



Subject: Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Renewal

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2024-147

Meeting Date: July 23, 2024

Recommendation:

That Office of the Chief Administrative Officer report 2024-17 be received; and

That Council approve the Proposal to Coordinate AODA Compliance for 2024-2026 attached as Appendix A to Office of the Chief Administrative Officer report 2024-17;

That the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) be directed to renew the City's membership in the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) as needed until otherwise directed by Council.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the City continue as a member of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Background:

On June 28, 2021, Council approved the City of Port Colborne joining the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and delegated the CHRO to select two City appointees to sit as members on the Committee for 2021-2022.

The CHRO contacted all members of the City of Port Colborne Accessibility Advisory Committee and asked them to submit an expression of interest outlining their qualifications for the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. The CHRO selected Laura Slade and Andrea Mamo as the City of Port Colborne representatives on the Joint Committee.

On November 22, 2021, Council approved the Proposal to Coordinate AODA Compliance for 2022-2024 and directed the CHRO to renew the City's membership in

the JAAC. Laura Slade and Jamie Kramer were appointed to the JAAC for the 2022-2024 term.

Discussion:

Staff are committed to promoting accessibility standards throughout the City through avenues including access to information such as accessible documents and an accessible website, evaluation of built environment, site plan review, provincial reporting, and accessible customer service. While multiple staff work on these goals, there is no dedicated staff position to ensure compliance and provide expertise.

Over the past several years, multiple employees have been given the task of ensuring compliance. These staff members have shown interest in promoting accessibility and have worked with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee to help the City remove barriers. While the City has moved in a positive direction it is important that the necessary resources be provided to continue this positive direction.

Staff believe that, in joining this multi-municipal committee, the City will have access to expertise that isn't otherwise available within the City workforce. In addition, the City will have an opportunity to work with other municipalities and benefit from knowledge sharing. The Proposal to Coordinate AODA Compliance for 2024-2026 is attached to this report as Appendix A.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee is comprised of members from each member municipality, a staff member, and an accessibility expert. The JAAC, along with the Consultants from the Herrington Group, provide invaluable expertise and advice to the City in the areas of interpretation of legislation, accessibility audits on buildings, documents, processes, reporting, site plan reviews, training, and accessibility awards. For example, some of the services provided are;

- Review any new Accessibility Standards created under the AODA and any related legislation which impacts compliance such as the Human Rights Code and the Accessible Canada Act, and provide consultation and advice in a variety of formats (written and verbal) as required. This includes advising on existing and new Accessibility Standard implications, policy and procedural needs, training needs and equipment and capital needs to comply with regulations.
- Audit sample internal and external documents, processes, and information systems to identify barriers to people with disabilities as well as identify Accessibility Standard compliance gaps with the assistance of the JAAC.
- Assist in policy writing, procedure development and training plan and content development to comply with AODA requirements and emerging municipal needs.

- Recommend strategies and implementation measures that are identified as best practices as a result of their previous experience with the identified compliance need as well as best practices from a legislative perspective.
 - Recommend best practices as they relate to providing the greatest extent of accessibility for individuals living with a wide variety of disabilities (i.e., maintaining a “cross-disability focus” addressing the needs of individuals with physical, sensory, environmental, and mental health disabilities).
 - Develop the multi-year accessibility plan and associated progress reports, provide training to staff, Council, and committee members.
 - Re-audit municipal facilities to address physical barriers ahead of 2025 legislated deadline.
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Internal Consultations:

None at this time.

Financial Implications:

The financial input into the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee is approximately \$10,000 annually. This amount is funded through an allocation model charged across all departments on the benefit expense line of the budget.

The partnership with this Committee is fiscally responsible as expertise will be provided to the City without the need to fund a full-time staff member.

Public Engagement:

None at this time.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
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Conclusion:

Staff are confident that continuing to work with the JAAC will ensure the City meets AODA compliance and will help the City move forward in creating barrier free access for everyone.

Appendices:

- a. Proposal to Coordinate AODA Compliance for 2024-2026

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Murray, CHRL, MIR
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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.