

Date: September 22, 2020

To: Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

Request for Public Consultations on Creating Safe Waiting Areas at City Hall for People with Disabilities

Summary:

According to a recent media report, concerns have been voiced that the City of Toronto in the name of public safety and security had reduced public access to City Hall for people with disabilities by eliminating the option of using the Hagerman and Elizabeth Street entrance and converting it into a dedicated staff-only entrance.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6595696/toronto-city-hall-accessibility/>

This recent policy change is problematic for persons with disabilities (including Wheel-Trans users) as it eliminates the option of using the heated indoor waiting area at the Hagerman and Elizabeth Street entrance and forces people with disabilities and Wheel-Trans users to use the Bay Street entrance. As highlighted in the above referenced media report, the Bay Street entrance has a small outdoor shelter that cannot safely accommodate individuals using large mobility devices, and moreover lacks sufficient accessibility features as the access ramp is too narrow to safely accommodate said individuals. In addition, this small outdoor shelter is not heated, therefore forcing users to experience cold frigid temperatures in winter months.

Recommendations:

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends that:

1. The Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, ensure that public consultations with specific outreach to people with disabilities are held regarding decisions of any proposed public safety and security measures at City facilities that would impact access and accessibility;
2. City Council request the Toronto Transit Commission Board to request the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Transit Commission to hold public consultations with people with disabilities to seek feedback on how to improve the safety and accessibility of the small outdoor shelter at the Bay Street entrance near City Hall and to make a presentation to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the findings of said public consultations.

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