

that departments have committed to support to the end of 2023 or on an on-going basis. As part of the adoption of the Action Plan, staff were directed to provide annual updates on progress.

Council also approved the creation of a new Accessibility Advisory Committee to work with City staff on implementation of the Short-Term Action Plan, as well as specific actions related to continuation of work undertaken by the former Accessibility Working Group. The mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee includes the following:

1. Communicate City activities on accessibility
2. Comment on provincial accessibility legislation
3. Share information on best practices and innovations
4. Respond to requests for input on new projects from City staff
5. Be a resource to the City on the Action Plan implementation
6. Work with staff on development of a Mid-to-Long Term Action Plan
7. Review proposed tool for balancing competing rights and interests
8. Update current guidelines for writing an Accessibility Impact Statement in Council reports

The new Accessibility Advisory Committee was appointed in February 2021 and elected a Chair in March 2021. Given the scope of work assigned to the Committee, the Terms of Reference were amended earlier this year to have meetings monthly, rather than quarterly, as reported and adopted through the 2021 First Period Triannual Report to Council. This increase in time commitment resulted in four members resigning, and a subsequent second recruitment process completed in May 2021. A Vice-Chair for the Committee was appointed in August 2021. The current Committee has nine members.

IMPACTS & ANALYSIS

Attachment A contains an update on the status of all 34 initiatives in the Short-Term Action Plan. The status of the actions is as follows:

- 3 Completed
- 21 Underway or On-Going
- 5 Planned for Future Year
- 5 Delayed due to Staff Capacity

Completed projects or initiatives includes the hiring of new positions through the new Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to support coordination of accessibility programs and activities including support to the new Accessibility Advisory Committee, installation of pedestrian activated lights along the Pandora Avenue bike lanes, and a review of scent reduction policies in public buildings. Delays of projects are largely due to staff capacity or requirements for additional funding to support the action in 2021 or beyond.

In addition to the Short-Term Action Plan, there are several initiatives within the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to support accessibility for all equity groups in addition to addressing physical and mental impairments to ensure barrier removal for all. Some examples from the Strategic Plan include the Welcoming City Strategy, Child Care Action Plan, Seniors Strategy, adoption of a Living Wage Policy, and opportunities to create shoreline access.

Outside of specific Council direction, staff are continually embedding the principles of the Accessibility Framework in on-going operations as identified in the City's Core Service Workplan that is provided to Council and the community through the Triannual Accountability Reports.

Examples of areas where accessibility is getting more explicit attention includes the Government Street design process, increased physical space for accessible parking stalls in parkades for people with Accessibility Placards, and new accessible parking stalls along Dallas Road. Additionally, other mobility improvements on an on-going basis include all new signals and signal rebuilds include Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS), continued expansion of tactile paving in new projects, new and retrofitting curb letdowns in capital projects, as well as new downtown signal timing plans to allow for longer pedestrian clearance time to cross the street.

Since the creation of the new Accessibility Advisory Committee earlier this year, the Committee has completed two of eight streams of work as outlined in the approved Terms of Reference as follows:

- **Accessibility Impact Statement** - As reported through the 2021 First period Triannual Report, the AAC provided staff with input on how to strengthen the Accessibility Impact Statements contained in Council reports. These new guidelines are available to all City staff and include a review process by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- **Accessibility Guide** - A new Accessibility Guide has been developed for staff to use to apply an accessibility lens to projects. This guide will be a companion to the existing Project Management Framework Documents to be refreshed in 2022.

Work is continuing on the recently announced Provincial Legislation on Accessibility Legislation and providing input into that process, as well as approach to develop the Mid to Long term Action Plan. Input from an assigned Sub-Committee assigned to the Interim Equity Informing Decision-Making Model is continuing. As well, emerging issues from staff managing the Accessibility Advisory Committee is on-going.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The current Accessibility Framework and Short-Term Action Plan identify overarching priorities and initiatives to advance building a more inclusive city that addresses barriers to participation for persons with disabilities. The approval of this report and attachment reflects an initial milestone in providing comprehensive direction to City staff in implementing a plan in support of removal of barriers in the short and long term.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

This report directly responds to direction contained in the current Strategic Plan to “Develop an Accessibility Framework” and “*Implement the Accessibility Short Term Action Plan*” as action items under the objective of *Health, Well-Being, and a Welcoming City*.

Also within the Strategic Plan are several Actions that focus on accessibility on other initiatives such as the opportunities for shoreline access, working with Island Health to attract and retain healthcare in all neighbourhoods, and inclusion of accessibility needs in banning single use items to support the Zero Waste Strategy.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Additional funding is being requested to advance the replacement of the current website as part of a larger Digital Strategy to remove barriers to access information and services remotely as part of the 2022 Financial Plan from the Department of Corporate Initiatives (Action #2 in Attachment A).

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Equity and inclusionary planning and improvements are consistent with OCP values, objectives, goals across several program areas. Staff have identified a list of required OCP policy updates that will be incorporated in the next OCP update as identified to Council earlier this year.

CONCLUSIONS

Looking forward, staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee are exploring a process to develop a medium and long-term action plan as well as continue to embed accessibility considerations into on-going City operations. Further updates will continue to be provided to Council through the on-going Triannual Accountability Reports to Council and the community.

Respectfully submitted,

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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

List of Attachments

A. Short Term Action Plan Status Report