

Priorities Committee Meeting_Oct17_2023

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Strathcona County Accessibility Framework update

Report Purpose

To provide Priorities Committee with an update on the development of a comprehensive County-wide Accessibility Framework.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 3 - Responsible Development

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 3 Priority - Investment in our infrastructure that supports development and complete communities

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

Report

Background

In 2018, Strathcona County Council appointed an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to provide advice and recommendations to Council on improving accessibility in Strathcona County.

In its July 12, 2022 presentation to Council, the AAC advised Strathcona County to develop a comprehensive, organization-wide approach to supporting accessibility. Later in July, Executive Team directed that an Accessibility Framework be developed in 2023 using internal resources.

Project

The Accessibility Framework was launched in early 2023. It is coordinated jointly by Recreation, Parks & Culture and Family & Community Services and implemented by an Internal Working Group made up of staff representatives from 14 departments. The Working Group has demonstrated that departments are highly motivated. There is a strong desire and energy to ensure that residents and staff in the County are not forgotten or excluded. An early learning from the process is that departments are already advancing a broad range of accessibility initiatives across the organization's buildings, programs, and services.

The Accessibility Framework is an opportunity to draw on and focus these collective efforts, as well as learn from community partners and other municipalities advancing accessibility frameworks.

The Framework will improve coordination and strategy by identifying principles, priorities, responsibilities, and resources to increase accessibility to County programs, services, and infrastructure. The Accessibility Framework will help prioritize strategic accessibility investments to support Strathcona County's priority to be a diverse, welcoming, inclusive and accessible community for all.

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Next steps

The working group is currently collecting information from each department and undertaking an environmental scan of promising practices from other jurisdictions. Input from the local disability sector is being obtained. The information will be used to support drafting of a framework in early 2024.

The Accessibility Framework project team will report back to Council in the second quarter of 2024 with a completed Framework.

Council and Committee History

July 12, 2022 In an annual report to Priorities Committee, the Accessibility Advisory Committee encouraged Council to establish an organization-wide approach to accessibility.

Other Impacts

Policy: The Accessibility Framework aligns with the Strathcona County Diversity and Inclusion Policy GOV-002-040.

Financial/Budget: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: A working group with representatives from 14 County departments, co-led by Recreation, Parks and Culture and Family and Community Services, is developing the framework.

Master Plan/Framework: Strathcona County Strategic Plan, Community Safety & Well-being Strategy, the Social Framework, Transportation Master Plan, and the Recreation and Culture Strategy.

Enclosure

1 Strathcona County Accessibility Framework update presentation