



Corporate *NO: R127*

Report *COUNCIL DATE: June 4, 2001_*

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	May 29, 2001
FROM:	General Manager, Engineering	FILE:	8013-001, 0523-500(C.1)
SUBJECT:	Accessibility for all into the Council Chamber		

RECOMMENDATION

Council receive this report as information.

BACKGROUND

At the Monday, December 11, 2000, Council-in-Committee meeting, Council received a delegation from Pat Goble, President of 'Surrey Access for All Committee' to discuss wheelchair and scooter accessibility into the Council Chamber as well as microphone access for the disabled.

Facilities staff have reviewed the issues raised by the delegation and have met on site with Pat Goble, President, Surrey Access for All Committee to discuss various options within the Council Chambers.

The items raised were that individuals in wheelchairs or scooters did not have access to the microphone since the microphone is situated in the centre and on top of the 42-inch high barrier. The distance between this barrier and the first row of chairs does not allow easy passage for a wheelchair or scooter and would disrupt any persons occupying these seats.

On other occasions it has been noted that the staff area created by this railing has only one access/egress and a second access adjacent to the ramp has been requested.

Seating accommodation for wheelchairs and scooters is also required.

In addition to the accessibility issue in the Council Chambers, it was noted that although the existing public washrooms in the lobby area are equipped for wheelchair usage, they were not signed as such. Also the doors to the washrooms were heavy and hard to open. Access could be improved by making the doors easier to handle. In addition, it was suggested that visibility of the access buttons on the exterior doors could be improved by using yellow signage.

The yellow signage for the access buttons has been installed and the doors to the public washrooms in the lobby are in process of being replaced with lighter doors and equipped with hardware for ease of swing. Proper signage for these washrooms has also been ordered.

The value of the proposed work is approximately \$7,500. which can be funded from the approved Capital Infrastructure Budget.

CONCLUSION

Modifications to the washrooms as requested are in progress. In regard to the Council chambers, various possible modifications to the railing were reviewed, including accommodating a second lowered microphone adjacent to the existing podium and microphone. Factors of visibility, ease of movement, least disruption, and cost were taken into account.

It is concluded that the most desirable modification includes:

- creating a wheelchair/scooter seating area on the west side of the chambers opposite the ramp, replacing 3 rows of seats adjacent to the west wall;
- creating a 42 inch wide opening in the barrier adjacent to the ramp, and closest to the new accessible seating area, which would allow wheelchair access to the microphone and overhead projectors, etc. located on the table surface in the staff seating area;
- modifying the millwork to accommodate easy wheelchair access to be seated at this microphone location.

A floor plan sketch is attached for illustration.

These modifications are least disruptive to the existing seating area. Access to the microphone in this location also accommodates access to any other visual aids that may be desired for presentation purposes and preserves for greatest visibility to the Council seating area.

The proposed modifications would be undertaken during the month of August.

Jorgen Johansen, P. Eng.
General Manager, Engineering

MB/kjj

Attachment

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