

**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)**  
***DRAFT* TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Appendix to Report AAC-C 4-2019**

**Recommended for Approval by the Corporate Services Committee on <date>**

**Ratified by Regional Council on <date>**

**Consolidated Version as of <date>**

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

On June 13, 2005, The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* received Royal Assent and is now law. The purpose of this legislation is to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. The Provincial Government, in collaboration with persons with disabilities will develop these standards that public and private sector bodies who provide goods and services will have to meet.

Public sector organizations are required to continue to prepare and make public annual accessibility plans as their legal obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*. This accessibility plan is prepared to address and issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the life of the community and is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede residents and visitors from access and using services.

## **2. MANDATE**

The Regional Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee is an advisory body established by the Regional Municipality of Niagara in accordance with the following Terms of Reference. The Committee has been established to advise Regional Council, reporting through the Corporate Services Committee on Municipal requirements as contained in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, including the preparation of a five year accessibility plan.

## **3. GOALS/PURPOSE**

To advise the Regional Municipality of Niagara regarding the preparation of a five year accessibility plan. The plan must address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the Region's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services, including the following components:

- A report on the steps the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities
- How the municipality assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services
- A list of by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services the municipality will review in the coming years to identify barriers
- How the municipality intends to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the coming year

The Committee may also advise on other municipal obligations under the Act, as follows:

- Considerations related to access for persons with disabilities when buying goods and services

- Development of accessibility plans for municipally administered, sub-contracted or licensed transit providers in consultation with persons with disabilities
- The percentage of modified units in new social housing
- Access considerations in site plan approvals
- Other matters as directed by Council

#### **4. REPORTING STRUCTURE**

The AAC will report to Regional Council through the Corporate Services Committee.

#### **5. WORK PLAN**

The AAC will provide guidance to staff in the development of the five year accessibility plan, identifying the specific initiatives and activities to be undertaken within each of the areas of focus, inclusive of budget needs, to further guide decision-making and resource management.

#### **6. BUDGET**

The AAC shall have an annual operating budget to be used for valid Committee purposes as detailed in the budget approved by Regional Council for the current year.

The Regional Clerk shall submit a budget request each year to Regional Council for consideration and approval.

There shall be no compensation payable to the members of the Committee with the exception of mileage reimbursement for scheduled meetings of the AAC.

#### **7. MEMBERSHIP**

##### **7.1 Composition**

Membership for the AAC shall not exceed a maximum of 14 members.

Membership for the AAC shall include:

- At least one member from Regional Council
- At least eight members who are people with disabilities
- Two members who are citizen of caregiver volunteers
- Three members who are community or professional stakeholders

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

## **7.2 Term**

The term of membership shall be four years, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office, and the membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

## **7.3 Privacy**

The meetings of the AAC are public. Members should be aware that their names will be in the public realm and a list of membership may be provided when requested. Member information, other than name or municipality, will be kept confidential in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

# **8. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **8.1 Chair & Vice Chair**

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members on a biannual basis at the first meeting of the New Year to preside over meetings and Committee business.

It is the role of the Chair to preside over Committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, and to act as a liaison between the Committee, the Corporate Services Committee and Regional Council.

It is the role of the Vice Chair to preside over Committee meetings in the absence of the Chair and to perform any other duties delegated by the Chair or as assigned by the Committee through a majority vote.

## **8.2 Committee Members**

All AAC members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the AAC's Mandate and Goals/Purposes. Committee members are also responsible for:

- Reviewing meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arriving prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration;
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities;
- Participating on working groups, as appropriate;
- Agreeing to describe, process and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner;
- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work;

- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee.

## **9. WORKING GROUPS**

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the AAC may establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. The working groups will meet, as needed, to review specific issues referred to them by the AAC and otherwise complete their assigned tasks.

Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the AAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least three members of the AAC and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise. Local municipal participation should be sought depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the AAC and shall provide regular updates to the AAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the meetings of the working group shall be recorded and submitted to the AAC for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

Administrative support shall be provided by a staff representative of the AAC or designate. The appropriate staff representative (or designate) will attend all working group meetings.

## **10. RESOURCES**

The Regional Clerk's Office is the designated lead department providing resource support for the AAC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required. It is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council. As required, additional resources may be sought. Additional resourcing may be required for projects with senior levels of government.

The Committee shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

## **11. MEETINGS**

The AAC Committee shall meet at least four times per year, and may meet more frequently if required. A meeting schedule shall be set for the AAC and circulated to

the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise, the AAC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The AAC meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters at a time as determined by the members. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time.

If necessary, a schedule setting the due dates for materials to be included on the agenda will be circulated to each member pending adoption of a meeting schedule or the scheduling of a meeting date.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting, shall forward his/her regrets to the Office of the Regional Clerk as soon as possible. Should the Office of the Regional Clerk not have confirmation of quorum 24 hours prior to the meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

## **12. ABSENTEEISM**

Members who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

## **13. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for approval through the Corporate Services Committee and shall take effect only upon the approval of Council.