

To: Susan Cassell  
City Clerk

From: Tim Higgins  
Accessibility Coordinator

Copy: Chief Administrative Officer  
Directors

Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee  
- 2020 Year End Report and 2021 Proposed Work Plan  
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The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is pleased to present its 2020 Year End Report and 2021 Proposed Work Plan.

### **2020 Year End Report**

The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee's activities and achievements in 2020 are described below.

### **Meetings & Membership**

- The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee maintained its full authorized complement of 10, highly-qualified, diverse members throughout 2020. As well, Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade provided a highly-qualified and engaged representative as a non-voting member of the Committee.
- In 2020 the AAC held nine regular meetings. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Committee meetings rapidly adapted to a virtual format. To avoid a livestreaming scheduling conflict with meetings of the Committee of Adjustment, the AAC meetings were rescheduled to the third Wednesday of each month from the second Wednesday of each month.
- Guests of the Committee frequently included Pickering community members, representatives of community partner organizations, and representatives of the staff of the City of Pickering.
- During 2020, in recognition of his Paralympic sporting skills and accomplishments, AAC member Anthony Lue was designated a "carded athlete", entitling him to receive training funds from the government. Notwithstanding the pandemic, Mr. Lue, continued his training for qualifiers for the Canadian team to attend the Tokyo Paralympic Games. Mr. Lue invited Committee members to follow him and his journey at [anthonylue.com](http://anthonylue.com) or on Instagram and Facebook.
- During 2020, AAC member Peter Bashaw completed a 6-week certificate course on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

## **Awareness Activities**

- The AAC has continued to monitor local, provincial, national and international emerging accessibility legislation, regulations, policies, best practices, products and services and considered adaptations for use in Pickering. As examples, AAC members have kept abreast of emerging accessibility policies and adaptive technologies:
  - The Committee reviewed and discussed issues raised in former Lieutenant Governor David Onley's report to the Ontario Government on the AODA's implementation progress.
  - Through the AAC's staff representative the Committee has liaised, on an ongoing basis and over a broad range of accessibility topics, with members of the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP).
  - AAC member John McLellan presented information on two-level residential elevators to the Committee.
  - Member Peter Bashaw shared information with the Committee on new-wave wheelchairs that allow independent movement on staircases, among other advanced features; and,
  - Members raised concerns during Committee meetings regarding high prices for adaptive devices.
- The AAC developed a YouTube video featuring AAC member Anthony Lue to contribute to Pickering's virtual Canada Day celebration.

## **Policies, Standards & Implementation**

- AAC members submitted a report on the Committee's 2019 accessibility accomplishments and its 2020 Work Plan to Pickering City Council on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Following consultation with the AAC and the Accessibility Core Staff Team and other City staff, the City of Pickering filed its required 2019 compliance report with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (the Regulator) indicating that the City of Pickering was fully AODA-compliant.
- On an ongoing basis, the AAC has monitored progress with respect to Pickering's Five-Year Accessibility Plan for 2016-2020, and the planning for the 2021-2025 Five-Year Accessibility Plan.
- As an ongoing concern, the AAC has held various discussions and hosted guest presentations to explore issues and identify potential solutions with respect to residential accessibility and housing affordability in Pickering and Durham Region. Noting a general reluctance by developers to fully embrace the building of accessible housing and communities, the AAC has continuously sought to identify strategies and opportunities to create additional accessible/affordable residential housing options and inventory. For example, AAC member Peter Bashaw took the initiative to e-mail Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP, regarding the lack of affordable/accessible housing, and to propose government encouragement for college and university-level architecture programs to increase curriculum requirements relating to accessibility.
- AAC member Daniel Hughes has provided periodic updates to the AAC with respect to Axess Condos Pickering to be developed at the intersection of Pickering Parkway and Valley Farm Road.

- The AAC fostered/promoted/supported submissions for local, regional, provincial and federal awards and grants to profile Pickering’s accessibility achievements and commitment. For example,
  - AAC members identified several potential nominees for Pickering’s Civic Accessibility Award for Disability Issues and for the Regional Accessibility Award;
  - the AAC supported a grant submission to JumpStart for a \$20,000 renovation of the tot pool at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex; and,
  - the AAC supported Pickering’s Museum Village submission for an Ontario Inclusive Community Grant to provide accessibility ramps.
- AAC member David Wysocki provided an in-depth presentation to the Committee on Listening Accessibility: Captioning. He noted that captioning can benefit a broad spectrum of Pickering’s residents: the aging population; persons with hearing loss, attention related issues, learning disabilities or other audio/visual–perceptual challenges; residents for whom English is a second language; as well as the general population.
- The AAC has maintained an ongoing awareness of the City’s steps to ensure website accessibility amid heightened AODA Information and Communication standards. By January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, all public websites and web content must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, meaning that public facing websites must be navigable and their content accessible. The AAC has been kept informed of the significant support from Pickering’s Senior Management Team and Staff to ensure website compliance. As well, the AAC has monitored the City’s collaborations with Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), Durham Region, and Durham tier-two municipalities to identify website best practices.
- The AAC reviewed and provided advice on a new Accessibility Checklist for Pickering Events.
- The AAC reviewed and provided advice on a new “Respect the Space” brochure to encourage residents and visitors to respect Pickering’s accessible parking spaces.
- Representatives of Participation House Durham attended the AAC meeting to discuss its range of programs to help individuals with disabilities acquire work skills and to successfully pursue employment.
- The AAC maintained an awareness of the City’s new staff and volunteer training process related to accessibility.
- The AAC received several presentations from City staff, and provided advice regarding accessibility related capital projects. The AAC has monitored and provided accessibility advice regarding walkway reconstructions, sidewalk retrofits, multi-use paths, installation of tactile plates at intersections, curb cuts, traffic light timing, snow clearing, parks, playgrounds, special event accessible parking, etc. For example,
  - Accessibility Core Staff Team (ACST) member Vince Plouffe, Manager, Facilities Capital Projects, appeared before the Committee to provide an update and consult on the City’s Signage & Wayfinding Program. The intent of the program is to enable individuals of all abilities to navigate efficiently through City of Pickering buildings.
  - Accessibility Core Staff Team (ACST) member Jeffrey Beaton, Coordinator, Parks Infrastructure, updated the AAC regarding work on asset management, and the rehabilitation City parks and trails. The Committee discussed the value of the City’s tranquil parks and trails amid the stress-laden pandemic, and rising frequency of mental illness in the community.

- The AAC expressed concern over community traffic light timings, noting instances where insufficient time was provided to ensure people with disabilities could cross intersections safely.

### **Consultation & Collaboration**

- At the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 City Council Meeting, Council approved Report CS 08-20, to submit the Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement to the Province and to set in motion the City of Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee's Service & Support Animal Initiative (SSAI). Pursuant to AAC discussions in November 2018, a sub-committee of the AAC was established to develop information regarding the current rules and best practices with respect to service and support animals, and related issues, particularly as they impact municipal operations and Durham businesses. The SSAI plan calls for hosting an Innovation Lab, development and publication of a Monograph, and a launch event to rollout findings of the Task Group study. Leadership of the Initiative has been provided by AAC member David Wysocki and the Task Group, a sub-committee of the AAC. David Wysocki has provided regular updates to the AAC on the SSAI progress.
- Representatives of the Pickering Football Club (PFC) attended the AAC to discuss their new research project, funded by an Ontario Trillium Grant, which aims to investigate barriers associated with recreational and sport opportunities in Pickering and Durham Region. The PFC has identified a number of community groups that encounter barriers and remain isolated from recreational opportunities. These groups include newcomers, seniors, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, and indigenous populations.
- The AAC has continued to collaborate and consult with regional and provincial accessibility professionals and advocates, such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), to stay abreast of emerging accessibility issues and successful practices. The AAC has monitored Regional AAC minutes and selectively participated in/attended virtual Regional, Provincial, Federal and U.S. learning and networking opportunities related to accessibility.
- The AAC has monitored the emergence of the Rick Hansen Foundation's accessibility certification program. During 2020, AAC member Anthony Lue has pursued Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) certification and kept the Committee up-to-date on the RHF program and his progress. Mr. Lue attended his first Rick Hansen ratings as part of an Ontario pilot project, and shared challenges and barriers he experienced with the AAC.
- AAC member Saima Fatima has participated in the Durham Region Accessibility Awareness Group meetings to identify opportunities for collaboration and information sharing with the AAC.
- The AAC has frequently expressed its interest in collaborating with the Durham Region, Durham Region Transit (DRT) and Metrolinx to identify opportunities to improve transit accessibility and customer service for people with disabilities.
  - Abdul Macci, Pickering's representative on the Durham Region Transit (DRT) Advisory Committee attended the AAC to discuss a range of transit accessibility issues and to establish a basis for ongoing collaboration with the AAC to remove transit accessibility barriers and improve transit customer service for people with disabilities.
  - Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services and Michael Binetti, Supervisor, Service Design, Durham Region Transit (DRT) joined the AAC and presented information on DRT's COVID-19 response. They discussed ridership

impacts, resumption of fare collection, and provided an overview of the multi-phase service plan, including a revised network and level of service frequency to respond to changes in ridership. Information on the DRT app (DRT on-demand) was also shared and Mr. Binetti presented draft social equity guidelines which include priorities, communities of focus, as well as guidelines and goals and obtained feedback from the AAC.

- The AAC continued to engage with DRT regarding concerns with delays for specialized transit customers travelling to/from the GTA.
- AAC member Daniel Hughes continued his appointment to the Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee representing Durham Region.
- The AAC hosted representatives of the CNIB who presented information on:
  - the CNIB Eyes Forward program which provides support to seniors who are experiencing limitations in conducting their everyday activities, and plans to open a location in Pickering in September, 2020.
  - a program to donate cell phones to seniors and install a network of beacons to accommodate the navigation needs of people with visual impairments.
- The AAC continued to liaise and consult with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Parks Canada, and Altona Forest representatives to consider innovative methods of providing access to outdoor spaces. For example,
  - Parks Canada representatives consulted the AAC on accessibility features of trails at the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) such as trail head signage to inform visitors about trail difficulty. Discussions ensued regarding specialized transit for seniors, rest areas, power stations to charge wheelchairs/scooters, and accommodations for people with visual/cognitive impairments.
  - TRCA's plans for the Claremont Nature Centre were reviewed by the AAC.
- The AAC supported, promoted and attended the virtual 2020 Durham Regional Police Children's Games for disabled youth between the ages of 5 and 18. The City of Pickering has actively partnered with Durham Regional Police Services, Grandview Children's Centre, the March of Dimes and other community partners since 1985 to host this annual inclusive event.
- In December 2020 the AAC members met virtually with Pickering's Accessibility Core Staff Team for the AAC's annual festive Meet & Greet to team-build, share information and to network.
- Through its Ajax Pickering Board of Trade representative, John McLellan, the AAC regularly exchanged accessibility information and issues with the local business community.
- Through its staff representative, the AAC liaised and collaborated with the City's Age Friendly initiative.

### **Site Plan Application Reviews**

- The AAC continued to work in collaboration with City planning staff through an ongoing site plan application review process to encourage the proactive integration of accessibility considerations into City developments. In 2020, the AAC reviewed and provided accessibility advice with respect to the following site plans:
  - Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre at 2580 Brock Road - This facility will be a treatment and learning centre for children with disabilities.
  - Site Plan Review - S01/20 - TriBro (movie) Studios to be located on the Durham Live property immediately southwest of the Pickering Casino Resort complex.

- Fire Station #1 Headquarters to be located at the northwest corner of Brock Road and Zents Drive in Duffin Heights
  - Accessibility Core Staff Team (ACST) member Vince Plouffe, Manager, Facilities Capital Projects observed to the AAC that the Fire Station project illustrates that accessible design is no longer a secondary consideration or an afterthought, rather it is widely accepted that accessible design constitutes good practice.
- Mattamy Homes - S 07/20 - 1033 Reflection Place
- Fieldgate Homes sales pavilion at Taunton and Brock Roads
- Marshall Homes (Finch) Ltd. at Finch Avenue and Rosebank Road
- S04/11(R20), Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, 2235 Brock Rd

## **2021 Proposed Work Plan**

The AAC's 2021 plans, as well as its accomplishments to April 2021, are noted below:

### **Meetings & Membership**

- To maintain its momentum, the AAC aims to maintain its full authorized complement of 10, highly-qualified, diverse members throughout 2021, as well as its Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade representative. To this end, three new members of the Committee were appointed by Council in March, 2021 replacing retiring members.
- By way of orientation for the new AAC members and as a review for the other members, the staff representative to the AAC provided the Committee an overview of Ontario's legal framework for accessibility, including highlights of: the Ontario Human Rights Code; the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA); and, the Ontario Building Code.
- So far in 2021, the Accessibility Advisory Committee has held four virtual meetings, on the third Wednesday of each month. A further six meetings are scheduled to the end of the year.
- Throughout 2021, guests of the Committee will frequently include Pickering community members, representatives of community partner organizations, and representatives of the staff of the City of Pickering.
- John McLellan, Ajax Pickering Board of Trade's AAC representative was recognized in 2021 with a City of Pickering Civic Award for community leadership in accessibility.

### **Awareness Activities**

In 2021, the AAC will continue to:

- monitor local, provincial, national and international emerging accessibility legislation, regulations, policies, best practices, products and services and consider relevant adaptations for use in Pickering;
- foster/promote/support submissions for municipal, regional, and provincial awards and grants to profile Pickering's accessibility investments and achievements; and
- play an active role in Pickering's community events and celebrations such as Canada Day.

### **Policies, Standards & Implementation**

- Margaret Kish, Principal Planner, Policy attended the AAC to provide an update on the City of Pickering Housing Strategy and to consult with AAC members. Among a number of matters discussed, the Committee shared information on:
  - a general shortage of accessible housing;
  - the findings of David C. Onley’s Report regarding the independent review of the implementation and enforcement of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*; and,
  - standards regarding accessible residential design as outlined in the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*.
- Accessibility Core Staff Team member Scott Booker, Manager, Capital Projects & Infrastructure attended the Committee and:
  - presented the approved Accessibility Capital Budget to the Committee and provided highlights of projects.
  - discussed concerns of the AAC members regarding increasing vandalism of accessibility and other infrastructure in community parks, on trails and in the Altona Forest.
- Pickering’s Five-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025 is currently under development and will:
  - feature a summary of the Accessibility Capital Budget for 2021 to 2025;
  - be informed by an environmental scan referencing:
    - input from the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Pickering Accessibility Core Staff Team;
    - the 2019 report and recommendations of David C. Onley to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility on the future of the AODA;
    - results of Pickering’s Service and Supports Animals Initiative (SSAI);
    - the recent Abilities Centre research study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with disabilities;
    - Pickering’s Housing Strategy;
    - the Pickering Football Club’s recent study of inclusive recreation programs;
    - recent federal and provincial accessibility legislation, regulations, policies and successful practices; and
    - a scan of plans, issues and successful practices from sources such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) and other Durham Region municipalities.
  - Be informed by consultation with persons with disabilities in the City of Pickering. This consultation may leverage “Bang the Table” software to effectively engage the community.
- The AAC will review and provide input to the City of Pickering’s 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report to the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility scheduled for submission to the Regulator by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

In 2021, the AAC will continue to:

- maintain an ongoing awareness of the City’s steps to ensure website accessibility commensurate with heightened (WCAG 2.0 Level AA) AODA Information and Communication Standards.
- explore issues and identify potential solutions with respect to residential accessibility and affordability in Pickering and Durham Region.

- monitor and provide accessibility advice regarding walkway reconstructions, sidewalk retrofits, new multi-use paths, installation of tactile plates at intersections, curb cuts, traffic light timing, parks, playgrounds, special event accessible parking, etc.
- foster/promote/support submissions for local, regional, provincial and federal awards and grants to profile Pickering's accessibility achievements and commitment.
- monitor the City's staff and volunteer training process related to accessibility.

### **Consultation & Collaboration**

- Omar McDadi from Parks Canada Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) and Larry Noonan, Altona Forest Stewardship Committee attended the AAC to consult on the Rouge Beach Improvements Project noting that a key objective of the project is to improve RNUP accessibility and inclusion. Following on from this presentation, the AAC provided a letter to Parks Canada indicating the Committee's support for the Rouge Beach Improvement Project.
- By way of update, AAC member Daniel Hughes informed the Committee that site plans for the Axxess Condominium project had been submitted to the City.
- Margaret Parkhill of the IBI Group attended the Committee to share information and consult the Committee regarding accessibility of the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Project.

During 2021, the AAC will continue to:

- Collaborate and consult with Regional and Provincial accessibility professionals and advocates, such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP), to stay abreast of emerging accessibility issues and successful practices.
- Promote awareness of, and advise on, information and resources for people with disabilities needing help during pandemic including:
  - emergency supports;
  - virtual management of anxiety and mental health; and
  - human rights of people with disabilities.
- Promote awareness of, and advise on City/Regional COVID-19 initiatives such as Pickering's partnership with Grandview Kids to provide respite programs.
- Monitor local, regional, provincial, federal and U.S. learning and networking opportunities related to accessibility.
- Monitor the Rick Hansen Foundation's accessibility programs, the Durham Region Accessibility Awareness Group, the CNIB, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Parks Canada as well as other accessibility advocates.
- Collaborate with Durham Region Transit (DRT) and Metrolinx to improve accessible customer service.
- Provide support, promote and attend the 2021 Annual Durham Regional Police Children's Games.
- Collaborate with Pickering's Accessibility Core Staff Team, the Ajax Pickering Board of Trade, the City's Age Friendly initiative and others.

### **Site Plan Application Reviews**

- The AAC will continue to work in collaboration with City planning staff through an ongoing site plan application review process to encourage the proactive integration of accessibility considerations into City development. In 2021 to date, the AAC reviewed and provided accessibility advice with respect to the following site plans:
  - The Jerry Coughlan Health & Wellness Centre located at 2580 Brock Road
    - This facility will be a treatment and learning center for children with disabilities, generously sponsored by recently deceased Pickering builder, Jerry Coughlan. AAC advice has aimed to help the Coughlan Centre achieve recognition as a center of excellence in terms of accessibility design befitting its sponsor.
  - S01/20 - TriBro Studios located on the Durham Live property adjacent to the Pickering Casino Resort complex
  - S04/20 - Shell Canada at the intersection of Kingston Rd. and Whites Rd.
  - S11/18 - Metropia
  - S12/02 (R20) 1400 Squires Beach Rd.
  - S 02/19 9004807 Canada Inc. – Stonepay Phase II
  - Pickering Heritage Community Centre at the Pickering Museum Village
  - S 03/21, R & K Pahal, Carousel Drive
  - S03/87 (R21) - Joriki Holdings Inc. 885 Sandy Beach Road

Submitted on behalf of the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee members:

- Peter Bashaw, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- Bianca D’Souza, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (to 2020)
- Saima Fatima, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- Donna Holmes, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (to 2020)
- Daniel Hughes, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- Glenn Lang, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- Tammy Lyle-Gravlev, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (from 2021)
- Anthony Lue, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- John McLellan, Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade Representative
- Phyllis Milton, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (from 2021)
- Anna Taverna, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (from 2021)
- Megan Thorpe Ross, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member
- Susan Wilkinson, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member (to 2020)
- David Wysocki, Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee Member

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