor, Council and all staff.

Below are the recommended and approved guidelines for the City of Hamilton.

Large Print Guidelines

What Is Considered To Be Large Print?
Documents are considered to be large print if the font size ranges from 16-48 point text or higher. The scale varies according to the visual disabilities of individuals.

- City of Hamilton Guideline for Large Print is: Arial 18 or Verdana 18.
- All City of Hamilton documents and publications shall be produced in large print, upon request from members of the public**.**

Clear Print Guidelines

What Is Considered To Be Clear Print?
Documents are considered to be clear print when they are clearly designed, easy to read and formatted in an accessible manner.

- City of Hamilton Guideline for Clear Print Guideline is:
    - **For e-mail** – Arial 14 or Verdana 12
    - **For agendas, minutes, printed publications** – Arial 12 or Verdana 12

1

Exceptions to Clear Print Guidelines

- If departments produce documents that do not meet the clear, accessible and large print guidelines, due to design and formatting restrictions, provisions must be made to reproduce the document in an alternate format, which meets the proposed guidelines, to suit the needs of the person with the disability, upon request.

- Publications produced in a lower font (e.g. Waste Calendar & Recreation Guide) than the Clear Print Guidelines must also be available on request in both Clear Print (12 font) and Large Print (18 font) formats.

Design and Formatting Guidelines

The accessibility, usability, legibility, ease of reading and comprehension of a document largely depends on its design and formatting. Documents should be designed and formatted in a manner that is clear, easy to read and understandable.

I. Font

Font legibility is essential especially for persons with visual disabilities.

- **Font Style**

    Do's
    - Use clear font (e.g. Arial, Verdana) with easily recognizable characters for documents, printed publications, minutes and agendas.
    - Font style should be less ornate (e.g. French Script, Vivaldi, mistral).
    - Font style should be consistent throughout document, wherever possible.

    Don'ts
    - Do not use decorative style fonts (e.g. Forte, Bernard MT Condensed, Old English Text).
    - Do not use stylized fonts (e.g. brush script, Vladimir Script, chiller).
    - Do not use italics and upper case letters throughout documents.
    - Do not capitalize all words or phrases throughout documents.

- **Font Heaviness**
    - Use fonts with medium heaviness (e.g. Arial).
    - Characters should be distinct, not too thick (e.g. Bauhaus 93, Broadway) or too thin (e.g. Bradley Hand ITC, Vivaldi).

2

o Do not use light type with thin strokes (e.g. `Vladimir script, pristina`).

II. Type Colour

Type colour refers to the text colour

- Use black type on white background or white print on dark background.
- Restrict coloured text to titles, headings or highlighted material.

III. Contrast

It is essential to create documents with high contrast between text colour and background especially for persons using screen readers or suffering from dyslexia. Achieving a suitable colour palette that will work for everyone is difficult, so the following guidelines should serve as a benchmark to achieve at least 70% contrast.

Tips for Achieving High Colour Contrast

- Use high contrast colours for text and background. For example black and white or dark blue text on a white background or white text on a black or dark blue background.
- Emphasize the lightness of light colours and darkness of dark colours when used next to each other to enhance contrast.
- Do not use colours which are similar in lightness or darkness next to each other. For example light green and light red may not be easy to distinguish for some people with low vision.
- Do not use similar colours together. For example, red, orange and green together will be a little difficult to distinguish.
- Do not use achromatic colours (black, white, grey) against colours of similar lightness or darkness. For example dark grey against black.
- Do not use text on an image or patterned background as letters and shapes will be harder to identify.

Good Colour Combinations to Help Achieve 70% Colour Contrast

- Light colours against black background.
- Dark colours against white background.
- Light or pale colours against very dark colours background. For example, light pink or yellow against dark blue.
- Black text on a solid background.

Poor Colour Combinations

- Pairing red and green together because it is difficult to distinguish the two.
- Using dark colours against black background.
- Pairing pastel colours together or against grey or white.

- Pairing light or pale colours together.
- Using jarring complimentary colours like orange and blue together.

IV. Letter Spacing
This refers to the spacing between letters
- Make sure the space between letters is wide enough, so the letters and words are easily recognizable.

V. Margins
- Make margins wide enough with sufficient space for binding, hole-punching etc.
- A line of text should be no wider than 6" to 6.5" across an 8.5" size page.

VI. Leading
This refers to the space between lines of text.
- It is recommended to use the '**format**' and '**paragraph**' functions to set the '**before** and **after line spacing**' at '**auto**', and set the '**line spacing**' at single or 1.5 point size.

VII. Text Alignment
Left alignment is recommended for all paragraph text because the start of each sentence is consistent, which makes it easier to read.
- Left align all paragraph text.
- Do not centre text as it can be difficult to find the start of the sentence using magnification devices.
- Do not align text to the right because it makes it difficult to find the start of the sentence.
- Do not justify text because it produces gaps between words on a line, posing a challenge for persons using magnification devices.

VIII. Paragraph and Document Headings
Headings allow readers to easily navigate a document by directing readers to the content or paragraph it references.
- Headings should be clear and distinct.
- Place headings in close proximity to the paragraph it references, so they remain associated.
- Keep headings with corresponding paragraphs left aligned.

IX. Columns
Columns can create challenges for persons with visual disabilities, especially those using screen readers and other scanning technologies. If it is necessary to use columns in a document, ensure the following guidelines are maintained.

- To make columns, use the column function to create standard column width and spacing.
- Keep corresponding sentences and paragraphs together within columns, wherever possible.

X. Paper Finish & Watermarks
- Use a matte or non-glossy finish to cut down on glare.
- Avoid watermarks or complicated background designs.

XI. Clear Design and Simplicity
The key to clear design is simplicity. Essentially, less is more. Too much colour, shapes and design is distracting especially for persons with visual disabilities.
- Use distinctive colour, sizes and shapes on the cover page of flyers, brochures, presentation documents and reports to make them easier to tell apart from the rest of the document.

XII. Images
Images can be used in a document to convey meaning, ideas or add a creative touch for sighted people. Images can also facilitate the ease of comprehension for people suffering from dyslexia or visual learners. When using images, be mindful of the following guidelines.
- Use images only if it conveys a meaning or adds relevance to the document.
- Always include text describing the image (preferable next to the image or below the image) for persons using screen readers.
- Do not overlay text on images, wherever possible.

XIII. Promotional Material
- Promotional material should be designed in a size that ensures easy readability. The following outlines the **minimum acceptable sizes** for promotional materials, but staff should make an effort to use the largest size whenever possible.
    1. The minimum size for the City of Hamilton logo (measured from the height of the symbol):
        a) Pens/key chains: 9.5 mm
        b) Any other City of Hamilton promotional material: 15mm
    2. The minimum font size for City of Hamilton promotional material such as pens/key chains is Arial 8
    3. The minimum font size for any other printed publications is Arial 12 or Verdana 12.

Guidelines for Creating Accessible Documents

- **Creating Accessible Word Documents**
  To create accessible Microsoft Word documents that can be viewed using accessible devices such as screen readers, please view the document titled "**Preparing Accessible Microsoft Word Documents**" on Enet under policies and procedures.

- **Creating Accessible PDF Documents**
  To create accessible PDF documents, view the document titled "**Accessible PDF Instructions**" on Enet under policies and procedures.
  *Please note: Not all City computers are equipped with Adobe software which is required to create accessible PDFs. Contact your supervisor or IS for authorization to download Adobe software onto your computer, if necessary.

6

Summary TIPS for producing Clear, Accessible and Large Print documents

- Use clear font (e.g Arial, Verdana) instead of stylized fonts (e.g. *Monotyoe Corsiva,* `Mistral`)for minutes, agendas, documents, printed publication except, where it is absolutely necessary to accommodate design and formatting purposes.

- Do not use *italics*, because it is difficult to read for persons with various types of disabilities.

- Use **bold** text to a minimum, only to highlight a few words, if necessary (e.g headings, title etc).

- Keep text layout simple and consistent.

- Do not use CAPITALIZED text throughout sentences.

- Do not underline words or phrases throughout documents as it could impact the clarity of documents.

- Left align all body text and paragraphs because it is easy to read with visual disabilities.

- Do not use centered and justified text alignment because is difficult to read for persons with visual disabilities.

- Maintain at least 70% contrast between text and background.

- Be consistent with text and font styles to make the document accessible for persons with disabilities.

- Maintain distinct spacing between texts.

- Use descriptive text for images to convey meaning.

- Create all Microsoft Word and PDF documents using the guidelines for creating accessible documents.