

## 4.22 (b)

August 10, 2020

Mayor and Members of Council,

Motivation – Inspiration – Celebration – Education and Empowerment – Good morning Mr Mayor, Deputy Mayor, council, friends, and family in attendance today. To say it has been an honour to be amongst this group of wonderful people strategically planning and pivoting our goal to host the Commonwealth Games in 2026 would not do it the justice it deserves. This journey we have embarked on together along with our community has been special. To have been asked to serve on this committee as an advisor for accessibility and inclusion is something I humbly accept and take with pride. To be surrounded by a group of people that mirror the same passion as I, I am full of gratitude for this opportunity. What makes the Commonwealth Games special is that unlike other multi-sport, international games, both sport and parasport are taking place at the same time – fully integrated and not an afterthought!

My vow to the committee and to the community is to ensure that athletes, para-athletes, families friends and guests that come to Hamilton are welcomed with open arms and to a place that is relatively barrier-free to the challenges that those with disabilities face are alleviated to the best of our abilities and that the comforts of home for those individuals are made readily available during their stay here.

What does that mean? That means our focus will be accommodating every individual equally and with respect. Once all athletes have made their commitments to Hamilton 2026, the intention is to form a sub-committee and outline our strategic plan to accommodate everyone but personalize residential accommodations to ensure their stay not only meets but exceeds their expectation. Following and exceeding barrier-free requirements and AODA guidelines, we will make sure that leading up to, during and following the Commonwealth Games in Hamilton 2026 that our ambitions is what others should aspire to.

That paratransit – albeit a work in progress currently, is in alignment within guidelines and strengths of all persons demonstrating - Inclusivity. That we ensure respect and dignity throughout for everyone and that's - Equality! That we maintain an organizational structure that treats everyone with respect and dignity that goes above and beyond any level of expectations and that it is maintained throughout the process.

We must take it upon ourselves to empower one another. This is our opportunity to be precedence setting, now, then and for the future of Hamilton as I believe this should be our destiny!

I implore everyone to take from my long-winded diatribe with them today that diversity is our strength while we embrace a vision of equality for all. Never tout perfection, celebrate progression. Let's all be leaders together and empower one another throughout the process and assurances that the Commonwealth Games in Hamilton 2026 do exceed any and all expectations that are ahead of us on this journey and that following the games we will come out further progression in our journey to ensure barrier-free access and inclusion as our collective civic right!

Anthony Frisina