

To: Mayor Burrow and Council

From: Charles Dowdall, Director of Finance

Subject: Township Office Building – AODA Compliance and Capital Repairs

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Council receive this Report F-26-13 – Township Office Building – AODA Compliance and Capital Repairs;

AND THAT Council directed staff to report back to Council on April 27, 2026, with an integrated review of the capital requirements of the New Dublin Garage, Township Municipal Building, and Frankville Public School to include the financial implications for each project individually and on a consolidated basis.

BACKGROUND:

On February 23, 2026, Council approved the 2026 Municipal Budget to include a capital expenditure of \$350,000 for the completion of capital repairs to various Township municipal buildings. Council further approved that the cost of these capital repairs is to be funded through short-term debt financing which results in an annual debt payment of \$72,170.

Of the total capital expenditures of \$350,000 approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget; \$142,000 is for repairs to the Township Municipal Office which is summarized as follows:

Capital Expenditure Description	Estimated Cost
Roof Repairs	\$50,000
Renovations to Council Chambers (ceiling, lighting, flooring)	\$26,000
Replacement of lighting throughout building to more energy efficient lighting	\$30,000
Renovations to 2 nd floor offices	\$15,000
Installation of new security system	\$21,000

During the departmental budget presentations staff outlined that further capital repairs over and above what was approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget would be required to the Township Municipal Office to be compliant with AODA legislation.

Staff advised they would undertake a further assessment of the Township Municipal Office specific to what would be required in renovations and/or modifications to the building and the associated costs to meet AODA requirements.

DISCUSSION:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

This legislation is an Ontario law mandating that organizations must follow established sets of accessibility standards when dealing with the public. The standards fall into five categories: namely, information and communications, customer service, transportation, employment, and design of public spaces.

It is important to point out that the focus of the AODA is not solely directed at members of the public attending the building for service but also includes accessibility of the premises by staff for the delivery of services.

The standards established by this legislation required all public sector, private sector, and non-profit sector organizations to be compliant by December 31, 2025. However, given the changes in market conditions since 2020 and its effect on the cost of building materials thereby impeding the compliance of the design of public spaces, the requirement of all public buildings to be fully accessible by December 31, 2025, will not be met.

As a result, the deadline for compliance of the design of public spaces for accessibility for **all** public buildings in the Province has now been extended to **December 31, 2030**. In addition to the revised compliance deadline, all public sector organizations are now required to file a report annually on the progress they have made toward accessibility compliance under the Act.

Township Office Building - Background

The Township Office Building was constructed in two phases. The original building is constructed of cut-stone masonry walls and was built in 1890. It is important to note that buildings of this period were not built to any accessibility requirements. The original building has two stories and a crawl space. The offices for the Finance Department, and IT & Communications are located on the main floor. The offices for Building Inspection, Facilities Management, and Planning & Zoning are located on the second floor.

In 1997, an addition was constructed to the original building consisting of one storey above grade and a storey below grade. The main level of this addition is used for the Council chambers and the offices of the CAO, Deputy Clerk, Deputy Treasurer, Public Works Manager, and the Recreations & Operations Coordinator are located on the basement level of this addition. The total area of the Township Municipal Office Building is 6,140 sq ft.

The only method of access to the second-floor offices for either the public or municipal staff is by a two-level staircase. In the case of the basement level offices, the only method of access is a single staircase. In its current format, any person with a physical disability, either the general public or staff, would not be able to access anything beyond the main floor of the building.

Township Office Building – AODA Assessment

Staff enlisted the services of Eastern Engineering Group to complete an assessment of the current building with respect to what is required for AODA compliance (Attachment 1). The assessment was completed using the criteria outlined in Section 3.8 of the *2024 Ontario Building Code* and accessibility standards outlined in CSA/ASC B651:23 would apply to the Municipal Township Office Building. The assessment provides an extensive summary of what renovations would be needed to the current structure on each floor and what renovations would be required at a minimum for AODA compliance.

The assessment concludes that the existing Municipal Township Office Building will require substantial upgrades with the requirements for barrier-free path of travel and accessibility standards. The assessment further concludes that while Part 11 of the Ontario Building Code provides some compliance alternatives for barrier-free accessibility, it is not a recommended practice for institutional facilities serving the general public.

The estimated cost for completion of the renovations required at a minimum for AODA compliance is \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000 plus HST. As pointed out in the assessment, the renovations, even those recommended at a minimum will result in extensive work and would require a complete renovation of the building. Further, as the report outlines, the installation of elevators for multi-level access will result in significant structural changes to the building.

OPTIONS:

Given the extensive renovations required to make the Townships Offices AODA complaint, staff are seeking direction with respect to the \$142,000 in capital repairs approved in the 2026 budget. Staff have identified three options for Council's consideration which are summarized as follows:

Option # 1 – Proceed only with the capital repairs to the Township Municipal Office Building in the amount of \$142,000 as approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Although the capital repairs for the Township Municipal Office Building will provide functional improvements within the building, the scope of these repairs does not address any of the AODA compliance requirements that have been identified.

Option # 2 – Do not proceed with the completion of capital repairs to the Township Municipal Office Building approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget and proceed with the planning stage for completion of renovations for AODA compliance.

To undertake the required AODA renovations will require a planning timeframe of approximately nine months to one year before renovations would commence. The planning stage would not only include the coordination of renovation work to be completed but it would also include the planning for temporary relocation of staff and delivery of administrative services given the extensive renovation work that would be required. Therefore, if it was the decision of Council to proceed in 2026 to the planning stage for these renovations, the actual renovations would not begin until 2027.

The planning stage costs to be incurred would be the necessary professional fees for architectural design and engineering reports. If the decision was to proceed with this option, there would be no reason for the capital repairs approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget for the Township Municipal Office Building to be completed as they would be incorporated into the renovations for AODA compliance. In this case, staff would recommend transferring the capital repairs of \$142,000 in the 2026 Municipal Budget for the Township Municipal Office Building to other municipal buildings that were identified for repairs but not approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Option # 3 – Postpone consideration of the required AODA renovations to the 2027 Municipal Budget

Postponing of the required renovations to the 2027 Municipal Budget for consideration by the incoming Council is a viable option and may become a moot discussion depending on the decision of Council for the future use of the Frankville Public School.

Although, the recommended renovations may be deferred to a future period, it does not absolve the Township from the requirement for AODA compliance relative to the design of public spaces by December 31, 2030.

Further, postponing consideration of these renovations to 2027 would mean that with the time required for the planning stage of these renovations as outlined, the construction would not commence until 2028 thereby putting pressure on the

renovation work to be completed to meet the compliance deadline of December 31, 2030.

Option # 4 – Undertake the planning for construction of a new Municipal Administration Building on Township owned property.

The construction of a new Municipal Administration Building on Township owned property is a further option for Council to consider. With a new construction, the Township would have direct oversight on the interior design of the building to provide sufficient space for daily operations and would be mandated to comply with the AODA. Further, such a construction on Township owned property would provide the opportunity for multiple sites to be considered in various locations throughout the Township.

In the absence of a Class “C” estimate and assuming a total area of 8,000 – 10,000 sq ft, using the current RMA standard for commercial construction of \$495 per sq ft, staff estimate the cost of a new construction under this guise to be \$3,960,000 - \$4,950,000. This cost estimate does not include the necessary servicing costs, engineering costs, and architectural design.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Regardless of which option Council decides to support, the fact of the matter remains, based on the assessment completed that a capital expenditure of \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000 plus HST is required at the current Township Municipal Building for the renovation of public spaces to be AODA compliant.

Long-Term Debt Financing

To fund the cost of this capital expenditure, it will be necessary for the Township to secure long-term debt financing through Infrastructure Ontario to receive a preferential borrowing rate.

The financial impact from the long-term debt financing required for AODA compliance is summarized as follows:

Project Cost:

Description	Scenario # 1	Scenario # 2
Capital Cost	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000
HST	\$195,000	\$325,000
HST Rebate	(\$171,015)	(\$285,025)
Capital Cost (Net of HST Rebate)	\$1,523,985	\$2,539,975

Financing Cost:

Description	Scenario # 1	Scenario # 2
Total Amount Financed	\$1,523,985	\$2,539,975
Interest Rate	2.91%	2.91%
Amortization	20 years	20 years
Monthly Debt Repayment	\$8,383.49	\$13,972.48
Annual Debt Repayment	\$100,601.88	\$167,669.76

Annual Repayment Limit (ARL)

Council has taken a conservative approach to management of debt by directing staff to ensure that the Annual Repayment Limit of the Township does not exceed 15%. This means to satisfy this threshold; the maximum annual debt payments for the Township are not to exceed \$1,297,911.

Considering the historical debt incurred by the Township for prior capital projects and the debt to be incurred for capital repairs and purchases that was approved in the 2026 Municipal Budget, the current annual debt payments will be \$740,475 which translates into an ARL of 8.56%.

Considering, the long-term debt financing that would be required as outlined under Scenario # 1 and Scenario # 2 above, the annual debt payments would increase to between \$841,347 and \$908,415. This would translate into an ARL of 9.72% to 10.49% depending on which of the two scenarios for costing is applied.

Further, this means that the total long-term debt available for the Township to undertake without exceeding an ARL limit of 15% would be between \$6,900,000 to \$8,100,000.

It must be pointed out that the proposed long-term debt structure for the Township with this report does not include what long-term debt financing will be required relative to the capital expenditures that may be incurred specific to the New Dublin garage and the future use of the Frankville Public School. If consideration is given to both these potential capital expenditures, depending on the associated costs, Council may be required to increase their ARL limit above the 15% threshold to allow for additional long-term debt financing if required.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

We will strive to be fiscally sustainable through prudent and future focused financial management to ensure that cost savings and financial efficiencies are identified to support the effective delivery of services.

OTHERS CONSULTED:

- Rob Nolan, CAO
- Tracy Gallipeau-Nolan, Chief Building Official
- Jason Myre, Building Facilities Manager
- Rabi Chowdhury, Infrastructure Ontario

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Township Office Building - Capital Repairs