



Report Number: C2021-0990

Meeting: Combined Meeting of Council

Meeting Date: 2021 June 21

NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Improving the Accessibility of Calgary's Mobility Networks

Sponsoring Councillor(s): Councillor Druh Farrell

WHEREAS the City of Calgary has an obligation to build and promote a city that is accessible to persons of all ages, abilities, and incomes;

AND WHEREAS the City has a duty to design, build, operate, and maintain public infrastructure so that Calgarians with disabilities can safely and reliably use it;

AND WHEREAS approximately 200,000 Calgarians over the age of 15 live with a disability;

AND WHEREAS Council approved C2018-0007 (Improving Accessibility and Reducing Injuries Through Snow and Ice Control Reform), C2018-1117 (Pathway Closure and Detour Improvements), NM2017-09 (Accessible Playgrounds), NM2015-16 (Improving Calgary's Accessibility), and NM2021-45 (Sidewalk Closures During Construction), all with the intent of improving accessibility for Calgarians with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS the City created a Cross-Corporate Public Accessibility Advisory Team to ensure that decisions on public buildings and public realm align with the Access Design Standards and the Corporate Accessibility Policy;

AND WHEREAS the City has made noteworthy improvements on accessibility in civic facilities, playgrounds, curb cut replacement, and pathway detours;

AND WHEREAS Calgarians with disabilities still face many accessibility challenges with Calgary's public infrastructure, particularly within our street, pathway, and transit mobility networks;

AND WHEREAS, for example, sidewalk closures/detours continue to provide inconsistent pedestrian access, snow and ice control on sidewalks continues to provide inconsistent support for Calgarians with disabilities, the quality of contractor snow and ice control on pathways has generally declined in recent years, signal crossing timing often poorly serves elderly Calgarians and those with disabilities, and several CTrain stations continue to have access gates that cannot be used by Calgarians with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS, while the Step Forward Pedestrian Strategy provides direction for improving accessibility, the City must accelerate implementation of this strategy to better support Calgarians with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS one of Calgary's most important and successful measures in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is the creation of pop-up patios for restaurants and drinking establishments, which Administration has impressively supported through accelerated approvals, quick setup, and the waiving of fees;

AND WHEREAS, because speed was prioritized above all else in the pop-up process, ensuring that patios supported the rights of Calgarians with disabilities to move freely about their City did not receive the level of attention it deserved;

NOTICE OF MOTION

AND WHEREAS, while accessibility advocates, members of the public, and Councillors raised concerns about pop-up patio accessibility, conditions that contravene accessibility standards persisted, posing significant legal and reputational risks to the City;

AND WHEREAS there is an opportunity to learn from challenges with the pop-up patio initiative, and to leverage the City's past successful accessibility initiatives, to reinforce and increase the importance of universal accessibility within Calgary's mobility networks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that City Council directs City Administration to continue to support the pop-up patio program and ensure that all pop-up patios/detours are erected in a manner that provides universal accessibility around and onto patios, with particular consideration to providing required wheelchair turning radii, stable/secure ramps where needed, appropriate indicators/routing for those with vision loss, and generally maintaining a clear path of travel;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that City Administration will direct placement of pop-up patios to the curb lane in order to leave the sidewalk for unobstructed passage, as is the global standard, wherever possible;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that City Council directs City Administration to significantly increase the priority given to accessibility in the design, building, operation, and maintenance of Calgary's mobility networks, reporting to Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit no later than Q2 2022, and subsequently with annual updates, with an action plan that details how the City will improve on:

- Sidewalk and pathway snow and ice control practices
- Sidewalk detour and closure practices
- Pop-up patio standards
- Embedding accessibility in new and retrofit design exercises for streets, pathways, LRT stations, LRT gates, and bus stops
- Crossing standards and signal operations including timing protocols, push button standards, and audible signals
- Implementing Step Forward Pedestrian Strategy action items, including missing links, urban braille, and wayfinding
- Removal of pathway maze gates and bollards that impede accessibility
- Removal of obstacles such as utility poles, light standards, signposts, ParkPlus machines, and sandwich boards from the middle of sidewalks.
- Staff training on accessibility, including real world trials of mobility networks while simulating disabilities
- Other considerations that will improve accessibility for Calgarians as informed by engaging with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and other relevant stakeholders.