THE JOINT ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPALITIES OF GRIMSBY, LINCOLN, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, PELHAM, PORT COLBORNE, THOROLD, WEST LINCOLN

TERMS OF REFERENCE JANUARY 2026

DEFINITIONS

Within this Terms of Reference, the term:

"The municipality" refers to:

> The Municipalities of Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara-On-The-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold, and West Lincoln and may refer to their Agencies, Boards and Committees

“barrier” means:

> anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice (“obstacle”)

“disability” means:

> 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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
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> a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
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> a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
>
> a mental disorder; or,
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> 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”).

MANDATE

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) shall advise and assist *"the Municipality"*, in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free municipality for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility), including persons with disabilities. This aim shall be achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

GOALS:

The JAAC has the following goals:

- To promote public awareness and sensitivity about accessibility issues for people with disabilities
- To encourage co-operation among all service and interest groups
- To communicate with all relevant levels and departments of government and service agencies and make recommendations on policy and legislation
- To identify and document relevant issues and concerns
- To create a community which encourages universal accessibility
- To recognize that the needs of all people are constantly changing, growing and in need of refinement.

DUTIES:

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) shall report to the Municipal Councils. *The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee* shall be responsible for providing advice and recommendations on matters related to The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and any subsequent amendments and regulations.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will collaborate with the Municipality in cultivating inclusion and the continual improvement of access to Municipal facilities, programs and services.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee shall liaise with other standing committees of Council to ensure accessibility is addressed.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee shall liaise with other Accessibility Advisory Committees throughout the Niagara Region.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will review site plans including new-builds, renovations or retrofits directly at its meetings or through its Consultant or Site Plan Review Checklist.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will initiate and implement education programs and events and will develop training materials for the Municipality to meet its AODA compliance obligations.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee will develop an Accessibility Award in recognition of municipal, public and private sector efforts to improve accessibility in our community. These awards will be given out once (1x) per council term.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee shall serve as a liaison between public and private sector organizations, services and interest groups by conducting public outreach activities. Ongoing activities of the committee include, maintaining a social media presence; speaking to organizations about accessibility; educating them how to welcome people with disabilities into their business or workplace and; providing information about the AODA and its regulations.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The JAAC shall be comprised of fifteen (15) members consisting of:

a) a majority of the members (minimum of (10)) shall be persons with disabilities. These Committee members shall be representative of gender, ethnicity and different types of visible and invisible disabilities noted in the AODA such as persons with physical (visual, speech, hearing, deaf, brain injury, use of a wheelchair); cognitive (intellectual impairments); perceptual (learning disability) and mental health disabilities.

   Up to two (2) individuals will be appointed per municipality with at least one person having a disability.

b) a maximum of five (5) members who **may not** have a disability:
   - one (1) whom shall be members of the Councils of *"the Municipality"* who shall rotate among the municipalities on an annual basis
   - four (4) shall be citizens from *"the Municipality".*

Members of the JAAC shall serve for the Term of the Municipal Councils and may be reappointed.

Staff Support Group:

Administrative Support Staff are subject to review and funding allocation and may be derived from the Departments of "the Municipality".

Sub-Committees:

The Advisory Committee may form sub-committees and working groups as may be necessary to address specific issues. These sub-committees and working groups shall draw upon members from the Advisory Committee as well as outside resource members as deemed necessary. The Chair of a sub-committee and/or working group shall be a voting member of the Advisory Committee.

QUALIFICATIONS

Each member of the Committee is an independent representative to the Committee and does not represent the concerns of only one disability or group. The members of this Committee shall work together for the purpose of developing a common approach that is reasonable and practical.

Members shall be chosen for their special expertise, experience, dedication and commitment to the mandate of the Committee in promoting and facilitating a barrier free municipality to persons of all abilities.

PROCEDURES AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted parliamentary procedures including provision for notices, agendas and minutes.

The Committee members will determine a regular meeting schedule.

In the event of a pecuniary interest the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and Municipal Code of Conduct shall be the guide for members of the Committee.

Each member shall be subject to the conflict-of-interest policy and code of conduct of the municipality they represent.

APPOINTMENT PRINCIPLES

In order to ensure an inclusive Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, “the Municipality” shall consider the following:

- application forms shall be available upon request to the Municipal Clerk’s Office

- vacancies shall be publicly advertised, and all applications must be considered

- the methods of advertising Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee vacancies may be tailored to the specific needs of this Committee. For example, in addition to local newspaper advertisements, targeted advertising may take

place through publications and/or local agency websites, as well as through the use of alternative formats, which serve the local disability community; and,

- “the Municipality” may, at its discretion, review the composition of this Committee as needed to ensure that it is representative of persons with disabilities and is working effectively.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES

Each member of the committee shall serve without remuneration but may be reimbursed by “the Municipality” for any necessary expenses incurred while engaged in official duties, within the approved budget of the JAAC.

The budget of the JAAC shall be reported upon quarterly.

For purposes of Clarity the budget of the JAAC is to be submitted annually on or before January 31 and approved by *“the municipality”.*

AMENDMENTS

The Committee may from time to time recommend to Council amendments to these Terms of Reference following an appropriately voted resolution.