

# Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Advisory Committee

## Mandate

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) shall act in an advisory capacity to Council through reports to General Committee and shall advise, recommend and assist the City of Mississauga in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Mississauga for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility), including persons with disabilities. AAC's mandate will work to further the City's commitment to its Strategic Plan's 'Belong' and 'Move' Pillars with an understanding that accessibility planning needs to be integrated into all Pillars to create a universally accessible community.

## Background

The Province of Ontario proclaimed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* on June 13, 2005. The purpose of the Act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers. Under the Act, each municipality is to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). A majority of the AAC Members must be persons with disabilities.

The AODA imposes certain requirements that municipalities must follow to ensure that existing barriers for people with disabilities are removed over time and that no new barriers are created.

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), all municipalities must establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organizations strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet their requirements under the IASR. Municipalities must post the plan on their website, and review and update it at least once every five years.

Additionally, municipalities must create and update the plan in consultation with people with disabilities, and an Accessibility Advisory Committee where one has been established. The Accessibility Plan's purpose is to address the "identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities" in Mississauga's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services". (s.11(2))

## Objectives/Goals

The Mississauga Accessibility Advisory Committee will fulfill its mandate through:

1. the review of municipal policies, programs and services;
2. the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities;

3. "The Committee shall advise the Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports..." (as per the AODA, s.29 (4)(a)).

Further duties, as outlined in the AODA include:

- Advise the Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the council may seek its advice under subsection (5);
- Review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the *Planning Act* that the committee selects; and
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

## Work Plan

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will perform all functions as mandated by the AODA and its regulations including:

- Members of the AAC will advise Council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of the City's multi-year and annual accessibility plan to ensure that it addresses the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the City's by-laws, policies, programs, practices, facilities, and services;
- Members of the AAC will advise Council on issues of accessibility in Council's decision to purchase goods, services and facilities through the procurement process for the use of itself, its employees or the public, when requested by Council.
- Members of the AAC will review selected site plans and advise on accessibility issues relating to identified buildings within the municipality.

The work plan for each Advisory Committee attempts to use the City's Strategic Plan Pillars, action items, Master Plans, or legislation as sub-headings to organize the Committee's focus and nature of work.

The Committee shall present its accomplishments as they relate to the work plan, to Council annually.

## Definitions

Within this Terms of Reference, the term:

1. "**disability**" means, according to the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code:
  - (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,

includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

- (b) a condition of cognitive disability;
- (c) a condition of a developmental disability;
- (d) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (e) a mental disorder; or,
- (f) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”).

2. **“barrier ”** means, according to the AODA:

- (a) anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including:
- (b) physical barriers, for example a step at the entrance to a store;
- (c) architectural barriers, for example no elevators in a building of more than one floor;
- (d) information or communication barriers, for example a publication that is not available in large print;
- (e) attitudinal barriers, for example assuming people with a disability cannot perform a certain task when in fact they can;
- (f) technological barriers such as traffic lights that change too quickly before a person with a disability has time to get through the intersection; and
- (g) barriers created by policies or practices, for instance not offering different ways to complete a test as part of job hiring.

## **Procedures and Frequency of Meetings**

The AAC shall operate according to the Council Procedure By-law regulating the operation of the meetings of Council and its Committees and within the purposes of the AODA. <https://www.mississauga.ca/publication/council-procedure-by-law/>

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will meet approximately six times per year or as determined by the Committee at the call of the Chair.

## Membership

All members are subject to the:

- Code of Conduct and Complaint Protocol for Local Boards. <https://web.mississauga.ca/publication/local-boards-code-of-conduct/>
- Corporate Policy 02-01-01: Citizen Appointments to Committees, Boards and Authorities. <https://www.mississauga.ca/publication/citizen-appointments-to-committees-boards-and-authorities-policy/>
- Council Procedural By-law. <https://www.mississauga.ca/publication/council-procedure-by-law/>

The AAC shall have nine to twelve (9 – 12) voting members consisting of:

- Citizen members: a majority of the members shall be persons with disabilities. Different types of disabilities may be represented such as persons with a physical disability (visual, speech, hearing, use of wheelchair or assistive device), cognitive disability, perceptual (learning disability) and mental health issues.
- Recruitment of citizens to be appointed to AAC will follow Corporate Policy and Procedure for recruitment of Citizen Appointments to Committees, Boards and Authorities (Corporate Policy and Procedure 02-01-01). Awareness and implementation of alternate formats for recruitment is also considered.
- Members of the AAC shall be eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred, which are deemed necessary for full participation in the Committee (i.e. sign language interpretation services, etc.)
- Up to three (3) representatives who are professionals from the stakeholder community (i.e. agencies representing persons with disabilities)
- Two (2) Members of Council

## Role of Chair

1. Preside at the meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee using City of Mississauga's Procedure By-law, and keep discussion on topic.
2. Provide leadership to AAC to encourage that its activities remain focused on its mandate as an Advisory Committee of Council.
3. Review agenda items with the Committee Coordinator and City's Accessibility Staff.
4. Recognize each Member's contribution to the Committee's work.

5. Serve as an *ex-officio* member of subcommittees and attend subcommittee meetings when necessary.
6. Liaise with the City's Accessibility Staff on a regular basis.

## **Role of Committee Members**

1. Ensure that the mandate of AAC is being fulfilled.
2. Provide the Chair with solid, factual information regarding agenda items.
3. Contribute their expertise actively during meetings of the AAC.
4. When required, advise Council on matters relating to accessibility.
5. Are familiar with the AODA, its regulations and the Terms of Reference for the Committee.
6. Notify the Committee Coordinator if they are unable to attend AAC meetings to ensure that quorum will be available for all meetings.

## **Quorum**

A quorum of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall result from the presence of a majority of the appointed and elected members, at a time no later than thirty (30) minutes past the time for which the meeting was scheduled and so noted on the agenda or notice of the meeting. The issuance of an Agenda for a meeting of this Committee will be considered as notice of that meeting. The presence of one (1) of the appointed Council Members shall be required to establish quorum.

## **Subcommittees**

The AAC may form subcommittees to address specific issues and report to the AAC. At least one member of the AAC must be represented in a subcommittee. Other members of the subcommittee may include other persons from the disability community.

## **Staff Support**

A City staff team (Staff Accessibility Resource Team) to support the AAC and to assist in the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities is necessary. City staff representatives from the following Departments/Divisions shall provide input at AAC meetings:

Department	Divisions
City Manager's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Communications &amp; Initiatives</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> </ul>
Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Emergency Management</li> <li>• Mississauga Library</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Forestry</li> <li>• Recreation</li> </ul>
Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Business Services</li> <li>• Facilities &amp; Property Management</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Legislative Services</li> </ul>
Planning and Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building</li> <li>• City Planning Strategies</li> <li>• Development &amp; Design</li> </ul>
Transportation and Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement</li> <li>• Infrastructure Planning &amp; Engineering Services</li> <li>• MiWay - Transit</li> <li>• Works Operations &amp; Maintenance</li> </ul>