

THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Report CAO 04-2019

Council Meeting Date: May 7, 2019

TO: Mayor Weber and Members of Council

FROM: Kevin Williams, CAO

RE: StopGap Community Ramp Project

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CAO 04-2019 regarding the “StopGap Community Ramp Project” be received; and

THAT Council supports the implementation of the StopGap Community Ramp Project if a local organization(s) wishes to champion the project; and

THAT the StopGap Community Ramp Project be promoted through the Lambton Shores Accessibility webpage.

SUMMARY

This report provides details on the StopGap Program, which exists to reduce barriers to accessing commercial buildings.

BACKGROUND

At its September 11, 2018 meeting, Council passed the following motion:

18-0911-18 THAT Report DCS 35-2018 regarding the Accessibility Committee StopGap Request be received; and

THAT staff be directed to prepare a detailed report on the StopGap program for a future meeting.

The StopGap Foundation is a registered charity that promotes the use of temporary ramps to allow access to commercial buildings where a step currently presents a barrier. This is done through Community Ramp Projects, which are volunteer-led initiatives bringing StopGap’s awareness raising messages to communities across Canada. Figure 1 is provided as an example of a typical ramp.

Community Ramp Projects have been implemented in Sarnia, Petrolia, London and Stratford and numerous other communities throughout Ontario and Canada.

The program requires local volunteers to advocate for the program to local business, BIAs and Chambers of Commerce. A volunteer Community Ramp Project Team Leader is identified, and that person works to gain support for the project, recruit other volunteers and secure donations (either monetary or building materials).

Volunteers approach businesses for buy-in to the program, take measurements for custom built ramps on properties that meet the criteria and provide signed waivers from prospective businesses back to StopGap. Ramps are built and painted by volunteers (usually local construction companies, high school construction classes or other qualified volunteers). The North Lambton Secondary School has indicated support

In order to assist communities in making their storefronts more accessible, StopGap provides the following:

- Ramp Project Brochure
- Design Spreadsheets
- Material Donation Request Letter
- Stencils (StopGap.ca)
- The Ramp Project Survey Form
- The "Access Ramp Available Upon Request Sign"
- Liability Waiver for participating businesses

There is no cost to receive the above materials from StopGap.

Ramps are temporary in nature and are not permanently fixed to the sidewalk or other structures. In most cases, the ramps are placed on a case by case basis, if requested by a patron. Signage provided by StopGap communicates the availability of a ramp. The temporary nature of the ramp negates the need to address a more permanent sidewalk encroachment, while providing a solution for access.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

There are no alternatives presented. Staff reached out to a business in a high traffic area of Sarnia that has a StopGap ramp, and the ramp has been a welcome addition to their business. The ramp has been in place now for approximately five years, and has required no repairs to date. The ramp allows access not only to persons with accessibility needs but also to parents with strollers.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

It is recommended that Council support any local organization wishing to come forward to champion the implementation of the StopGap program in Lambton Shores.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no direct financial impact to the Municipality. StopGap recommends fundraising to cover the cost of ramp materials, or soliciting building supply stores for

the donation of materials. Alternatively, businesses that wish to have a ramp often cover the cost of the materials for the ramp that serves their establishment. Typically, the materials for an average sized ramp cost approximately \$100. StopGap is a registered charity and is able to provide tax receipts for materials and/or monetary donations.

CONSULTATION

Staff reached out to One Tooth, a participating StopGap business in Sarnia, and to Mr. Luke Anderson, Executive Director of the StopGap Foundation. Lambton Shores Accessibility Committee was also consulted.

Figure 1:

