



## **Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee**

### **MINUTES**

Minutes of the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee held on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020, at 6:30 p.m., virtually via Zoom.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor J. Hurst, Chair; Councillor W. Farrow-Reed, Vice Chair; C. Licznarski; D. Sebalj; K. Heffernan; M. Lowe; J. Pearce

**REGRETS:** J. Bray; LD. McKenzie; C. Macewan

**STAFF PRESENT:** C. Warner, Accessibility Coordinator; R. Brown, Deputy Clerk; D. Locey, Transit Supervisor

**OTHERS PRESENT:** A. O'Hara; J. Ragunathan; B. Goodge, Y. Grinspun of Left Turn Right Turn Consulting

#### **1. Call to Order**

Councillor J. Hurst, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

#### **2. Disclosure of Pecuniary/ Conflict of Interest**

Councillor J. Hurst, Chair called upon members of the committee for any disclosure of pecuniary or conflict of interest they might have with items on the agenda. None were declared.

#### **3. Scheduled Items for Discussion**

##### **a. Presentation by J. Ragunathan from Left Turn Right Turn Consulting regarding the Specialized Transit Plan**

J. Ragunathan of Left Turn Right Turn consulting provided the committee with an update regarding the Specialized Transit Plan and the review of ActiVan Services.

J. Ragunathan advised that Phase 1 of the project began in May of 2020 and was completed in September of 2020 which included evaluating ActiVan's current service delivery model and proposing new improvements to ensure AODA compliance.

A report was presented to Town Council on September 28, 2020 which was well received and all recommendations were approved and will be implemented once budget approval is obtained. J. Ragunathan reviewed these recommendations with the committee which included bringing services in-house, establish an independent appeals process, update the eligibility application form, update the booking policy and process and enhance transfer connections.

J. Ragunathan went on to discuss Phase 2 of the project which included future demand of ActiVan and creating service standards to improve customer experience. These proposed service standards are broken down into 5 key categories; eligibility, service efficiency, service quality, customer service, and operations. J. Ragunathan went on to review each of these categories in depth with the committee.

J. Ragunathan let the committee know that a Public Information Centre (PIC) will be held virtually in early November 2020 through the Lets Talk Halton Hills website. The PIC will be a pre-recorded presentation and will be used to get citizens interested, inform them of the upcoming changes to ActiVan and engage customers to provide feedback about the current service. The information shared at the PIC will be a high-level summary of the Phase 1 service improvements and service standards recommendations. An online survey will also be placed on the Lets Talk Halton Hills website for two weeks in early November 2020 with questions to help understand citizens current experience with the ActiVan service and feedback on specific service standards.

D.Locey, advised that a newspaper ad will be placed in the local paper, along with a mail out to all existing customers. Both the ad and mail out will have links to the Lets Talk Halton Hills webpage.

J. Ragunathan let the committee know that next steps will be to obtain budget approval for the proposed Phase 1 recommendations and conduct the Phase 2 public consultations along with developing long term service improvement recommendations. J. Ragunathan thanked the committee for their input.

Councillor J. Hurst thanked the consultants for sitting in on the meeting and look forward to seeing the finished product.

## **b. Activan Update**

D. Locey provided an update to the committee regarding the use of ActiVan over the past few months during the COVID-19 Pandemic. D. Locey, advised that ridership has decreased over the months due to COVID-19 which was partly due to many of the programs that riders used ActiVan to attend, have been cancelled and/or they are running minimal programs.

D. Locey noted that ActiVan has increased cleaning and sanitation of the vehicles and has installed driver barriers in all vehicles. A fare box was also installed in each vehicle to reduce hand to hand contact and they also have reduced passenger capacity and installed "Seat Out of Use" stickers to promote physical distancing. Riders must also now fill out a COVID-19 screening questionnaire at the time of boarding.

D. Locey advised that they did have to place some part-time staff in declared emergency leave, but have since been able to hire some back. From March 30<sup>th</sup> to July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 ActiVan fares were waived. Temporary client applications have been accepted over the phone due to facility closures and have an expiry date of December 31, 2020.

ActiVan has been used to assist Food for Life with contactless door-to-door delivery of food donations along with assisting Halton Food for Thought with delivery of healthy Grab-and-Go food boxes for schools.

D. Locey advised that the Province has provided some provincial funding through Municipal Transit Enhanced Cleaning Fund and Safe Restart Agreement - Transit Phase 1 to help offset additional costs related to cleaning and support municipal pressures incurred from COVID-19.

D. Locey advised that ActiVan has not experienced this yet but should a rider with symptoms need ActiVan to get to the doctor they would still transfer the rider. The vehicle would then be pulled out of service for that day to be fully cleaned and sanitized. ActiVan would also make sure that the driver was fully equipped with all proper PPE prior to accepting the rider onto the vehicle.

D. Locey advised that each vehicle is cleaned 3 times a day by the driver, as cleaning was already part of their daily duties. Each vehicle is cleaned in the morning at the yard, mid-day, and then again at the end of the day in the yard.

### **c. Accessibility Funding Requests**

D. Locey presented to the committee a request to implement MagnusCards. MagnusCards are a free user application (APP) that is downloadable and helps assist those with autism and other cognitive special needs. It helps users to learn new life skills while building confidence and helps users to live more independently.

D. Locey explained that each card deck can have up to 10 cards and each card deck presents one step of the task in question. Magnus through the APP teaches the user how to handle day to day activities and the user can either read or listen to Magnus explain each step. An example of a card deck could be how to purchase ActiVan tickets.

D. Locey advised that MagnusCards could be used by 3 different departments within the Town of Halton Hills; ActiVan, Halton Hills Public Library, and Recreation and Parks.

D. Locey, advised the request would be for a total of 15 card decks, 5 for each of the 3 departments. There would be a one-time capital investment of \$30,000.00 plus HST hosting fee and \$5,000.00 plus HST first year operating cost for a total of \$35,000 plus HST. After this initial investment the three departments using the cards will cover the operating costs of \$5,000 plus HST per year.

The committee discussed and agreed to support the use of funds from the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee Capital Budget for the one-time capital investment of \$30,000.00 plus HST hosting fee and \$5,000.00 plus HST operating fee for a total of \$35,000 plus HST for the first year operating costs. With the understanding that after this initial investment the three departments using the cards will cover the operating costs of \$5,000 plus HST per year through their own departmental budgets.

Recommendation No. HHAAC-2020-0001

THAT the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the funding request for 15 card decks through MangnusCards for Activan, Halton Hills Public Library, and Recreation and Parks.

AND FURTHER THAT Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the one-time capital investment in the amount of \$35,000 plus HST to be funded from the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee Capital Budget.

CARRIED

**4. Closed Session**

NIL

**5. Items to be Scheduled for Next Meeting**

NIL

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.