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Date January 16, 2025 **Report No.** 2025-53
To Chair and Members
Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee
From Heather Carvalho
Manager, Communications and Community Engagement

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item For Consideration

2.0 Topic **2025 Accessibility Education Campaign [Financial Impact: \$10,000]**

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report No. 2025-53 regarding the City of Brantford Accessibility Education Campaign BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT the 2025 Accessibility Education Campaign be APPROVED; and
- C. THAT the release of funds in the amount of \$10,000 from the Council Reserve Fund for the implementation of the campaign BE APPROVED.

4.0 Background

The 2024 Accessibility Education campaign included the relaunch of the Brantford Accessibility Improvement Awards program to celebrate and honour

individuals, groups, and organizations that made significant contributions to accessibility in our community. The education campaign was also supported by a new video titled “*A Day in the Life - Understanding Accessibility in our City.*” The video, that debuted at the City hosted AccessAbility Expo on June 1, 2024 and ran on City platforms throughout June features City officials experiencing various situations through the perspective of persons with disabilities, fostering empathy and commitment to removing barriers in both customer service and City infrastructure.

The 2024 Accessibility Awards were presented at the AccessAbility Expo, celebrating the achievements of five individuals and organizations that work towards a more accessible Brantford.

Building on the success of the 2024 campaign, staff continue to feel strongly that the Accessibility Awards Program is one of the most effective methods to promote accessibility both to the private sector, as well as to members of the community at large. To build on the education campaign, staff also recommend that the education video be updated to include additional situations showcasing the City’s considerable efforts to make outdoor infrastructure more accessible.

5.0 Analysis

The City of Brantford is committed to being a leader in accessibility by setting an example for the community and helping private sector and not-for-profit organizations become aware of and implement the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. Furthermore, ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility aligns with the goals of the City’s Inclusive Community Plan 2023 - 2026 ([Report No. 2024-217](#)). Staff will be providing the Inclusive Community Plan 2025 Annual Update to Council in Q2 2025.

While the City maintains compliance with *AODA* through our delivery of programs and services, many persons with disabilities still face challenges accessing private sector services in our community and many community members are unaware of these challenges.

5.1 City of Brantford 2025 Accessibility Awards

The City of Brantford Accessibility Awards Program recognizes and celebrates individuals and organizations in our community that have shown a commitment to providing excellent accessibility initiatives to accommodate people with disabilities.

Initially launched in 2016, the City has recognized organizations that met and/or exceeded the legislated standards of the *AODA* for both existing and renovated structures, as well as programs, services and private sector events within the municipality that provide a barrier free experience. Organizations are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

Adjudication Process

To qualify, nominations must be received from members of the public by February 28, 2025. Evaluators will include the City of Brantford Accessibility Coordinator, Communications staff and community representatives who serve on the Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee. Each submission will be reviewed and assessed based on specific criteria as outlined above. Recommended recipients will be presented to BAAC at their next meeting to be held March 20, 2025. Award winners will be announced at the May City Council meeting on May 27, 2025 and promoted during National AccessAbility Week 2025 from May 25 to 31, 2025.

5.1.1 Accessibility Awards Promotional Campaign

To ensure that recipients are selected in time to award them during National AccessAbility Week. National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) takes place every year starting on the last Sunday in May. NAAW 2025 is May 25 to 31, 2025.

This week is a time when accessibility and inclusion is promoted across communities and workplaces and a time to celebrate the contributions of persons with disabilities. It is also an opportunity to recognize the efforts of the City and local citizens who are actively removing barriers and ensuring persons with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of society.

Staff proposes that the 2025 Accessibility Awards Program call for nominations

be open from January 22 to February 28, 2025 and be supported with the following communications:

Collateral materials to support the program include:

- Online nomination form
- A framed Certificate of Recognition to each award recipient
- Window decals that may be displayed in a prominent position within the business to identify that the business supports accessibility for people with disabilities.
- A letter of congratulations to the organization from the City of Brantford/Mayor's Office, in recognition of the positive community difference in the area of accessibility initiatives, displayed on the organization and City's website.

Recommended communications to promote Accessibility Awards campaign:

- Dedicated webpage on the City's website
- Media release
- Print and Social Media Campaign (augmented with Facebook, Instagram and YouTube ads)

5.2 "A Day in the Life – Understanding Accessibility in our City" video update

Staff recommend making updates to the "*A Day in the Life – Understanding Accessibility in our City*" video that was produced in 2024. The video features City officials experiencing various situations through the perspective of persons with disabilities, fostering empathy and commitment to removing barriers in both customer service and City infrastructure. Staff recommend capturing additional video footage showcasing demonstrating the City's considerable efforts to make outdoor infrastructure more accessible, including Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) installed in City crosswalks.

It is recommended that the updated video launches on May 25th to coincide with the first day of NAAW. The video will also air at the ceremony to recognize the 2025 Accessibility Award recipients.

Staff value and welcome the Committee’s insights and input in making updates to the video to ensure that this initiative is sensitive to the diverse needs of our community and is well-received.

6.0 Financial Implications

Following is a suggested detailing of the 2025 Education Campaign Budget

Video Update	\$ 3,500
Paid Print Media/Sponsored Content	\$ 3,500
Digital Advertising	<u>\$ 3,000</u>
Total:	\$10,000

7.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

8.0 Conclusion

The objective of the 2025 Accessibility Education Campaign is to build on the success of the 2024 initiatives, and to publicly reaffirm the City of Brantford's commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible community. By promoting the Accessibility Awards Program, enhancing the impactful “*A Day in the Life – Understanding Accessibility in our City*” video, and aligning these efforts with National AccessAbility Week, the City continues to lead by example in removing barriers and celebrating accessibility achievements. These initiatives not only recognize the contributions of individuals and organizations but also encourage broader support of accessibility principles, fostering a more equitable environment for all members of our community.

Heather Carvalho
Manager, Communications and Community Engagement

Prepared By:

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Attachments (if applicable)

Copy to:

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? yes no