



## TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

## REPORT

Item No.

**REPORT TO:** Reeve Vincent and Members of Council  
**PREPARED BY:** Jeff Molenhuis, Director of Public Works  
**DATE:** 06/03/2017  
**SUBJECT:** StopGap Program Report  
**ATTACHMENTS:** StopGap Program Policy

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby accepts the StopGap Program Report for information purposes;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the StopGap program in North Huron through the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee;

AND FURTHER THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron direct staff to further refine the attached draft "StopGap Ramp Policy" and report back to Council with a formal policy for adoption.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, Council heard from Julie Sawchuk through a delegation. Julie is a resident of Blyth, a teacher at FE Madill, and a member of Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee. She was asking for support of the StopGap ramp project in North Huron through a Council motion endorsing the program. StopGap is a not-for-profit organization whose sole objective is to increase accessibility, so everyone can have access to every space. The Community Ramp Project will create awareness about barriers in our built environment.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Community Ramp Project was developed by the StopGap Foundation to allow communities to supply free deployable entry ramps to businesses with single stepped storefronts which prevent access to some people including those in wheelchairs, with mobility devices or strollers. In the older, more historic downtown cores, accessibility to buildings is an issue. This initiative is an easy, straightforward fix to increase accessibility.

It is understood that the materials and labour for the StopGap ramp are procured through donations and student labour, and the program is coordinated through Ms. Sawchuk and the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Township Staff are in support of the program. The program would require temporary deployment of a small, wooden access ramp partially onto the sidewalk at the point of entry to a building. It's understood that the deployment would be temporary to allow for access, and would be simply removed and stored once used.

Staff have been in contact with our insurance provider, BFL Canada, and have been advised on specific liability limitations. To limit the Township's liability for the private ramps being deployed in the Township right of way, it is recommended that the Township require applicants to provide a

“Certificate of Insurance” naming the Township as co-insured but only for the purpose of operation of the ramp activity. It is recommended that an application process be created to ensure necessary items are completed through a policy and procedure to track and administer the program as it relates to Township interests. The sole purpose of the application would strictly be associated with allowing business owners to place the ramp on the Township sidewalk when required by a patron, and that responsibility and liability for such would be that of the business owner only.

It is anticipated that close coordination with the business community and the Advisory Committee through Ms. Sawchuk will be required. Prior to the report deadline, the draft policy was forwarded to Ms. Sawchuk; however, a response was not received prior to the Council report deadline.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There will be no financial impact to the Township of North Huron for the ramps. Township staff are recommending the insurance requirement in order to limit the Township’s potential liability due to this particular activity in the right of way.

#### **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

When further comments are received on the draft policy, Staff will bring a separate report forward on the policy for Council consideration.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Goal 3 the Township is healthy and safe.

Goal 4 the administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.



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Jeff Molenhuis, Director of Public Works



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Sharon Chambers, CAO