

2016 Advisory Committee on Accessibility Annual Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The prevalence of Calgarians that have a disability is rising and The City of Calgary is positioning itself to respond to the needs of these Calgarians through actions taken by Administration and the Advisory Committee for Accessibility (ACA).

ACA embedded accessibility through a number of initiatives in 2016. Highlights include: the approval of the Access Design Standard 2016; the review of a new vibrotactile accessible audible pedestrian signals model; and the development of a 311 service request that accommodates Calgarians including hearing impaired individuals at City meetings and events. A summary of the ACA's 2016 activities and accomplishments, and those of its Access Design sub-committee, are provided in Attachment 1.

ACA has updated its Strategic Plan (Attachment 2) to illustrate its new ten year timeframe 2017-2026, reflecting the anticipated length of time required to complete ACA's strategic goal areas. In future the ACA will provide a progress report on its accomplishments and achievements, which will include proactive accessibility work informing the upcoming provincial City Charter and Federal Accessibility Legislation, advising on the implementation of the Access Design Standards, the review of new accessibility technology, the implementation of improved accessible communications, progress on accessible transportation, accessible affordable housing and collaborative leadership activities demonstrating The Corporation's commitment to accessibility.

Significant work has been undertaken on a new Accessibility Policy for The Corporation; it will be presented for Council's consideration when its implementation implications are clarified.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council:

1. Approve the amended ACA Strategic Plan 2017-2026; and
2. Defer the 2017 Accessibility Policy to the SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than 2018 March 31.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, DATED 2017 MARCH 01:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report CPS2017-0212 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2016 September 12, Council approved PUD2016-0426, "Access Design Standards 2016". These standards are intended to reflect the needs of persons with disabilities within a built environment and complement the Alberta Building Code, Section 3.8.

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On 2016 May 04, Council approved CPS2016-0265, the ACA Annual Update. It directed Administration to bring forward no later than 2017 May, an updated Calgary Corporate Accessibility Policy. Council also approved an additional recommendation to “Direct Administration to follow up with hearing impaired individuals to explore options to improve services at The City of Calgary events and activities”.

On 2015 July 28, Notice of Motion NM2015-16 “Improving Calgary’s Accessibility” led to the Municipal Complex accessibility audit and two reports in 2016: PUD2016-0721 “Improving Calgary’s Accessibility, Planning Initiatives” and LASC2016-76 “Improving Calgary’s Accessibility: Update”. These reports committed Administration to integrating accessible design into current and future planning, public realm and development initiatives, auditing the Municipal Complex and reviewing the accessibility of other civic facilities.

BACKGROUND

Access to programs and services is essential to 12 per cent of Calgarians that have identified as having a disability according to Statistics Canada’s 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability. The increasing prevalence of disability in our aging society is accepted as fact with both disability and the severity of disability gradually increasing with age. With the population of seniors expected to triple in the next thirty years, age-related disabilities will also increase.

The ACA’s Strategic Plan outlines goal areas that cover physical infrastructure, transportation, accessible communications, and accessible housing. Organizational excellence is reflected by The City’s public commitment to make Calgary an inclusive place for all. The ACA members through their disability lived experience provide input in all of these areas to create a more universally-designed city. The ACA and its Access Design sub-committee, have worked across The Corporation to advise on the usage of the Access Design Standards (ADS) and with their cross-disability lens provide comments to access reviews. Recognizing that persons with disabilities often face barriers to participation in society these activities assisted in removing barriers.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Strategic Plan

The ACA and the Access Design sub-committee worked across The Corporation in 2016 on the 4C’s of commitment, collaboration, competence and character in their accessibility work guided by their ACA Strategic Plan. Highlights include:

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THE ACA GOAL:	ACCOMPLISHMENT:
1. To have the physical infrastructure of public spaces be accessible and universally designed.	The completion of the 2016 Access Design Standards, that aim to incorporate barrier free design in all City- owned and operated facilities.
2. To have accessible transportation services for people with disabilities.	The ACA reviewed and made recommendations on three new models of vibrotactile audible pedestrian signals pilot sites; The Corporation is proceeding with the selected model for future installations.
3. To educate business units and Council on the importance of accessible communication.	The ACA worked with Calgary Neighbourhoods, Customer Service & Communication and Information Technology to develop an accessible website to outline accessible communications services and begin educating communicators and business leaders on applying accessible communications practices.
4. To provide leadership and organizational excellence for persons with disabilities.	The ACA members have been involved in consultations with the federal government on Accessibility Legislation to provide input into the areas that are important to Calgary's accessibility, including transportation, technology, employment supports and accessible affordable housing.
5. To determine affordable and accessible housing options for persons with disabilities.	The ACA worked with Calgary Building Services, Calgary Growth Strategies and Calgary Housing to highlight the need for more affordable accessible housing through The City Charter process.

The ACA will build upon its strategic direction in goal and strategy areas that identify collaborations and partnerships across The Corporation. Examples of current collaborations and partnerships include:

- Civic Innovation YYC is working on a project to generate ideas on how to make Calgary "The most accessible city in the world";
- The Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy is developing an 'Age-Friendly Business Checklist' to assist seniors and persons with disabilities to identify businesses that can accommodate their unique needs;
- Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Transit and Calgary Roads together have designated 350 bus stops that are cleared as Priority 1 for Snow & Ice Control (SNIC), in order for seniors and persons with disabilities to utilize Transit;
- The ADS implementation plan will incorporate access reviews on all City projects.

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In 2016, reports from Facility Management and Calgary Growth Strategies responded to NM2015-16:

- An accessibility audit was performed on the Municipal Complex based on the 2016 ADS and costs were outlined to meet current accessibility standards, with a plan to audit other civic facilities through Facility Management;
- Collaboration with Calgary Building Services, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Parking Authority, Calgary Recreation, Calgary Roads and Calgary Transit provided knowledge and support of an accessibility audit strategy to be developed to prioritize the assessment of the remainder of civic facilities;
- Calgary Growth Strategies committed to integrating accessible design into current and future planning, public realm and development initiatives. A review of current initiatives, planning policies and guidelines was completed to understand how accessibility is currently being addressed to identify the most effective opportunities for enhancement and to outline next steps.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on Accessibility through Planning & Development was created to provide a forum to assist Planning & Development's efforts to understand accessibility issues and identify opportunities to integrate accessibility appropriately into current and future planning initiatives. The TAC has commenced an inventory of business units that are responsible for physical infrastructure to benchmark their knowledge of the ACA and the use of the ADS. A strategy for improving accessibility coordination is to be developed in 2017.

One-time additional resources

Funding through the Fiscal Stability Reserve in 2015 and extended through 2018 will enable Administration to work towards a collective and coordinated approach to accessibility in all service provision areas of The Corporation.

In 2016 a position in Calgary Building Services advanced access and disability work by:

- Updating the 2016 ADS and implementing the standards across The Corporation;
- Continuing to work on a process to review City project plans for barrier free design;
- Acting as a resource support for Calgary Parks, Calgary Recreation, Calgary Roads, Calgary Transit, Facility Management and Transportation Infrastructure projects, with respect to ADS understanding and universal design;
- Delivering presentations to increase understanding of the ADS.

In 2016 a position in Human Resources focused on change leadership and embedding the accessibility culture across The Corporation through:

- Reviewing Human Resource Administrative policies and incorporating a disability lens, (e.g., Code of Conduct);
- Creating a Statement of Work for 'Accessible Customer Service Training' to be launched in 2017; and
- Coordinating 'Inclusion Month' in October which included speakers with disabilities and disability experiential labs.

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This work has enabled The City to advance accessibility initiatives, work towards removing barriers and determine solutions that align with ACA's Strategic Plan through coordination, change leadership, accessible communications and the 2016 ADS.

This one-time funding will have also enabled Calgary Neighbourhoods and Customer Service & Communication to create tools for planning inclusive meetings and events, and a centralized 311 process for citizens with disabilities to request accessible services. Accessible communication practices for City and Council materials, events, meetings and activities are available on calgary.ca/accessibility.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In 2016, the appointed members of the ACA provided input to projects and provided access reviews based on the 2016 ADS and their own disability lived-experience. The ACA worked across The Corporation to promote the use of the 2016 ADS and provide universal design recommendations on City projects so that persons with disabilities will have accessibility in current and new buildings or programs. The ACA has collaborated with Calgary Building Services, Calgary Growth Strategies, Calgary Housing, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Parks, Calgary Recreation, Calgary Roads, Calgary Transit, Community Standards, Customer Service & Communication, City Clerk's Office, Facility Management, Human Resources, Information Technology and Transportation Infrastructure. Business units work with ACA so that the principles of universal design are addressed and the ADS are utilized.

Responding to CPS2016-0265, ACA and Calgary Neighbourhoods have engaged Deaf & Hear Alberta, Calgary Chapter of Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) and The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities on options to improve services for those with hearing loss at City of Calgary events and activities.

Strategic Alignment

The work of the ACA and Administration to advance accessibility aligns with Council Priorities of: A Prosperous City, A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods, A Healthy and Green City and A Well-Run City.

The ACA's strategic plan supports Action Plan 2015-2018 key areas:

- CSPA P 12.1-Steward relevant policies and strategies that address the needs of vulnerable populations including Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, and immigrants; and
- CSPA P12.2 Advise on social policy implications and provide social research support to strengthen The City's responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable populations.

It also aligns with the Leadership Strategic Plan, embedding accessibility across The Corporation with 'One City, One Voice'.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The ACA Strategic Plan provides a collective and coordinated approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. To be an inclusive and accessible city for everyone requires that persons with disabilities are able to participate and contribute in all City programs and services. By incorporating the ADS into City projects, buildings and public realm will be useable for all persons with disabilities. City accessible services and communication practices allow Calgarians with disabilities to fully participate socially and economically in the community.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The City continues to evaluate the implications of adopting these practices and other accessibility measures. Any operating budget requirements due to the adoption of Accessibility Design Standards will be brought forward when known.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The City continues to evaluate the implications of adopting these practices and other accessibility measures. Any capital budget requirements due to the adoption of Accessibility Design Standards will be brought forward when known.

Risk Assessment

The ACA's work across The Corporation mitigates reputational risks for an inclusive city and reduces the risk that persons with disabilities may not be able to safely or adequately access City programs and services.

The ACA and Administration are committed to universal design principles being integrated into City projects and services. The ACA will continue to advocate for the use of the ADS to assist in mitigating any design issues.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report responds to Council's request for an Annual Update from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. It also outlines the ACA's strategic direction for 2017-2026 to embed accessibility across The Corporation.

The request to defer the presentation of the 2017 Accessibility Policy to no later than 2018 March 31 is based on the Administrative Leadership Team direction to more fully investigate the implementation implications are clarified.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Summary of Strategic Plan Accomplishments for 2016
2. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Strategic Plan Summary 2017-2026