

City Council**Motion without Notice**

MM44.85	ACTION			Ward:All
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Increasing Accessibility of Online Content and Materials for Public Consultations - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Chief Information Officer in collaboration with the Interim Director, Strategic Communications to explore options to identify and eliminate accessibility barriers for online platforms and video materials used to share and enhance public consultations held by the City and report back to Council in the first quarter of 2019 this includes ensuring online content, that is streamed and stored online, is available to users on at least one accessible platform.
2. City Council request the Director, Equity, Diversity and Human Rights to work with City divisions that conduct public consultations, inclusive of the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division and Policy, Planning, Finance and Administration Division, to ensure that consultation processes are made accessible to people with disabilities thereby reducing the need to request documents in an accessible format.

Summary

The City provides access to Council and Committee meetings, consultations and other events online to inform citizens and encourage public conversation. The use of different technologies, including video and social media platforms, connects people to city processes. But not all platforms (e.g. Periscope) are accessible for people with disabilities who use adaptive technology, such as those with visual impairments who rely on screen readers. In many instances, people with disabilities must request accessible formats and resources to ensure they can access materials. Engaging in City consultations processes already presents some barriers for vulnerable groups. The process to request accommodations may create additional barriers for people with disabilities.

We should identify and remove these barriers and build a Toronto that is inclusive of all. We must prioritize accessibility in public engagement to ensure that everyone has an equal

opportunity to participate in City consultation processes, from start to finish.

In 2009, City Council committed to create an accessible city and to support the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) to align with the Province's goal of full accessibility by 2025. Currently, the City has developed policies, practices and procedures to become consistent with the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 provisions, including in the areas of information access and communications.

To date, the content on the City of Toronto's website has been updated to ensure accessibility standards (note: Both Corporate IT and Division IT units are working diligently to ensure all applications are also accessible. There is currently a capital project that has started to review and remedy any non-accessible public-facing applications). Compliance remains a shared responsibility, as each City division is responsible for ensuring the content it puts up on the website meets the guidelines. Video and social media tools are transforming how people gather information and interact with others, including government. But not everyone can access these tools: screen reader users often have difficulty navigating social media due to lack of keyboard shortcuts or no alternate text for images; people who are deaf cannot access the content of videos with no closed captioning.

The recommendations seek to increase access to City resources, materials and information to create an equal opportunity for people living with disabilities to participate in civic engagement.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM44.85