

Memorandum

Date: June 21, 2022

To: Members of Council

From: Patrick Trafford, Deputy Clerk, Records & Information Services

Subject: Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2021

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The purpose of the AODA is to benefit all Ontarians by implementing standards to achieve accessibility across the province by January 1, 2025. Pursuant to the legislation, this requires actively preventing and removing barriers for those with disabilities to ensure access to goods, services, facilities, employment, premises and buildings.

To promote and work towards achieving accessibility in Caledon, the 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) was adopted by the Town. The MYAP outlines various strategies to improve accessibility, consistent with the AODA. The purpose of this memo is to provide a status update on the progress achieved towards the goals of the MYAP in 2021 and highlight Town initiatives to promote accessibility within the community.

Updated Corporate Accessibility Policy

As reported within the update for 2020, the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility conducted an accessibility audit of the Town's compliance with the AODA between November 2020 and March 2021. Staff worked with a Senior Compliance Analyst at the Ministry to complete this comprehensive review which determined that the Town is largely successful in meeting its obligations under the AODA. Only minor amendments to the Corporate Accessibility Policy were required.

The revised Corporate Accessibility Policy was adopted by Council on March 30, 2021. It includes an updated statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of those with disabilities. Further, it addresses accessibility regulations added since the original policy was developed in 2013. The adoption of the new policy has been successful as no issues have resulted throughout 2021. This achieved a goal within the 2018-2022 MYAP to regularly review the Corporate Accessibility Policy. The updated version will assist in guiding the development of a new MYAP in 2023, discussed further below.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Review Process

As a result of COVID-19, the normal meeting schedule of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was interrupted. With the ability to conduct remote meetings, the AAC was relaunched in 2021 with the initial meeting taking place in June. The AAC has continued to meet since being relaunched with sessions held in September 2021 and February 2022.

To facilitate reviews of Site Plans and Plans of Subdivision, as required by the AODA, a new process was developed to circulate materials to the Members of the AAC between meetings. When a new plan is received by staff, a review is conducted to compile accessibility comments for the applicant. Members of the AAC are canvassed for at least two volunteers to participate in each review cycle. The plans and staff

comments are circulated to those Members for consideration. The Members of the AAC frequently provide additional advice and comments which are then incorporated into the responses provided to the applicant to be addressed in the next submission of the Site Plan or Plan of Subdivision. At each of the subsequent meetings of the AAC staff then provide an update to ensure all Members are aware of the comments received and status of the plans going forward.

A goal within the 2018-2022 MYAP is to continue consultation with the AAC to comply with the Design of Public Space Standards within the AODA including for public spaces, exterior paths of travel and accessible parking. Each of these items is carefully reviewed within the circulated development plans. Over the past year, the legislatively required review process has been successfully adapted to ensure that valuable feedback from the AAC continues to be included, thereby furthering the goal in the MYAP.

Treat Accessibly Halloween Event

In the early summer of 2021, the Town was contacted by the organizer of a grassroots initiative called Treat Accessibly. The goal of the movement is to promote ways to make Halloween inclusive and accessible for children with disabilities. For example, one method advocated by the initiative is to hand out candy at the ends of driveways to avoid any front door stairs which can create a barrier. Further, in partnership with the private sector, lawn signs and flags were made available through the Treat Accessibly initiative for homes across the GTA to indicate that they are accessible on Halloween.

At the September 13, 2021 meeting of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the organizer of Treat Accessibly provided a presentation to Members on the initiative and promoted awareness of Treat Accessibly Day on October 7, 2021. Further, the organizer was invited to the September 28 meeting of Council where a subsequent presentation was provided. As a result, the Town participated in building awareness of Treat Accessibly by distributing flags at several Town facilities throughout the community as well as promoting the initiative through various Town social media channels. Further, staff coordinated and funded a road closure permit to support a Member of the AAC who organized a local Treat Accessibly event within the community.

Conclusion and Next Steps

In compliance with the AODA, this Annual Accessibility Status Report has outlined action taken throughout 2021 to further advance the Town's 2018-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as well as highlight initiatives the Town supported to promote accessibility in the community. The Town remains committed to accessibility and creating a community that is inclusive for persons of all abilities.

In the 2022-2026 term of Council beginning in November, recruitment for the new Accessibility Advisory Committee will be completed. Therefore, in 2023 the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be updated and brought forward to the new Committee for consideration and consultation. As required by the AODA, this annual report will be posted on the Town's website.