



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: June 13, 2023

From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Subject: **New Select Committee of Council: Accessibility and Inclusion Committee**

Report Prepared by: Corinne Boback, Legislative Services Manager / Corporate Officer

RECOMMENDATION to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council considers, provides input, and approves the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee's Terms of Reference; and

THAT Council directs staff to seek the new Accessibility and Inclusion Committee's membership through means of public advertisements and recruitment.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Invest in Infrastructure – We will invest in building, improving, and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

Pursue Economic Growth and Prosperity - We will work with stakeholders throughout the region to advocate for and support efforts aimed at helping West Kelowna businesses prosper. With a focus on the future, we will advance opportunities to expand our economy, increase employment, and develop the community in ways that contribute towards prosperity for all.

Strengthen Our Community - We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

Foster Safety and Well-being - We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

BACKGROUND

At the November 1, 2022, Inaugural Council meeting, Council appointed Councillor Millsap as the representative and Councillor Zanon as the alternate representative for the new Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (“AIC”). The AIC is a select Committee of Council, which requires an appointed Councillor to participate in the committee along with members of the community. Further, a select Committee of Council requires Council to consider and approve the Committee’s Terms of Reference (TOR). The *Community Charter* as defined in Section 142, states that at least one member of Council must be appointed for select committees. West Kelowna Council has one Councillor appointee and one alternate Councillor who shall fulfil this obligation. Staff is now seeking Council’s direction on development of the TOR and public participation.

The *Accessibility B.C. Act* prescribes that organizations must establish an accessibility committee by their deadline date of September 1, 2023. Additionally, organizations must create an accessibility plan and a tool to receive feedback no later than September 1, 2024. As a result, staff is seeking Council’s approval to finalize the draft TOR noted in Attachment 1, and to publicize the opportunity for the appropriate West Kelowna community members to join the AIC as described in the TOR.

As per the *Accessibility B.C. Act*, half the committee membership should include representatives with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support people with disabilities, and at least one of the committee members should be an Indigenous person. The committee should reflect the diversity of people with particular attention paid to ensure a cross-disability perspective.

The purpose of the AIC is to work collaboratively with the City of West Kelowna staff to discuss, develop, improve, promote, and sustain community accessibility and inclusion. This includes removing barriers associated with accessibility, focusing on experiences of people with disabilities and foster and all-encompassing community. The AIC will also advise Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life. West Kelowna is a city where everyone is welcome, and the AIC will further Council’s vision, mission and strategic priorities that increase the accessibility and inclusivity in our community.

DISCUSSION

The AIC will begin by establishing an Accessibility Plan and review best practices for means of receiving feedback from our West Kelowna community that guides our way forward. This includes how the City can increase the methods in which those with disabilities can provide feedback to the City where, for example, an individual cannot complete a survey.

The Accessibility Plan will be a continually updated document which will help support decision making and improvements for the City of West Kelowna to increase its accessibility and inclusivity across the city.

For those who may not be familiar, and as defined in the *Accessibility BC Act*, a barrier is anything that hinders full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment caused by environment, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communication, technology may be affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

An impairment, as also defined in the *Accessibility BC Act*, can be a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

A disability, as defined in the *Accessibility BC Act*, can be the inability to participate fully and equally in society due to interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

The AIC will first need to understand the diverse needs in our community and align a strategy, priorities, processes, and resources to begin to meet those needs. For example, this includes creating a survey in a format that all members of our community can participate in. Having a group of individuals who face accessibility and inclusion barriers is a valuable resource to effectively and collectively work with staff to determine the best way to collect information on barriers.

Staff have consulted with the CNIB (formerly known as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind) to gather information about different types of disability challenges for residents in West Kelowna who are blind.

Mrs. Vittoria Spindor with the CNIB is a West Kelowna resident who has worked with staff identifying concerns and providing quality feedback on how to reduce our community barriers. Mrs. Spindor, has also attended many of the City of West Kelowna's open houses and reached out to staff regarding accessibility concerns on how to address them at a preliminary stage with current projects.

In March 2023, the City established an accessibility working group of five City staff who provided feedback on current accessibility accomplishments the City has successfully completed in recent years.

Current accomplishments include:

- accessible ramp, handrails, door buttons, door handles, washroom, parking, signage, and accessible public counter heights;
- tactile warning strips;
- handsfree faucets;
- handsfree hand dryers;
- motion activated lights;
- accessible doors on the washroom at Westbank Centre Park / Julia's Junction / Spray Park located at 2569 May St;
- relocated soap and towel dispensers at Westbank Centre Park / Julia's Junction / Spray Park located at 2569 May St;
- installed accessible pathway;
- purchased waterproof wheelchair;
- constructed storage/changing shed; and
- installed accessible swimming dock at beechnut park.

The accessibility working group will functionally report to the AIC, as they will continue to have the direct interface between the AIC and other departmental staff.

In June, staff and Mayor Milsom met with Mrs. Spindor and Mr. Tommy Leung from CNIB to discuss the City's AIC draft TOR to incorporate their input prior to presenting to Council at the June 13 Regular Council Meeting. As the AIC evolves, additional input from a wider range of those with disabilities will further build the strategies to meet the needs of our diverse community. The draft TOR is attached, and staff is seeking Council's consideration, input, and approval (with amendments at the direction of Council).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is important to note that funding for projects that include accessibility requirements and recommendations will need to be considered as part of the annual financial planning process. Legislative and Finance staff will collaborate with the AIC regarding their recommendations and staff will present the budget implications for Council's future consideration.

COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
November 1, 2023	THAT Council appoint Councillor Millsap as the Representative to the Accessible Committee for a four-year term; and that Councillor Zanon be appointed as the Alternate; and THAT staff appointed to the Accessible Committee create a Terms of Reference. <u>CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</u>	C285/22

CONCLUSION

Staff is requesting Council's approval of the attached draft TOR, and for Council to direct staff to seek applications for membership by publicly advertising and connecting with organizations that fit with the accessibility and inclusion participation criteria.

Staff will report back to Council with recommended appointments early July.

REVIEWED BY

Warren Everton, Director of Finance/CFO

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

PowerPoint: Yes ☐ No ☒

Attachments:

- 1) City of West Kelowna Draft Accessibility and Inclusion Committee Terms of Reference June 2023