



**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2023

**Submitted by:** James Hutson, Municipal Clerk

**Report No:** CLK-03-2023

**Subject:** Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Report CLK-03-2023 re: Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification be received for information.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding the results of the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program (RHFAC) and rating assessment for the Komoka Wellness & Recreation Centre, located at 1 Tunks Lane in Komoka.

**Background:**

The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) is a national rating system that measures and certifies the level of meaningful access of buildings and sites.

The program works to help improve accessibility of the built environment in Canada.

The RHFAC program is unique in three ways:

1. It measures the level of meaningful access beyond building code, and is based upon the holistic user experience of people with varying disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing;
2. It trains professionals to conduct ratings and become accredited through a formal exam developed by RHF and facilitated CSA Group; and
3. It recognizes an organization's commitment to accessibility through formal certification as 'RHF Accessibility Certified' or 'RHF Accessibility Certified Gold.'

The municipality engaged with the Rick Hansen Foundation in the Spring of 2022 to explore the possibility of having the existing Komoka Wellness and Recreation Centre site evaluated against the criteria for certification. The Komoka Wellness & Recreation Centre opened in 2011 and the facility boasts two NHL-sized ice rinks with nine change rooms. The facility also contains a fitness centre with an indoor walking track and a

large gymnasium (operated by the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario), a library (operated by the County of Middlesex), and a number of activity and multi-purpose rooms.

The design of the Wellness Centre integrates many features of sustainable design. The facility is Green Globes certified (an assessment protocol, rating system and guidance for green building design, operation and management). Based on this, the location appeared to be ideal for a rating under the certification program.

### **Analysis:**

In the fall of 2022, Julie Sawchuk of Sawchuk Accessible Solutions was selected by the municipality to undertake a review and rating of the existing Komoka Wellness and Recreation Centre. Julie Sawchuk is a certified accessibility professional and is the current Chair of the Design of Public Spaces review being conducted under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The review of the Komoka Wellness and Recreation Centre was completed in October 2022 and the municipality received a score of 74%, exceeding the mandatory certification requirements and achieving the designation of “RHF Accessibility Certified.”

Some of the key observations and areas of success identified during the rating review included:

- Parking stalls are large and well signed;
- Building signage has recently been added to improve finding direction from the street;
- All entrances are accessible with automatic or push-to-open operation;
- Splash Pad is well designed and outdoor seating is accessible;
- All areas of the building are accessible including ice surfaces;
- Accessible changerooms are available for hockey teams;
- Walking track is a great indoor space for physical activity for those with a mobility device;
- Washrooms are large.

Justin Fidler, Manager of Operations was instrumental in partnering with Julie to complete the review, and implement recommendations to enhance the overall accessibility of the Komoka Wellness and Recreation Centre.

The program goes beyond the rating of as-built environments and prioritises ongoing learning and training supports. The Municipality will continue to engage with the Foundation to explore opportunities to grow and expand the accessibility of facilities and the overall accessibility of Middlesex Centre services.

### **Financial Implications:**

A small program registration and review fee was charged in accordance with the Foundation’s fees and charges.

**Strategic Plan:**

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

Prioritizing the ongoing accessibility of municipal facilities ensures that residents and users can access municipal service offerings.

**Attachments:**

A1 RHFAC Scorecard