

REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: MARCH 29, 2016

FROM: Strategy, Policy and Communications Department

DATE: March 14, 2016

SUBJECT: Accessibility Advisory Committee 2015 Accomplishments and Proposed 2016 Work Plan

LOCATION: Town wide

WARD: Town wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the 2015 accomplishments and the proposed 2016 work plan for the Accessibility Advisory Committee be received.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Every year, following Council's established process, the town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) submits an annual report that includes accomplishments from the previous year and a work plan for the current year
- In 2015, a new AAC terms of reference was approved and six members appointed to the committee
- The AAC provided input to staff on over 25 initiatives in 2015 to help improve and promote accessibility for residents of all abilities
- In addition, the AAC provided feedback to town staff on site plan applications, as required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA)
- In 2016, the committee will focus on participating in consultations on the newest AODA requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard and providing feedback on key town initiatives. The AAC will work with staff to promote awareness about accessibility and celebrate inclusion in the town

BACKGROUND:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a statutory committee that advises Town Council on accessibility initiatives to address requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The goal of the AODA

is to identify, prevent and remove barriers to make Ontario accessible by 2025. The town works with the AAC to promote awareness and celebrate inclusion.

Committee mandate and deliverables

The AAC meets on the second Thursday of each month to advise Town Council on improving and promoting accessibility for residents of all abilities in key areas of daily living including town programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

The committee accomplishes its goal by:

- Providing feedback on the town's multi-year accessibility plan and annual updates on accessibility initiatives to comply with the requirements of the AODA
- Participating in consultation requirements under the AODA
- Providing feedback on site plan applications as described in section 41 of the *Planning Act*, as determined by the town
- Creating an annual AAC work plan and working to meet the objectives
- Promoting awareness of accessibility and inclusion
- Seeking support and guidance where necessary from town departments and other stakeholders

The committee is not responsible for:

- Accessibility issues related to private facilities or businesses
- Administration or implementation of the requirements of the AODA
- Administrative matters, including direction to staff

The AAC is supported by:

- Accessibility Coordinator, Strategy, Policy and Communications
- Committee Coordinator, Clerk's
- Urban Design Manager, Planning Services
- Manager of Planning and Accessible Services, Oakville Transit

This report highlights the AAC's 2015 accomplishments and provides details of its proposed 2016 work plan (Appendix A).

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

In 2015, a new AAC terms of reference was approved and six members appointed to the committee. A comprehensive orientation program for the new members was conducted in April by staff from the town's accessibility steering committee. The orientation program outlined the role of the committee and the town's commitment to accessibility for residents of all abilities. Staff reviewed the legislative framework around accessibility, how the town has met all provincial requirements to-date and areas where the town went above and beyond the requirements of the legislation.

At each meeting, a sign language interpreter is provided for members with hearing loss and laptops are provided for members with vision loss to enable increased magnification of presentations to any extent needed. All presentations to the committee are provided electronically and hard copy in Arial font, 22-point minimum.

The AAC held nine meetings in 2015, its accomplishments are highlighted in four key areas below.

1. Town initiatives and consultations

The AAC received over 25 presentations on town initiatives and projects in 2015. One of the key initiatives was an update to the town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2012-2017 to include over 180 requirements that apply to the town under the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Establishing a multi-year accessibility plan is required under the AODA and it acts as a roadmap to implement provincial requirements and timeframes for compliance. The committee was consulted on these updates to the plan and staff provided a status update on initiatives taken to meet each requirement as well as departmental actions that went over and above the legislated requirements. Feedback was incorporated into the plan which was approved by Council on December 14, 2015.

The AAC also received presentations and provided feedback on the following key initiatives:

- Accessibility plan for 2015 municipal by-election
- Downtown Cultural Hub Draft Master Plan
- On-demand accessible taxis
- Kiosk pilot project
- Design of Public Spaces procedure
- Planning accessible meetings procedure and checklist
- Trail design on Bronte Road underpass
- Renovations for Glen Abbey Youth Centre, Iroquois Ridge Community Centre fitness change rooms and Forster Park washrooms
- Council direction regarding transit service area
- 2016 Oakville Transit Annual Accessibility Plan

Updates on provincial accessibility initiatives were also received by the committee including:

- Proposed amendments to the AODA's Customer Service Standard
- Response to second legislative review of the AODA
- 10-Year Accessibility Action Plan
- Accessibility certification program

2. Design of Public Spaces Standard consultations

The Design of Public Spaces Standard sets out design requirements for public spaces not covered by the Ontario Building Code. Public spaces covered by the standard include recreational trails and beach access routes, outdoor eating areas and play spaces, exterior paths of travel (sidewalks, ramps, stairs, etc.), accessible parking, service counters and maintenance. The standard requires the town to consult the AAC on design solutions that meet the needs of people of all abilities. Two consultations were held in 2015:

- a. **Outdoor play spaces** – consultation focused on the needs of children and caregivers with disabilities when developing outdoor playgrounds. Staff outlined that playgrounds are installed as part of new subdivisions or upgraded as part of the town's capital replacement or annual rehabilitation programs. The classification of parks for the town's inventory outlines accessible components attributed for: community parks, neighbourhood parks, and parkettes or village squares. Staff provided a list of accessible components for each type; for example in all new playground installations in a community park accessible swing seats, transition steps in high contrast colours, musical play panels at ground level, braille panels with the alphabet, and concrete transition ramp to the playground surface are included. The committee had questions about playground surfacing and staff provided information on the two types (engineered wood fiber and rubberized surfacing) noting the ongoing review of surfacing to ensure equality across the community.
- b. **Accessible on-street parking** – consultation focused on the need, design and location of accessible on-street parking spaces. Staff currently review these spaces on an area-wide basis or individual requests. The request process involves review of a number of factors such as determining closest existing accessible space, traffic flow, ease of entry into the space, grading, size and location of requested space, and integration with other amenities including proximity to a rest area, ramp and/or cross walk, and placement of site furniture. Staff highlighted the town's goal is to have uniform and distinct spaces and to standardize the location and number of accessible spaces per block in commercial areas to ensure easy identification of accessible parking spaces. The committee had feedback about how accessible pavement markings are oriented on the street, and possibility of using the brighter blue colour on the pavement markings for easier identification. With respect to municipal enforcement, staff indicated that an accessible space must have a pavement marking with the international symbol of access and a permanently affixed posted sign, and enforcement may take place on both public and private property.

3. Site plan review and standards

In 2015, a new site plan working group was established with dedicated staff support from the urban design team, Planning Services department. The working group provided feedback on site plan applications described in section 41 of the *Planning Act*, as required under the AODA. The working group will continue to provide feedback on site plan applications and share information with the full committee through regular updates.

4. Community awareness and collaboration

Last year, the AAC presented its 2014 annual accomplishments report and 2015 proposed work plan to Council, promoting awareness about accessibility and celebrating inclusion in the town. Staff and committee members participated in and promoted several events to increase community awareness and collaboration including:

Pan Am Torch Relay - the committee hosted a booth at the event, promoting programs and services the town has to offer people of all abilities. A sign interpreter was present at the booth and materials were provided in large print with colour contrast.

AODA 10th Anniversary - the AAC attended a celebration marking the 10th anniversary of the introduction of the AODA. The event was hosted by AMCTO and the Government of Ontario highlighting municipal success stories, community champions and promoting accessibility in our communities.

Halton Community Resource Fair - the committee hosted a booth and promoted programs and services the town has to offer people of all abilities in the community. The fair featured local agencies showcasing their programs and services for people of all ages and stages in life. The AAC and town has participated in this event for over five years.

National Access Awareness Week and International Day for Persons with Disabilities - the town, with the AAC, promoted awareness of these observances through mayoral proclamations, the town's website, social media and digital screens at town facilities. These observances encourage the community to consider barriers people with disabilities face and to find ways to help remove them.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

The AAC's accomplishments and proposed work plan were approved by the committee at its meeting on March 10, 2016. The AAC was advised that a report would be presented to the Administrative Services Committee on March 29, 2016.

(B) FINANCIAL

Staff resources to assist advisory committees are addressed in departmental budgets.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

The Accessibility Advisory Committee addresses accessibility initiatives which may impact on all departments within the corporation.

(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- provide outstanding service to our residents and businesses
- be accountable in everything we do
- enhance our social environment
- have accessible programs/services
- be the most livable town in Canada

(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

The issues addressed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee support a livable community that is accessible for all.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – proposed 2016 AAC work plan

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