

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2023

AUTHORED BY NATALIE SPONAUGLE, COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

SUBJECT Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide an overview of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI), and to present options for discussion and feedback that will guide future amendments to the ACAI's Terms of Reference.

BACKGROUND

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) was first established, and its Terms of Reference adopted, at the December 16, 2019 Regular Council meeting (Attachment A). The ACAI's mandate is to "promote social and political equity within existing and proposed City plans, policies, bylaws and infrastructure and make recommendations to ensure that they are inclusive and accommodating to citizens of all ages, abilities and walks of life."

The committee had many notable achievements during its first three-year term (between 2020-2022) including:

- Provided input and feedback throughout the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process that resulted in incorporating accessibility policies and serving as the City's Accessibility Plan
- Reviewed & recommended changes to the LEAP program, which was brought forward and endorsed by Council
- Visited Maffeo Sutton Park's inclusive playground and provided feedback that was taken into account for Phase 2 of the project
- Made a number of gender, diversity and inclusion recommendations that were passed by Council
- Reviewed and provided feedback on a water feature plan for the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre that will replace the current boat
- Took part in the Beban Pool accessibility audit
- Reviewed the Outdoor Learning Centre design proposed for Beban Social Centre
- Facilitated the installation of an accessible Mobi-Mat® on Departure Bay Beach

DISCUSSION

Beginning September 1, 2022, the *Accessible B.C. Act* put into place a requirement for organizations to "establish their own accessibility committees made up of people from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous peoples, no less than half of whom must either be persons with disabilities or persons representing a disability-serving organization."

With the ACAI already established, this provides an opportunity to review the committee's Terms of Reference and make some amendments to ensure the membership structure and mandate fulfil legislated requirements. Staff also see this as an opportunity to look at

opportunities for the committee to help support Council's *City Plan* goal of an **Empowered Nanaimo**.

Proposed committee membership structure

Staff welcome Council input on a revised membership model for the ACAI which could include:

- Thirteen voting members, of which there are:
 - Two members of Council
 - Five members appointed on behalf of non-profit organizations dedicated to matters of accessibility, diversity and/or inclusion
 - Five members-at-large
 - One youth representative (age 15-24)
- At least half of the members would be persons with disabilities or persons representing a disability-serving organization
- Indigenous representation must be included

Committee mandate and purpose

From staff's perspective, the current purpose outlined in the ACAI's Terms of Reference still stands strong. Some suggested additions to the committee's mandate include:

- Review and provide feedback on the City's actions to implement *City Plan* in regards to accessibility
(note: the Accessibility Directorate confirmed that *City Plan* would meet the criteria for an Accessibility Plan, with implementation to be built on it through the *Integrated Action Plan*)
- Review *City Plan*'s **Empowered Nanaimo** goals and identify opportunities to support the related policies

These additions would help fulfill updates to the *Accessible B.C. Act* and facilitate actions towards achieving *City Plan*'s **Empowered Nanaimo** goals. Staff welcome Council feedback and input prior to returning with a revised Terms of Reference to a future Council meeting.

CONCLUSION

The current ACAI members' term concluded in 2022. Once a revised Terms of Reference that meets the new legislated requirements has been adopted by Council, staff will advertise for new members. Staff will ensure that the application process is accessible to people of all abilities.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council will discuss the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness' membership structure and mandate at their Feb. 13, 2023 GPC meeting.
- Updates to the *Accessible B.C. Act* came into effect in September 2022 that outline requirements which will need to be included in the committee's Terms of Reference.

- Staff will return to a future Council meeting with a revised Terms of Reference for adoption, based on Council's feedback.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Current Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (adopted Dec. 16, 2019) |

Submitted by:

Natalie Sponaugle
Communications Advisor |

Concurrence by:

Sheila Gurrie
Director, Legislative Services

Richard Harding
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and
Culture |