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Report 2025-108

Report Title: Accessibility Upgrades to Emergency Exits at 555 Courthouse Road

Committee Name: Public Works

Committee Meeting Date: June 2, 2025

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Approved by: Jennifer Moore, CAO

Council Meeting Date: June 18, 2025

Strategic Plan Priorities: ☐ Innovate for Service Excellence
☐ Ignite Economic Opportunity
☐ Foster a Thriving Community
☒ Propel Sustainable Growth
☐ Champion a Vibrant Future

Recommendation

“That the Public Works Committee, having considered Report 2025-108 ‘Accessible Upgrades to Emergency Exits at 555 Courthouse Road’, recommend that County Council award RFQ 25-06 – Replacement of Exterior Walkways at 555 Courthouse Rd., to AVI Construction Inc., at their bid price of \$172,822.20, inclusive of HST; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council authorize the use of \$87,228.22 in funds from Facilities Reserves, to partially fund this project.”

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to receive Council authorization to award RFQ 25-06 to AVI Construction Inc, and further to secure Council authorization to utilize \$87,228.22 of funds from Facilities Reserves to partially fund the overall cost of this project.

Background

In 2022, it was identified that upgrades to two of the Emergency Exits at 555 Courthouse Road should be made in order to make these Emergency Exits accessible for staff and visitors with disabilities and support the County’s Commitment to Accessibility. The two Emergency Exits in question are:

- 1st Floor Emergency Exit located in Committee Room B; and
- 2nd Floor North-East Staff Entrance / Emergency Exit.

In late 2022, staff submitted a funding application to Employment and Social Development Canada’s (ESDC’s) Enabling Accessibility Fund. In March of 2023, the County received notice that its funding application had been successful and that it would receive \$100,000 from the Enabling Accessibility Fund towards the project.

In 2023, the County retained the services of Barry Bryan Associates (BBA), to complete the detailed design of the necessary upgrades.

The upgrades to the 1st floor Emergency Exit will include:

- Installation of 1 exterior accessible door (with push button operator and cane detectable guardrails); and
- Installation of a new exterior cement ramp, to remove barriers between the South parking lot and the existing Emergency Exit.

The upgrades to the 2nd floor North-East Staff Entrance / Emergency Exit will include:

- Installation of 2 accessible doors (interior and exterior) (with two sets of push button operators);
- Installation of a new exterior cement ramp, to remove barriers at this entrance; and
- Installation of a canopy / weather cover at the entranceway to alleviate current issues with icicle formation above the entrance and snow build up around the entrance.

Consultations

Throughout the funding application and design process for these planned accessibility upgrades, the Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) was engaged. In October of 2022, the Committee provided a letter to the County in support of the funding application to ESDC.

As the detailed designs were being prepared for the upgrades, the NAAC was consulted with and their members provided excellent and practical feedback which ultimately helped to ensure that the overall design would meet the needs of a multitude of users with various accessibility challenges.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), municipalities are expected to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of the AODA is to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA and its standards, municipalities are required to include a statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in their policies. The County's commitment statement is as follows: "The County of Northumberland is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, visit and invest in our community. The County is guided by the four core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, and supports the full inclusion of persons as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)."

The Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) is mandated to provide recommendations to Council and County Departments on the development, implementation review and update of the County's multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the NAAC duties include identifying and recommending measures for the removal and prevention of barriers within the County's programs, services, and facilities.

The County invites members of the public to attend various public events in Council Chambers, such as Council Meetings, Public Information Sessions, Open Houses, Committee Meeting, etc. In the event of a fire or activation of the fire alarm system, the use of the elevator is not permitted by the public or staff. The majority of the 2nd floor at 555 Courthouse Road is only accessible to staff who have security swipe cards. As a result, in the event of a fire or activation of the fire alarm system, members of the public with mobility challenges, who are attending an event in Council Chambers, would be challenged in exiting the building safely. The only exit that would be available to them is the North-East Staff Entrance. This entrance is currently not accessible. There is a 15 cm drop outside of the exterior door, and a raised curb where the walkway to this entrance meets the parking lot, the doors at this entrance are also not equipped with push button automated door openers. Should an emergency (fire or other threats) take place in the main lobby area, staff and visitors in the secured area behind the reception desk (Committee Room B and the Warden, CAO and other offices) would not have a safe exit.

Council could elect not to proceed with the proposed accessibility upgrades. In doing so the County would lose out on \$100,000 of committed funds from ESDC. This funding amounts to roughly 53% of the overall project costs. The funding agreement with ESDC expires at the end of November this year.

Discussion / Options

Four (4) electronic bids were received by the submission deadline. The submissions have been checked and verified for accuracy with no discrepancies to report.

The four (4) bids received were as follows:

	Company/Bidder	Company Bidder Location	Bid Results (incl. of non-recoverable portion of HST)	Difference from the Low Bidder
1	AVI Construction Inc	Markham, ON	\$155,631.74	\$0
2	Henderson Construction	Port Hope, ON	\$221,328.00	\$65,696.26
3	Absolute General Contracting	Trenton, ON	\$235,065.60	\$79,433.86
4	Dalren Limited	Cobourg, ON	\$320,696.64	\$165,064.90

Financial Impact

There are sufficient non-committed funds within the Facilities Reserve account to cover \$87,228.22 required to complete this project. As such, staff are proposing that the \$87,228.22 in funds required to complete this project be provided from the Facilities Reserves.

The table below provides a breakdown of the total estimated project costs, and funding sources:

Item	Amount (incl. of non-recoverable portion of HST)
Detailed Design	\$31,596.48
Construction	\$155,631.74
Total Project Cost	\$187,228.22
ESDC Funding	(\$100,000)
Net amount to be funded from Facilities Reserves	\$87,228.22

Member Municipality Impacts

N/A

Conclusion / Outcomes

Staff are requesting that the Public Works Committee recommend that County Council award RFP 25-06 to AVI Construction Inc, at their bid price of \$172,822.20, inclusive of HST. Staff are also requesting that the Public Works Committee recommend that County Council approve the use of \$87,228.22 from Facilities Reserves to partially fund this project.

Attachments

N/A