

To: Mayor Ashe
Members of Council

May 23, 2023

From: Tim Higgins
Accessibility Coordinator

Copy: Chief Administrative Officer
Director, Community Services
Division Head, Culture and Community Programming

Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee
- 2022 Year End Report and 2023 Work Plan
File: A-1410-007-23

The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is pleased to present its 2022 Year End Report and 2023 proposed Work Plan.

2022 Year End Report

The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee's activities and achievements in 2022 are described below.

Meetings & Membership

- **Members** - Council appointments to the Committee expired in October 2022 at the time of the 2022 municipal election. A refreshed slate of 10 members was appointed by Council resolution on December 13, 2022 following the 2022 municipal election. With a view to maintaining momentum, the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee maintained its full authorized complement of 10, highly-qualified, diverse members throughout 2022 and again into 2023 following Council's new appointments. As well, the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade provided a highly-qualified and engaged representative as a non-voting member of the Committee.
- **Meetings** - In 2022, the AAC held six virtual meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. In light of the 2023 municipal elections process, Committee meetings were not held during October, November and December, 2022.
- **Guests** – Guests of the Committee frequently included Pickering community stakeholders, representatives of community partner organizations, and staff representatives of the City.
- **Reporting** - The 2021 Year End Report and the 2022 Proposed Work Plan having been endorsed by the AAC, were approved at the May 24, 2022 Council Meeting and posted to Pickering.ca.

- AAC members garnered the following recognitions in 2022:
 - Peter Bashaw was presented with the Durham Regional Accessibility Award;
 - John McLellan was nominated for a David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility; and,
 - David Wysocki was recognized with a City of Pickering Civic Award for community leadership in accessibility and also received the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Award for his work on accessibility.

Awareness Activities

- The AAC has continued to monitor local, provincial, national and international emerging accessibility legislation, regulations, policies, best practices, products and services and has considered adaptations for use in Pickering. For example:
 - The AAC has continued to liaise, collaborate and consult with regional and provincial accessibility professionals and advocates, such as the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) on an ongoing basis and over a broad range of accessibility topics to stay abreast of emerging accessibility issues and successful practices.
 - AAC members have selectively participated in/attended virtual Regional, Provincial, and Federal learning and networking opportunities related to accessibility.
- The AAC fostered/promoted/supported submissions for municipal, regional, and provincial awards and grants to profile Pickering’s accessibility investments and achievements.
- Canada Day - The AAC delivered a “Tranquility Tent” exhibit at Pickering’s 2022 Canada Day celebrations, to offer a cool, shaded, relaxing space for people to unwind. The AAC knows the pandemic has had a severe impact on mental health, anxiety and social isolation. The tent provided a calm, quiet place for people to visit, participate in mindfulness, yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, music therapy and similar activities. Autism Ontario and Resources for Exceptional Children Durham collaborated with the AAC on programming for this event and AMICA and the Pickering Football Club provided support and resources.
- Pickering Football Club (PFC) – AAC member and PFC representative T. Lyle-Gravlev provided an update pertaining to the reconstruction of the Pickering Soccer Club dome including the addition of a fifth soccer field and multi-use hard-floor space estimating completion of construction for March 2023. The Committee discussed the creative programming that takes place at the Pickering Soccer Club for people with wide-ranging disabilities, as well as the transportation challenges getting to/from the facility.
- The AAC continued to promote awareness of, and advise on, information and resources for people with disabilities needing help during the pandemic including: emergency supports; virtual management of anxiety and mental health; and human rights of people with disabilities.

Policies, Standards & Implementation

- T. Higgins provided updates to the AAC on the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) Desk Audit that examined selected City policies and procedures for AODA compliance, and

examined policies and procedures pertaining to training, feedback, and individual accommodation plans. In response to MSAA recommendations, policy amendments were approved by Council in April 2022. Revised policies were posted to pickering.ca and enhanced accessibility training and recordkeeping processes for staff, volunteers and others were implemented. As well, the 2017, 2019 and 2021 Accessibility Compliance Reports were posted to the City's website.

- On an ongoing basis, the AAC monitored progress with respect to Pickering's Five Year Accessibility Plan for 2021-2025. For example, the AAC discussed highlights of the Five Year Accessibility Plan (2021-2025) in relation to the findings of the National Disability Survey Report, highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 including worsening mental health, greater social isolation, deteriorated peer relationships, and decreased physical activity among people with disabilities.
- L. Narraway and D. Wysocki provided an overview of the City's Service and Support Animal Initiative and outlined what the City Staff training might look like. As well, D. Wysocki provided responses on an ongoing basis to periodic Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) questions regarding Service and Support Animals.
- The AAC provided accessibility advice to the City 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.

Consultation & Collaboration

- Community advocate A. Omar discussed accessibility concerns including: pedestrian crossings, sidewalk conditions for wheelchair/scooter users; pool lifts and ramps; accessibility of private businesses; and accessibility of Esplanade Park and City events.
- Monitored Accessibility Core Staff Team (ACST) meetings in 2022 addressing a broad range of accessibility matters: for example,
 - To enhance ACST effectiveness, ACST Terms of Reference were revised and approved by Council September 19th; and,
 - ACST membership expanded to more fully represent City Departments.
- Accessible/Affordable Housing - As an ongoing concern, the AAC has held various discussions and hosted various 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.
- DRPS 38th Annual Children's Games - The AAC supported and attended the drive-through 2022 Durham Regional Police Children's Games for disabled youth between the ages of 5 and 18 held on October 29th, 2022. The City of Pickering has actively partnered with Durham

Regional Police Services, Grandview Children's Centre, and other community partners since 1985 to host this annual, inclusive event.

- Community Safety & Well Being - M. Crumpton provided an overview of the City's Safety and Wellbeing Plan that is currently under development. She outlined the history of the project, the priorities and risk factors being considered, and the existing feedback collected from the Community Services department. Committee members provided feedback.
- Business - Through its Ajax Pickering Board of Trade representative, J. McLellan, the AAC regularly exchanged accessibility information and collaborated with Durham businesses.
- Age-Friendly Initiative - the AAC liaised and collaborated with the City's Age Friendly initiative and supported the 55+ Aging Well Together, Information & Active Living Fair.
- Developed grant submission which proposed to offer an accessibility internship program in partnership with six City Departments, Durham College and Ontario Tech University.
- Provided letters of support for various City grant proposals relating to the Pickering Museum and cultural projects.
- Promoted awareness of, and advised on, information and resources for people with disabilities needing help during the pandemic including:
 - emergency supports;
 - management of anxiety and mental health; and
 - human rights of people with disabilities.
- Playgrounds - A. Mostert, Manager Landscape & Parks Development, provided a presentation to the AAC regarding the City's Playground Investment Strategy/Options and the City's efforts to refurbish City playgrounds and enhance their accessibility.
- Waterfront Park & Trail - A. Mostert, Manager Landscape & Parks Development, provided a presentation to the AAC regarding the Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park and Beachfront Park projects and received the Committee's input.

LEAD Canada - Abilities Centre representatives M. Walker and Y. Brown presented information to the AAC regarding the LEAD Canada Program funded by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA). LEAD (Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery) is a methodology to help governments, public and private sector organizations collaboratively define and embed inclusion and accessibility into strategic planning, daily operations, program environments, and organizational culture. The LEAD process helps organizations to identify opportunities to improve and enhance inclusion and accessibility at all organizational levels. A collaboration of the City of Pickering and LEAD was initiated.

- Culture - J. St. Amant, Coordinator, Cultural Services presented information to the AAC regarding the Main Street Grant Application Community Activator Project. The AAC provided

accessibility input and a letter of support for the Main Street Grant Application Community Activator Project.

- West Shore Skate Spot Community Survey – Members discussed a program that exists in Toronto that provides skateboarding opportunities for children living with disabilities, and how best practices of the Toronto program could inform the West Shore Community Centre Skate Spot project. D. Wysocki provided members information with respect to the West Shore Skate Spot Community Survey as an opportunity to provide feedback on the new skate park being proposed at West Shore.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - J. San Antonio, Senior Advisor, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion spoke to the AAC about Black History Month, as well as resources the City is making available to acknowledge and recognize Black History, and also discussed the concept of diverse identities and intersectionality. AAC member A. Lue spoke to his lived experience as a Black para-athlete, and the barriers he has experienced and overcome.
- The AAC partnered with Pickering Animal Services to implement Service Support Animals Initiative (SSAI) training recommendations:
 - delivered SSAI executive briefing April 27th
 - delivered SSAI presentation to City’s Age Friendly team
- Liaised on an ongoing basis with:
 - The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA), the “Regulator”;
 - The Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP);
 - Durham Region’s Accessibility Coordinators;
 - Pickering’s Age Friendly stakeholders; and,
 - Pickering’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team.
- Provided ongoing consultation to Pickering residents, staff and other accessibility stakeholders on a wide range of accessibility issues and topics such as integration manual, universal washrooms, access to recreation and mental health.
- Participated in 18th Annual Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Forum November 22, 2022.
- Inspected CHDRC for para sport tennis suitability
- Integrated Sustainable Design Standards - C. Whitaker and G. McGregor provided a presentation that reviewed the overview of the City’s Sustainability Design Standards.

During 2022, the AAC continued to:

- monitor the Accessibility Standards Canada, 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)/Metrolinx to improve customer service and reviewed a transit case summary for Hejka v. the Regional Municipality of Durham.

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 2022, the AAC reviewed and provided accessibility advice with respect to the following site plans:
 - S01/22 - Tribute at Liverpool
 - S07/21 - Sandy Beach Rd.
 - S03/22 - 2540 Brock Rd.
 - S04/22 - 1635 Palmer's Sawmill Rd.
 - S 02/22 - Universal City Phase 4 & 5
 - S 05/22 - SBB Industrial (Seaton) GP Inc.
 - S 06/22 - Universal City Phase 7
 - S 03/92 - Mount Pleasant Group
- Connectivity – following on from the site plan review of the Tribute development at Liverpool, AAC member D. Wysocki provided a presentation to the AAC on the concept of urban connectivity. Members discussed:
 - destinations members travel to in the community and their transportation modes;
 - barriers encountered as a pedestrian (e.g. lack of sidewalks, unsafe surfaces etc.);
 - how communities have been designed in a disconnected and car-centric fashion;
 - experiences using public transit; and,
 - how points of interest and neighborhoods in Pickering can be better connected.
- Presentation by Stephanie Brown, Hearing Assistive Technology Group re: Removing Communication Barriers within Older Adult Centres - S. Brown, Hearing Assistive Technology Group provided the Committee an overview of hearing loop technology.
- Claremont Library Accessible Washroom - J. Flowers provided an overview of the Tomlinson Community Centre library renovations. She shared information regarding the proposed extended access program and public accessible bathroom for the site. V. Plouffe provided an overview of the space and the proposed features of the accessible washroom.

2023 Proposed Work Plan

The AAC's 2023 plans, as well as its accomplishments to April 2023, are noted below:

Meetings & Membership

- Members - The AAC aims to maintain its full authorized complement of 10, highly-qualified, diverse members throughout 2023, as well as its Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade representative.

- Meetings - So far in 2023 the AAC has held four virtual meetings, on the third Wednesday of each month. A further six meetings are scheduled.
- Guests - Throughout 2023, guests of the Committee will frequently include Pickering community advocates, representatives of community partner organizations, and representatives of the staff of the City of Pickering.
- Training/orientation - By way of training/orientation for the new AAC members and as a review for continuing members, the staff representative to the AAC provided the Committee with a continuous learning curriculum to be delivered to Members at future meetings to provide knowledge and insights regarding key accessibility, inclusion and Human Rights topics. Specific training delivered at 2023 AAC meetings to April has included:
 - 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;
 - the role of Accessibility Coordinator at the City of Pickering;
 - the role of the Committee in identifying gaps and providing advice to the City to ensure optimal compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA);
 - relaying of advice to the Accessibility Core Team of City staff;
 - reviewing site plans;
 - the Committee’s Terms of Reference; and,
 - City policies governing Committees of Council.

Awareness Activities

- Canada Day - The AAC is planning a second annual “Tranquility Tent” area at Pickering’s 2023 Canada Day celebrations, to offer a cool, shaded, relaxing space for people to unwind. The AAC realizes that the pandemic has had severe impact on mental health, anxiety, social isolation in our community. The idea of the Tranquility Tent is to have a calm, quiet place for people to visit, participate in mindfulness, yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, music therapy and similar calming activities.

In 2023, the AAC will continue to:

- promote awareness of, and advise on, information and resources for people with disabilities needing help during the pandemic including:
 - emergency supports;
 - management of anxiety and mental health; and
 - human rights of people with disabilities.
- monitor local, regional, provincial, federal and U.S. accessibility networking opportunities;
- 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 and the DRPS Children's Games.

Policies, Standards & Implementation

- Reporting - Following consultation with the AAC and the Accessibility Core Staff Team and other City staff, the City of Pickering will file its required 2023 Accessibility Compliance report with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility indicating Pickering's degree of AODA compliance.
- In 2023, the AAC will continue to:
 - monitor the City's steps to ensure website accessibility commensurate with heightened (WCAG 2.0 Level AA) AODA Information and Communication Standards;
 - 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.; and,
 - monitor the City's staff and volunteer training process related to accessibility.
- Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Centre (CHDRC) – Change Room Emergency Buttons
T. Higgins provided an overview of an issue that emerged regarding concerns with the renovations at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Centre (CHDRC), specifically the addition of emergency buttons in the facility's dressing areas. He informed the Committee that the City responded to these concerns by having additional emergency buttons/alarms installed in these areas.
- S. Douglas-Murray attended the Committee and provided introductory remarks and led a discussion regarding the Memorandum from the Deputy Clerk Re: Amendments to Boards, Committees and Taskforces Staff Liaison, Chair, and Vice Chair Roles - Council Membership. The Accessibility Advisory Committee found Council representation on the Committee advisable and was receptive to amending the AAC's Terms of Reference to include 2 Members of Council, one of which will be a Regional Councillor, and one of which will be a City Councillor.
- A. MacGillivray provided an overview of the Terms of Reference review process being undertaken by Legislative Services and requested feedback from the Committee regarding the existing Terms of Reference.
- T. Higgins provided an overview of the ongoing discussions with the Abilities Centre to improve the City's accessibility processes and services. He informed the Committee regarding the tentative dates for the upcoming Improvement Planning meetings being March 30, 2023, April 19, 2023 and April 26, 2023.

- 2023 Budget - T. Higgins informed the Committee of the City's Budget process that was underway and opportunities to provide input/feedback. He further explained how accessibility is tracked through the City's budget process and how capital accessibility projects are outlined in the City's Five Year Accessibility Plan.
- AAC Document Sharing - A. MacGillivray solicited feedback from the Committee regarding what kind of solution they may be looking for in terms of collaboration and document sharing. He briefly explained the use of ShareFile by the City's Committee of Adjustment and how they use the platform to organize and store information for reference.
- AAC Meeting Captioning - A. MacGillivray explained that meeting captioning has been considered in the past and that there have been conversations with IT to explore what is possible presently with the City's meeting software and YouTube. The Committee provided feedback around this feature, speaking to its importance for those that are hard of hearing, and that while accuracy may be an issue, it would certainly provide a heightened general understanding of what is being discussed in meetings.

Consultation & Collaboration

- Playgrounds and Parks - A. Mostert, Manager Landscape & Parks Development, provided a presentation to the AAC regarding the City's efforts to refurbish City playgrounds and enhance their accessibility. A. Mostert also provided information regarding the Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park project and his use of Pickering's Let's Talk platform.
- EnAbling Change Grant Submission regarding Accessibility Internships – The City's proposal for six (6) internship opportunities with a term of six (6) months for Durham College and Ontario Tech University students was discussed and a letter of support was approved.
- AODA 4th Independent Review – the Committee endorsed recommendations provided by the City of Pickering to the Province of Ontario regarding:
 - policies to prioritize employment of persons living with disabilities;
 - policies to encourage development of accessible affordable housing;
 - standards regarding accessible recreation programming;
 - policy gaps around service and support animals;
 - accessible transit standards; and,
 - formal recognition of the network of provincial accessibility coordinators (ONAP).

During 2023, 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;
- monitor the Accessibility Standards Canada as well as other accessibility advocates;
- collaborate with Durham Region Transit (DRT) and Metrolinx to improve customer service;

- provide support and attend the 2023 Annual Durham Regional Police Children’s Games; and,
- 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. In 2023 to date, the AAC has reviewed and provided accessibility advice with respect to the following site plan applications:
 - S 08/22, a proposed sales office for residential development in Seaton;
 - S 16/22, auto sales, showroom, and repair facility at 1695 Bayly St.;
 - S 17/22, a public elementary school at 2570 Tillings Rd.; and,
 - S21/80(R23), Vaughan Willard Public School (DDSB).

Priorities for 2023

- Election - A refreshed slate of ten Committee members was appointed by the newly elected Council in early 2023. Training, orientation and Committee teambuilding will be a priority throughout 2023.
- Monitoring - On an ongoing basis, the AAC will monitor progress with respect to Pickering’s Five Year Accessibility Plan for 2021-2025.

Submitted on behalf of the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee members:

- Dave Currie
- Saima Fatima
- Brian Ferguson
- Ayesha Khan
- Tammy Lyle-Gravlev
- John McLellan, Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade Representative
- Phyllis Milton
- Reza Rizvi
- Carla Rudberg-Chin
- Sam Snyders
- Megan Thorpe Ross

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