



REPORT

CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

TO: Chair and Members of the Administration Committee

FROM: Michael de Rond, Deputy Clerk

DATE: December 15th, 2014

REPORT: #CL 46/14

SUBJECT: ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY UPDATE

BACKGROUND:

The Township of Uxbridge's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2013-2018) requires the Accessibility Coordinator to write an annual report that updates Council on initiatives and accomplishments from the past year as well as any issues the Township faces moving forward.

By January 1, 2015, the Township is required to be able to provide accessible information to persons with disabilities upon request of that information. Making information accessible includes, among other things, reading information directly to the person, enlarging the font of a document and formatting an electronic document so that it can be read using a screen reader.

The Township has been very proactive with ensuring compliance with this regulation, including the passing of By-law No. 2012-102 – Alternate Formats Policy. This policy requires Township Staff to develop and deliver alternate formats of corporate documents at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. Through this policy, as well as training that Staff have received, the Township is compliant with this regulation.

By January 1, 2016, the Township must be compliant with the Design of Public Spaces Standard of the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). To be in compliance with this, the Township adopted By-law 2012-149 – The Township of Uxbridge Facility Accessible Design Standard. The By-law addresses accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities, as well as the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing facilities, owned, leased or operated by the Township of Uxbridge.

In 2014, the Township completed various projects that were either accessibility driven, or had an accessibility component involved. The most impressive of these accomplishments is the new and accessible playground that was installed in Elgin Park. The Township was able to obtain funds through the Accessibility Grant to assist with the project which cost about \$70,000. Using funds from the same grant, the

Township was also able to purchase 20 accessible picnic tables which are in use across the municipality.

Improvements have also been made at the Municipal Office in the last year. Both the new ramp in the Council Chambers up to Councillor's seating, and the automatic door openers installed outside public washrooms are examples of projects which increased the Township's accessibility commitment. Staff have received many compliments about the usefulness of the ramp and it being esthetically pleasing. At the last Meeting of the Accessibility Committee, members were brought into the Council Chambers to view the ramp, and they were also very complimentary of the work done.

Although Council will be receiving a report early in the New Year which specifically looks at accessibility as it relates to the 2014 Municipal Election, it is still important to briefly note in this report. The Township employs the Vote-By-Mail system of Election, which is considered one of the most accessible forms of election available to municipalities. Disabled electors are able to vote without having to leave their home. When electors did choose to come to the Town Hall to vote, or be added to the Voters' List, Township Staff set up accessible areas where persons with disabilities could vote in the same manner as all other persons.

Looking forward to 2015, the Township will maintain the same commitment to accessibility that it has always shown. The same Accessibility Advisory Committee from the last term of Council will continue their work this term, with the exception of Councillor Mikuse replacing Councillor Ballinger as Council's representative. Staff will be providing accessibility training to the new Council and appointed advisory committees early in the New Year.

The next regulation set forth in the AODA that the Township must comply with (notwithstanding the Design of Public Spaces Standard) is that all online content be accessible under the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines by January 1, 2021. The Township had a website accessibility audit completed in 2013 and is in position to be compliant with this regulation years before we are required to.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Report #CL 46/14 be received as information;

Respectfully Submitted by:

Michael de Rond
Deputy Clerk