

Staff Report 2019-0191

Meeting Date: December 3, 2019

Subject: Disabled Road Sign Policy

Submitted By: Chad Curtis, Specialist, Legislative Services
Arash Olia, Interim Manager, Transportation Engineering

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed Disabled Road Sign Policy attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2019-0191 be approved; and

That the General Manager, Corporate Services be delegated the authority to make minor and technical adjustments to the Disabled Road Signs Policy as required.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The intention of disabled road signs is to draw awareness to drivers that a person in the area may not react in an expected manner due to a physical or mental impairment.
- A resident requested a disabled road sign on Walker Road and was denied. This same requestor noticed a disabled road sign on Borland Crescent and notified the municipality of inconsistencies of disabled road signs in the Town.
- There are no signs designated in the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) for traffic warning signs dealing with disabilities.
- Council directed Staff to research a disabled road sign program. Town Staff examined similar programs from municipalities across Canada.
- A proposed disabled road sign policy and application form are included as Schedules to this report to outline the requirements to have a disabled road sign placed on a road.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to bring forward a proposed Disabled Road Sign Policy for approval. This proposed Policy creates a formalized process for residents of Caledon to obtain road signage that alerts motorists they are entering an area where a disabled person resides.

Several years ago, the Town received a request for a disabled road sign for Walker Road. Staff conducted a review, and a sign was installed. In 2018 a resident attended an Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting to request a similar sign on Borland Crescent and reported that their request was denied as there is no mention in the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) for warning signs dealing with disabilities. This same requestor noticed the disabled road sign on Walker Road and contacted the Town to inquire why their request was rejected while there are similar signs located elsewhere in the municipality.

Road signage for disabilities is not a legal requirement in the OTM or the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. The City of Niagara Falls is the first municipality in Ontario to adopt a disabled road sign policy. Niagara Falls provided the Town with their report to Council for their program and provided feedback on their experiences to date. Staff in Transportation Services at the City of Niagara noted that;

- they receive positive feedback from residents regarding the program;
- they have installed approximately 20 signs to date;
- signs are installed on local roads only, not regional roads;
- the cost to produce and install the sign are covered by the municipality;
- they follow up with residents annually who have previously requested signs to ensure the sign is still applicable and to confirm that they have not moved.

Staff reviewed the policy established by Niagara Falls and sought guidance from Town Staff in Transportation Engineering with respect to the purpose, approach and need for a similar program in Caledon. It was noted by Transportation Engineering that at the time the sign was installed on Walker Road, Town Staff reviewed the situation specifically (e.g. collected traffic volume and speed data, land use, the requester's needs, etc.), and alignment with the Town's Transportation Master Plan (that safety for vulnerable road users is paramount) and the Region's Vision Zero Road Safety Initiative (that all efforts are needed to prevent the loss of life on road). To ensure consistency and eliminate the ad hoc approach taken previously, Transportation Engineering Staff support creation of a disabled road sign program.

Through the course of research, it was noted that the Region of Peel does not have a disabled road signs program. Correspondence was sent to the Region regarding any concerns with the Town developing such a program. No concerns were raised.

Staff contacted the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Caledon Detachment regarding any concerns with the Town developing such a program. The OPP did note that there is no ability to enforce the proposed road signage as they are not identified in the OTM or the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA).

Staff is of the opinion that given the intent of the sign is draw awareness to drivers that a person in the area may not react in an expected manner due to a physical or mental impairment, there is still merit to have such signs in place as a caution to drivers, even if enforcement is not possible.

The proposed Disabled Road Signs Policy outlines the requirement of having a disabled sign placed in the Town of Caledon. This includes;

- the proximity of a disabled sign placement to the applicant's address;
- the processes for a resident to inform the municipality of any amendments of the disabled sign;
- the length of time a sign will be placed before removal;
- the timeframe for a sign to be installed after an application has been made'

- that annual correspondence be sent to requestors to ensure the sign is still applicable and they have not moved; and
- listing of such approved signs in the Transportation Engineering systems database.

The proposed Disabled Road Signs Policy is included in Schedule A to Staff Report 2019-0191 and outlines the purpose and process to be implemented. The proposed Policy was drafted in partnership with Transportation Engineering Staff.

Staff are recommending that the General Manager, Corporate Services be delegated the authority to make minor and technical adjustments to the proposed Policy as required. This will provide flexibility such that if processes such as technical review or application form require amendment they can be made by staff and do not require a staff report to Council. This delegated authority to make minor and technical amendments is consistent with other Council approved policies.

The proposed disabled road sign application form, attached as Schedule B to Staff Report 2019-0191, outlines the process for a resident to formally submit their request for a disabled road sign to be placed near their residence. Requests will be received and reviewed by Transportation Engineering Staff and the division will be responsible for the installation of disabled signs and updating the sign database. Annual correspondence will be sent by Legislative Services Staff to requestors to ensure the sign is still applicable and they have not moved.

A sample of proposed road signage is included in Schedule C to Staff Report 2019-0191. A standardized sign using the disability symbol, that is universally recognized, along with sign tabs that identify the more specific condition of the individual in the area are proposed be instituted if the program is supported. This will provide information to the driver as to how to anticipate pedestrians' reaction to traffic.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sign production and installations will be carried out by Transportation Engineering staff. Staff estimate that each sign will cost between \$30 and \$40. The total budget impact of the Program is dependent upon the number of requests of such signs, which at this time is not expected to be significant. Since this is one of the first disabled road signs program in Ontario, it is unknown the number of requests the Town will receive.

The costs to produce and install the sign is proposed to be covered by the Town. This is similar to the Town covering costs of other types of warning signs in the municipality. The signs provide benefits to the requestor; however, they also benefit the public therefore no fee is proposed to be charged to the requestor.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Sustainable Growth

Continue the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan including transit, infrastructure, cycling, traffic management, traffic calming, liveable and walkable communities.

Improved Service Delivery

Increase education and awareness of available services and accessibility options.

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule A: Proposed Disabled Road Sign Policy

Schedule B: Proposed Disabled Road Sign Application

Schedule C: Proposed Disabled Road Sign Layout