

To: Accessibility Advisory Committee
From: Kari Kluge, Director of Recreation and Culture
Date: February 7th, 2025
Subject: Accessibility Input for Parsons Park Bleachers and Retaining Wall Renovation

Background

An inspection of Parsons Park in late summer 2024 identified structural concerns with the retaining wall and bleacher seating area located between the Parson's Park ball diamond and the south end of Rogers Arena. These findings indicate a need for renovation in the near future to ensure public safety, maintain compliance with building codes, and protect the integrity of the arena's foundation.

The existing bleachers have reached the end of their lifespan, with deteriorating wood and shifting ground conditions contributing to structural instability. The retaining wall, which also functions as a support structure for the south end of Rogers Arena, is showing signs of failure, with the ground moving away from the arena and toward the field. Additionally, the bleachers lack appropriate accessibility features and do not comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

AODA Compliance and Accessibility Considerations

As this project constitutes a major renovation, it must align with AODA accessibility requirements and be reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee for feedback. AODA compliance includes:

- Accessible seating options that allow individuals using mobility devices to view events comfortably.
- Barrier-free pathways to and from the seating area.
- Proper handrails and guardrails for safety.
- Compliance with Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under the AODA, ensuring all public spaces meet accessibility standards.

Proposed Design

Tulloch Engineering has developed a new design that incorporates the following accessibility improvements:

- Expansion of the entrance at the top, beside the arena to allow wheelchair access.
- A viewing area at the top level for individuals using mobility devices.

- A continuous accessible pathway leading from the entrance, around the storage shack, to the visitors' viewing side.
- An accessible route that loops around the storage shack, providing direct access to the field-level spectator area on the home team's side along the third baseline.
- Proper drainage solutions to redirect water away from the field and spectator areas to improve safety.
- Handrails and proper step heights to reduce fall risks.

Request for Committee Input

Given the scope of this project and its impact on accessibility at Parsons Park, input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee is being sought on the proposed design. The committee's recommendations will be instrumental in ensuring this project aligns with best practices for accessibility and inclusivity.

Next Steps

Following this committee review, staff will finalize the project scope and move forward with the Request for Proposal (RFP) process based on Tulloch's technical drawings. The goal is to have construction begin in September, with measures in place to minimize disruption to park users during the summer months while the area remains closed for public safety and renovations taking place at Rogers Arena.

Respectfully submitted,



Kari Kluge
Director of Recreation and Culture