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Executive Summary Accessibility Assessment Project



Executive Summary
Accessibility Assessment Project of the
Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee of Lincoln,
West Lincoln, Pelham, Thorold, Niagara-on-the-Lake
and Grimsby

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Audit Results

August 28, 2020

Executive Summary

To further its commitment to citizens with disabilities and to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has initiated the Facility Accessibility Audit Project. Upon completion, this project will allow Town staff to systematically plan for the elimination of physical and architectural barriers for those with disabilities, and to design new buildings and facilities that will meet the needs of all members of its community.

The project involved auditing 5 facilities and spaces to identify where barriers may exist in the built environment. The audit focused on the accessibility section (OBC Section 3.8) of the Ontario Building Code and the AODA's Design of Public Spaces Standard. The audit tool also referenced the Niagara Facility Accessibility Design Standard (FADS).

1. The Audit – Project Context

1.1 The Impact of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The AODA creates and enforces standards of accessibility and addresses barriers relating to all types of disability. This project was informed by the Design of Public Spaces Standard, GAATES Illustrated Technical Guide of the DOPSS, the Niagara Facility Accessibility Design Standard (FADS), as well as newly updated sections of the Ontario Building Code, Section 3.8.

This audit affords a “snapshot” of accessibility in relation to these standards. It indicates the level of non-compliance, priority of concerns and associated cost of bringing its facilities up to current codes and standards as of 2019, should the Town choose to initiate these changes. It provides the Town with a quantifiable baseline as to the extent of the accessibility currently available within its facilities and venues and provides recommendations to improve accessibility in the future.

1.2 Audit Methodology and Scope

This report includes 5 facilities identified by Town staff. Each facility was assessed for use according to a customized assessment tool created by the consultant. Audits provide a detailed “tour” of each facility, reflecting all external and internal elements, as well as on-site services and amenities. Audit staff begin at the parking and move to the building or public space entry and walk throughout the facility/space (e.g. entrance,

access and circulation, meeting rooms, washrooms, stairwells, elevators etc.). The audit team takes specific measurements of facility areas, and elements. A “cross-disability” focus is used, ensuring facilities are assessed for barriers experienced by individuals with mobility, sensory and cognitive disabilities.

1.3 Audit Limitations and Context

The audit report provides reasonable, achievable recommendations over time. For example, in many facilities, doorways ranged from 820 mm – 860 mm wide. Although the Niagara Facility Accessibility Design Standard (FADS) requires doors in a public path to be a minimum 950 mm wide, the consultant made no recommendation. It is not feasible to widen every doorway within existing structures. Therefore, the item was classified as “an acceptable existing condition”. Changes to ensure compliance with Standards should be made when there is a change in the facility use or when there is a direct need.

1.4 Report Format and Priority Rankings

This report will act as a tool that will enable the Town to prioritize and plan “access improving” initiatives. The audit results are presented in a dataset form to facilitate easy review as well as providing all necessary information, in a succinct format, relating to why the barrier exists and how it can be removed. Recommendations are ranked according to priority levels.

Priority 1

High priority recommendations relate to issues that pose an immediate risk of creating or maintaining hazards to life or public safety. High priority items found include access to defibrillators, fire pulls, visual fire alarms and emergency call buttons in washrooms.

Priority 2

Medium priority recommendations relate to items, when completed, that will ensure OBC compliance or DOPSS Regulations Compliance. Priorities in this category include parking, entrances, automatic doors, improving colour contrast, washroom improvements and ramps.

Priority 3

Low priority items are those, which would increase accessibility when needed to accommodate staff or citizens with a disability. For example, priorities in this category

include Niagara FADS requirements such as the installation of a platform lift/elevator.

2. Audit Result Observed

Audit results vary across facilities and are largely impacted by the facility's age and the design standards that were in place at the time of construction. Older facilities have more issues than newer ones. Overall, the efforts of the Town to increase accessibility, in a cross-disability way, is obvious to the auditing team. Wheelchair accessibility has been well addressed in new construction. In general, path of travel is possible throughout most facilities with ease and directness.

In terms of accessibility barriers recurring trends and themes are the same across facilities:

Washroom Accessibility:

Facilities have sensory issues in washrooms, specifically, a lack of visual alarms. The presence of visual alarms was the exception and not the rule for both washrooms with stalls and universal, gender-free washrooms. The availability of visual alarms in these areas is essential as users may become isolated in the event of an emergency.

Grab bar requirements, type and placement have changed under the Ontario Building Code. These changes are reflected in the enclosed findings.

Interior Access:

The need for automatic doors at primary entrances and at washrooms is reflected in this report. Wheelchair access is not always possible to upper and lower levels.

Exterior Access:

The Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPSS) requires the installation of both car and van accessible parking spaces. All parking spaces meet the needs of both cars and vans but are not labelled as such which is a requirement of the Standard. Additionally, the Standard requires the installation of access aisles in all parking spaces to ensure adequate space is maintained for vehicles with ramps. Although parking spaces are wide enough, many did not have the painted required access aisle.

2.1 Understanding Cost Estimates

Final cost estimates for these facilities total \$938,010. Cost estimates are determined using the Elemental Format, which is the national format produced by the Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors. Costing is based on retrofitting as opposed to creating “new builds”. Also, all recommendations, however minor were assigned an associated cost, including maintenance related items.

Costs according to priority levels are as follows:

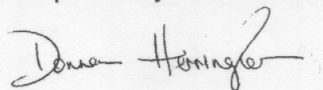
Facility	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Facility Totals
Centennial Arena	\$5,600	\$43,580	\$71,900	\$121,080
Fire Station #2	\$1,120	\$111,830	\$18,100	\$131,050
Fire Station #4	\$3,360	\$17,220	\$136,600	\$157,180
Queenston Library	\$ ---	\$17,000	\$475,000	\$492,000
St. Davids Pool	\$ ---	\$29,300	\$7,400	\$36,700
TOTALS	\$10,080	\$218,930	\$709,000	\$938,010

The costing report does not consider discounts due to volume purchasing. If the Town chooses to make updates based on a specific design element (e.g. door openers, grab bars), supplier discounts may be secured. Also, the costing report does not distinguish between work that is completed internally by Town staff and that done by outside contractors. Internal work such as simple, maintenance-related projects (relocation of washroom fixtures, soap dispensers etc.) may be done at a lower price by using internal resources.

3. Conclusion

The success of this project would not have been possible without the assistance and support of Town staff. We appreciate all efforts to expedite our work and the ongoing support we received in accomplishing the project deliverables. We sincerely hope that this project will assist the Town in its future endeavours to create a universally accessible community.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna L. Herrington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donna L. Herrington
Senior Planner/Owner
The Herrington Group Ltd

Costs by Facility and Priority Level

Centennial Arena

Priority 1 Total:	\$5,600.00	(based on 3 items)
Priority 2 Total:	\$43,580.00	(based on 10 items)
Priority 3 Total:	\$71,900.00	(based on 4 items)
Facility Total:	\$121,080.00	(based on 17 total items)

Fire Station #2

Priority 1 Total:	\$1,120.00	(based on 2 items)
Priority 2 Total:	\$111,830.00	(based on 13 items)
Priority 3 Total:	\$18,100.00	(based on 3 items)
Facility Total:	\$131,050.00	(based on 18 total items)

Fire Station #4

Priority 1 Total:	\$3,360.00	(based on 3 items)
Priority 2 Total:	\$17,220.00	(based on 5 items)
Priority 3 Total:	\$136,600.00	(based on 8 items)
Facility Total:	\$157,180.00	(based on 16 total items)

Queenston Library

Priority 2 Total:	\$17,000.00	(based on 3 items)
Priority 3 Total:	\$475,000.00	(based on 12 items)
Facility Total:	\$492,000.00	(based on 15 total items)

St. Davids Pool

Priority 2 Total:	\$29,300.00	(based on 9 items)
Priority 3 Total:	\$7,400.00	(based on 7 items)
Facility Total:	\$36,700.00	(based on 16 total items)

Grand Total:	\$938,010.00
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FULL REPORT FOUND ON
TOWN'S ACCESSIBILITY page.