

# Hillsview Georgetown Welcome Desk Renovation

## Recreation and Parks

Submission to: Town of Halton Hills Accessible Advisory Committee

### Project Summary:

A new **Welcome Desk** at the Hillsview Active Living 50+ Seniors Centre in Georgetown requires a renovation to meet AODA standards. The welcome desk is the first point of entry into the facility and should be accessible and inclusive for volunteers and all persons who visit, participate and volunteer in this public recreation centre. In addition to being the Centre's welcoming point, the desk is also an important location for the direct delivery of services to participants. Accessibility Advisory funding will enable us to re-design a welcome desk that complies with AODA standards and provides an open and welcoming customer service experience.

### Background:

The Hillsview Active Living 50+ Seniors Centre in Georgetown is the primary location in this community for recreation and social connections for this demographic. The Centre is membership-based and offers a wide array of opportunities for seniors to be active, social, engaged, volunteer in their community and much more. The Town and Hillsview have been in partnership for 25 years through a Memorandum of Understanding where Hillsview contributes 25% of the total operating budget. The Town is responsible for all capital projects and expenditures to keep this facility current and in good repair.

With a membership base serving approximately 10% of the senior's population in Halton Hills, members enjoy a wide range of active and social programs. The Centre also serves as a community hub for various health and social service agencies in the Region. The Centre operates Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Volunteers are critical to the operation of the Centre and are relied upon to support day-to-day operations, including Customer Service (reception) Volunteers. The current customer service desk is a 'piecemeal' of used office equipment. It does not meet AODA standards and due to structure and dimensions, it is not suitable for volunteers with a disability. With approximately 27% of the current membership identifying as having a physical disability, the customer service desk is key for creating a welcoming and accessible first point of contact when entering the facility. This is where members obtain information and perform all Centre functions. Renovation of the desk will increase opportunities for volunteering and provide easy access to obtain services for those with a disability.

Total Funding Request: **\$17,000 + HST**

A preliminary design and quote were provided for the purpose of requesting grant funds. The Recreation and Parks department applied for this funding through both the Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) and the Provincial Inclusive Grants Program. Unfortunately, we were not successful with either of these applications.

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### Why Funding is Required/Financial Impacts:

The AODA (Accessibility Ontario Disabilities Act) aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for Ontarians with disabilities, with a goal of making Ontario fully accessible by 2025. The Standards under the Act contain the rules businesses and organizations must follow to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. In the Town of Halton Hills, we have a customer service desk at the Hillsview Active Living 50+ Seniors Centre that needs renovation to meet AODA criteria. Renovations to this structure will improve accessibility and safety for older adults and persons with disabilities in a community recreation space and create a “Welcome Desk” for all persons. This project will address two of the five AODA standards:

- i) The Design of Public Spaces Standards - Public spaces are everywhere, and every person deserves the right to access these spaces without limitations. The Town wants to make communal spaces more accessible. Renovating a public counter is a service-related element that reduces barriers and promotes inclusivity. The design chose for Hillsview Georgetown is a non-fixed asset so can be moved should we change locations.
- ii) The Customer Service Standards – The Customer Service Standard mandates that service providers must find ways to break down barriers that prevent customers with disabilities from accessing the services they need. The existing service desk is a physical and architectural barrier that limit access to services. Hillsview Georgetown needs a welcome desk that is accessible and allows all people to do every-day activities similar to the Hillsview location in Acton. The existing service counter is designed in regular check-out format with someone behind the counter. According to AODA, the counter must be redesigned for people to perform tasks in front of them such as registering for a program, signing up for a membership, using a point-of-sale device, purchasing transit tickets, or viewing merchandise. This funding will support construction of this counter to create a proper Welcome Desk so that a portion of it meets the appropriate height for a seated person to access. It will have knee and toe clearance so that people using mobility devices can sit comfortably at the counter. This renovation will allow persons with disabilities to participate in, and contribute to, their community through participation, volunteerism, and the right to access public services.

The project will be led by the Town's Manager of Capital projects with support, input and engagement from the target audience which is Hillsview membership, volunteers, and persons with disabilities. In our project plan, seniors will be an integral in confirming the design and layout of the space to ensure that it also meets requirements of an aging population for the long term.

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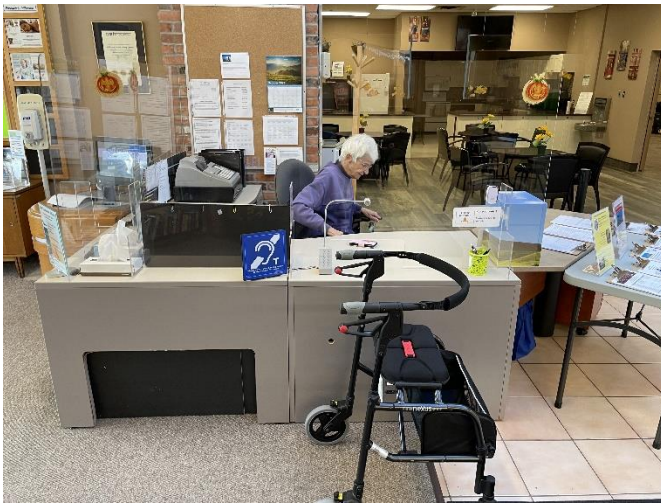
### Risk:

This project is not currently in the capital forecast, and we are at risk of not meeting AODA standards within a public space.

### Next Steps:

If funding is not granted, we will need to pursue capital budget support from council, as part of the annual budget process, and will continue to seek grant opportunities.

### Pictures:



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