

Accessibility Advisory Committee 2021 Annual Report

July 12, 2022

Background

- March 2019: Inception of Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)
- Purpose
 - Provide advice and recommendations on improving accessibility for all people in Strathcona County
- Members

Bonnie Maguffee	Brenda Frederick
Carley Dobko	Leah Lyseng
Sarah Valois	Kim McDonald (Vice-chair)
John Vrolijk (Chair)	
Council Representatives: Councillors Katie Berghofer, Linton Delainey (alternate to June) Lorne Harvey (November)	

AAC Mandate Alignment

Becoming Canada's Most Livable Community

2021 Strathcona County Strategic Goals

- Goal 1: Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents
- Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents
- Goal 7: Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Social Framework Outcomes

- Affordability, Access, Safety, Connectedness and Inclusion

Recreation and Culture Strategy and Transit Master Plan Principles

- Access, Collaboration, Forward Thinking, Viability, Safety, Customer-focused, Reliable, Efficient


Strathcona County policies: Diversity and Inclusion, Inclusive Hiring

AAC Mandate Items


Mandate Letter – 2021 / 2022 Items

1. Provide input: Diversity and Inclusion Policy implementation
2. Invite organizations / groups: perspectives on accessibility challenges
3. Provide advice / considerations: educating the business community
4. Participate in engagements: Indoor Fieldhouse and accessibility
5. Provide advice: community safety and wellbeing impacts for accessibility
6. Provide advice: pandemic impacts related to accessibility considerations


Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Activities	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity and Inclusion Policy implementation: update and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate emphasis on fostering a culture of inclusion – it is about attitudinal and behavioral change• Continued priority on training for all staff, including front-line• Potential synergy: external strategy and AAC mandate item on educating the business community• AAC support: Diversity and Inclusion blog for International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Organizational perspectives: accessibility and COVID-19 impacts

Activities	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robin Hood Association• Heartland Housing Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Big impacts on mental health: residential programs - significant isolation, decreased connections, lost access to services• Transportation a key support: Everybody Rides Program important; suggested expanded Mobility Bus access for teens• Accessible affordable housing a priority:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptable housing for seniors• Accessible housing for young adults seeking to stay in their home community• Families with accessibility requirements• Affordability and AISH: re-examine affordability assumptions/policy

Community safety and wellbeing (CSWB)

Activities	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two CSWB engagements: project planning input, accessing lived experience of diversity of residents with disabilities• Seniors Initiative: CSWB considerations for seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility in CSWB planning important: personal safety significantly impacted by ease of accessibility• A comprehensive CSWB picture of accessibility and lived experience: engage regional providers for more complete picture of experiences• CSWB and seniors:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age-friendly community spaces - seniors are welcomed, included and supported• Accessible safe sidewalks and curb cuts• More accessible parking by entrances

Indoor Fieldhouse project engagement

Activities

- **Multi-stakeholder engagement**
- **Review of What We Heard Report**



Findings

- **Think of the whole user journey:** in reviewing preliminary designs, members stressed the importance of adequate accessible parking and spacious accessible elevators
- **Planning details:** AAC members look forward to more detail in upcoming reports
 - Choice of non-slip surfaces
 - Comfortable flow and space for wheelchair navigation
 - Transit access right to the front door

Business community education – advice

Activities	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach to Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce  A photograph of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue t-shirt, sitting in a wheelchair. He is smiling and looking towards the camera while holding a green card up to a service window. A tan messenger bag is resting on his lap. The background shows a building with a window and some text on a wall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strathcona County businesses under pressure in 2021: significant financial impacts of successive COVID-19 waves• Collaboration important: discuss, co-design strategies with businesses is AAC's desired approach• Tabled: This is a continued AAC mandate item for 2022

AAC additional engagement requests

Activities	Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible Strathcona County Municipal Election Engagement<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strathcona County Elections Officer and team• Strathcona County Transportation Master Plan Engagement<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement team and representatives from Soles & Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports for visible and invisible disabilities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• staff training; design of accessible flow and processes such as colored markings for ease of navigation for visually impaired• Removing barriers to access:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local and regional transportation for employment, education, service access• Mobility Bus: growing population and specific cohorts• Future thinking: transportation options for persons with disabilities

Mandate focus for 2022

- Diversity and Inclusion policy - external implementation
- Engaging organizations on accessibility considerations and COVID-19 impacts
- Advice on education of the business community
- Universal design lens for Indoor Fieldhouse
- Community safety and wellbeing - actions



Summary considerations

- **Strathcona County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan**
 - Accessibility lens: goal of Healthy & Safe Community
 - “ ...diverse, welcoming, inclusive **and an accessible** community for all”
 - **Looking forward: how to embed this in all County departments**
- **Front-line staff training: visible and invisible disabilities**



Summary considerations

- **Current and proposed Strathcona County infrastructure development:** consistent coherent approach to Universal Design for residents, tourists, employees, etc.
- **2023-2026 budgets:** cutting or investing in accessibility





**THANK
YOU!**

