




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
**Government and Community Relations**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	June 14, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Accessibility Award Program (CM23012) (City Wide) <b>(Outstanding Business List Item)</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Jocelyn Strutt (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5702
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Morgan Stahl Director, Government Relations & Community Engagement City Manager's Office
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the City of Hamilton establish an Accessibility Award Program to recognize individuals, businesses, community organizations and groups that have made a significant contribution towards improving access for persons with disabilities in Hamilton;
- (b) That the 2023 Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities budget be increased by an amount up to but not exceeding \$9,000 from the Volunteer Committee Reserve #112212 be approved for estimated costs to support the administration, marketing and promotion of the new Accessibility Award Program;
- (c) That the 2024 Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities budget be increased by \$9,000 to support the administration, marketing and promotion of the new Accessibility Award Program; and,
- (d) That the item respecting the Accessibility Award Program be removed from the Outstanding Business List.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Many municipalities across Ontario and Canada have established an award program that recognizes the achievements that an individual, group or organization has made or is making towards improving access for persons with disabilities. At the March 23, 2022, meeting of the General Issues Committee, in response to the motion from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Council directed staff to review options and criteria for establishing an Accessibility Award Program for the City of Hamilton.

Members of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities identified in 2022 that an award program would contribute to raising awareness about the importance of accessibility and universal design. This aligns with the Committee's goal "to consider the needs of all in order to make this City a more equitable, diverse and inclusive place to live".

In early 2023, staff worked with members of the Outreach Working Group, a direct working group of the broader Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, to draft an Accessibility Award framework, including:

- Award Statement
- Eligibility Requirements
- Selection Factors
- Award Type and Timing

At the April 2023 Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities meeting, the framework was endorsed by the Committee (attached as Appendix "A" to Report CM23012).

## **FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** The \$9,000 increase to the annual budget for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be used for the development and implementation of the Accessibility Award Program, beginning in 2024.

**Staffing:** The Staff Liaison for the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will administer the award process. They will consult with the Talent and Diversity Office to ensure the awards process is in alignment with the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications of this report.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

At the February 8, 2022, meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities), members discussed the importance of recognizing, promoting and encouraging individuals, businesses and organizations who champion accessibility or make improvements to the inclusion and accessibility of Hamilton. The establishment of an award program would meaningfully demonstrate the nominees' commitment to accessibility and highlight their achievement(s) to the broader Hamilton community. A motion to establish an award program was brought to the General Issues Committee (GIC) by the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. At the March 23, 2022, GIC meeting, the following direction was provided:

“That staff be directed to review options and criteria for establishing an Accessibility Award Program for City of Hamilton individuals, businesses and organizations that have made significant contribution beyond legislative requirements, towards improving access for persons with disabilities in Hamilton, and report back to the General Issues Committee.

That representation from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities be included in the development of the eligibility and award criteria as well as the selection process for the Accessibility Award Program”.

In order to inform the development of the Award Program, staff conducted a comprehensive scan of other municipal award programs that champion accessibility, as highlighted in Table 1. In addition to award parameters, a review of budget allotments was also conducted. Budgets for municipal awards ranged from \$3,000 on the lower end to \$25,000 on the higher end. This scan provided a baseline understanding of other municipal approaches to recognizing achievements in accessibility and inclusion.

Using this information, staff met with the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities on February 14, 2023 to initiate the process of establishing an Accessibility Award Program. At that meeting, the item was referred to the Outreach Working Group with the direction to develop an award framework. The Outreach Working Group met on February 21, 2023 and March 6, 2023 to address the key components of the award, including its goal statement, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, award format and timing.

**Table 1 – Municipal Accessibility Award Programs**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population (2017)</b>	<b>Award Program</b>
<b>Ontario</b>		
City of Barrie	153,356	✓
City of Brampton	603,346	✓
City of Brantford	102,159	✓
City of Burlington	205,960	✓
City of Hamilton	579,200	
City of Kingston	136,685	✓
City of London	404,699	✓
City of Sarnia	71,594	✓
City of Toronto	2.93 million	✓
City of Windsor	233,763	✓
<b>Out of Province</b>		
City of Calgary	1.336 million	✓
City of Edmonton	981,280	✓
City of Winnipeg	749,534	✓
City of Vancouver	675,218	✓

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

Members of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities recommends to the City of Hamilton policy, procedure and standards that address the needs and concerns of all disabilities. This work is carried out in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in matters of customer service, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and information and communication. There are no policy implications to the establishment of an Accessibility Award Program.

There are no legislated requirements for the establishment of an Accessibility Award Program.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

### **Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities**

In February 2023, staff from the Government and Community Relations Division met with Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities to introduce the scope of work and seek direction on next steps for the establishment of an Accessibility Award Program. At that meeting, the item was referred to the Outreach Working Group.

The Outreach Working Group, comprised of eight members, met on two occasions (February 21, 2023, and March 6, 2023) to develop the key components of the Accessibility Award Program. The work was then summarized and presented back to the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities committee members at their April 11, 2023, meeting where it was unanimously supported.

### **Age-Friendly City, Healthy and Safe Communities Department**

Hamilton's plan for an age-friendly community outlines strategic goals, objectives and recommendations for older adults and seniors living in the City. An important part of Hamilton's age-friendly work includes celebrating seniors who have made an outstanding voluntary contribution to the City through the annual Senior of the Year Awards program. Staff engaged with the Age-Friendly team in December of 2022 to understand the evolution of the Senior of the Year Awards program that has been in place for 28 years. That information was used to inform the Accessibility Award Program recommended in this Report. It is recognized that the Senior of the Year Awards program has evolved and grown over time. It is anticipated that the Accessibility Award program will also start modestly and evolve over time.

### **Talent and Diversity Office, Human Resources Department**

The Talent and Diversity Office, embedded within Human Resources, monitors the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This Plan outlines how the City of Hamilton will maintain compliance with legislative requirements and continue working towards barrier-free programs, services and opportunities. The Accessibility Award has a strong alignment to the work of this team. To ensure that the Award continues to grow, develop, and contribute to the goals of the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, collaboration with this team is encouraged.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The City of Hamilton has a number of awards and recognitions that celebrate and honour those who contribute to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child and age successfully. Examples of current City of Hamilton awards include: Arts Awards, Community in Motion Awards, HMHC Heritage Recognition Awards, Heritage Day Awards, Senior of the Year Awards, Sport Volunteer Awards, Trillium Awards and, Urban Design and Architecture Awards.

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities members felt strongly that the work of individuals, businesses, organizations, and groups who are working towards improving awareness and understanding of accessibility and inclusion should be recognized and celebrated. This Award may also contribute towards progress in enhancing accessibility and inclusion efforts across the City of Hamilton.

The Outreach Working Group drafted an award statement that outlines the importance of this award for Council and the broader community:

“The award celebrates the outstanding achievements by individuals, businesses, community organizations and groups to improving awareness and understanding of accessibility and inclusion throughout the City of Hamilton. We highlight and recognize the significant contributions in making Hamilton the best place to live, work and play together and encourage others to try new ideas”.

It is proposed that the inaugural Accessibility Award be conferred at the annual Accessibility Fair in early October 2024. It is proposed that the Award ceremony will focus on establishing awareness of the Award Program in the early years of its inception and then work to grow the Award Program over time. Highlights of the proposed Accessibility Award Program include:

- Award Type: Certificate conferred annually at the Accessibility Fair held in October.
- Award Design: Will include a request for proposal to the community for a design that represents the diverse range of disabilities in the City of Hamilton.
- Award Categories: Four categories, including: (1) community members, (2) youth, (3) local businesses, and (4) community organizations and/or groups.
- Award Eligibility: Must be a resident, business or community organization located in Hamilton.
- Award Selection Factors: six categories proposed, with a focus on innovation, environment, awareness, customer service and employment for persons with disabilities.
- Award Budget: \$9,000 annually to support the process of establishing, advertising, selecting and conferring the award to successful nominees. The budget also addresses important accessibility needs, such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, captioning or providing print materials in alternate formats.

Appendix “A” to Report CM23012 provides a detailed outline of the Award Framework.

## **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Community Engagement and Participation**

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OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Hamilton has an open, transparent, and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community

**Healthy and Safe Communities**

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

**Built Environment and Infrastructure**

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

**Culture and Diversity**

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report CM23012: City of Hamilton Accessibility Award Program Summary