

Report to Committee of the Whole

Date: 4/14/2025
From: Julia McCaugherty-Jansman, Clerk
Re: Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2029

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive for information the report regarding the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2025-2029 and the draft Multi-Year Plan attached as Schedule "A" to the report;

AND FURTHER THAT Committee direct staff to bring the final draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to the April 28th Regular Council Meeting for final approval and recommend that Council support and approve the Plan for 2025-2029.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was passed to recognize the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario and provides for the development, implementation, and enforcement of mandatory standards for accessibility in all areas of daily life. It aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities, and applies to all levels of government, nonprofits, and private sector businesses in Ontario that have one or more employees.

The AODA is made up of five standards, as well as some general requirements, which covers Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces. These AODA standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

One of the requirements of the IASR is to develop, implement, and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan to outline strategies to prevent and remove barriers within the Municipality and meet the requirements of the IASR. The Multi-Year Plan is to be updated at least once every five (5) years and be made publicly available on the website. It also includes a statement of commitment, which is also to be made publicly available.

ANALYSIS

At the July 25th, 2022 Regular Meeting, Council approved the current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2022-2025. This current Plan is attached as Schedule "C" to this report for reference. It is also currently posted on the Village website.

Staff have drafted an updated Multi-Year Plan for 2025-2029, attached as Schedule "A". This satisfies the 5-year timeline in accordance with the requirements of the IASR, and this Plan would then be reviewed again within this timeline.

Staff have endeavored to include all efforts being made to remove barriers within the community for accessibility within the draft Plan. The Municipality strives to enhance accessibility and will continue to. This Multi-Year Plan outlines the initiatives and provides a guideline on how the Municipality is committed to improving accessibility.

BUDGET/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There may be future budget considerations if Council chooses to allocate funds for accessibility projects and updates within the Municipality.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Darlene Plumley, CAO

Kirsten Rahm, Manager of Finance/ Treasurer

Chad Kean, Manager of Public Works

Brad Cole, Fire Chief/By-law Enforcement Officer

Dan Halladay, Chief Building Official

The Merrickville Lions Club Accessibility Committee

The first draft of the Multi-Year Plan was circulated to all Department Heads for review, as well as the Merrickville Lions Club Accessibility Committee for their input and feedback.

Their feedback was reviewed and has been integrated into the document. The Lions Club Accessibility Committee provided a fulsome document outlining their feedback and suggestions to make the Plan better and more actionable. This feedback is attached to the report as Schedule "B". The highlighted sections within the draft Plan are based on the suggestions provided by the Accessibility Committee so that it is easily identifiable what has been incorporated into the draft Plan after staff reviewed their feedback.

CONCLUSION

The draft Plan is being presented to Committee of the Whole for comments and discussion. Staff are recommending that once it has been reviewed and no further changes are requested, that it be brought back to a Regular Council Meeting for final approval.

Once the 2025-2029 Multi-Year Plan has received Council approval, it will be posted on the Village's website for public viewing and reference.

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule "A" – Draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2029

Schedule "B" – Feedback review documents from Lions Club Accessibility Committee

Schedule "C" – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2025

Submitted by:

Julia McCaugherty-Jansman, Clerk

Approved by:

Darlene Plumley, CAO