

**REPORT TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 05, 2023**

SUBJECT **Establishment of an Accessibility Advisory Committee**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To approve a Terms of Reference (TOR) to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), consistent with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

BACKGROUND

In June 2021, the *Accessible British Columbia Act* became law and provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. To advise the province on matters related to accessibility and to support the development of accessibility standards, the Province of British Columbia established the Provincial Accessibility Committee. This included the creation of a forward-looking, three-year government accessibility plan, determining which other organizations the law will apply to and developing a feedback tool to ensure people throughout the province can provide input on identifying, preventing and removing barriers.

In September 2022, new regulations came into force which require local governments to establish by September 2023: (1) an accessibility committee; (2) an accessibility plan; and (3) a tool to receive feedback on accessibility. By the regulations:

- (1) Accessibility committees, to the extent possible, should have at least half of its members be persons with disabilities; represent a disability-serving organization. Membership should also reflect the diversity of British Columbians and have Indigenous representation. Committees may include members from inside or outside of the organization.
- (2) An accessibility plan should outline how the organization will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in the organization or interacting with it. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years. In developing or updating the accessibility plan, an organization must consult with its accessibility committee and consider specified principles: inclusion; adaptability; diversity; collaboration; self-determination; and universal design. In updating the accessibility plan, an organization must also consider comments received through its public feedback mechanism.
- (3) A tool to receive feedback on accessibility will be developed and vetted through the AAC.

The attached TOR (Appendix A) has been prepared as the first step of creating an AAC. Consistent with the regulatory requirements, the key purpose of the AAC will be to:

- a) Provide recommendations on the development of an accessibility plan.
- b) Identify barriers of access to CRD services and programs for persons with disabilities in the community and recommend solutions for consideration by the CRD.

- c) Be available as a resource to CRD on matters relating to accessibility and participate in community engagement activities in an objective and unbiased manner, as needed, and avoid reflecting preferred outcomes.
- d) Collaborate and share information and best practices with other committees and organizations focused on supporting persons with disabilities.
- e) Provide input and advice to the Governance Committee on the best methods to engage the public and stakeholders.
- f) Ensure that the accessibility plan and community engagement are neutral, balanced and inclusive.
- g) Ensure that adequate information is provided to community members to enable them to provide informed feedback.
- h) Remain objective and unbiased while overseeing the process of the community education and participation.
- i) Review CRD accessibility plan every three (3) years.

The AAC will report its input to the CRD Governance Committee for consideration, with the CRD Board as the final decision-making authority. The Governance Committee will recommend AAC member appointments to the CRD Board, for up to a two-year term, and will appoint a member as the liaison between the AAC and the Governance Committee.

Recruitment of AAC members will be advertised for a minimum of 30 days in accordance with the CRD policy on Appointment of Public Members to External Boards and shortlisted by the Appointments Advisory Committee, which will in turn recommend appointments to the CRD Board.

Public members of the AAC would receive an honorarium in the amount of \$110.00 per meeting and reimbursement of any necessary travel expenses. Honoraria are not intended for members who are representatives of organizations or businesses where they are employed. AAC meetings will be held at a minimum of every two months, and in a manner which is as accessible as possible by default.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Governance Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. that the TOR for the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) be adopted;
2. that staff be directed to proceed with recruitment of AAC members in accordance with the requirements of the CRD Appointment of Public Members to External Boards Policy;
3. that the TOR for Governance Committee be amended to include consideration of matters related to accessibility;

4. that public members of the AAC receive an honorarium in the amount of \$110.00 per meeting and reimbursement of any necessary travel expenses; and
5. that staff report back on resources required to support the AAC as part of 2024 service planning.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Social Implications

As required of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and Regulation, the AAC will provide the CRD with recommendations on policies, programs, services, built environments, infrastructure, and outdoor spaces that improve the livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons with disabilities in the capital region. The AAC must be established and have undertaken work on an accessibility plan by September 2023.

Given the legislated timelines, staff will begin working on an interim accessibility plan to ensure the plan is in place prior to September 2023, with the intention of reviewing it with the AAC once appointed. Staff anticipate the initial plan would be further developed and refined by the AAC members in accordance with the AAC's mandate and identified priorities.

Financial Implications

AAC members would receive an honorarium for their service. The CRD Board budget will be amended to account for this payment.

The establishment of this new committee will require additional staff time and other resources necessary to assist with administration of the committee meetings and implement the recommendations of the AAC. The required resources will be advanced through the 2024 service planning process and incorporated into the 2023-2027 Financial Plan.

Service Delivery Implications

Resources to lead the coordination and outcomes of the AAC will require replanning of other service requirements and will be evaluated for the 2024 service and financial planning process.

CONCLUSION

In September 2022, new regulations of the Province of British Columbia came into force which require local governments to establish, by September 2023, an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility. Adoption of a TOR for an AAC and recruitment of committee members is the first step in meeting this new legislated requirement.

RECOMMENDATION

The Governance Committee recommends to the CRD Board:

1. that the TOR for the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) be adopted;
2. that staff be directed to proceed with recruitment of ACC members in accordance with the requirements of the CRD Appointment of Public Members to External Boards Policy;
3. that the TOR for the Governance Committee be amended to include consideration of

- matters related to accessibility;
4. that public members of the AAC receive an honorarium in the amount of \$110.00 per meeting and reimbursement of any necessary travel expenses; and
 5. that staff report back on resources required to support the AAC as part of 2024 service planning.

Submitted by:	Chris Neilson, MBA, CPHR, Senior Manager Human Resources & Corporate Safety
Concurrence:	Steve Carey, Acting General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: CRD Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

CRD

CRD ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is an advisory committee of the CRD Governance Committee created further to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The AAC is established to provide recommendations on improving accessibility to the Governance Committee on CRD policies, programs, services, built environments, infrastructure, and outdoor spaces that to improve the livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons with disabilities in the capital region.

The Committee's official name is to be:

Accessibility Advisory Committee

1.0 PURPOSE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will:

- a) Provide recommendations on the development of an accessibility plan.
- b) Identify barriers of access to CRD services and programs for persons with disabilities in the community and recommend solutions for consideration by the CRD.
- c) Be available as a resource to the CRD on matters relating to accessibility and participate in community engagement activities in an objective and unbiased manner, as needed, and avoid reflecting preferred outcomes.
- d) Collaborate and share information and best practices with other committees and organizations focused on supporting persons with disabilities.
- e) Provide input and advice to the Governance Committee on the best methods to engage the public and stakeholders.
- f) Ensure that the accessibility plan and community engagement are neutral, balanced and inclusive.
- g) Ensure that adequate information is provided to community members to enable them to provide informed feedback.
- h) Remain objective and unbiased while overseeing the process of community education and participation.

- i) Review CRD accessibility plan every three (3) years.

2.0 ESTABLISHMENT AND AUTHORITY

- a) The Governance Committee will:
 - Recommend AAC member appointments to the CRD Board for up to a two-year term; and
 - Appoint a member as the liaison between the AAC and the Governance Committee.
- b) The AAC will appoint a Chair and a Vice-Chair on an annual basis.
- c) The AAC will report its input to the Governance Committee for consideration. The CRD Board is the final decision-making authority.

3.0 COMPOSITION OF VOTING MEMBERSHIP

- a) To the extent that it is possible, members will be 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.
- b) The AAC will be composed of at least five (5), and up to 11, members.
- c) The AAC may include both members external and internal to the CRD organization.
- d) Members will be appointed for a 2-year term (except in the first year when 3 citizen appointments will be appointed for a 1-year term to allow for staggered expiration terms).
- e) A term will equal 2 years, and members will serve no more than 3 consecutive terms (i.e. 6 years).
- f) Public members of the AAC will receive an honorarium in the amount of \$110.00 per meeting and reimbursement of any necessary travel expenses. Honoraria are not intended for members who are representatives of organizations or businesses where they are employed.
- g) AAC vacancies will be publicly posted for a minimum of 30 days and appointments will be made in accordance with the CRD Appointment of Public Members to External Boards Policy.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- a) The CRD Board Procedures Bylaw will apply.
- b) The AAC shall meet at a minimum of every two (2) months at the call of the Chair and have special meetings, as required.
- c) The agenda will be finalized in consultation between staff and the Chair.

- d) A quorum is a majority of the committee membership and is required to conduct committee business.
- e) AAC meetings will be held in a manner which is as accessible as possible by default, including but not limited to: accessible meeting locations; use of accessible hybrid virtual meeting technology; provision of accessibility supports including ASL interpreters and live caption services; and other as identified by the AAC.

5.0 RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- a) The Senior Manager, Human Resources and Corporate Safety, will lead the coordination and allocation of resources to the Committee.
- b) Appropriate CRD staff and resources will be provided to assist with the activities of and support to the AAC.
- c) Minutes and agendas are prepared and distributed by the Legislative Services division.

Approved by the CRD Board on _____