

2014 ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on 2014 initiatives and the Strategic Plan of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) and its two sub-committees; Accessible Transportation and Access Design. ACA's collaborative work within The Corporation leads to an inclusive workplace, accessible City services, and useable facilities for everyone. Strategy 4.5 of the Strategic Plan requires that ACA meet with Council annually to report back on the key work areas undertaken over the course of the year.

The City of Calgary strives to be a leader in accessibility. ACA supports the incorporation of universal design into new developments and projects. The theory of universal design is anchored in the idea that environments should be accessible for everyone - useable and functional for all people.

ACA focuses on broad policy issues and advises The Corporation and Council on access and disability matters that impact the needs of people with a variety of disabilities. ACA's mission is to provide access recommendations and to advise City Council of the rights and service needs of Calgarians with disabilities. ACA reviews and recommends the optimum level of accessibility for all City services and projects.

In order to promote an environment in which all persons can participate and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and political life of Calgary, ACA will continue to work across business units on the implementation of the Corporate Accessibility Policy.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S):

The SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council receive this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION/POLICY

On 1999 May 03, TTP00-19 Council approved the terms of reference for the proposed advisory committee and dissolved the Handicapped and Elderly Transportation Committee (HETCO). The terms of reference established the Advisory Committee on Accessibility on Services for People with Disabilities, which reports to the SPC on Community and Protective Services (Attachment 1).

On 1999 September 13, N99-22 Membership for Advisory Committee on Accessibility, directed "That the committee, previously referred to as the Advisory Committee on Services for People with Disabilities, be officially named the Advisory Committee on Accessibility".

On 2005 December 12, Council approved CPS2005-82, 'Accessibility Policy'. The Corporate Accessibility Policy CSP003 provides direction on how The City will provide services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

On 2010 February 08, Council approved LPT2010-01, 'Access Design Standards 2010'. These standards represent The City's approach to universal design. The standards align with the minimum standards as set in the Alberta Building Code, Section 3.8. Barrier-free design.

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On 2014 May 12, Council approved CPS2014-0138, Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) Annual Report; this is the most recent in a series of annual reports presented since 2003.

BACKGROUND

Disability impacts the lives of many Calgarians, and the number of people with disabilities is increasing. Statistics Canada's 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, 12.5 per cent of Calgary's population has a disability of some kind, and this number is expected to continue to grow as the population ages.

According to Community & Neighbourhood Services' *Trends 2014-Community Wellbeing*, the population aged 65 or older is expected to triple, rising from approximately 100,000 to over 300,000 people during the 30 year span of 2012-2042. By the early 2030's, for the first time in history, Calgary will have more seniors than youth. This will mean an increase in age related disabilities and even more people requiring a barrier-free Calgary.

Accessibility is a precondition to an inclusive society. Accessibility is also an enabler of an improved, participative, economic and social environment for all members of society.

The ACA has contributed their expertise to The City's *Human Resources Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Framework*, which aims to create an inclusive workplace. By attracting a diverse workforce, The City becomes a stronger, more resilient and competitive workplace able to continue to deliver sustainable, quality public service to a diverse group of Calgarians.

In 2014, City departments responded to the needs of citizens with disabilities in a variety of ways. There has been involvement of people with disabilities in Transportation Planning's Pedestrian Strategy *Step Forward*, making sure that the strategy reflects their needs. Roads and Transit has requested input from ACA on its strategy for snow clearing of pedestrian priority areas which will assist those with mobility challenges reach work and community destinations. Waste & Recycling provided the leadership for implementing the use of the tactile/braille plaques for waste and recycling containers, which was an idea brought forward by the ACA. Public Safety Communications (with the success of the Text to 911 services) provides the safety information for people who are deaf or hard of hearing that ACA envisioned. The ACA access reviews for the four new recreation centres and the New Central Library have assisted The City in building more inclusive facilities. The ACA has spearheaded efforts to build awareness about the importance and inclusion of barrier-free design in all these developments.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

In 2014, ACA, and its two subcommittees (Accessible Transportation and Access Design), collaborated across The Corporation to support accessibility action on projects and build connections with City staff. The ACA contributed to an array of accomplishments in 2014, as outlined in Attachment 2. Highlights include:

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ACA STRATEGIC GOAL AREA:	ACCOMPLISHMENT:
1. Physical infrastructure of public spaces be accessible and universally designed	1.9 ACA worked with Calgary Municipal Land Corporation on barrier-free design features to the interior (lower book shelves and counters, color contrast for walls and signage, elevators) and exterior (ramps and stair nosing) of the New Central Library, so people with disabilities can use the library.
2. To have accessible transportation services for people with disabilities	2.5 ACA provided consultation on barrier-free designs and recommendations on the Pedestrian Strategy, underpass projects and Cycling Strategy, so that each of these projects incorporated safety and navigation considerations for the needs of people with disabilities.
3. Educating business units and Council on the importance of alternative communications	3.3 ACA provided expertise on tactile and braille plaques for waste and recycling containers, so that people with vision loss can use the provided containers.
4. Leadership and organizational excellence for persons with disabilities	4.8 ACA worked closely with the Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy team on issues related to age-related disabilities.

ACA's 2015-2016 Strategic Plan guides the continued implementation of The Corporate Accessibility Policy that provides direction on how The City can reduce barriers to City-provided services. ACA had two facilitated strategic planning sessions in which established what they will focus on in the upcoming year. ACA will continue to work towards goals and strategies in the areas of Physical Infrastructure, Accessible Transportation, Housing and Communication, along with Leadership and Organizational Excellence as outlined in Attachment 3.

Key areas of focus in the 2015-2016 ACA Strategic Plan include:

GOAL	AREA	STRATEGY
1. To have the Access Design Standards as a guide to be used to ensure barrier-free design on all City infrastructure projects.	Physical Infrastructure Projects	1.1 To re-write sections of The City's Access Design Standards, in order to align with the 2014 Alberta Building Code. This will update the 2010 Access Design Standards.
2. To have accessible transportation services for people with disabilities.	Pedestrian Strategy "Step Forward"	2.5 To advise on key items impacting people with disabilities, including barrier-free path of travel, sidewalk hoarding, crosswalk design, accessible/audible signals and underpass designs.
3. To enhance communication accessibility across the Corporation.	Provision of Alternative Formats	3.2 To create a checklist of alternate communication formats for City staff to use when planning and coordinating events and meetings. The checklist will also include information on how to book and use these formats for successful integration into a meeting or event.

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4. To provide leadership and excellence.	Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy	4.9 To incorporate accessibility items into the Strategy, such as Snow and Ice Control (SNIC), accessible taxis and accessible/audible signals.
5. To increase accessible affordable housing options.	Affordable Housing Strategy	5.1 To advocate for 10 per cent adaptable and barrier-free units in affordable housing projects and provide access reviews.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility consists of 13 members including Council appointed representatives with a range of disabilities, and three members of Administration. ACA has participated in a variety of City projects that now incorporate barrier-free design. Their collaborative work has engaged the following business units: Animal & Bylaw Services, City Clerk's Office, Corporate Properties & Buildings, Customer Service & Communication, Office of Land Servicing & Housing, Parks, Planning & Development, Recreation, Roads, Transit, and Transportation Infrastructure. Universally designed projects are built with everyone in mind and can benefit the greatest number of people. Regardless of ability, an universally designed environment is accessible, functional and useable. Business units are working with ACA to incorporate these principles into their projects.

Strategic Alignment

ACA provides strategic leadership, planning and support towards Council Priorities, especially in the priority areas outlined in a city of inspiring neighbourhoods, a city that moves and a well-run city. This report aligns with:

- *Action Plan 2015-2018, CSPA P12.1* - Steward relevant policies and strategies that address the needs of vulnerable populations including Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and immigrants. *CSPA P12.2* - Advise on social policy implications and provide social research support to strengthen The Corporation's responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable populations.
- *2020 Sustainability Direction* - By 2020, City facilities and spaces incorporate the Access Design Standards.
- *Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) RouteAhead* 30-year vision to incorporate accessibility and the needs of people with disabilities in all Calgary Transit and Transportation Infrastructure projects.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

To be an accessible and inclusive city for everyone requires that people with disabilities are welcomed as active participants in community life. This means all community members, including people with disabilities, must be considered in the planning of all physical and social infrastructure, policies and programs.

Environmental

By incorporating The City of Calgary Access Design Standards, buildings remain functional for longer as they can continue to be used by a broad range of people without requiring retrofitting or rebuilding.

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Economic

According to the Royal Bank of Canada, people with disabilities have an estimated spending power of about \$25 billion annually across Canada (*About the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2008*). Accessible City services will allow Calgarians with disabilities to participate economically in the community. In addition, there are potential opportunities for recruitment of people with disabilities and accommodation in the workplace, in turn providing employment and economic benefits.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget

ACA operates within the Community & Neighbourhood Services operating budget. The City provides operational and administrative support to ACA and their activities.

Current and Future Capital Budget

There are no capital budget impacts associated with this report.

Risk Assessment

Public perception among some stakeholder groups may be that change is not occurring quickly enough for people with disabilities and resources are not being placed where they need to be in the barrier-free design realm. Administration is mitigating this risk through ongoing public engagement and furthering accessibility initiatives in the community.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

This 11th annual update provides Council with an overview of 2014 ACA initiatives and how they have supported The Corporation to make buildings, transportation amenities and services more accessible. This report also provides strategic direction for 2015-2016 on how ACA will work across The Corporation to promote City services and physical infrastructure that meet the needs of people with disabilities.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Terms of Reference
2. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Summary of Strategic Plan Accomplishments for 2014
3. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Strategic Plan Summary 2015-2016