

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT this report be received for information.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for information.

REPORT

The Access Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on 2023 February 07, received and adopted the attached report providing information on the parameters and purpose of a new accessibility plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Tetrault
Chair

Councillor R.T. Lee
Vice Chair

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer Deputy CAO/CFO GM Corporate Services GM Engineering GM Community Safety GM Lands and Facilities GM Parks, Recreation and Culture GM Planning and Development Chief Human Resources Officer Chief Librarian Fire Chief OIC – RCMP City Solicitor

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: 2023 January 30

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

FILE: 2410 20
Reference: Access Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

PURPOSE: To provide an introduction to the parameters and purposes of a new accessibility plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** this report be received by the Access Advisory Committee and Council for information.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for information.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In 2021 June, the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (the *Act*) received royal assent. The *Act* is a provincial law that establishes a framework for government to work in partnership with people with disabilities and the broader community to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in BC.

The responsible Provincial ministry, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, has released guidance for public sector organizations and local governments regarding requirements of Part 3 of the *Act*. Part 3 of the *Act* requires government and prescribed organizations (including local government) to establish an accessibility committee, which will provide input and direction towards:

- development of an organizational accessibility plan; and
- creating a mechanism for public feedback on accessibility.

At the 2022 December 12 Council meeting, Council appointed six resident representatives on the new Access Advisory Committee (AAC). As per *Section 9* of the *Act*, at least half of the membership is composed of resident members who are either persons with disabilities themselves,

family members of persons with disabilities, or representatives from organizations supporting persons with disabilities. At least one of the members should be an Indigenous person as per the legislation¹.

Effective 2022 September 1 by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Part 3 of the *Act* requires the development of an accessibility plan and public feedback mechanism. This is discussed in further detail in *Section 3.0* below. Local government is required to meet these requirements by 2023 September 1.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Civic involvement in accessibility and inclusion is aligned with the following Council-adopted policies and plans/strategies: *Corporate Strategic Plan* (20122), *Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011), *Equity Policy* (1994, updated 2020), and the *Healthy Community Policy* (1991).

3.0 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

In accordance with Part 3 of the *Act*, an accessibility plan must be developed in consultation with the AAC to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in or interacting with the City. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

In developing and updating the plan, the following principles must be considered:

- inclusion;
- adaptability;
- diversity;
- collaboration;
- self-determination; and
- universal design.

Updating the plan also requires consultation with the AAC and consideration of public feedback.

In general, an accessibility plan should consider key principles, community context and achievements to date in alleviating barriers to accessibility. Focus areas to improve accessibility across the City should be considered, such as:

- built environment, including buildings and facilities, parks and open spaces (e.g. provide accessible parking locations, improve and maintain sidewalks and curb cuts);
- transportation and mobility (e.g. improve sidewalk and road snow removal timelines);
- information and communications (e.g. provide key municipal resources in large print or braille upon request, ensure website and digital communications are screen-readable);
- goods and services (e.g. develop and maintain accessible playgrounds, provide accessible exercise equipment at civic facilities); and

¹This requirement has not yet been fulfilled.

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- employee services (e.g. provide corporate disability and accessibility awareness training for staff, review adequacy of corporate funding to support required assistive devices or accommodations for staff).

The plan should also consider public feedback mechanisms, plan implementation, including responsibilities of Council, staff, and the AAC, and monitoring and evaluating progress over time.

The provincial government has provided funding to the Disability Alliance of BC to support organizations in meeting the requirements of the *Act*. Resources developed by Disability Alliance BC will be utilized to assist in developing a plan and creating a feedback mechanism, such as the BC Accessibility Hub website which highlights examples of existing accessibility plans in Canada.

In accordance with the new legislation, staff will begin work to develop the accessibility plan. To assist, staff will engage a consultant to support the AAC and staff in its work. Appropriate budget for a consultant has been included in the Planning and Development Department 2023 budget.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of the requirements of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and outlines the general considerations for developing a new accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers in policies, programs, and services to individuals in or interacting with the City.

It is recommended that this report be received for information. In addition it is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for information.



E.W. Kozak, General Manager
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

HGH:sa

Copied to:	Chief Administrative Officer	Fire Chief
	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer	Chief Librarian
	General Manager Engineering	City Solicitor
	OIC – RCMP	General Manager Lands & Facilities
	General Manager Community Safety	
	Chief Human Resources Officer	
	General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture	
	Director Legislative Services	