



## Advisory Committee on Accessibility

### MANDATE

To provide strategic advice and make recommendations to City Council and City Administration in addressing issues, needs, and services for people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities; including, but not limited to: built environment, accessible transportation and transportation infrastructure, technology, information and communication, goods and services, affordable/accessible housing, and social and economic accessibility issues in order to provide high level accessible City services for people with disabilities.

### COMPOSITION

14 Members:

- 11 Public Members
- 3 Administration

### MEETINGS

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) had ten meetings since May 2023, receiving seventeen presentations.

Meetings were hybrid, with a commitment to providing online options as it provides members with flexibility and accommodates members who are immunocompromised and/or have accessibility challenges in getting to physical meetings. Each Advisory Committee on Accessibility meeting included American Sign Language interpretation and use of the captioning feature on Zoom.

This year a OneDrive Advisory Committee on Accessibility folder was created for members of both the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Access Design Sub-Committee allowing for shared access to agendas, minutes, presentations and supporting documents, foundational documents, and workplans. A mechanism and document were created to capture emerging issues and challenges identified by members.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available to the public on request. Public participation at meetings is welcome, with members of both the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Access Design Sub-Committee participating at either meeting if interested in issue discussed or presentation.

The ACA Accessibility Awards Working Group met seven times to plan, as well as review promotional materials, update a Communications plan, review applications, and host the Accessibility Awards Recognition Ceremony in December.

The ACA Accessibility Tours Working Group met five times, resulting in an Accessibility Tour for members of Council and Administration. There were eight Councillors and Ward Office representatives, along with six ACA members.



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Committee members also; attended three site reviews to provide input on City of Calgary projects, toured Vivo for Healthier Generations and the Ability Workshop Society, as well as attended events throughout the year including the Inter-Committee Connections and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

The Access Design Sub-Committee met ten times over the previous year, reviewing fifteen projects including public realm improvement, pathways, seasonal patio program standards, flood barrier projects, MNP, and Arts Commons. Members of the Access Design Sub-Committee were very engaged throughout the year with Planning & Development Services, consulting on best practices of raised cycle tracks and sidewalk delineation to inform a Technical Brief Bulletin.

### WORK, IMPACT & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the past year, the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Access Design Subcommittee have had impact in the following ways:

Activity completed	Description
Accessibility Tour	Members of ACA and the disability community led a tour for Councillors and Ward employees.
ACA Awards Working Group	The ACA Accessibility Awards were refreshed, with the development and implementation of a communications plan, resulting in over 30 nominations in 3 categories. The Awards Ceremony was at a Regular Meeting of Council in December and included an ASL Interpreter for the first time. ACA hosted a well-received Recognition Awards Reception following.
Calgary Parks Plan	Provided input into the revision of Calgary's Parks Plan to incorporate accessibility in Calgary's natural, recreational, and cultural parks.
Calgary Transit	Spoke with Senior Transit Planners about detour planning and provided specific suggestions for improving communication about detour planning for people with accessibility issues.
Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Community Preparedness	Community Conversations held in 2023 identified that less than half of participants that identified as a person with a disability reported having essential safety equipment i.e. fire alarms, smoke detectors. CEMA have developed materials to increase awareness and outreach to the disability community.
Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy	Provided feedback about accessibility needs in the Housing Strategy.
Council Budget Adjustments	Presented to Council as part of the 2023 budget adjustment process, emphasizing the need to continue support for accessibility initiatives in The City of Calgary budget.
Equity in Service Opportunity Fund	Participated in reviewing and ranking City of Calgary projects submitted to the Social Well-Being Committee for funding.
Fair Entry Eligibility Expansion Project	Provided input on eligibility criteria and considerations of potential changes for the disability community.



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Review of Public Spaces & Infrastructure	Presentations were received from the Green Line, Eau Claire, Stephen Avenue Project and Bridgeland TOD Project, Bridgeland Riverside Pedestrian Bridge, 8th Street Public Realm Improvement Project, 26th Avenue Project, MNP Leisure Expansion Aquatics Project, Streetscaping on 11th and 12th Avenue SE.
Handrails at Somerset Bridlewood LRT	Participated in a site-review and provided consultation to Transportation on cane detectable handrails.
International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)	Attended the IDPD event at City Hall, representing ACA at a table hosted by Community Strategies.
Office for the Persons with Disabilities	The Provincial Advocate highlighted the impact of COVID-19 increasing isolation for persons with disabilities, and their work to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities,
Mapping Our Cities for All (MOCA) and University of Calgary Accessibility Initiatives	Attended Disability & the City symposium held by University of Calgary to initiate conversations amongst community partners working in the disability landscape.
Remuneration Policy for Boards, Commissions, and Committees	Participated in workshop, provided input and advocated for remuneration to extend to Access Design Sub-committee members.
Seasonal Patio Program	Provided advice and input into the 2023 Guidelines for Seasonal Patios which were approved by Committee. Worked closely with City employees to continually approve initiatives through ongoing site tours of temporary patios.
Sign-Language Interpretation at City of Calgary Events and Festivals	Provided input and advice on accessibility needs for City festivals and events.
Special Olympics Canada Winter Games	Provided guidance on accessibility considerations for Calgary events including additional sign language interpreters in La Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) and Indigenous sign language, such as Plains Sign Language, and response to increased demand for transportation.
Transit Public Safety Strategy	Participated in building the framework for the Transit Public Safety Strategy by providing specific input on the needs of the disability community. Participated in onsite tours of LRT stations considering a Fair Gate strategy and provided feedback.
Vehicle-for-Hire program and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Calgary	Learned of on-demand wheelchair accessible taxis service for Calgarians and incentives provided to expand program.
Winter Maintenance Policy Update	Significant input regarding the experience of people with disabilities was provided in advance of updates to the Winter Maintenance Policy Update (previously the Snow and Ice Control Policy). Particular attention was paid to the social and economic impact snow and ice have on disabled Calgarians.



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	Presented to Council on the value of improved accessibility initiatives in the Strategy and the importance of continuous improvement.
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The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Access Design Subcommittee have several additional projects underway:

Activity underway/ongoing	Description
Accessibility Standards Canada	Attending ongoing workshops held by the Federal Government in their efforts to create national standards and Memorandums of Understanding with the Provinces.
City of Calgary Diversity Inclusion Training	Providing input into the review of existing employee training content and the creation of disability inclusion training for frontline employees.
City of Calgary's City Building Program	Providing advice on the initial concepts of the Calgary Plan. Continue to provide input on further phases to ensure that equitable, accessible, safe and consistent practices for persons with disabilities are at the forefront of design and implementation of City projects.
Raised Cycle Tracks, Street Manual Technical Design Brief	Working with Public Mobility Spaces to create a design brief to be included in the Street Manual, to identify best practices on raised cycle track delineation and floating bus islands to increase safety and consistent practices, especially for Calgarians who are blind or have low vision.
Street Manual	Provide ongoing input into reviewing street designs, including participating in joint site visits to provide feedback on wayfinding and safety.
Technical Brief Bulletin	Engaging with Planning & Development Services to enhance safety and embed consistent practices to reduce barriers for persons with disabilities, including informed practices on directional curb cuts; sidewalk widths and clear path of travel; signal accessibility; placement of Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI), and raised cycle track delineation from sidewalks.

### MANDATE ALIGNMENT

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility have aligned their work and activities with their mandate to provide strategic advice and recommendations to City Council and Administration.

As shown in the table above, the ACA has provided specific recommendations to City Council and Administration on making City policies and projects more accessible. The ACA's work and activities include collaboration with the Calgary Parks Plan, Calgary Transit, Affordable Housing



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Strategy, City of Calgary Policy Administration, City of Calgary Events and Festivals, Calgary Transit Access, and suggestions in the 2023 budget adjustment presentation to the Council.

However, the ACA only meets for 2.5 hours a month, and the ADS meets for 2 hours per month, which is not enough time to address the needs of people with disabilities and provide them with high-level accessible City services. The Challenges section of this report highlights this issue.

### COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

ACA Members presented to Council on several occasions. ACA identified the need for increased funding for improved accessibility through the mid-cycle budget review process. ACA also spoke in support of accessibility needs in the infrastructure policy update, and in support of the Winter Maintenance Policy.

ACA participated in an Inter-Committee Connections meeting, where the Committees and Subcommittees that support the Social Wellbeing Policy come together to discuss intersectionality's across the committees. There were several panel discussions reflecting on emerging priorities and the year ahead.

ACA Members provided feedback during a workshop with other BCC Members on the Remuneration Policy for Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

### WORKPLAN & PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

See attachment 1.

### CHALLENGES

- 1. Accessibility Plan:** The Advisory Committee on Accessibility has certain limitations in bringing about changes within its mandate as it is an advisory committee. Other municipalities are making efforts to promote accessibility by creating a cross-corporate Accessibility Plan. Therefore, it is worth considering developing and adopting an Accessibility Plan that can set accessibility goals for all departments, educate City employees on disability and accessibility, and cultivate an inclusive culture throughout the organization.
- 2. Resources Assigned to ACA:** The Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) has made progress by appointing an Issue Strategist and Strategy Liaison for the ACA and the Access Design Sub-Committee. However, the limited resources currently dedicated to accessibility and disability throughout The Corporation may affect capacity to address gaps in services in areas such as communication, human resources, digital accessibility, and equitable programming. The reliance on ACA to educate and advise on accessibility and disability highlights the pressing need for disability knowledge specialists at The City of Calgary, and more training and education opportunities for employees.

To improve our city's inclusivity and accessibility, we need to explore opportunities to establish more roles within The City of Calgary solely dedicated to addressing the needs



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of the disability community. By doing so, we can envision a future where our city's accessibility and inclusivity are significantly enhanced.

3. **Accessibility in Key City Projects:** To create an accessible and inclusive city for everyone, it is necessary for Administration to implement an equity lens with a focus on accessibility and disability in The City's Access Design Standards, City and City-funded projects, especially complex projects that shape the public realm. This equity lens needs to be applied in all stages starting with the early design concept, procurement, engagement, and throughout the entirety of project development to better understand the unique needs and requirements for creating an accessible and inclusive city.
4. **Detours:** Road and transit detours continue to pose significant challenges for people with disabilities. In 2023, The City created Temporary Patio Guidelines that consider accessibility requirements and dedicated City employees to implement the Guidelines, leading to significant enhancements in patio accessibility. A similar approach could be effective at addressing road and transit detours.

### MEMBER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Members of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility are active and participating members, with some members working beyond the expectations as outlined within the Terms of Reference, such as consulting on City projects, providing further considerations for accessibility.

ACA does not have a formal performance evaluation process for its volunteers. ACA ensures that each member is fulfilling their commitment outlined in the Terms of Reference and encourages individual participation through roundtable discussions

### BCC COMMENTS

In response to concerns highlighted within the 2023 ACA Annual Report a Briefing was submitted to the Executive Committee Accessibility: Looking Ahead 2023-2024 which addressed improvement in cross-corporate work on accessibility, administrative supports, inclusive meeting accommodations, and awareness of the Access Design Standards.

An Issue Strategist supporting the work of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Access Design Sub-Committee was hired the summer of 2023, however the Strategy Liaison position experienced further turnover.

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility would like to share its appreciation for the inclusion of Accessibility within the newly created Bi-annual Infrastructure Insights Report. Within the March report to Council the work of the Technical Advisory Services (TAS) group was highlighted, including that in 2023 168 projects were reviewed; 18 of them referred to the Access Design Sub-Committee. ACA welcomes the hiring of two new Accessibility Strategists to update the Access Design Standards and increase capacity to conduct accessibility reviews on crucial infrastructure projects.



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The BCC Remuneration Policy has been reviewed and supported by Council. While the scope includes the ACA, it does not include the Access Design Sub-Committee. The ACA proposes that public members of the Access Design Sub-Committee also receive remuneration due to the amount of volunteer hours and commitment to reviewing projects that benefit Administration and enhance accessibility in Calgary.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Workplan 2024 – 2026



## Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) Workplan 2024 - 2026

**Mandate:** To provide strategic advice and make recommendations to City Council and City Administration in addressing issues, needs, and services for people with disabilities.

**Goal 1.** To have the physical infrastructure of public spaces be accessible and universally designed.

Strategies	
1.1	Provide input and support to the refresh of the Access Design Standards
1.2	Review and make recommendations to the City Building Program, Zoning Bylaw & Street Manual
1.3	Identify opportunities to enhance equitable practices when engaging and developing Local Area Plans
1.4	Access Design Sub-Committee to continue to engage with Public Spaces & Mobility to complete Technical Brief Bulletin, identifying best practices for raised cycle tracks and sidewalk delineation and floating bus islands
1.5	Explore and make recommendations that addresses accessibility requirements for projects funded by The City or on City-owned land (i.e. procurement)

**Goal 2.** People with disabilities can move around the city easily.

Strategies	
2.1	Advocate for consistent Audible Pedestrian Signal practices and maintenance
2.2	Engage with Green Line to ensure accessibility and that persons with disabilities can access new LRT Stations and facilities
2.3	Work with Administration to ensure working LRT Station elevators, accessibility at existing stations, and accessible parking is available
2.4	ACA will advocate for accessible parking stalls and street parking
2.5	ACA will work with Administration to develop accessibility guidelines for City street detours
2.6	Continue to advise on the Winter Maintenance Policy

**Goal 3.** People with disabilities have equitable access to City communications & services.

Strategies	
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3.1	ACA will advocate and work with the City to review practices that increase digital accessibility, including web services access for people with sensory and cognitive disabilities.
3.2	Provide feedback and direction to increase awareness and submitted nominations to The Award for Accessibility, Calgary Awards
3.3	Recognize accessibility advancements in Calgary through the yearly ACA Accessibility Awards
3.4	Identify opportunities to connect with members of Council to increase awareness and advise on disability matters and key priorities
3.5	Work with Administration to identify and implement inclusive practices for communication with the public, accessing City services, City events, and municipal elections
3.6	Explore opportunities to enhance navigation at the Municipal Building i.e. tactile relief maps

**Goal 4.** People with disabilities have the security of an appropriate home.

Strategies	
4.1	ACA will work with Administration to ensure accessible and affordable housing for Calgarians in the Home is Here, The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy, 2024-2030
4.2	ACA will work with Administration to encourage The Province to increase their level of funding to 20% of adaptable units
4.3	Review process for navigating and accessing City funded accessible housing initiatives

**Goal 5.** Attention to issues related to accessibility and addressing barriers to achieving an inclusive city.

Strategies	
5.1	ACA will provide input on the update of the 2005 Corporate Accessibility Policy
5.2	Work with Administration to explore the development of a Calgary Accessibility Plan
5.3	ACA will celebrate people with disabilities by supporting and participating in events, such as the International Day for Persons with Disabilities and National AccessAbility Week

**Goal 6.** Increase capacity of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and its' members in achieving their mandate.

Strategies	
6.1	Participate as required in the review of the ACA Bylaw Update and Access Design Sub-Committee Terms of Reference



6.2	Consult and advocate for the adoption of the BCC Remuneration Policy, including the Access Design Sub-Committee
6.3	Develop an ACA Communications Plan