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## **The Regional Municipality of Durham**

### **MINUTES**

#### **ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, May 27, 2025**

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:03 PM. Electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

#### **1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment**

K. Smith read the following land acknowledgement:

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the growing Inuit communities and large Métis communities and here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Present: D. Campbell\*, Whitby  
P. Chandwani\*, Whitby, Vice-Chair  
W. Henshall\*, Whitby, left the meeting at 2:22 PM  
M. Jaffer\*, Whitby  
M. Lloyd\*, Oshawa  
Councillor McDougall\*, attended the meeting at 2:18 PM  
J. McEwen\*, Clarington, Chair, left the meeting at 2:59 PM  
L. Saumur\*, Pickering  
J. Stevenson, Oshawa  
L. Williams\*, Pickering  
**\*denotes members of the committee participating electronically**

Absent: S. Sones, Whitby

#### **Staff**

Present: F. Amin, Administrative Assistant, Durham Region Transit

D. Daniels, Program Manager, Community Engagement & Change Management  
N. Dash, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer  
P. Hines, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
K. Walfall, DRT Ambassador, Durham Region Transit

**3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by M. Lloyd, Seconded by D. Campbell,  
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on  
Tuesday, March 25, 2025, be adopted.  
CARRIED

**5. Welcome and Introduction of New Members**

J. McEwen, Chair, welcomed new members, M. Jaffer, L. Saumur, and J. Stevenson to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

N. Dash invited members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to introduce themselves. The members introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their background.

**6. Presentations**

A) Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist, Town of Ajax, re: Launching the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program in Ajax

Sarah Moore, Legislative Specialist, Town of Ajax, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Launching the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program in Ajax.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?
- Why it's important
- From Implementation ...
- ... to Public Launch
- Request Process
- Q1 Summary
- Considerations
- Don't Underestimate the internal impact
- A Quiet Moment of Understanding at Town Hall

- Looking Ahead
- Expenses to date

S. Moore responded to questions with regards to whether the presentation can be provided to the lower tier municipalities and other service provider organizations in Durham Region in order to spread awareness of the program.

W. Henshall requested the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program be included in the October education event.

B) Deborah Daniels, Program Manager, Community Engagement & Change Management, and Kamika Walfall, DRT Ambassador, Durham Region Transit, re: Implementing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program at DRT

Deborah Daniels, Program Manager, Community Engagement & Change Management, and Kamika Walfall, DRT Ambassador, Durham Region Transit, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Implementing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program at DRT.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- We've joined The Sunflower
- What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?
- DRT has Launched the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program
- See Our Sunflower
- Impact to Date
- Community Impact
- How did DRT get here?
- How did DRT Join and Launch the Program?
- Success Factors
- Challenges
- Next Steps

D. Daniels and K. Walfall responded to questions with regards to which media outlet wrote an article on the program; and availability of different symbols to identify a person with a hidden disability, and if a choice is offered.

Discussion ensued with regards to rolling out the program at the Regional level; and how the program could be used to acknowledge someone with site loss.

P. Hines advised that Service Durham is currently in discussions about rolling out the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program at all public facing Regional facilities.

## **7. Discussion Items**

### **A) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)**

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N. Dash advised that a survey on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan received 230 responses and that staff have held focus groups to gather thoughts and feedback on the Plan. The next step will be taking the information gathered and look at the strengths and challenges of the Plan to take to senior leadership for a workshop. The last step will be to develop a strategic framework that will outline visions, strategic directions and feedback from specific players. N. Dash also advised that the Equity Audit conducted in 2023 provided 86 recommendations to Durham Region with 3 relating to accessibility and 20 relating to accommodations. Staff are ensuring these are taken into consideration in the development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

### **B) Annual AAC Awards**

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P. Hines advised that additional discussions have taken place regarding the nomination process for the AAC Awards, and the proposal of having municipalities nominate three accessibility champions from each municipality, and the AAC selecting a winner. P. Hines stated there was some concern from the local municipalities with being able to select three nominees, so staff are now proposing to invite the public to provide nominees to be considered during the selection process. P. Hines requested feedback from Committee members on the new proposed nomination process as well as having a member from each of the local Accessibility Advisory Committees to be part of the review committee.

Discussion ensued with regards to having representation from across Durham Region as award recipients; increasing the importance and priority on the outreach, advertising and communication strategy to ensure as many people as possible know about the award nominations; the composition of the review committee; and ensuring there is a clear, transparent rubric for the nomination process.

P. Hines responded to a question with regards to whether the nominees are required to live in Durham Region. She advised that the nominees need to have lobbied for, championed, advocated for, or worked on improving the accessibility in Durham Region.

## **8. Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence to consider.

**9. Information Items**

A) Education Sub-Committee Update

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N. Dash advised there have been discussions around a conference that will take place in October that will highlight inclusive hiring and encourage businesses in Durham Region to hire persons with disabilities. Staff are working on finalizing a location and the event will include a keynote speaker and have a panel discussion.

P. Hines also advised the October conference was taking place in recognition of Disabilities Employment Awareness Month. The event will include employers who have current vacancies, education, awareness and networking.

B) Site Plan Sub-Committee Update

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N. Dash advised staff are working on creating a decal program to identify businesses that meet certain accessible features and prioritize accessibility. Staff are currently on the second draft of the design. P. Hines shared the draft decal design with the Committee.

Discussion ensued with regards to using the forward movement symbol for the wheelchair in the design; the criteria businesses must meet to obtain the decal; the size, legibility, colour and contrast of the decal; who will be reviewing the applications to determine accessibility standards are met; and having different categories for the decal program such as built environment vs website.

N. Dash also advised the subcommittee is working on identifying site plans they would like to review.

C) Update on the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

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The May 20, 2025 Transit Advisory Committee meeting update from J. McEwen was emailed to Committee members.

D) Accessibility Coordinator Update

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N. Dash advised the Durham Accessibility Conference is taking place on May 28, 2025; on May 30, 2025, "TIFF Film Circuit Ajax Screening of Patrice: The Movie" is taking place at the St. Francis Centre; and the Ajax Accessibility Fair is taking place on May 31, 2025 at the Ajax Public Library Main Branch.

**10. Reports for Information**

There were no reports to consider.

**11. Other Business**

There was no other business to be considered.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

**13. Adjournment**

Moved by M. Lloyd, Seconded by P. Chandwani,  
That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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J. McEwen, Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

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K. Smith, Committee Clerk