



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: March 21, 2022

TITLE: Accessibility Study Cost Estimate Report

DIVISION: Planning & Infrastructure

SUMMARY:

During Committee of the Whole's deliberations on the 2022 to 2024 Recommended Corporate Plan, the following motion was made; "THAT Committee recommends to Council that Administration provide a report to Council on the assessment of costs to review the accessibility of city assets for those with mobility challenges in first quarter 2022."

PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion is not required.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Accessibility is defined as creating communities, workplaces and services that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers. Although mobility is a component of this, there are other accessibility needs that should also be considered when completing an accessibility study on City assets. With this in mind, the scope of the study went beyond an analysis on mobility challenges to include an analysis against Universal Design standards and the associated costs. Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

At this time the City does not have standards for publically owned and accessed spaces that meet Universal Design requirements other than minimal references to crosswalks and lights related to universal accessibility. In addition, there are no municipal standards in place for private development of buildings to incorporate universal design standards into their practices. At the provincial and federal level, there is no legislation that requires developers or public

institutions to incorporate universal design standards into building codes or practices. To address this gap, some municipalities have accessibility policies and plans in place to implement accessibility standards to public facilities and amenities. There are also incentive programs for private developers to build accessibility standards into development above and beyond what's required through Alberta Building Code.

The City conducted an accessibility study in 2021 on four city owned assets: Elks Hall, City Hall (public spaces), Jubilee Park and the Agrena. This work was funded through the three year Community Inclusion Initiative (approved in the 2021-23 Corporate Plan) and resulted in all four buildings being assessed as welcoming, reasonably comfortable and safe, and allowing for basic access for the diverse residents using them. The recommendations of the accessibility audit reports are intended to provide the way forward to increased accessibility for the four specific facilities. Each building was compared against the Rick Hanson Accessibility Foundation scorecard (based on Universal Design standards) which is a national rating system that measures and certifies the level of meaningful access of buildings and all sites. All four facilities appear to achieve the basic level of accessibility as determined through the Rick Hanson Accessibility Foundation rating data.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

n/a

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

Many departments within the City were engaged in drafting this report including Facilities and Fleet Management, Public Works, Planning and Development, Recreation and Culture, and Integrated Planning and Strategic Services.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Administration can bring forward a business case as part of the 2023 to 2025 corporate planning process.

IMPACTS:

n/a

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Based on the costs to conduct the 2021 accessibility study, the cost to do a similar study on 11 remaining publically accessed city facilities would be approximately \$180,000. The estimated cost to do an accessibility report on City owned outdoor land (hard or soft surface) that is publicly accessible, including parks, trails, and other public spaces, as well as playgrounds, roads, sidewalks and public access to bus stops is approximately \$130,000.

STRATEGIC VISION ELEMENT:

This topic relates to all three of the City's strategic vision elements contained in Council's Strategic Plan

RELATED GOAL:

n/a