

Changes Impacting Access to Social Infrastructure

Presentation to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory
Committee

July 29, 2025





Purpose

- Provide an overview of changes regarding access to social infrastructure to the AAAC for informational purposes.

Council Direction

- At its December 2024 meeting ([2024.CC24.2](#)), City Council directed the City Manager, in consultation with the City Solicitor, applicable City divisions, the Toronto Police Service and other applicable stakeholders, to report to City Council in the first quarter of 2025, informed by public consultations and a constitutional legal expert opinion on the Charter Rights implications from the City Solicitor, with a proposed by-law, with an emphasis on protecting vulnerable institutions such as places of worship, faith-based schools and cultural institutions, that supports the City's commitment to keeping Torontonians safe from hate and protects Charter rights that address impacts of demonstrations that target people based on their identity as prohibited under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Public Consultation

- Key themes from the public consultation included:
 - Polarization of opinion in terms of strong support for or strong opposition to a potential proposed bylaw
 - Concern about potential infringement of rights protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
 - Support for demonstrations in Toronto
 - Ability for the City to explore and/or utilize other existing enforcement tools to address concerns about demonstrations
 - Lack of clarity around the definition of “vulnerable institutions”
- Through directed engagement with Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents and communities, the City received feedback expressing the critical importance of demonstrations and the potential negative impact on freedom of expression and civic engagement.

Council Decision

- In May 2025, City staff reported back to Council with a proposed bylaw amendment.
- At its meeting on May 22, 2025, City Council voted on several amendments to the staff-proposed bylaw and adopted an amended bylaw ([2025.CC30.5](#)).
- The City's Streets and Sidewalks Bylaw was amended to include an article on Access to Social Infrastructure, which came into effect on July 2, 2025.

Access to Social Infrastructure

- An Access Area would prohibit specific behaviours (see Appendix) on City property preventing access to Social Infrastructure.
- Under the bylaw, Social Infrastructure is defined as a Childcare Centre, a Place of Worship or a School (which includes primary and secondary, and public and private schools as defined in the Education Act).
- An Access Area would cover any City property that is within 50 metres from the Social Infrastructure.
- An Access Area is established upon request from the Social Infrastructure Owner attesting that they reasonably believe a prohibited activity may occur on City property within the prescribed distance.
- An established Access Area is in effect for a one-year term.
- An established Access Area does not prohibit peaceful gatherings, protests or demonstrations, including any activities that occur as part of a labour union strike, information pickets and/or activities related to a Labour Dispute.

Bylaw Implementation

- City staff have been moving forward with implementation activities and operational planning to administer the bylaw.
- The City began accepting requests for Access Areas July 2, 2025 when the bylaw came into effect.
- An ongoing public education and communication plan is being conducted to ensure the public is aware of and understands the new regulations, including community-focused communication.

Communications

- A dedicated City webpage was launched on July 2 with information about the bylaw and Access Area requests: toronto.ca/AccessArea
- Staff presented to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee in June and will be presenting to the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee in October.
- Staff are informing community groups and organizations that participated in the public consultation about the amended bylaw coming into effect and the new website.
- Staff will continue to explore further communications opportunities to support public and community awareness of the amended bylaw and its provisions.



Thank you

Appendix - Prohibitions

While in an Access Area, no person shall:

- (1) perform or attempt to perform an act of discouragement concerning a person's attendance at, use of, or attempts to attend or use Social Infrastructure;
- (2) persistently request that a person refrain from accessing Social Infrastructure;
- (3) obstruct, hinder or interfere or attempt to obstruct, hinder or interfere with another person's access of or attempt to access Social Infrastructure; or
- (4) express an objection or disapproval towards any person based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability or the receipt of public assistance by any means, including graphic, verbal, or written means.