

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, Legislative Services, jkramer@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	April 19, 2021		
Report No.:	Corporate Services-055-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: National Accessibility Awareness Week 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes, and;

FURTHER THAT Council proclaim Accessibility Awareness Week from May 31st to June 4th, 2021, and;

FURTHER THAT Council hang the banner created by the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at Victoria Hall throughout this week, and;

FURTHER THAT Council provide a budget of \$2,500 for a budget to secure a keynote speaker to kick off the event, and;

FURTHER THAT Council participate in different events throughout the week, to the best of their availability and schedule.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Pillar #1: People:** The Town of Cobourg supports and cares for the social and physical well-being of its citizens.
- **Pillar #3: Partnerships:** The Town of Cobourg engages in strong, sustainable public private partnerships to improve the quality of life for everyone.
- **Pillar #4: Programs:** The Town of Cobourg provides efficient and effective corporate, community, business, and recreational services for its residents, businesses, and visitor.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

N/A

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report to provide information about the proposed events around Accessibility Awareness Week for the Town of Cobourg.

By hosting events throughout Accessibility Awareness Week, we will be fulfilling two (2) of the action items in the Town of Cobourg's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2020 to 2024:

1. Continue to proclaim Accessibility Awareness Week on an annual basis.
2. Use Accessibility Awareness Week to encourage learning and education.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

On November 23, 2020, Town Council approved the following resolution:

THAT Council receive the report from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes.

FURTHER THAT Council adopt the revised version of the Accessible Customer Service Policy; and

FURTHER THAT Council adopt the revised version of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy; and

FURTHER THAT Council adopt the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024 for the Town of Cobourg as required pursuant to Section 4 of Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards as well as to renew commitment to Persons with Disabilities who live, work, visit, and play in Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward status reports to Council Meetings on an annual basis presenting an update on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward reports to Council Meetings on an "as needed" basis presenting status updates and concerns from the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward accessibility costs on a project by project basis for 2021 for maintenance, upgrades, and new initiatives related to Accessibility as outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024 with initial budget amounts to be presented at the 2021 Budget review process for Council deliberations; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward annual budgetary considerations for accessibility related concerns during the 2022 budget consideration period.

On October 26, 2020, Town Council approved the following resolution:

THAT Council review the memo from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council review the revised version of the Accessible Customer Service Policy and provide input, as necessary; and

FURTHER THAT Council review the revised version of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and provide input, as necessary; and

FURTHER THAT Council review the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024 for the Town of Cobourg and provide input, as necessary; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to begin broad public engagement with residents of Cobourg on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward a final version of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024 to a future Council meeting prior to the end of 2020.

On June 13, 2005, the AODA received Royal Assent and is now law. The AODA requires the Government of Ontario to work with the disability community and the private and public sectors to jointly develop standards to be achieved within stages of five (5) years or less, leading to an accessible Ontario in twenty (20) years, or by 2025. The aims of this act were realized through accessibility standards setting items to be addressed.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 was enacted to serve as a framework for the establishment of accessibility in five (5) different areas:

1. Customer Service, to help remove barriers for People with Disabilities so they can access goods, services, or facilities,
2. Information and Communications, to help organizations make their information accessible to People with Disabilities,
3. Transportation, to make it easier for everyone to travel in the province,
4. Employment, to help making hiring and employee support practices more accessible, and
5. Design of Public Spaces, to help organizations make new and redevelopment outdoor public areas accessible.

The standards support the principles of the AODA to ensure dignity, integration, independence, and equal opportunity and each standard has specific timelines for implementation. The AODA is in place for the purpose of ensuring that People with Disabilities are not discriminated against.

Implementation for both public and private sectors is to be phased in over time to achieve the objectives of a fully accessible province by 2025.

While the last pieces of implementation occur before 2025, the legislation will remain as law, with the need for the Town of Cobourg to remain in compliance with the AODA and the Integrated Standards. Further, there may be updates to the

AODA and/or the Integrated Standards near 2025, especially as some of the standards are using compliance metrics that have since changed. For example, there is a newer international standard for website compliance (WCAG 2.1 came into effect in 2018 and there is a draft of WCAG 2.2).

In addition, the Government of Canada passed the Accessible Canada Act and is developing the Standards, which may impact how Ontario adapts their understanding of accessibility in the future.

5. BACKGROUND

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) runs from May 31st to June 4th, 2021 and is an opportunity:

- to celebrate the valuable contributions of persons with disabilities, and;
- to recognize the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces that are actively working to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion.

We all benefit from a society and an economy without barriers to inclusion. When persons with disabilities can participate in all aspects of society, including accessing employment, resources and services, it enriches Cobourg's, Ontario's, and Canada's economy.

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Town of Cobourg is helping Canadians with disabilities maintain their health, safety and dignity. To this effect, this year's celebration activities for NAAW will be virtual, to reflect public health instructions.

The Town of Cobourg in partnership with the Cobourg Accessibility Advisory Committee has created programming that will help end social isolation to bring persons with disabilities together while also providing opportunities for the public to learn and engage on topics related to accessibility.

6. ANALYSIS

As the leader in the community, the Town of Cobourg is proposing hosting a series of events over National AccessAbility Awareness Week to both educate the public and provide a space for persons with disabilities to connect as a means to end social isolation.

The proposed schedule has been attached in the Appendix of this report and is as follows.

Monday, May 31st

- 1:00 p.m.: Kick-off Event with Address from the Mayor and Town Council, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and a Keynote speaker.

Tuesday, June 1st

- 10:00 a.m.: Wheelchair Yoga through a YouTube video.
- 1:00 p.m.: Zoom connection and social time to help end social isolation.
- 6:00 p.m.: Showing the documentary Shameless the ART of Disability

Wednesday, June 2nd

- 10:00 a.m.: Zoom connection and social time to help end social isolation.
- 1:00 p.m.: Presentations that provide information and resources for the people watching/residents as well as answer any questions or take any suggestions and will include where possible:
 - Town Staff from a variety of departments,
 - Organizations that provide services in Cobourg/Northumberland, and
 - Other levels of government.

Thursday, June 3rd

- 10:00 a.m.: Showing the documentary Alpee of the Stars.
- 4:00 p.m.: Wheelchair Yoga through a YouTube video. Zoom connection and social time to help end social isolation.
- 6:00 p.m.: Zoom connection and social time to help end social isolation.

Friday, June 4th

- 10:00 a.m.: Zoom connection and social time to help end social isolation.
- 1:00 p.m.: Closing remarks from Mayor and Town Council.

All of these events, with the exception of the keynote speaker, are free for the Town of Cobourg to host and for residents to attend. Where possible, we have worked with other organizations to partner and host free events.

As we are currently in another Stay At Home order, it is essential to create events that are accessible for people with disabilities to end social isolation while still providing resources and avenues for people to learn and engage with the Town of Cobourg.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

At the Council meeting for the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Council resolved that Staff to bring forward accessibility costs on a project by project basis in 2021 for maintenance, upgrades, and new initiatives related to Accessibility as outlined in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 to 2024 with initial budget amounts to be presented at the 2021 Budget review process for Council deliberations.

Through the 2021 budget session, there is \$1,000 for accessibility related activities and initiatives for the remainder of the year.

The request for this project is \$2,500 to secure a keynote speaker. All other activities planned throughout the week are free for the Town of Cobourg to present and will be free for the public to attend.

These two budget amounts combined will be used to secure a keynote speaker for 2021 Accessibility Awareness Week.

Municipal Staff recognizes that throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, it has been a difficult time in people's lives especially those who have been isolated due to the risks that the pandemic can cause to those of the vulnerable population and Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee feel that having a keynote speaker from the accessible community will help provide initiative to engage the public during accessibility week.

As a result of the cost, Municipal Staff is recommending that the extra unbudgeted amount that is above the \$1,000 that is allocated for this initiative in the amount of \$2,500.00 be funded through a reallocation of funds from the Legislative Services approved operating budget under the Training/Courses.

8. CONCLUSION

By hosting events during Accessibility Awareness Week, the Town of Cobourg can continue to lead the community in accessibility awareness as well as creating barrier free opportunities for people to engage and participate.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Council Recorded Voting Staff Report - Corporate Services-050-21.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 15, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services - Apr 13, 2021 - 2:52 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Apr 15, 2021 - 11:52 PM