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**TO:** GENERAL COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** CITY OF BARRIE'S ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENT STATEMENT

**PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:** C. DILLON, ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR, HUMAN RESOURCES, EXT. 5237

**SUBMITTED BY:** A.M. LANLGOIS, DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES *Am Langlois*

**GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:** E. ARCHER, CMA, GENERAL MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES *E. Archer*

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:** C.LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER *C. Ladd*

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**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That the Statement of Commitment to accessibility attached as Appendix "A" to Staff Report HR003-13 be approved.

**PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

2. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) develops, implements and enforces accessibility standards so that goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, structures and premises are accessible to persons with disabilities.
3. Under the AODA, the Ontario Regulation 191/11, entitled, "Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation", came into force on July 1, 2011. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards for information and communication, employment and transportation. The City of Barrie is included in the Regulation's definition of an "obligated public sector organization" and must comply with the phased-in requirements of the Regulation. The City has successfully met compliance of the standards regulation in 2011, 2012 and 2013, and is well positioned to meet its accessibility compliance obligations in subsequent years.
4. The AODA and IASR requires large obligated public and private sector organizations to develop and implement policies, practices and procedures governing how it will improve accessibility to persons with disabilities (including employees, customers and the public) in the provision of its goods and services.
5. In addition to accessibility policy development, obligated organizations are required to establish and implement a multi-year accessibility plan indicating how they will achieve accessibility and a statement of organizational commitment indicating how they will meet the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. The accessibility plan, policies and statement of commitment, must be made available to the public in 2013.
6. The City of Barrie adopted an Accessible Customer Service Policy in 2009, and per the IASR requirements to develop and implement accessibility policies, is incorporating accessibility into already existing employment, and transportation policies. New accessibility policies related to the IASR are being established and implemented as required, where necessary.

7. Like all Ontario municipalities, the City of Barrie is meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) by preparing and implementing both a general Multi-year Accessibility Plan and a Transit Multi-year Accessibility Plan, as well as incorporating accessibility requirements into its policies and procedures.
8. The City's 2013-2018 Multi-year Accessibility Plan, and the City's 2013-2018 Multi-year Accessibility Plan for Transit, have been developed with support from staff and the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). They are presented as separate reports on this agenda for review and approval.
9. The City's commitment statement was developed by the Accessibility Coordinator and Communications Staff, with support from the Executive Management Team. This statement of organizational commitment, Appendix A, is based on the City's 2009 Accessible Customer Service Policy statement, encompasses the City's IASR compliance requirements and confirms the City of Barrie's commitment to the broader goals of accessibility, community inclusion, universal design and the Standards made under the AODA.
10. IASR Compliance requirements for 2012 and 2013 impacting the City of Barrie includes:
  - 3 (1) The Establishment of Accessibility Policies, whereby every obligated organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements referred to in this Regulation.
    - (2) Obligated organizations, other than small organizations, **shall include a statement of commitment** to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in their policies.
    - (3) The Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, every designated public sector organization and large organizations shall:
      - a) Prepare one or more written documents describing its policies; and
      - b) Make the documents publicly available, and shall provide them in an accessible format upon request.

## ANALYSIS

11. The City has a history of proactively improving its facilities, services and programs to ensure increased accessibility for its citizens. The City's statement of organizational commitment highlights the City of Barrie's commitment to the AODA and increased accessibility of the community in general.
12. It is acknowledged that the City's plans must reflect a balance between the goals, objectives and priorities identified by stakeholders and the City's ability to achieve those goals within the framework of Council's Priorities, the City's Strategic Plan, and the resources made available through the City's Annual Business Plan.
13. As the City of Barrie continues to grow, the importance of creating an accessible community should be publicly recognized, and the statement of organizational commitment to accessibility will help to create such public recognition.
14. Consultation with the Executive Management Team and Communication's Staff occurred in December 2012 and January 2013.

15. If approved, the City of Barrie's statement of commitment to accessibility will be posted on the City's website and used to support the City's multi-year accessibility plans and related projects/initiatives. A Statement of Commitment is required for compliance with accessibility legislation and signals the City's commitment to accessibility in its policies, procedures, facilities, goods and services.

#### **Environmental Matters**

16. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

#### **Alternatives**

17. There is an alternative available for consideration by General Committee:

##### **Alternative #1**

General Committee could alter the language used in the Accessibility Statement – Statement of Organizational Commitment to Accessibility.

The Statement of Organizational Commitment to Accessibility was developed in consultation with interested stakeholders and the Executive Management Team, with support from Communications staff. If General Committee elects this alternative, consideration should also be given to re-engaging the stakeholders who participated in creating the draft Statement.

#### **Financial**

18. There are no financial implications associated with the recommended motion.

#### **Linkage to Council Strategic Priorities**

19. This is an operational matter with no direct relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities.

**APPENDIX "A"**

**Draft Statement of Commitment to Accessibility**

The City of Barrie is committed to providing exceptional, accessible service as it works to ensure its policies, programs, and facilities are inclusive and barrier free. The city remains dedicated to incorporating accessibility and universal design principles in its public spaces, reflecting the diverse needs of residents and visitors. Goods, services, and programs will be provided in a manner that is based upon the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity to all its customers and community stakeholders.