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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Finance and Administration Committee
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2024-A-1
Date: February 13, 2024

Subject:

The Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2023 Annual Report, 2024 Workplan and Revised Terms of Reference.

Recommendation:

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That the CAO's Report # 2024-A-1 be received for information as The Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2023 Annual Report; and
 - B) That the Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2024 Workplan be approved; and
 - C) That the Regional Municipality of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee's revised Terms of reference be approved.
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Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Workplan to the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 In June 2005, the Ontario Legislature passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA builds on the previous Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and both acts are still in effect.
- 2.2 Municipalities are required to have AACs which advise Council by:

- a. Providing advice on the preparation of accessibility reports and plans required under the AODA.
 - b. Advising Council on the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards.
 - c. Reviewing site plans and drawings for buildings and facilities.
- 2.3 In addition, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) the AAC is active in the following areas:
- a. Committee education
 - b. Communication and outreach
- 2.4 The ToR also requires that the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer prepare an annual report to Committee and Council.

3. Durham Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee

- 3.1 Legislation stipulates that AACs must ensure most of its members are persons with disabilities. Ten community members plus one Regional Councilor comprise the AAC.

4. Durham Region AAC 2023 Achievements

4.1 Events

- a. Each year Accessibility Awards are presented to champions within the Region. These awards acknowledge a person, business or an organization that have made considerable effort to incorporate accessibility into their operations or everyday life. Nominations are sought from each of the eight area municipalities. In 2023, awards were presented to:

Town of Ajax - Community Living Ajax-Pickering-Whitby Supported Employment Program

Community Living Ajax-Pickering and Whitby (CLAPW) is dedicated to supporting people with developmental disabilities so they can live full lives and be effectively, safely, and inclusively supported in their own communities. Community Living has been providing professional employment support to the community since 1985.

The CLAPW Supported Employment Program is an excellent program that works to remove some of the barriers to employment inclusion that many people with disabilities face and the Town of Ajax Accessibility Advisory Committee encourages recognition of these efforts through receipt of the Region of Durham Accessibility Award.

Township of Brock St. Joseph's Parish, Reverend Oswin Fernandes

St. Joseph's Parish recently underwent a 1-million-dollar renovation to bring accessibility to its parishioners and visitors. This renovation includes large accessible entrance doors that leads to an accessible elevator taking visitors up to the chapel. Previously the only

entrance to the chapel was via two large staircases. The renovation also includes an accessible washroom, as well as a new reception hall area with a modern kitchen. These renovations are not only beautiful but have incorporated the needs of those with limited mobility to allow for ease of access for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers.

Municipality of Clarington – Newcastle Griddle

Mr. Karan Sinna, owner of the Newcastle Griddle and his team are committed to providing heartfelt service and friendly greetings as they serve delicious food within an inviting dining atmosphere. They provide exceptional customer service and inclusion for people with disabilities. Their commitment to creating a community meeting place where everyone is welcome is evident in their recent upgrades which include an accessible patio, ramp and accessible washroom.

City of Oshawa – David McKay

The Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee nominated David McKay for a 2023 Region of Durham Accessibility Award to recognize him for his accessibility leadership in Oshawa. David joined the Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2013 and quickly became an active member of the committee by serving as the Chair of the Communication Subcommittee for several years. During David's tenure as Chair of the Communication Committee, he was instrumental in the creation of a series of social media messages that increased accessibility awareness. David has lived in Oshawa for 20 years and has played a key role in the employment of people with disabilities through his work as an Employment Counsellor with the Durham Region Unemployment Help Centre.

City of Pickering – Tammy Lyle-Gravlev

As a long-time representative of the Pickering Football Club and a long-time member of the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee, Tammy has generously provided unique accessibility expertise and energetic leadership to the Pickering and Durham communities.

Township of Scugog – The Piano Inn Café

Christy Stone-Curry, Owner of The Piano Inn and Café in Port Perry and her team are dedicated to ensuring their patrons can easily access their welcoming café environment. They have achieved this through the following recent installations to their historic building: a front doorbell to notify staff when patrons require assistance, entrance and bathroom handrails, a Braille menu, and accessible chairs. It's remarkable that they consider such a broad range of needs in their community and create a place that welcomes everyone. They ensure patrons of all abilities can access their goods and services.

Township of Uxbridge –Precious Minds Support Services (charitable organization) Executive Director, Chas Harding

Precious Minds (PM) has been serving our North Durham Community since 1999. Precious Minds founded their charity on CARE, SUPPORT and HOPE for children, teens and young adults and their families. A core goal for PM s to “promote community inclusion, enhanced community engagement, mutual respect and understanding”. They have achieved this by providing innovative, evidence-based programs that are inclusive

and fulfilling. The “Skills for Life - Adult Day Program” has been engaging young adults in activities that will build independent living skills, prepare for work in the community and engage in recreational pursuits.

Precious Minds is a charitable organization that relies solely on grants and donations to run the programs. The organization has continued to identify needs and gaps in services and programs for children, teens and adults with disabilities.

Town of Whitby – Melly’s Place Ellen McRae, Director

For their work to create a culture of inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through a workplace, café and market that recognizes their talents and inspires the community. For their support of advancing opportunities and empowering the dreams of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working to train adults to work in the food service and retail industry with the goal of getting jobs and making a proper wage.”

Durham Region –Doreen Hume-McKenna

The Durham Region AAC nominated Doreen Hume-McKenna who retired from the AAC after a 4-year term and worked out of the Back Door Mission as a Regional Housing Coordinator with Durham Mental Health Services. Doreen initiated and distributed weekly the COVID-19 Service Update to a wide range of service partners in Durham Region throughout the pandemic. Her work focused on accessible outreach and collaboration to meet the unique and complex needs of people who live with mental illness, addictions or street engaged and living unsheltered in Durham Region.

Education – throughout 2023, the AAC received the following presentations for information:

- a. Allison Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, re: Project SEARCH
- b. Patricia Hines, Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Region of Durham staff Census.
- c. Dr. Matthew Stein, Ontario Tech University, and Danielle Pineda, Policy Advisor, participating electronically, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Durham Community Evaluation Research Program – Case Study on Newcomers with Disabilities.
- d. David Dunn, Manager, Rapid Transit Office, participating electronically, and Jack Phelan, Supervisor, Service Scheduling, participating electronically, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Simcoe Street Rapid Transit Project and Future Sites.
- e. Jacek Sochacki, Program Manager, Facilities Engineering, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to The Durham Standard.

5. 2024 Workplan for the Durham Region AAC

An AAC Workplan (Attachment #1) is developed annually to outline the scope and activities of the AAC. It includes necessary activities for meeting requirements of both the ODA and AODA. The workplan includes:

- a. Providing advice and reviewing annually, the Accessibility Report created by the staff liaison in the CAO's office.
- b. Reviewing site plans for new builds and extensive renovations to existing buildings that the Region owns and/or operates to ensure accessibility has been incorporated in the design.
- c. Forming of subcommittees in the areas of site plan review, traffic/road improvements, accessibility awards, equitable employment, education and communication and ad hoc committees as required throughout the year.
- d. Education development continues throughout the year, as required, for AAC members, Councillors, and staff. Education sessions take place when changes to the AODA standards occur, by agencies who serve the disability community and by staff who present initiatives from departments where feedback from this committee is required.
- e. Communicating work the AAC does annually to Regional Council and staff through AAC minutes of meetings, the staff e-newsletter, newspaper articles, social media messaging when appropriate, and meetings with other AACs within the Region.
- f. Presentation of Durham AAC Accessibility Awards annually to recognize individuals, services and/or businesses that have championed, achieved and/or embraced accessibility in each of our local area municipalities.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The AAC will continue to meet legislative obligations of both the ODA and AODA. Activities and consultation with staff will be important elements of their work. Their expertise, experience and dedication are of great value to the accessibility work undertaken at the Region of Durham. Advice given to Regional Council and staff will continue to be an integral piece to the Region's identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: Accessibility Advisory Committee Workplan

Attachment #2: Accessibility Advisory Committee Revised Terms of Reference

Prepared by: Natalie Dash, Accessibility Coordinator, at 905-668-7711, ext. 2009.

Approved by: Allison Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, at 905-668-7711, ext. 3893.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Workplan 2024

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
Facilities and Site Plan Review	Reviewing site plans for new builds and extensive renovations to existing buildings that the Region owns and/or operates to ensure accessibility has been incorporated in the design.	Referenced Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility Advisory committee. The committee's role and responsibilities Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility advisory committee ontario.ca	Year round
Outreach and Communications	Presentation of Durham AAC Accessibility Awards annually to recognize individuals, services and/or businesses that have championed, achieved and/or embraced accessibility in each of our local area municipalities.	Referenced Durham Regional AAC Workplan 2023	September 2024
Advise Council	How to implement the province's accessibility standards as it applies to the Region of Durham. Support and provide feedback for your municipality's accessibility compliance reports. Provide feedback and recommendations on accessible design criteria in terms of any Region project proposals/strategy. Initiatives, projects, or reviews related to accessibility such as LEAD or Region's Equity Audit Report.	Referenced Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees: Learn how municipalities must work with their accessibility advisory committees to identify and break down barriers for people with disabilities in their communities Municipal	Year round

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
		Accessibility Advisory Committees ontario.ca	
Committee Education and Development	Education development continues throughout the year, as required, for AAC members, Councillors, and staff. Education sessions take place when changes to the AODA standards occur, by agencies who serve the disability community and by staff who present initiatives from departments where feedback from this committee is required.	Referenced Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees: Learn how municipalities must work with their accessibility advisory committees to identify and break down barriers for people with disabilities in their communities Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees ontario.ca	Year round
Subcommittees	Forming of subcommittees in the areas such as, site plan review, traffic/road improvements, accessibility awards, equitable employment, education, communication, and ad hoc committees as required throughout the year.	Referenced Guide to serving on a municipal Accessibility Advisory committee. The committee's role and responsibilities Guide to serving on a municipal accessibility advisory committee ontario.ca	Ongoing

Priority Areas	Proposed Activities	Comments	Timelines
Accessibility Report	Providing advice and reviewing annually, the Accessibility Report created by the staff liaison in the DEI Division of the office of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO).	Referenced Durham Regional AAC Workplan 2023	Annually
Advocacy	<p>Advocate for changes to policies, procedures and systems that will increase accessibility and inclusion in the Region of Durham.</p> <p>Collaborative efforts between the regional AAC and local municipal AAC's regarding scope of areas that we advise/consult.</p>	Ensure alignment with AODA, Accessible Canada Act, and Durham Region Multi-year Accessibility Plan	Ongoing



Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

November 2023

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide advice to Regional Council on the preparation, implementation and review of its annual accessibility plan and other accessibility related issues within the Region to reduce and prevent barriers to inclusion and promote full participation for all Durham Region residents and visitors.

2. Mandate

- 2.1 The Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a volunteer Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA 2001) and these Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference provide for the AAC to advise and assist the Region in the development of an annual accessibility plan(s), Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and for the AAC to be proactive and advise on matters identified on its own initiative, provided it satisfies the requirements under the ODA 2001.
- 2.3 Issues, barriers and concerns faced by people with disabilities may be referred to the AAC from Regional Council. The AAC will report to Regional Council through the Finance and Administration Committee, under the purview of the Chief Administrative Officer, on substantive matters as determined by the requirements of the ODA 2001, and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

3. Scope of activities

- 3.1 The scope of the AAC will include the following activities:
 - a) participating in the annual development of the Region's Accessibility Plan(s) which is intended to improve the quality of life for all Regional citizens, including people with disabilities;
 - b) advising the Region on the implementation and effectiveness of its annual Accessibility Plan(s) to ensure that it addresses the identification, removal and prevention of physical and non-physical barriers to people with disabilities in the Regional by-laws, and all its policies, programs, practices and services;

- c) selecting and reviewing in a timely manner the site plans and drawings for new development, described in section 41 of The Planning Act;
- d) Reviewing and monitoring websites, forms, documents and any relevant content produced for public consumption;
- e) reviewing and monitoring existing and proposed procurement policies of the Region for the purpose of providing advice with respect to the accessibility for people with disabilities to the goods or services being procured; and
- f) reviewing access for people with disabilities to buildings, structures and premises (or parts thereof) that the Region purchases, constructs, significantly renovates, leases or funds.
- g) The AAC will also have sub-committees/working groups responsible for specific business areas or projects decided by the committee, such as education and transit.

4. Composition

- 4.1 The AAC will comprise up to eleven voting members in total. The majority of members shall be people with a disability as defined by the ODA 2001. Voluntary disclosure of a person's social identity, including disability, gender, family status and ethnicity or race is included in the application form. An eleven-person committee may typically be comprised as follows:
- a) At least six members shall be persons with disabilities. These Committee members shall represent diverse identities and different types of visible and invisible disabilities noted in the ODA 2001;
 - b) Five members shall be persons who may not have a disability. These members shall be comprised of:
 - one member of Regional Council,
 - two citizen members of which one member shall be a family member of a disabled person, and
 - two members who are professionals from the stakeholder community.
- 4.2 Membership shall be a 4-year term corresponding with the term of Regional Council. However, citizen members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed by Regional Council. If a member chooses to resign, the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with Section 5.
- 4.3 At the discretion of the AAC, non-attendance at three consecutive meetings will be sufficient grounds for replacement. Appointments may be revoked at any time at the discretion of Council.

- 4.4 The AAC shall strive to maintain a high level of relevant technical expertise and competence in disability issues within its membership.
- 4.5 The AAC may establish subcommittees and ad hoc working groups as deemed necessary to address specific issues; noting that secretariat services will not be provided to these teams/groups. These subcommittees/working groups shall draw upon members from the AAC as well as staff support/outside resources as deemed necessary. The Chair of a subcommittee/working group shall be a voting member of the AAC.

The purpose of a subcommittee/working group(?) shall be to make recommendations on a particular issue to the AAC or to assist with the implementation of an assigned project.

5. Membership selection

- 5.1 Durham Region will place an advertisement utilizing a broad range of media including local and community specific media, social media, local municipalities, Regional information kiosks, facilities and community agencies that represent people with disabilities. The advertisement will seek individuals with diverse identities interested in volunteering for appointment to the AAC.
- 5.2 The CAO's office shall contact appropriate agencies and community organizations and invite individuals to volunteer for the AAC. Interested individuals will be required to submit an application form to the Regional Clerk and provide a brief resume outlining their interest and qualifications.
- 5.3 The CAO's office will review the applications received. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by a panel of Regional staff in the CAO's office and will recommend individuals for appointment to the AAC. Members shall be chosen for their special expertise, experience, dedication and commitment to the mandate of the Committee. Preference will be given to people who have lived experience and knowledge of accessibility matters, including accessibility legislation and disability awareness.
- 5.4 All members of the AAC shall be appointed by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.
- 5.5 Regional Council shall appoint a representative to the AAC from the members of the Finance and Administration Committee.
- 5.6 In the case of a vacancy, the approach described in Section 5 will generally be followed.
- 5.7 Any resignations will be submitted to the Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Committee Clerk.

6. Officers

- 6.1 A chair and a vice-chair will be elected annually by the membership of the AAC. The Committee Clerk will chair the inaugural AAC meeting for the voting process.

7. Support services

- 7.1 The Region's CAO's Office liaison or the Accessibility Coordinator shall serve as staff liaison to the AAC. The staff liaison will provide administrative, procedural and technical support to the AAC and will utilize the staff support group noted in Section 7.2 as deemed necessary.
- 7.2 If required, a staff group of accessibility champions/ambassadors/allies will provide support to the AAC on an as needed basis.
- 7.3 The staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator will co-ordinate all requests for advice from the AAC, through meeting agendas. AAC responses to such requests shall be coordinated by the staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator through the Finance and Administration Committee to Regional Council.
- 7.4 The Region will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a budget to cover the operational expenses of the AAC and this budget will be administered by the CAO's office.
- 7.5 The staff liaison or Accessibility Coordinator may circulate content to members through alternative means (email or on MS Teams) in order to obtain informal feedback for that particular item, especially those items that are time-sensitive in nature.

8. Meetings

- 8.1 The AAC will meet six times per year (January, March, May, June, September and November) in a hybrid or virtual meeting format using a designated Regional meeting room or platform. The AAC will establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting, taking into account the business needs and the schedule of Regional Committees/Council. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. Accessibility Advisory Meetings shall be scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 3:00pm. This schedule may be reviewed as needed.
- 8.2 Quorum for AAC meetings shall be a majority of the sitting AAC members. The committee shall wait 15 minutes from the scheduled start time for quorum at which point the meeting will be adjourned and/or rescheduled if quorum is not met.

- 8.3 All meetings will be open to the public. As a formal Advisory Committee to the Region, the AAC is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference.
- 8.4 An agenda package, including accessible meeting materials and previous meeting minutes will be shared with the committee members one week in advance of the meeting date.
- 8.5 The Committee may participate in meetings with the Accessibility Advisory Committees (AACs) of surrounding area municipalities at a frequency mutually established by all committees. The purpose of such meetings shall be to share best practices and enhance cross-border collaboration.
- 8.6 Members shall be responsible for reviewing all materials sent by the CAO's Office or Committee Chair and respond in a timely manner to ensure the business of the Committee is not delayed. All communication should always be provided in an accessible format.
- 8.7 Community and organizational members of the AAC will be compensated for their time and work. Each member will be paid \$75.00 per meeting (attendance is a requirement for this compensation) and an hourly rate of \$25.00 for travel time and work outside of the scheduled meetings that has been pre-approved by Durham's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Reimbursement will occur twice a year, in May and in November, up to a maximum of \$600 per member per year.

9. Delegations at committee meetings

- 9.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the AAC as a delegate must submit a request to the staff liaison in the CAO's office/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk, advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak. All requests for delegations must be received at least two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure that the delegation is included in the agenda. Any person wishing to address the AAC as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution.
- 9.2 Only one spokesperson at a time per group/organization shall be permitted to speak on a matter. Individuals shall be limited to speak for no more than 10 minutes. A five-minute extension to speak may be decided, without debate, by a majority of committee members present.
- 9.3 Members shall be permitted to ask questions of delegate(s) but shall not make statements to enter into debate with the delegate(s).

10. Minutes and agenda

- 10.1 The minutes of each AAC meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Council as part of the Council Information Package prepared by the Regional Clerk.
- 10.2 The AAC agendas will be prepared by the staff liaison/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk, with input from the AAC chair or vice-chair, and AAC members. Agendas will be distributed the week prior to upcoming meetings.
- 10.3 Staff liaisons and/or those staff and committee members with a forecasted agenda item shall submit agenda content to the staff liaison/Accessibility Coordinator and/or the Legislative Services Division/Committee Clerk by no later than noon, two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

11. Committee resolutions

- 11.1 The AAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are 'carried' if supported by a majority unless otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference or Regional Council Rules of Procedure. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the AAC. The committee shall not reconsider a previous decision, unless directed to so by Council.

12. Annual reports and workplan

- 12.1 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the AAC for consideration and approval by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council. To avoid duplication, the AAC shall ensure that the workplan is coordinated with other disability initiatives in the Region.
- 12.2 An annual review of the AAC by the Chief Administrative Officer, on behalf of Regional Council, will be completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure continued improvements.

13. Rules of Order

- 13.1 Members are encouraged to ask questions engage in discussion and share feedback following presentations and delegations. The Committee Chair shall maintain order and decorum during the meeting and decide the order of

questions.

- 13.2 Members shall indicate to the Chair their desire to speak and wait to be acknowledged by the Chair before speaking.
- 13.3 A conflict of interest may arise for Committee members when their personal business interests conflict with the duties and decisions of the Committee. Municipal conflict of interest requirements as defined by the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act will apply to the Committee.
- 13.4 Members who have declared an interest on any matter may not move, participate in the discussion, or vote on the matter or attempt to influence others on the matter.
- 13.5 Any member asked to speak publicly to an organization or professional association as a member of the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee must notify the CAO's Office liaison or Accessibility Coordinator prior to accepting the request.
- 13.6 Any member who is approached by the media will refer all inquiries to the Region's CAO's Office liaison or Accessibility Coordinator who will defer to the Communications and Engagement department.
- 13.7 Members shall not approach the media on behalf of the Committee. If they are expressing personal views these must be clearly stated as such and that they do not represent the views of the Committee. As active members of the AAC, personal views expressed publicly cannot be contradictory to the mission and mandate of the AAC.
- 13.8 Any member will not use their personal email, social media accounts or other modes of communication to represent the opinions or policies of the Region.