



January 25, 2021 **DRAFT**

Government of Ontario  
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
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Dear Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

**re: Rural Economic Development (RED) program: Peterborough DBIA's  
Downtown Vibrancy Alleyway Project**

On behalf of Peterborough's Accessibility Advisory Committee, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Peterborough Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA)) application to the RED program. The Downtown Vibrancy project will address numerous existing barriers for a key downtown pedestrian route.

The existing alleyway is in major need of accessibility upgrades. Transforming the alleyway to an accessible pedestrian route will complete the most critical link of a north-south mid-block walkway network serving Peterborough's main downtown blocks. The list of barriers in the existing alleyway includes non-compliant stairs, inadequate walkway width, lack of rest areas, minimal shade cover, deficient pedestrian lighting, poor edge detection and lack of a walkway connection through the Simcoe Street parking lot to the Simcoe Street sidewalk and the City's main transit terminal.

Accessible mid-block walkways are critical in supporting the downtown restaurants, retail, places of employment and various services. By linking the existing transit terminal, off-street parking lot, parking garage and covered accessible parking spaces to the sidewalk network, this project will help remove barriers to business and job growth, attract investment, and attract and retain skilled people with disabilities to the workforce.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee and its Built Environment sub-committee is comprised of people with various types of disabilities. The members have first hand experience with the barriers identified in this project and understand the opportunities of the project. Replacing the stairs with a sloped walkway allows people who use mobility aids to use the walkway and minimize their travel route. Increasing the walkway width makes it possible for two scooters to pass. Rest areas and shade cover allow people of all abilities to take a break mid route to their destination or when returning with shopping bags in hand. Pedestrian scale lighting, edge detection and walkway connections are critical navigational aids that allow people with low vision and vision loss to independently navigate and participate in the community.

## Appendix A

Peterborough's DBIA leads the Downtown Vibrancy project with their project partner GreenUP. We have confidence they can successfully incorporate accessibility into the project.

The DBIA has already engaged with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and accessibility staff to provide preliminary input on the project. The committee's wide range of technical expertise and lived experience will be applied in their accessibility review of the fine details of the project, including a review of walkway slopes and use of contrasting walkway materials to help people with low vision navigate.

The DBIA provides valuable contributions to a wide range of projects including the Downtown Vibrancy projects. The DBIA's role in promoting and supporting an accessible and age-friendly Peterborough has made them an accessibility leader in the community.

Yours truly,

Amanda Motyer, Chair  
Peterborough's Accessibility Advisory Committee

cc: Accessibility Advisory Committee Members  
Brendan Wedley, Manager of Communication Services  
Sarah Mackillican, Communication Coordinator  
Mark Buffone, Accessibility Compliance Coordinator