

## ACCESS DESIGN STANDARDS 2016

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Access Design Standards (ADS) 2010 were approved by Council in 2010. Council approval of the ADS 2016 is required in order to align with the Alberta Building Code (ABC) 2014, and to respond to new advancements in universal design. The ADS apply to buildings and facilities built on City-owned land and to spaces that are leased by The City but are not on City-owned land.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development recommends that Council adopt the updated Access Design Standards 2016 set out in Attachment 1.

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2016 JULY 22:

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That Council adopt the updated Access Design Standards 2016 set out in Attachment 1, **effective 2017 April 01.**

Excerpt from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development Dated 2016 July 22:

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“And further, that the Speaking Notes received with respect to Report PUD2016-0426 be attached to the report prior to being forwarded to Council.”

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At its 2010 February 08 meeting, Council approved the recommendation contained in Report LPT2010-01 which was to adopt the Access Design Standards 2010.

### BACKGROUND

The City of Calgary first articulated a set of accessibility design principles known as the Access Design Guidelines in 1988. Building Regulations, as the technical experts has provided input into the guidelines historically, and therefore has been tasked to assist in the periodic revisions, most recently in 2010 when they were renamed the Access Design Standards. In 2015, administration, in conjunction with various stakeholders, initiated a process to update the 2010 Standards. This report provides the result of this most recent initiative; the 2016 version of Access Design Standards.

### INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

As The City strives to be a leader in accessibility and the need for accessible design is on the rise, the ADS remain a key document. Statistics Canada's most recent (2012) Canadian Survey on Disability found that over 12 per cent of Calgary's population has some type of disability. While a large proportion of disability is a product of the aging process, other disability may result from chronic illness, workplace injury, and various genetic forms of cognitive, physical or sensory disability. As the incidence of disability rises, there is a growing demand to accommodate the needs of this population.

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On 2015 November 01, the ABC 2014 came into full effect and, as a result, there are changes to the legal requirements for the construction of new buildings in Alberta. All requirements of the ADS 2016 have been reviewed to reflect or exceed the changes to the ABC 2014.

The ADS 2016 are set out in Attachment 1. The requirements of the ADS apply to:

- all buildings and facilities on City-owned land;
- spaces leased by The City in buildings that are not on City-owned land (subject to landlord approval);
- new construction and renovations, where conditions permit;
- facilities that are built on City-owned land and operated by The City (e.g. Village Square Leisure Centre); and
- facilities that are built on City-owned land, but operated by another organization (subject to lease agreement terms - e.g. Trico Centre).

The requirements improve access inside and around buildings for people with disabilities. There are also provisions pertaining to transit facilities and pathways.

The ADS 2016 was developed in co-operation with several City business units through a process of stakeholder engagement, outlined in Attachment 2. This process ensured that the ADS 2016 requirements align with the current requirements and practices of business units who are stakeholders in the design, construction and approval of buildings and facilities on City-owned land.

A working group consisting of members of Council's Advisory Committee on Accessibility and its sub-committee Access Design, who represent the community, has provided feedback from their lived experience accessing City buildings and facilities. Contributions from this working group have informed much of the prescriptive ADS content. As issues have been identified, revisions to the ADS 2010 were required.

The new ADS 2016 specifications are not only required to align with the ABC 2014 and to remain current with advancements in universal design, but they exceed the current building code in several areas. In particular, requirements for people with vision loss, hearing loss or cognitive disabilities, which are not thoroughly addressed in the ABC 2014. For example, the ADS 2016 requires an Assistive Listening System to be installed at information counters and that brightness / colour contrast be considered with interior elements. These two standards help people with a hearing disability or a vision disability respectively. In addition to the above mentioned standards, the ADS 2016 also requires that all building entrances intended to be used by the public be barrier-free. There is a gap in the building code in that the ABC only requires one half of a building's entrances to be barrier-free. Design in conformance with the ADS 2016 allows all members of the public to approach any public building entrance. Additional examples of differences between the ABC and the ADS are outlined in Attachment 3. The City of Calgary will demonstrate leadership in accessible design with the adoption of the ADS 2016.

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Approval of the ADS 2016 will incur some minor financial costs as outlined in the Altus cost consultant report, Attachment 4. The ADS 2016 (like the building code) cannot be retroactively applied to existing buildings, and as such, cost implications of applying the ADS 2016 are limited to new construction and new renovation projects. Many specific standards require no extra cost to implement (mounting height of automatic door operator at 800 mm for example) when considered at the design phase, whereas other standards will impose some additional costs (e.g. the ADS 2016 requires every public entrance to a building to be barrier-free).

### Implementation

Administration is proposing a phased implementation. It is proposed that the ADS 2016 will come into effect 2016 October 01, as an optional standard required for the construction or renovation of buildings and facilities on City owned land. The period from October 2016 to March 2017 is proposed to be a transitional period, where stakeholders will be engaged through a process of education and training, to ensure they are aware of changes and new requirements between the ADS 2016, the Alberta Building Code and previous internal design standards. Additionally this transition phase will allow time for stakeholders to adjust budgets and processes to accommodate the new requirements. Full implementation of ADS 2016 is recommended for projects that submit a Request for Proposal on or after 2017 April 01.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

Stakeholders participated in an engagement process from March 2015 to May 2016. A variety of interested parties including Facility Management, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Recreation, Calgary Transit and Calgary Roads contributed to the discussions. Further details are set out in Attachment 2.

### **Strategic Alignment**

Initiatives and designs that encourage access are promoted in The City's 2020 Sustainability Direction under the goals of community well-being, smart growth and mobility, and sustainable corporation. The ADS are referenced directly in both the 2020 Sustainability Direction and also the New Community Planning Guide Book. The Municipal Development Plan encourages accessibility for City Transit and provides policies around diverse housing options, including accessible housing.

There is also a strong connection between implementation of the ADS 2016 and priorities as outlined in the 2015 – 2018 Action Plan. Increased inclusion leads to greater participation which in turn contributes towards a prosperous city. The diversity that comes from inclusion of all citizens is a key component of an inspiring neighbourhood.

The ADS align with and help to achieve the goals in the Corporate Accessibility Policy, CSPS003, by “work[ing] towards the reduction and elimination of barriers to the physical access of City-owned and operated buildings, walkways, pathways and parks; transportation access to all its services; and communication access..”. – CSPS003. Also, the ADS 2016 provide the most up to date content and forms part of the deliverables in concert with the 2015 July 02 Notice of Motion 2015-16: Improving Calgary's Accessibility.

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The ADS 2016 provides technical requirements that benefit persons with disabilities and is consistent with the goals and objectives stated within these strategic corporate policies and initiatives.

### **Social, Environmental and Economic (external)**

#### **Social**

Persons with disabilities represent a significant proportion of our population. This proportion will increase in the next 20 years, as a result of a significant increase in the population of senior citizens. Individuals with disabilities want to live in inclusive communities and have full access to City facilities, including government administration buildings, recreation centres and affordable housing as well as enjoy a variety of accessible transportation options. Implementation of the ADS 2016 will help to achieve The City's priority to create a livable city with complete communities that are inclusive for persons with disabilities.

#### **Environmental**

When buildings or facilities are designed and built without consideration for the entire population, the likelihood of the need to renovate or replace the infrastructure is much higher. Designing with the ADS 2016 will ensure more efficient use of resources.

#### **Economic**

Applying design elements from the ADS are recommended but not required for non-City construction.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### **Current and Future Operating Budget:**

There will be minimal impact to operating budgets.

#### **Current and Future Capital Budget:**

Modest capital cost increases are presented in the Altus cost consultant report, (Attachment 4). A discussion of increased capital costs is not complete without also considering the positive economic impact that is realized from the inclusion of people with disabilities. Incorporating a high level of universal design into infrastructure at the onset reduces future capital costs associated with replacing infrastructure that may not meet the needs of the population as a whole.

#### **Risk Assessment**

If the 2010 version of ADS continues to be used as a design document, the criteria for accessible design will have limitations. People with disabilities will not benefit from recent advancements in universal design. Additionally, if the ADS 2016 is not adopted, the ADS 2010 will remain as a reference document which does not align with the ABC 2014. Adoption of the ADS 2016 will reduce the risk of confusion associated with the incongruent standards of ADS 2010 and ABC 2014. Aligning standards should result in reduced costs associated with consultant fees, change orders or construction delays.

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### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Adoption of the ADS 2016 ensures all Calgarians of today and tomorrow are able to access and enjoy City buildings and facilities to the highest degree possible, with consideration of the latest developments in universal design and in alignment with the most recent building code. Our built infrastructure tells a lasting story about our collective values. Design that incorporates the ADS will tell a story of inclusion and respect. We have maintained a leadership role provincially towards accessibility and this effort lends to continued support of that stance.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Access Design Standards 2016

Attachment 2 - Stakeholder Engagement

Attachment 3 – Alberta Building Code and Access Design Standards Differences

Attachment 4 - Access Design Standards 2016 Cost Impact Study

**Attachment 5 – Speaking Notes Received at the Regular Meeting of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development, 2016 July 22**