



Subject: Agreement with Consultant to Coordinate AODA Compliance for 2024-2026 for Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Member Municipalities

Report to: Thorold City Council

Recommendations

1. That Council **APPROVE** the City of Thorold's continued participation as a member of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years, at an annual cost of \$10,000; and
2. That a by-law **BE ADOPTED** at Council meeting on August 13, 2024, to authorize the execution of an Agreement with the participating municipalities and the Herrington Group Ltd. for consulting services for a two year period from 2024 to 2026.

Key Facts

- On October 1, 2002, Council approved Report CC2002-16, authorizing the City of Thorold to partner with Niagara region lower-tier municipalities to form a Joint Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee ("JAAC").
- The JAAC has since met regularly to produce Annual Accessibility Plans for each member municipality.
- Municipalities must meet requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11 (the "AODA"), and prepare and submit an annual Accessibility Plan to the Province.
- It is recommended the City appoint the Herrington Group Ltd. for a period of two (2) years, for the purpose of coordinating the preparation of an Accessibility Plan and offering accessibility consulting services to the JAAC municipalities, and that the associated costs be shared equally.

Budgetary Status

The cost for this service has been incorporated into the City's budget since entering into the JAAC.

Analysis

Municipalities are required to submit an Annual Accessibility Report to the province, and meet legislated requirements specified in the AODA. Working towards AODA compliance is listed as a priority operational action under the [City's Strategic Plan, 2024-2027 and beyond](#).

The Herrington Group Ltd. has provided its expertise in accessibility to members of the JAAC for over twenty years. As noted in its proposal (Appendix A), the Herrington Group is offering its consultative services to the seven (7) JAAC members for a fee of \$140,000 over two years. When divided equally amongst the members, the fee for services is \$10,000 per year, per municipality. According to Report CC2017-46, when accounting for the time and research to produce an annual accessibility plan, training of front line staff, and acting on legislative requirements, it is estimated that if this scope of services were provided by in-house staff, the cost to the City would be over \$65,000. That report was prepared in 2017, so the costs today would likely be higher.

The re-appointment of The Herrington Group Ltd. is also recommended for the following reasons:

1. The principal, Donna Herrington, is based in the Niagara Region and is familiar with the JAAC members, along with industry-specific agencies, boards, and legislative requirements, and is respected by legislators in the field.
2. The Herrington Group Ltd. has established a good working relationship with the JAAC members and has worked diligently to prepare Annual Accessibility Plans for each of the member municipalities since 2003.

Impact on the Environment, Climate Change

There are no known environmental or climate change related impacts to this Report.

Alternatives Reviewed

The City of Thorold can solicit quotes and proposals from other organizations. The City may also consider having internal staff conduct the work. This Report is not recommending these alternatives for the following reasons:

- There are a limited number of organizations who may be able to offer the service;

- The Herrington Group has provided its consulting services to member municipalities since 2002, and in that time has gained valuable institutional knowledge of the members and their AODA compliance progress; and
- There is a cost-benefit in continuing to employ a shared service approach, as referenced in Report CC2017-46.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

Compliance with the AODA is a legislative requirement and an operational action contained within the City's Strategic Plan (Strategic Goal – Livable Community).

Other Pertinent Reports

Prepared and recommended by:

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Appendices

Appendix 1 JAAC Proposal – 2024-2026

Appendix 2 Report CC2017-46