

City of Edmonton

Edmonton

**CORPORATE  
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN  
2021-2024**

Corporate Accessibility Committee  
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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Accessibility is fundamental to the quality of life, well-being, and engagement of individuals with disabilities in the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political aspects of the society. [Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy C602](#) commits to accessibility and continuous improvement where people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to access, participate and contribute.

The City of Edmonton is committed to pursuing the following objectives:

- Accessibility and continuous improvement where people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to access, participate and contribute. To provide the greatest level of access, participation, and opportunities to contribute for people with disabilities, the City of Edmonton applies an accessibility lens to:
  - Policies;
  - Civic Engagement;
  - Programs and Services;
  - Employee Services;
  - Communications and Technology; and
  - Infrastructure (facilities, open spaces, transportation).
- Identification, removal, and prevention of attitudinal, systemic, physical, communication and technology barriers. The City of Edmonton acknowledges that individuals have multiple identity factors that intersect and will affect how diverse groups of people experience barriers and accessibility.
- As an employer, ensuring people with disabilities have access to employee services including employment opportunities within the corporation and employment policies and practices that facilitate

reasonable accommodation for qualified applicants and current employees.

- As a funder, having organizations pursue the spirit and intent of the policy statements and principles where reasonable. This will be outlined in the grant parameters and defined in the funding agreements for: Program and services; Affordable housing; and Community group led redevelopments and new construction projects.
- As a model, encouraging businesses, institutions, organizations, and community groups to incorporate accessibility and universal design in their policies, goods, programs and services, communications and technology, and infrastructure.

## **Overview**

Administrative Directive A1472, approved by City Manager in October 2019, requires the development, implementation and evaluation of three-year Corporate Accessibility Plans to support Policy C602 implementation. This first Corporate Accessibility Plan includes 60 accessibility actions developed by all seven City departments and the four actions by the Corporate Accessibility Working Committee. These actions will be implemented over the next three years (Q2 2021 to Q2 2024) to support the City's commitment of making Edmonton a more accessible city for all.

The following activities were undertaken for the development and implementation of the Plan:

- Departments established accessibility action committees or delegated the responsibility of developing accessibility actions to department diversity and inclusion committees.
- Each department completed an internal analysis of the current state of accessibility in the programs and services they provide.

- The Corporate Accessibility Working Committee conducted Phase 1 of public engagement to identify barriers that Edmontonians face in their city.
- Departments developed draft accessibility actions based on an understanding of current state and to address barriers identified through Phase 1 public engagement. A GBA+ lens was used in the development of the draft actions.
- The Corporate Accessibility Working Committee conducted Phase 2 of public engagement along with an internal staff engagement to gather feedback on the draft actions endorsed by department leadership teams.
- Departments finalised accessibility actions based on engagement feedback.
- The Corporate Accessibility Working Committee developed the Corporate Accessibility Plan incorporating all the actions, for approval from the City Manager.
- The department accessibility action committees will implement the accessibility actions over the next three years.
- Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a progress report published annually.

## **Strategic Alignment**

### [ConnectEdmonton Edmonton's Strategic Plan 2019-2028:](#)

- The Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy aligns with two of the four strategic goals.

- Healthy City - Edmonton is a neighbourly city with community and personal wellness that embodies and promotes equity for all Edmontonians.
- Urban Places - Edmonton neighbourhoods are more vibrant as density increases, where people and businesses thrive and where housing and mobility options are plentiful.

### [The City Plan:](#)

- The Corporate Accessibility Plan supports many directions in the City Plan including the following.
  - Design public spaces that are safe and easy to navigate for people with disabilities.
  - Design, build, maintain and operate public infrastructure to facilitate movement and universal accessibility in all seasons.
  - Facilitate access to City activities and programs for people of all ages and abilities.
  - Provide people with disabilities equitable opportunities to participate in the workforce, access services and amenities, and contribute to the development and implementation of policies, programs and infrastructure.

### [The Art of Inclusion - Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework:](#)

- The Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy and supporting implementation work are included in the framework.
- One of the objectives is to *“create department accessibility plans for people with disabilities that consider physical and mental accommodation needs and support the Corporate Accessibility Plan development and implementation.”*

## Implementation activities

The following activities were completed in 2020 as part of the ongoing Policy Implementation:

1. Developed and published an Accessibility for People with Disabilities e-learning course in Learning Management System (LMS). This course provides awareness to staff about disabilities, accessibility, and how they can incorporate the perspectives of people with disabilities into their work and be an ambassador for accessibility.
2. Updated the 311 app, online submission form and ticketing system to add a checkbox to track accessibility/disability related concerns.

## THE ACTIONS

This section includes accessibility actions identified by each department to support implementation of the Policy.

### Corporate actions

These actions will be led by the Corporate Accessibility Working Committee with support from the Steering Committee.

1. Promote awareness on accessibility within the corporation and create a culture of acceptance and inclusion.
  - a. Promote awareness of the duty to accommodate under human rights legislation and related guidelines that staff must consider when assessing accommodation options for members of the public.
  - b. Promote corporate disability and accessibility awareness training.
  - c. Increase representation of people with disabilities in City publicity/communication materials.

2. Assess whether annual corporate accessibility funding is sufficient to support required accessibility improvements and develop a business case for increased funding, if required.
3. Develop an evaluation matrix to monitor progress and measure the success of the Policy implementation.
4. Research how people who are Deaf or hard of hearing experience City of Edmonton recreation programs in order to inform a prototype for a communication services fund (i.e. ASL/CART).

## **Citizen Services**

The following actions were developed by the Citizen Services Department.

1. Review existing recreation publications, programs, and supports to assess how accessibility is included (examples include Rec Facility Guides, Leisure Access Program, etc.).
2. Engage the Interagency Committee on Inclusive Recreation to consider the possibility of expanding their scope to address general accessibility issues, programs, services and potential partnerships. Strengthen the relationship with the City of Edmonton, Accessibility Advisory Committee.
3. Explore accessible programs that could be done in partnership with community organizations serving people with disabilities.
4. Update the Measuring Up initiative to current standards and best practices and promote awareness.
5. Explore policy changes that would prioritize accessibility on city streets and sidewalks
6. Collaborate with Integrated Infrastructure Services in assessing current state and informing prioritization of accessibility improvements of city

owned and operated facilities, streets, open spaces and other City owned and operated, publically accessible locations.

7. Establish a list of accessible City of Edmonton services and programs to be included on a centralized City website.

## **City Operations**

The following actions were developed by the City Operations Department.

1. Improve inclusion and consultation with people with lived experience with disabilities when making changes, developing programs and services, acquiring assets for public use and designing infrastructure.
2. Improve customer service by providing enhanced training to staff around accessibility and best practices when serving people with disabilities.
3. Implement continuous improvement to infrastructure projects to ensure the built environment meets the needs of people with disabilities.
4. Explore ways to address challenges faced by people with disabilities posed by living in a Winter City.
5. Implement continuous improvement to accessibility of public transit services.
6. Expand on initiatives to enhance the accessibility of the City's waste collection program.

## **Communications and Engagement**

The following actions were developed by the Communications and Engagement Department.

1. Promote and encourage training around accessibilities, disabilities and equity.

2. Provide accessible communication products and services.
3. Establish a centralized online location for all accessibility information on the City website (Edmonton.ca).
4. Create a centralized, internal online resource for all CoE employee accessibility information (OneCity).
5. Promote accessible services, tools and programs available for staff and Edmontonians (Internally & Externally).
6. Support development of client communication plans that include accessible and equitable forms of information.
7. Provide sign-language interpreters at significant City of Edmonton news conferences to ensure they are accessible to more people.
8. Improve information/signage (e.g. posters/pamphlets) to ensure communication material is highly visible, interpretive and uses plain language.
9. Build a process to incorporate accessibility practices in the following:
  - a. Web operations best practices
  - b. Visual identity and Corporate Brand guidelines
  - c. Social Media
  - d. Filming, photography and videos (Storytelling)
10. Increase options within C&E to provide feedback on accessibility.
11. Ensure customer service standards, practices and procedures consider the needs of people with disabilities.
12. Create a public engagement checklist of elements/best practices.

13. Annual or bi-annual engagement with persons with disabilities (both in City and city) and front line staff to capture barriers and opportunities.

## **Employee Services**

The following actions were developed by the Employee Services Department.

1. Educate recruitment staff to improve accessibility of the recruitment process.
2. Ensure Corporate training provided by Employee Services is accessible to the greatest extent possible.
3. Develop corporate guidelines for consistent working from home/flexible work hours opportunities to remove barriers and enable employment for employees with diverse needs.
4. Ensure first aid kits, AED cabinets, and fire extinguishers in staff areas are located in accessible spaces.
5. Improve accessibility to single-stall barrier-free washrooms in City facilities by ensuring they remain unlocked and available for those who require them.
6. In collaboration with the Fleet and Facility Services Branch, Employee Services will review and recommend swipe passes and automatic door openers in areas where barriers may exist for those who require improved accessibility.

## **Financial and Corporate Services**

The following actions were developed by the Financial and Corporate Services Department.

1. Provide annual assessment and tax notices in alternative formats made available upon request, and continue development of secure web

- services to enhance access to and comprehension of property assessment and tax information.
2. Ensure City employees and Edmontonians have easy access to financial policy, process and information, and seek ongoing opportunities to improve clarity with plain language.
  3. Enable technology solutions that support and foster accessibility across the corporation.
  4. Opportunities to improve accessibility will be incorporated into the changes and updates to ongoing maintenance schedules and capital upgrade projects. An accessibility lens will be used when communicating service disruptions.
  5. Enhancing building evacuation plans and drills to include processes and instructions for evacuation of employees and visitors of all abilities.
  6. Adjustments for greater digital accessibility will be explored by the Data Analytics team through training from a third party specializing in Adaptive Technology.
  7. Work with external partners to increase accessibility of the Geographic Information System (GIS) platform used by the City.
  8. Apply human-centred design principles and methods, including accessibility and inclusion considerations, when reviewing and evaluating services and recommending service design and delivery changes.
  9. Customer Experience research will include engagement with people with disabilities, to ensure accessibility considerations are addressed and planned for.
  10. Promote awareness of and position accessibility as a driver in the strategic corporate planning processes applied within the City, and

ensure plain language and other accessibility considerations are applied when sharing corporate strategy and reporting materials online.

## Integrated Infrastructure Services

The following actions were developed by the Integrated Infrastructure Services Department.

1. Understand accessibility: Provide staff with training to help them identify barriers to accessibility and recognize how to prevent/remove them within their work, projects and deliverables. Raise staff awareness on available training, tools and resources by developing and implementing an IIS Accessibility Education Plan.
2. Apply an accessibility lens: Develop requirements that ensure an accessibility lens is applied throughout the planning and delivery of infrastructure projects.
3. Understand current state: Develop and implement an Accessibility Assessment Program for infrastructure assets.
4. Tools, guides and resources: Review and update all tools, guides, and resources to align with City's commitments towards accessibility as per Policy C602, Administrative Directive A1472, and Procedure.
5. Budget: Allocate budget using appropriate funding mechanisms to improve accessibility of existing infrastructure.
6. Maintain barrier-free access: Develop requirements to maintain barrier-free access during construction, where appropriate, by providing safe alternate or temporary barrier-free paths of travel through or around construction sites.

## Office of the City Manager

The following actions were developed by the Office of the City Manager.

1. Election Office handrail and accessibility of the front door is being addressed to ensure accessibility without secondary assistance.
2. Edmonton General Elections information sessions offered virtually.
3. Ensure plain language for Edmonton General Elections online materials.
4. Apply GBA+ (<https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html>) lens applied to the development of Edmonton General Elections processes and procedures.
5. Partner with subject matter experts to support the development and delivery of accessible election participation opportunities - vote, work, run.

## Urban Planning and Economy

The following actions were developed by the Urban Planning and Economy Department.

1. Encourage the development of buildings and surrounding built environments to contribute to accessibility to accommodate people of all ages and abilities through increasing the awareness of CoE Access Design Guide.
2. Ensure staff are aware of and referencing the current CoE Access Design Guide, in addition to other standards and guides, in the design of infrastructure projects.
3. In cooperation with Communication & Engagement, support/promote the creation of a list of accessible venues for in-person engagement activities and public meetings.

4. Establish a Design Review process to ensure accessibility considerations are included in design of developer-led infrastructure projects.
5. Promote use of the City's Event Accessibility Checklist for event planning (ensure accommodations upon request - captioning, ASL interpreters, large print, braille etc).
6. Offer opportunities for staff within the department to experience some of the issues that people with disabilities face on a daily basis (e.g. using wheelchairs).
7. Incorporate a Universal Design review in the development of departmental project charters.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Progress of the accessibility actions will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a progress report published annually. An evaluation matrix is under development to measure the impact of the Corporate Accessibility Plan. The results of this evaluation will support development of the next three year Corporate Accessibility Plan.