
Sent by e-mail: clerk@hamilton.ca

May 2, 2019

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
City of Hamilton
c/o Rose Caterini, City Clerk
71 Main Street West, 1st Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

I am writing today about your city's letter of March 13, 2019 regarding a 2018 Council resolution requesting support for a pilot program for the City of Hamilton to meet *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) requirements and to prioritize accessibility priorities in the Canada and Ontario infrastructure programs.

We know that municipal governments across Ontario, including Hamilton, support the goals of the AODA. However, AMO has also heard from many of our members about the challenge they face to afford compliance with the legislation and regulations within the provincially imposed timelines. We all know that municipal governments face mounting financial pressures on a number of fronts including municipal infrastructure and the rising costs of insurance, policing, fire and emergency medical services, to name a few. Accessibility goals should be achievable in a way that recognizes these cumulative pressures.

AMO has repeatedly called upon successive provincial governments to address the high cost of implementation by supporting municipalities through financial and non-financial assistance. Financial assistance from the provincial government should include a funding pool to help municipal governments, at the very least, to contract consultants to conduct accessibility assessments and to project the costs of compliance. Further funding to help cost-share capital projects, particularly to meet compliance with the Built Environment Standard, is also needed. A provincial funding source will help us achieve compliance as per the provincially set timelines. To date, a dedicated provincial stream has not been established.

The current Canada-Ontario Infrastructure programs require that projects meet the accessibility standards set in each province. In Ontario, that means that projects must conform to the AODA. While there is no distinct stream that gives priority to accessibility projects, costs to ensure that new infrastructure projects selected within the Agreement's streams are covered as part of the capital costs shared between Canada, Ontario, and the municipal government. This will ensure that new projects in

Hamilton meet compliance with accessibility standards. As well, the doubling of funding for the Federal Gas Tax program administered by AMO provides a further opportunity for the City to direct funds toward ensuring projects are AODA compliant.

We do not believe that a new stream should be added to the existing federal-provincial infrastructure programs as it will dilute existing funding available for municipal priorities. Instead, we will continue to call upon the Province to establish a dedicated fund for municipal accessibility projects in addition to the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure programs.

Thank you for raising your AODA concerns with us. We will continue to advocate for new dedicated funding for accessibility projects for all municipal governments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McGarvey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jamie McGarvey
AMO President