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STAFF REPORT:



REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: October 10, 2012
REPORT NO.: CEDC.12.9
SUBJECT: Response to Proposed Amendments to the Integrated Accessibility Standard
PREPARED BY: Lisa Kidd

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CEDC.12.9 “Response to Proposed Amendments to the Integrated Accessibility Standard” for information purposes; and

THAT Council direct staff to submit comments on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains as outlined in Attachment 1 of CEDC.12.9.

B. Background

Several laws in Ontario address accessibility and some requirements have existed since the 1980s. Since then, progress on accessibility has been made in some areas and by some organizations.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, is a law passed by the Ontario legislature that allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility and to enforce them. The standards are made into laws called regulations, and they provide the details to help meet the goal of the AODA. The AODA is the foundation upon which the standards are built.

The province is in the process of unveiling these proposed standards. The Customer Service Standard has already been enacted, with components of the Integrated Accessibility Standard, already, or in the process of being enacted.

Recently, the provincial government announced it would be seeking comments with respect to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) proposed Amendments to the Integrated Accessibility Standard.

The bulk of the proposed amendments would establish new standards for “new” or “redeveloped” accessible public spaces, such as:

- recreational trails;
- beach access routes;
- outdoor public use eating areas (e.g. public parks, hospital grounds, university campuses);

- outdoor play spaces (e.g. areas that may contain play equipment such as swings, or features such as logs, rocks, sand or water where the equipment or features are designed to provide play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers);
- exterior paths of travel, including those with ramps, stairs, curb ramps, depressed curbs, accessible pedestrian signals, and rest areas;
- accessible parking spaces;
- service counters, fixed queuing guides, and waiting areas; and
- maintenance of accessible elements.

Compliance dates for the proposed new public spaces standards range from 2015 to 2018.

As Council is aware, the Town of The Blue Mountains AODA Committee, composed of a trans-disciplinary team of staff, undertakes the following responsibilities:

- Review the proposed standards;
- Draft formal responses to the province;
- Review implementation processes for these standards;
- Consider the financial impact of these standards; and
- Communicate the above to Senior Management Team and Council.

As such, the AODA Committee and key staff have compiled a list of comments on the proposed Amendments for the Ministry's consideration (see Attachment 1).

Staff are seeking direction from Council to submit this list as the Town's comments on the proposed Amendments to the Integrated Accessibility Standard.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

6.6 Implement processes for continuous improvement

D. Environmental Impacts

None.

E. Financial Impact

None at this time.

F. In Consultation With

- Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act (AODA) Staff Committee
- David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building
- Reg Russwurm, Director of Engineering and Public Works
- Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation

- Breaking Down Barriers

G. Attached

Attachment 1- Draft Response to the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Kidd

Troy Speck, CAO

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Attachment 1- Draft Response to the Ministry of Community and Social Services RE: Proposed Amendments to the Integrated Accessibility Standard

(To be submitted electronically, via the Ministry's commenting site)

On behalf of the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I wish to submit the follow questions with respect to the proposed Amendments and respectfully ask for the Ministry's consideration in providing clarification within the Standard with respect to the following:

- What is the definition of a "wilderness trail"?
- What is the definition of a "minor repair"?
- Are municipal harbor docks considered as "exterior paths of travel"?
- What is the definition of "consultation"? For example, does it mean that a consultation would be required for the engineering and design standards (for example) , or would consultation be required for each application or project?
- What is the scope of "beach access"? Does it mean access to the sand, or access to the water?
- We are a municipality with a population of less than 10,000. We have a joint accessibility plan with the County and a member of our Council forms part of the County's accessibility advisory committee. Could our municipality strike its own municipal (i.e. local level) accessibility advisory committee to serve as the consultative body, or would we still have to go to the County's committee for consultation on accessibility issues?

Please note that the Town is unable to comment further on the amendments as we would require clarification and responses to the questions above first.