

Date: 2020-11-09

Subject: **Accessibility Awards Program – Amendments to Nomination and Recognition Procedures**

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Report Number: Legislative Services-2020-419

Recommendations:

1. That the report titled **Accessibility Awards Program – Amendments to Nomination and Recognition Procedures**, to the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of December 8, 2020 be received; and
2. That the Accessibility Awards Program established in 2017, be amended to include the following updates:
 - a new Award category be established for “Accessible Programs & Initiatives”, open to individuals, community groups and businesses;
 - self-nominations be permitted;
 - employees and Members of Council be eligible to submit nominations for the Award categories as long as they have no involvement in the review or selection process;
 - award recipients be invited to a Committee of Council or Council meeting in June annually, during National AccessAbility Week, for a presentation of the awards; and
 - all nominees for each category be recognized with a certificate signed by the Mayor.

Overview:

- **The Accessibility Awards Program is an annual program coordinated by the City Clerk’s Office that recognizes individuals, groups, organizations and businesses in Brampton that make outstanding contributions towards accessibility.**

- **This report recommends amending the eligibility criteria for persons who can submit nominations, adding a new category (Accessible Programs & Initiatives), and changing the award presentation of the Accessibility Awards Program to make it more inclusive, increase community participation and align eligibility requirements with accessibility award programs in other municipalities.**

Background:

The Accessibility Awards Program was established in 2017 to recognize individuals, groups, organizations and businesses in Brampton that make outstanding contributions towards accessibility. Each year, recipients are selected from a list of nominees to receive a reward of recognition.

Current eligibility criteria to be nominated for an award includes:

- A community member, community group or business meeting one the following criteria are eligible for nomination:
 - a resident of Brampton
 - a community or not-for-profit organization operating in Brampton
 - an owner of a business in Brampton
- The achievements and contribution of nominees must benefit the Brampton community.
- Self-nominations are not accepted.
- City of Brampton employees and members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) are not permitted to submit nominations or be nominated for the award.

The nomination and recognition process in the past has included the following steps:

1. Nominations for Accessibility Awards opened and were accepted for two months in the fall of each year.
2. A sub-committee of the AAC was established to review all nominations and select one recipient from each category to receive an award.
3. The successful nominees were presented with a plaque at an awards reception at the December AAC meeting.
4. A list of award recipients is available to the public on the City's website.

Current Situation:

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has resulted in many provincial and regional restrictions that closed facilities, events and programs across the province. As a result of the restrictions, accessibility staff have considered alternative ways to promote, offer and celebrate the 2020 Accessibility Awards Program.

2020 has been an exceptional year in managing public expectations, information provision and innovative ways to provide public services and programs across the

country. Many services and facilities have had to alter the way they provide access and services to individuals and many of the mandated restrictions have resulted in virtual platforms. Accessibility related to these amended circumstances and virtual platforms has been discussed on numerous occasions to ensure individuals of all abilities continue to have equal access to facilities, services and programs in light of the changing times.

Recognizing that the current Awards Program could be enhanced and improved to not only address the current pandemic environment, but to also provide for more opportunities for individuals to be nominated, and to ensure all nominees are recognized for their important contributions, staff undertook a review of the program.

Upon review, staff is suggesting the following changes to the existing program:

- the Accessibility Awards Program be amended to include a new Award category for “Accessible Programs & Initiatives” with the category being open to individuals, community groups and businesses;
- allowing self-nominations for any of the categories;
- Allowing employees and Members of Council to make nominations for the award categories as long as they have no involvement in the review or selection process;
- changing the awards presentation from the December AAC meeting of the award year to a Committee of Council or Council meeting in June the following year annually during National AccessAbility Week; and
- Acknowledging all nominees in each category through provision of a recognition certificate signed by the Mayor.

Staff further suggest hosting a reception the morning of the designated meeting for an opportunity to allow City staff, Council, AAC Members, the recipients and a designated number of guests to mingle. This reception would be dependent on annual budget considerations and resources each year, as well as the status of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions and public safety measures. For the 2020 Awards, nominations will be open from January-March of 2021 and be presented in June 2021 with the intention for this to be the continued process for future years. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2021, the presentation may be virtual instead of in person.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

The cost of the Accessibility Awards Program is minimal with funding currently provided through the City Clerk’s Office budget. Staff do not anticipate any impacts to this current budget allocation.

Other Implications:

None.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report fulfills the Council priority of the City of Brampton as a **Mosaic**, recognizing the City’s continued commitment towards accessibility for all residents of Brampton. The City Clerk’s Office strives to promote accessibility for all as a key priority in our day-to-day business and future planning.

Further, Accessibility Awards Program meets additional Council priorities:

- The City of Brampton’s Vision for **Opportunities** – improving livability, employment opportunities, neighborhood services and programs
- **Healthy and Safe City** – focusing on community safety, improving mental health support, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles
- **Well-Run City** – public participation, modern workforce, collaboration and advocacy

Conclusion:

Accessibility awards provide role-model recognition that reinforces positive change within a community by promoting awareness. It is an opportunity to celebrate achievements and reaffirm the City of Brampton’s commitment to fostering an inclusive, accessible environment. Staff recommends making enhancements to the current Accessibility Awards Program to continue with the goal of promoting awareness and recognizing individuals, groups and businesses who make significant contributions in relation to accessibility within the City of Brampton.

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