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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Laughie Rutt, Diversity Advisor

DATE: July 7, 2017

SUBJECT: Feedback on creating a more accessible community

I have been asked to prepare a short list of five or six items in accessibility that could be accomplished to create a more accessible community. This list of four to five items would be submitted to the mayor's office.

- Please consider the five areas where barriers to accessibility exist:
- Attitudinal – Example, Customer service training
- Systemic – Example, A learn on the job training program for persons with disabilities
- Physical – Example, Adoption of the CSA standard of accessibility for all HRM built environment projects
- Information / Communication – Example - Producing HRM essential materials in alternate formats
- Technology – Example - Set a standard of web site accessibility to adhere to an international standard.

If you could bring any ideas to the next meeting.

Thanks, Laughie

Attachments:

A Municipal Guide to an Act Representing Accessibility in Nova Scotia (Bill No. 59)

Q & A Backgrounder on Accessibility & Inclusion Office of Diversity & Inclusion

A Municipal Guide to an Act Representing Accessibility in Nova Scotia (Bill No. 59)

When did the Act come into force?

The Act was given royal assent on April 28th, 2017.

What is the goal of the act?

The goal is to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

What areas are covered under the Act?

- (1) The delivery of goods and services.*
- (2) Information and communication*
- (3) Public transportation and transportation infrastructure*
- (4) Employment*
- (5) The built environment*
- (6) Education, and*
- (7) A prescribed activity or undertaking*

What is the timeframe of the Act?

The goal is set of achieving an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

What is the provincial structure under the Act?

An Accessibility Directorate of staff will support the administration and implementation with its' own Executive Director.

An Accessibility Advisory Board consisting of twelve members will make recommendations on accessibility standards to be implemented.

When will the standards be available?

No timeframe for any of the standards has been established in the Act. Each standard will be released separately as they are finalized. The standard will dictate who is responsible to implement the standard and the period of implementation. The Accessibility Advisory Board can establish sub committees to assist with the development of the standards.

Who will get to consult with those developing the standards?

Consultation will take place with (1) persons with disabilities; (2) organizations representing persons with disabilities; (3) entities engaged in the undertaking of the standard; and (4) others.

What is in the immediate future for municipalities?

Under the Act every public sector body shall prepare and make available an accessibility plan within one year of the coming into force of the Act.

What is required in this accessibility plan?

This accessibility plan must report on the measures taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers. The plan must be for a period of three years and updated on a three year cycle. The plan must be made available to the public.

What is the requirement on the committee structure of the municipality?

All public sector bodies must have an accessibility advisory committee or continue any such committee it had in place before the coming into force of this Act.

At least one half of the members of an accessibility advisory committee must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities.

What will be done with Compliance?

The Executive Director of the Directorate will have inspectors to for administering compliance.

What will be the role of inspectors?

The inspectors will determine compliance by verifying the accuracy of records, require the production of records and inspect physical premises and equipment.

What is the power of inspectors?

Inspectors may issue an order which is appealable.

What happens if there is no compliance with the order?

The director has the power to assign an administrative penalty.

What are the parameters of the administrative penalty?

The parameters of the administrative penalty are not stipulated in the Act and will be found in the regulations of the Act which have not been issued.

Q & A Backgrounder on Accessibility & Inclusion

Office of Diversity & Inclusion

Question: What is Accessibility & Inclusion?

Answer: Simply put the words accessibility and inclusion put together refer to the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities that level their playing field with other diverse groups. The removal of these specific barriers does not remove all barriers faced by this group. This group still experiences many of the same barriers faced by other diverse groups that are the focus of overall diversity programs, such as the following examples:

- low employment levels
- stereotypes
- being victims of crime, including violence
- discrimination

Question: What are the Barriers to Accessibility & Inclusion?

Answer: There are five types of barriers to accessibility and inclusion:

1. Attitudinal
2. Systemic
3. Physical
4. Information / Communication
5. Technological

Question: What are attitudinal barriers?

Answer: Attitudinal barriers are perceptions, assumptions and biases that manifest themselves into behaviours. Examples may be that a person who is non-verbal is not intelligent or that not having vision might mean that an individual will not be on time for work or appointments.

Question: What are systemic barriers?

Answer: Intentional or unintentional barriers that create unfair distinction for some customers or staff. Examples may be that no parents are allowed on the pool deck during swimming classes, thereby furthering the anxiety for a child with this form of emotional disability or, not making allowances for job applicants who need to see interview questions in writing as they have a disability that makes oral questioning not perform at their best.

Question: What are physical barriers?

Answer: These are elements of buildings, other facilities and paths of travel that preclude the full participation of staff and citizens. Examples could be a step into a work area or, no access to a playing field so a parent with a disability cannot institute care and control of their child as do other parents.

Question: What are technology barriers?

Answer: These are platforms such as web sites that cannot be used for their intended purpose even with the use of an assistive device. An example may be a web site that is not fully accessible to the international web access standard of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) and cannot be read by screen readers for those who are blind or visually impaired.

Question: What are information and communication barriers?

Answer: These are barriers resulting from the non-disclosure of the options available to persons with disabilities to overcome the other four barriers to accessibility and inclusion or by

not providing information in alternate formats such as large print or not using sign language interpretation.