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**City of
Kawartha Lakes
Accessibility Strategy
2008-2012**



**February 2008
Final Report**

Prepared by

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Final Report

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Introduction

In the fall of 2007, The City of Kawartha Lakes embarked upon the preparation of a 5 year Community Accessibility Strategy. The City retained the firm of Kevin M. Duguay Community Planning and Consulting Inc. to lead the project.

Following the approval of the RFP, the City and the project consultant commenced with the first major component of the project. A productive half-day workshop attended by 32 individuals representing the City, Kawartha Lakes Community Accessibility Advisory Committee (KLAAC) and community stakeholders was held on October 16, 2007 at the Ops Community Centre. Attached to this report is the detailed workshop report (Attachment A).

The Workshop was facilitated by Patricia Hooper, and Kevin M. Duguay (Project Consultant) served as an expert resource.

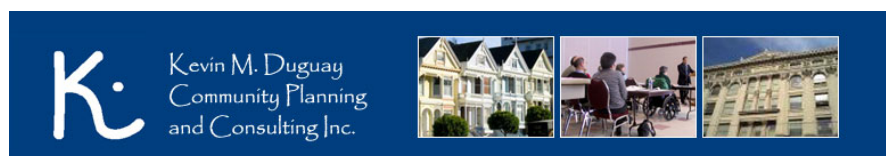
The report summarized the workshop results and set forth a series of preliminary recommendations pertaining to the next component of the project; community consultation-input.

Following the October community workshop was a series of six (6) proposed Public Open House forums intended to show-case the workshop results to the public and obtain feed-back and suggestions. Regrettably, the first three forums did not generate any public attendance, and it was decided at that time to suspend the balance of the planned forums. In its place, the project consultant obtained further input-information from the following sources:

1. City staff;
2. Stakeholders; and
3. Material-sources from comparable Ontario municipalities.

This report is organized in sections, summarized as follows:

- a) the Community Consultation process;
- b) the October 16, 2007 Community Workshop;
- c) the Strategy (2008-2012).



The Community Consultation Process

In order to ensure a meaningful Accessibility Strategy was produced, efforts were made to incorporate meaningful input from the community throughout the process. The October 16, 2007 Community Workshop was particularly relevant in this regard. Buy-in from KLAAC, Staff, Elected Officials and Stakeholders was evident throughout the workshop. Moreover this “buy-in” allows for up-front support towards the recommended 5 year Strategy.

This input was derived from a variety of sources, most notably being the following:

- Review of the City's 2006 and 2007 Access Plans
- Review of the City's Strategic Plan
- The October 16, 2007 Community Workshop
- KLAAC Members
- Stakeholders
- City staff
- 2006 Chamber of Commerce and Lindsay BIA Retail and Accessibility Workshops (led by Kevin M. Duguay)

As noted in the introductory section of the report, the community consultation process envisaged a series of Public Open House forums to follow the October 16, 2007 Community Workshop. The purpose of the proposed forums was to share and discuss the results of the workshop with the general community.

The promotion and advertisement of the forums was carried-out through several means, including:

- Lindsay Post Newspaper, display advertisement
- Letters of invitation to stakeholders
- City Website
- Posters at event locations

Open House forums were planned for the following locations:

| Community Location | Date | Time |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Lindsay City Hall, Victoria Room | November 19, 2007 | 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. |
| Bobcaygeon Service Centre | November 21, 2007 | |
| Coboconk | November 26, 2007 | |

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| Service Centre | | |
| Fenelon Falls Library | November 3, 2007 | |
| Little Britain Library | December 3, 2007 | |
| Kirkfield Service Centre | December 5, 2007 | |

For community residents and other interested parties unable to attend the forums, provisions were made for the Community Workshop Reports and comment sheets being made available at all 6 (six) Municipal Service Centres and on the City's website.

Regrettably, the planned forums did not generate any community attendance. In lieu of this unforeseen turn of events, the project consultant liaised with City staff and stakeholders as part of the on-going preparation of this report.



The October 16, 2007 Community Workshop

A half-day community workshop was held on October 16, 2007 at the Ops Community Centre-Arena, attended by:

- City Councillors;
- City Staff;
- KLAAC Members; and
- Community Stakeholder representatives

The Workshop was a productive undertaking generating many valuable recommendations for the Community Accessibility Strategy. The detailed workshop report is attached to this report (Attachment A).

The following represents a summary of the recommendations offered at the workshop, based on a yearly basis over the proposed 5 year term of the strategy

Year 1 (2008)

- Implementation Strategy
- Facility Inventory
- Communication Strategy
- 5 year plan
- Sustainable funding
- Communication/consultation/review feedback
- Ramp up implementation
- Annual Improvement Plan – include training (Council too)
- Customer service standards
- Community Awareness and Education
- Commitment of everyone from municipality – staff/committees
- Annual Accessibility Fund

Year 2 (2009)

- Prioritize/design projects
- Raise funding
- Way-finding
- Annual event for public
- Review Accomplishments
- Share plan with community
- Audits/Checklists for businesses
- Encourage more joint planning and partnerships

- Develop guidelines/standards
- Lobby for funding
- Capital budgets
- Commence capital projects
- Dedicated staff position

Year 3 (2010)

- Ongoing process – design standards/update guidelines
- Maintain funding
- Staff
- Capital works – continue on regular cycle
- O.D.A. standards implementation
- Partnerships
- Education of public/staff
- Transportation – urban/rural
- Strategies to follow-up on audits
- Ongoing funding
- Implement projects
- Annual communication plan
- Hire to implement
- Review Process

Year 4 (2011)

- Educate new City council
- Capital works/budgeting
- Education
- Policy development on O.D.A. standards
- Housing for special needs
- Rebuild partnerships
- Celebrate successes
- Review Annual Access Plan
- Maintain funding
- Proactive leadership – Municipality/KLAAC
- Keep community aware of progress
- Continue projects
- Communicate

Year 5 (2012)

- Access plan-project progress
- Write new plan

These recommendations served as a key source of relevant information in the eventual development of the Strategy.

A Workshop report was presented and reviewed by KLAAC and City staff. The pertinent recommendations arising from the workshop were prepared for show-casing at the proposed series of Public Open House forums.



The project consultant also compared the workshop recommendations with that of other comparable Ontario municipal projects, particularly that of Burlington. This was employed for purposes of identifying any similarities –consistencies between the two projects.

The Strategy (2008-2012)

The objective of the project was to establish a community supported strategy addressing accessibility issues. The strategy will cover the term of 2008 to 2012 (inclusive). During this term certain important events will occur, including the following:

1. The implementation of the Province's "Customer Service Standard" (2008 to 2010) , directly arising from the 2005 Provincial Accessibility Legislation;
2. The implementation of other similarly derived Provincial Standards (Transportation, Built Environment, Employment);
3. Municipal election of 2010; and
4. The evolution of Provincial Accessibility policies and programs directly impacted the obligated municipal sector.

The forgoing events are in addition to the on-going obligation of the City to provide accessible services, programs and facilities to its residents and visitors alike. Regard has been given for the forgoing events and these community realities in the advancement of the Strategy.

The recommended Strategy is intended to provide direction, planning parameters and general assistance to the City in its mandated responsibility (2001 and 2005 Provincial Accessibility Legislation) of moving towards a barrier-free community. It is also understood that the Strategy will be reviewed on the following basis:

1. annual review, performance review and reporting; and
2. review of the Plan and update, as required, in year 5 (2012).



Year One – 2008

| Priority | Comments |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Development of Accessibility Guidelines</p> | <p>Guidelines Project to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • companion Audit Tool • Resource Tool Kit • Staff –Volunteer Training • Test Audit Program (2-3 sites/buildings) • Report of test Audit Program to KLAAC- City Council, for year two implementation • Establish year two Audit priorities (10-15 sites/buildings), including 1 private sector and 1 stakeholder setting • Recommend the establishment of an Annual Access Fund dedicated to the funding of City site/building remedial work arising from Audit Program <p>Need to hire project consultant.</p> <p>Use of comparable Municipal resources (Whitby, Peterborough, Waterloo, Guelph, Kingston, Thunder Bay).</p> |
| <p>2. Customer Service Program</p> | <p>Prepare and implement a Customer Service Program in accordance with the Provincial Customer Service Standard. The program must be delivered within year one and two of the Plan (2008-2009).</p> <p>The required training encompasses all City Staff, City Council and key volunteers.</p> <p>Consider partnership opportunities with Durham Region- City of Oshawa (currently developing a core training program).</p> |

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| | <p>Develop a program that can be employed in other community sectors.</p> <p>Need to hire project consultant.</p> |
| <p>3. Staff Position</p> | <p>Need for a dedicated City Access Coordinator.</p> <p>Research-consider other Municipal solutions (Peterborough, Oshawa, Burlington).</p> <p>Prepare recommendation for year two implementation for KLAAC endorsement and City Council approval.</p> |
| <p>4. Communication</p> | <p>Communicate-share the approved Strategy, particularly year one directives, to the following sectors/groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-at-large • City Staff, volunteers • Stakeholders <p>Use of the following resources to implement communication directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Website, develop a dedicated "chapter" on the Website • City Leisure Guide feature article • City publications, newsletters • Proposed Spring 2008 Access Fair (KLAAC) • Other means as determined by KLAAC and Staff |

Year Two - 2009

| Priority | Comments |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Customer Service Program | <p>Continued from Year 1 (2008).</p> <p>Implementation of staff training program.</p> <p>Recommendations from Site-Building Audit Program may result in need to remediate customer service areas, information displays, signage and the like.</p> <p>Resource manual and web based resources to be prepared for on-going staff/volunteer use.</p> <p>Consider training-the-trainer program.</p> <p>Maintain partnerships with neighbouring municipalities.</p> <p>Program outreach to retail-business sectors through partnerships with Chamber of Commerce(s) and BIA organizations.</p> |
| 2. Site-Building Audit Program | <p>Undertake Audit of the selected 10-15 priority site-buildings.</p> <p>Implement Year 1 (2008) Audit results (2 sites-buildings remedial work).</p> <p>Use of Annual Access Fund to carry-out the recommended remedial work.</p> <p>Continue with staff-volunteer training.</p> <p>Use of consultant to carry-out Audits and related reporting.</p> <p>Devise remedial plans for the Audited facilities for Year 3 (2010)</p> |

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| | implementation. |
| 3. Access Fund | Annual municipal contribution to the fund (tax based). |
| 4. Access Coordinator | <p>Recruitment, selection/hiring and employment of a dedicated staff position.</p> <p>City –KLAAC to determine actual placement of the employee within the Corporate structure.</p> <p>Typically, it is a City position, serving as a resource to the CAAC.</p> |
| 5. Partnerships | <p>Implement outreach program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business community • Stakeholders • Other obligated sectors <p>Program-resource sharing opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Training • Access Guidelines-audit program • Access resources |
| 6. Community Awareness | <p>Continue with communication plan.</p> <p>Provide orientation program for new full-time employees.</p> |

Year Three - 2010

| Priority | Comments |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Site-Building Audit Program | <p>Undertake Audit of the selected 10-15 priority site-buildings.</p> <p>Implement Year 2 (2009) Audit results (10-15 sites-buildings remedial work).</p> <p>Use of Annual Access Fund to carry-out the recommended remedial work.</p> |

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| | <p>Use of staff (volunteers) to carry-out the site-building Audits, based on Year 2 (2009) Audit training program.</p> <p>Use of consultant to assist with the Audits and related reporting, as required.</p> <p>Devise remedial plans for the Audited facilities for year 3 (2010) implementation.</p> |
| 2. Access Fund | Annual municipal contribution to the fund (tax based). |
| 3. Customer Service Training | <p>Continued from Year 2 (2008).</p> <p>On-going implementation of staff training program (for all new and seasonal employees).</p> <p>Recommendations from the on-going Site-Building Audit Program may result in need to remediate customer service areas, information displays, signage and the like.</p> <p>Maintain and update resource manual and web based resources for on-going staff/volunteer use.</p> <p>On-going use of the training-the-trainer program.</p> <p>Maintain partnerships with neighbouring municipalities.</p> <p>Program outreach to retail-business sectors through partnerships with Chamber of Commerce(s) and BIA organizations.</p> |
| 4. Policy Review | Implement a review of Provincial Accessibility policies and their impact |

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| | <p>upon the municipality (built environment standard, housing and the like).</p> <p>Modify-update Corporate policies as required.</p> |
| 5. Transportation | <p>Implement a review of the urban-rural transit services (opportunities, constraints, options).</p> <p>Explore funding programs opportunities.</p> |

Year Four - 2011

| Priority | Comments |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Site-Building Audit Program | <p>Undertake Audit of the selected 10-15 priority site-buildings.</p> <p>Implement Year 3 (2010) Audit results (10-15 sites-buildings remedial work).</p> <p>Use of Annual Access Fund to carry-out the recommended remedial work.</p> <p>Use of staff (volunteers) to carry-out the site-building Audits, based on Year 2 (2009) Audit training program.</p> <p>Use of consultant to carry-out Audits and related reporting.</p> <p>Devise remedial plans for the Audited facilities for Year 5 (2012) implementation.</p> |
| 2. Access Fund | Annual municipal contribution to the fund (tax based). |
| 3. City Council Orientation | Implement accessibility awareness-orientation program for City Council (2010-2014 term). |

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| 4. Policy Review | <p>Continue with Year 3 policy review of Provincial Accessibility policies and their impact upon the municipality (built environment standard, housing, planning and the like).</p> <p>Modify-update Corporate policies as required.</p> |

Year Five - 2012

| Priority | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Site-Building Audit Program | <p>Undertake Audit of the selected 15-20 priority site-buildings.</p> <p>Implement Year 4 (2011) Audit results (10-15 sites-buildings remedial work).</p> <p>Use of Annual Access Fund to carry-out above remedial work.</p> <p>Use of staff (volunteers) to carry-out the site-building Audits, based on Year 2 (2009) Audit training program.</p> <p>Use of consultant to carry-out Audits and related reporting, as required.</p> <p>Devise remedial plans for the Audited facilities for Year 6 (2013) implementation.</p> |
| 2. Access Fund | Annual municipal contribution to the fund (tax based). |
| 3. Review –update Access Guidelines | <p>Implement a comprehensive review and update of the 2008 City Access Guidelines.</p> <p>Research other comparable municipal resources- guidelines.</p> |

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| | Community-stakeholder input recommended. |
| 4. Update Accessibility Strategy | <p>Implement a comprehensive review and update of the 2008-2012 City Accessibility Strategy.</p> <p>Research other comparable municipal resources- strategies.</p> <p>Community-stakeholder input recommended (community workshop, outreach program).</p> |



Staff Position

At present the City assigns/designates the responsibilities of coordinating and delivering of various accessibility programs, services and resources to specific senior staff. This is not an uncommon municipal practice.

The Strategy recommends the introduction of a dedicated staff position to carry-out these responsibilities. Several Ontario municipalities have elected to implement this option, including:

1. Kitchener
2. Peterborough
3. Oshawa
4. Kingston
5. Thunder Bay
6. Windsor

Other municipalities are in the midst of researching and implementing a staff position.

The decision to establish a dedicated staff position recognizes the increasing demands being placed upon municipalities by way of Provincial Accessibility legislation, policies and programs. The horizon confirms that this situation will, if nothing else increase in its magnitude.

Access Guidelines

In order for the City to effectively carry-out a comprehensive audit of its sites-buildings, it is highly recommended that City approved Access Guidelines be employed.

Many Ontario municipalities are employing such a resource. The two lead Ontario municipalities in this regard are London and Peterborough. The London model is more regulatory-technical in nature (Building Code orientation). Conversely, the Peterborough model is more design oriented, aimed at supporting site/building planning and development.

Both models and other such community resources are available to the City as they consider and select the most appropriate resource for its purposes.



The Access Guidelines program would encompass the following components:

1. companion Site-Building Audit Tool;
2. staff-volunteer training program addressing the understanding and application of the Guidelines, the Audit tool and related resources; and
3. advancing a program of site-building remedial work aimed at creating barrier-free environments.

Customer Service Program

The City is obligated to implement a comprehensive Customer Service program in order to comply with the 2005 Provincial Accessibility legislation and the associated Customer Service Standard. This standard sets forth specific obligations of a municipality.

All Ontario municipalities (and the other three obligated sectors) must devise and implement programs and policies to meet the standard requirements. The Region of Durham and the City of Oshawa have recently initiated a collaborative partnership in this regard. The City of Kawartha Lakes could approach either project leader to discuss partnership opportunities. This concept of collaboration and resource sharing between obligated sectors is worthy of fully pursuing.



(Photograph of an Accessibility Audit Training Event led by Kevin M. Duguay, Village of Lakefield, Peterborough County, summer of 2007)