



## Notice of Motion

Councillor Alysson Storey

Re: Ensuring access for all residents to the proposed Chatham-Kent Community Hub

Whereas, there is an estimated 25,000 people in Chatham-Kent with an identified disability, equaling 1 in every 4 people;

Whereas, current provincial accessibility legislation does not cover the vast majority of barriers and has not been updated in twenty years

Whereas, the Municipality can and should be a leader in demonstrating accessibility through universal design and ensuring all citizens can access public services at the Civic Centre, Library and Museum;

Whereas, the Municipality should not be creating taxpayer-funded barriers in the old Sears building and potentially restricting access to municipal business, library and museum services;

Whereas, universal design and improved accessibility to publicly-owned buildings treats all members of the public with dignity and respect and accommodates a wide range of abilities;

Be it resolved that:

1. All planning and design work for the old Sears building should exceed current 20-year old legislation, informed by feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee
2. Relevant user groups related to accessibility, including the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and local accessibility and seniors advocacy groups are consulted before the next Report to Council on this item and throughout the remainder of this process.
3. This planning will include standard studies for a project of this type and size, which includes passenger and pedestrian load, modelling and traffic flows in and around the entire property, vehicle traffic flow on entire property including parking garage, traffic impact study on the surrounding streets, to make sure everyone can enter, travel around the building, and exit the building safely.

4. A list of parking distance and parking accessibility features of the proposed site are reviewed with the ACC and included in the next Report to Council on this item.
5. Recommendations from the AAC and stakeholder groups that exceed current standards are costed out and included in upcoming Council reports on this proposal.
6. An assessment of universal design experience of the current team is done and reviewed with AAC; and if additional expertise is needed this cost will be included in the next Report to Council.

The notice of motion would support the following area(s) of strategic focus:

			
<p><b>Deliver Excellent Service</b></p>	<p><b>Promote Safety &amp; Well-Being</b></p>	<p><b>Grow Our Community</b></p>	<p><b>Ensure Environmental Sustainability</b></p>

# Administration Response – Notice of Motion

Topic: Ensuring access for all residents to the proposed Chatham-Kent Community Hub

Requesting Councillor: Alysson Storey

Name of staff completing this form: Greg Benson

Council meeting date NOM presented: October 7, 2024

Council meeting date to be voted on: November 18, 2024

---





1. Has this request come before Council previously? Yes  No

If so, when and what was the Council decision?

---

2. Does this request support a Council Term Priority? Yes  No

If so, the notice of motion would support the following area(s) of strategic focus:

			
<b>Deliver Excellent Service</b>	<b>Promote Safety &amp; Well-Being</b>	<b>Grow Our Community</b>	<b>Ensure Environmental Sustainability</b>
1a, 2d	4c	1b, 5a	

3. What is the cost/ budget implication (at a high level), if any: \$80,000.00

Explanation of cost estimate

**To procure Consulting Services to perform a traffic study surrounding the proposed property and to procure a separate Consulting Service outside of the Architect project team who, through code requirements, are required to perform these services already.**

**Note: The cost estimate only accounts for the Detailed Design Phase**

4. Is it already in the queue with administration? Yes  No

If yes, date expected to come to Council: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Should a report from administration be completed? Yes  No

Why? **The necessary scopes of work for the detailed design phase of this project are captured in the October 21, 2024 Report to Council for the project.**

Type of Report? Information Report  Recommendation Report

6. What is the estimated time to complete this request? **4-6 months**

Date expected to return to Council: **At the completion of Detailed Design.**

7. What items, if any, are needed to be put on hold in order to complete this task?

**The progression of architectural detailed design, impacting the overall schedule. Retaining a Universal design consultant will result in duplication of works and will result in delays to progression of design and approvals. Additionally, the motion proposes for additional expertise to be considered at the next report to Council, however the next report to Council will be upon completion of the detailed design effort, after the work to fully design the accessibility measures will be complete as part of the overall project design and the project will be at the final cost estimate stage and prepared for the construction procurement process subject to Council direction at that point.**

8. General or other comments:

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent remains committed in its obligation to making public spaces accessible for all residents, including the approximately 25,000 individuals living with disabilities. This is supported by adherence to accessibility legislation, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which was enacted in June 2005, and our ongoing focus on universal design principles that ensure inclusivity for everyone. The design and development of the Chatham-Kent Community Hub, located in the former Sears building, reflects these values and ensures that access to public services, such as the Civic Centre, Library, and Museum, is barrier-free.

**1. Provincial Accessibility Legislation Coverage:**

The design of the Chatham-Kent Community Hub meets the current standards of AODA and OBC. The Ontario Building Code (OBC) addresses key areas, including building entrances,

paths of travel, washrooms, signage, parking, and assistive devices. Furthermore, AODA focuses on customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation, and public spaces. The Municipality's approach integrates these requirements into the overall design of the Chatham-Kent Community Hub.

Administration has concerns about the idea that the design must "exceed" current legislation, as this sets an unknown standard to meet. As the architect discussed at the Oct 21, 2024 meeting, universal design is being used in the design work. As previously outlined in the October 21st Report to Council, consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be conducted throughout the remainder of the project design. This ensures ongoing engagement with stakeholders to ensure that the Hub remains inclusive and accessible to all citizens.

## **2. Stakeholder Consultation and the Municipality's Role in Leading Accessibility Initiatives:**

As noted above and outlined in the October 21, 2024 Report to Council, consultation will be conducted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) through the detailed design phase of the project, as the official Committee for the Municipality for consultation on matters related to accessibility for persons with disabilities. Consultation with other advocacy groups has not been identified and is not clear. Consultation has been undertaken with the public through the concept design phase of the project, including matters relating to accessibility for the proposed Community Hub, and this informs the detailed design phase of the project in addition to continued consultation with the AAC.

Recommendations from the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will be considered to ensure they enhance accessibility while aligning with project scope and requirements. The Municipality remains committed to integrating accessibility features into the overall design and budget of the Chatham-Kent Community Hub, as these elements are fundamental to the project's planning and compliance with all current standards. Therefore, accessibility-related features will not be itemized separately, as they are fully embedded into the facility's design and included in the project budget to ensure the entire facility is fully compliant with accessibility standards.

## **3. Comprehensive Accessibility Planning and Parking Considerations:**

The Chatham-Kent Community Hub is located within an existing mall structure, and thus many elements related to traffic and parking have already been addressed. As a result, studies typically required for projects of this size and scope, including passenger and pedestrian load, traffic modelling, and parking distance comparisons, are not required for this project. The facility is being designed with ample pedestrian pathways, vehicle drop-off zones, and barrier-free parking that exceed municipal bylaw requirements. The existing parking garage offers 462 spaces with traffic signal access, and there are additional surface parking areas and no traffic concerns are anticipated since there will be no increase in parking demand. Additionally, the reduction in loading docks from 5 to 3 will improve overall traffic flow within the site.

As outlined in the October 21, 2024 report to Council, parking distances have been reviewed and are in alignment with the OBC and AODA with best practices. Administration will provide further updates in future reports.

**4. Expertise in Universal Design:**

It is not within the role or mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to assess the qualifications and procurement of consultants. As outlined in the October 21, 2024 report to Council, the architect, Architecttura Inc., brings significant expertise in universal design to the project, ensuring that all accessibility requirements are fully addressed. Their experience ensures that there is no need for additional consultants, as they have the skills necessary to meet the highest standards for making public spaces accessible to all.

In summary, the Chatham-Kent Community Hub is designed to exceed current accessibility standards, integrating best practices and universal design principles forecasting future requirements. With stakeholder input, expert design, and a strong commitment to inclusivity, this facility will provide an accessible environment for all, ensuring that the Municipality leads by example in making public services accessible to everyone. Staff is committed to being fiscally responsible for this project, hence no additional consulting resources are required.