

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 15, 2015**

Item 4, Report No. 44, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 15, 2015.

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#### **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2013-2018**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Chief Human Resources Officer, dated December 1, 2015:

##### **Recommendation**

The Chief Human Resources Officer recommends:

1. That Council approve the City of Vaughan Accessibility Plan 2013-2018.

##### **Contribution to Sustainability**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 4, and Objective 4.1:

- To foster a City with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

##### **Economic Impact**

There is an economic impact in regard to implementing the City's Accessibility Plan. The annual budget process includes capital projects submitted by departments which incorporate funding for initiatives to meet accessibility requirements. For day-to-day operations, departments seek to meet accessibility requirements within their operating budgets. As the Accessibility Plan continues to be implemented, future operating or capital funding requests will be assessed and brought forward if needed.

##### **Communications Plan**

In consultation with the Office of Corporate Communications, the Accessibility Plan 2013-2018 will be communicated through the City's external website, and the City's e-Newsletter, City Update.

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the Accessibility Plan 2013-2018.

##### **Background - Analysis and Options**

Accessibility is a priority in the City's strategic plan "Vaughan Vision 2020." The City of Vaughan is dedicated to being an accessible and inclusive City not because it is the law, but more importantly it is the right thing to do and is good for business. Accessibility benefits all Vaughan residents and visitors.

The City of Vaughan provides a number of programs and services for people with disabilities and regularly identifies and creates new opportunities to reflect the diverse and growing program needs of the community. Opportunities for persons with disabilities are vast and include the creative arts, health and wellness, life and social skills, performing arts, sports and leadership programs.

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The City's Accessibility Plan 2013-2018 outlines corporate and departmental objectives and achievements related to addressing accessibility issues and services at a corporate level.

Highlights of the Accessibility Plan 2013-2018 include the following:

- The City of Vaughan hired a full time Accessibility and Diversity Coordinator responsible for leading the advancement of accessibility and workplace diversity in the City of Vaughan.
- The City of Vaughan is compliant with all of the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) employment standard.
- Staff has facilitated the establishment of on demand accessible taxis at the meter rate.
- The City of Vaughan is launching Essential Accessibility. Essential Accessibility is software that will enhance the accessibility of the internal and external City websites. Features of the software include on-screen keyboard, audio playback and radar mouse, etc. Other accessibility features being added to the City's websites include color contrast and large text options.
- Vaughan Public Libraries are providing books and other materials in accessible formats.
- The Facilities Maintenance Services Department will be conducting an accessibility audit of frequently used City facilities.
- The Economic Development and Culture Services Department installed the Innovative Path System (IPS). The IPS is a way-finding technology that informs people with visual challenges where they are in a building through Bluetooth device and electronic cane. The IPS is installed at Vaughan City Hall.
- The Parks Development Department Installed accessible swings and wood carpet surfacing at Maple Community Centre and improvements to accessibility were completed at Mario Plastina Park.
- The Office of Corporate Communications is designing a plain-language style guide with input from department representatives and the Internal Communications Committee.
- The Public Works Portfolio is incorporating directional lines in sidewalks at intersections for people with visual challenges.
- The Recreation Services Department is developing two pilot multi-sensory outdoor educational programs for children and youth with disabilities.

The barriers persons with disabilities face are more prevalent as a result of the environment in which they live in, rather than their impairment. Obstacles to participation stem more from the environment in which people live than from within the individual's perception of their abilities. These barriers can be prevented, reduced or eliminated.

The inclusivity of citizens with disabilities is a corporate-wide vision shared by Vaughan Council and staff as identified in Vaughan's corporate strategic plan. The City plays an important role in ensuring access for residents with disabilities and through the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC). The role of the VAAC is to advise Council to support the City's work in identifying and removing barriers to lay the foundation for a barrier-free, inclusive community.

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The VAAC approved the Accessibility Plan 2013-2018 at its meeting on September 29, 2015.

Some of the highlights of the initiatives supported by the VAAC are the following:

- Contributed to the content of the multi-year accessibility plan and endorsed its approval;
- Assisted with the City's compliance of the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation;
- Assisted in the planning of events for National Access Awareness Week;
- Provided valuable input that reflects the diverse needs of our citizens;

#### **Relationship to Term of Council Strategy Map (2014-2018)**

This report supports the Vaughan Vision 2020 initiatives of Service Excellence, specifically to support and promote arts, culture, heritage and sports in the community and continue to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens.

#### **Regional Implications**

There are no regional implications.

#### **Conclusion**

The City of Vaughan is dedicated to being an accessible and inclusive City not because it is the law, but more importantly it is the right thing to do and is good for business. Accessibility benefits all Vaughan residents and visitors. The City of Vaughan takes great pride in being a community where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can thrive. The City's Accessibility Plan 2013-2018 is a reflection of that commitment and outlines the various activities and initiatives in support of accessibility.

#### **Attachment**

1. Accessibility Plan 2013-2018.

#### **Report prepared by:**

Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility and Diversity Coordinator, ext. 8641

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)