



To: Planning Committee **Date:** January 4, 2024
From: Kim Somerville **File:** 08-4055-05/2024-Vol 01
 Director, Community Social Development
Re: **Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Work Program**

Staff Recommendation

That the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee’s 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Work Program, as presented in the staff report titled “Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Work Program” dated January 4, 2024, from the Director of Community Social Development, be approved.

Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development
(604-247-4671)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

The creation of the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC) was approved by City Council on November 28, 2022 to address one of the municipal requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. The RAAC acts as a resource and provides advice to City Council to support the advancement of accessibility in the city, so people with disabilities are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life. Each year, the RAAC submits an annual report to Council for the completed year and a proposed work plan for the upcoming year. This report presents the RAAC's 2023 annual report (Attachment 1) and the proposed RAAC 2024 Work Program (Attachment 2) to Council for approval.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

Analysis

The RAAC is comprised of up to 12 Council-appointed, voting members who bring unique perspectives, knowledge and experiences to committee meetings. By fostering meaningful dialogue and information sharing, the RAAC provides input and advice to City Council to support the identification, removal and prevention of barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the community.

Work undertaken by the Committee aligns with the Accessible British Columbia Act's requirements related to the role of accessibility advisory committees, including the requirements to:

- Assist the City with identifying barriers experienced by people with disabilities when interacting with or within the City (public and staff);
- Advise the City on how to prevent and remove these barriers; and
- Support the development and implementation of the Richmond Accessibility Plan.

2023 Annual Report

The inaugural meeting of the RAAC was held on April 12, 2023. Activities undertaken by the Committee in its first year of operation are outlined in the 2023 Annual Report. Highlights of the

Committee's work include:

- Provided input and guidance to support the development of the Richmond Accessibility Plan, including reviewing findings from the initial consultation with people with disabilities, as well as the individuals and organizations that support them, and providing feedback on the recommended actions outlined in the draft Plan;
- Supported the development of initiatives being undertaken by the City to advance accessibility and inclusion in the community by inviting City staff to present on accessibility-related projects, including the new accessibility features on the City's recently refreshed website, ongoing transportation improvements that promote enhanced access in the built environment and the development of the City's updated Social Development Strategy; and
- Regularly discussed barriers in the community that were identified by Committee members or individuals they support to assist with the removal and prevention of these barriers.

2024 Work Program

The proposed 2024 Work Program was discussed at the RAAC meeting held on November 8, 2023. In 2024, priorities for the Committee include:

- Supporting the finalization and ongoing implementation of the new Richmond Accessibility Plan;
- Providing advice and recommendations related to the advancement of accessibility in the City, including providing input to support the development of new City strategies and initiatives; and
- Increasing RAAC members' awareness on issues and trends that impact people with disabilities in the community through guest speakers and presentations.

Throughout 2024, the RAAC will meet monthly to discuss accessibility-related matters, advise City Council and staff as necessary, and provide an accessibility lens to the review of related policies, plans and initiatives that work to advance accessibility in the community. Development of the new accessibility plan will be completed shortly and the final Richmond Accessibility Plan will be presented to Council for adoption in winter 2024.

Financial Impact

There is provision in the department budget to support the activities of the RAAC.

Conclusion

The RAAC 2023 Annual Report provides a summary of the activities undertaken by the Committee during the 2023 calendar year. The proposed RAAC 2024 Work Program outlines the Committee's priorities for the year to fulfil its mandate to support the advancement of accessibility in Richmond, so that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life. Staff recommend that the proposed RAAC 2024 Work Program be approved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Melanie Burner
Program Manager, Social Development
(604-276-4390)

- Att. 1: Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee: 2023 Annual Report
- 2: Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee: 2024 Work Program

Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report

Introduction

The creation of the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC) was approved by City Council on November 28, 2022 to meet one of the initial requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. The RAAC was established in 2023 and its inaugural meeting was held on April 12 of that year. The RAAC acts as a resource and provides advice to City Council to support the advancement of accessibility in the city, so that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life. Through ongoing discussion, information and knowledge sharing, the RAAC assists the City with identifying barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the community and advises the City on how to prevent and remove these barriers, thereby aligning its work with related requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. A representative from the Richmond Public Library also participates as a member of the RAAC to support the alignment of the City's and Library's efforts to advance accessibility in Richmond.

2023 Membership

The RAAC is to be comprised of up to 12 Council-appointed, voting members, consisting of seven citizen representatives and five organization representatives, representing Aspire Richmond, Pathways Clubhouse, Richmond Centre for Disability, Richmond Public Library and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). In 2023, the RAAC had 11 voting members and one vacant position designated for a Citizen Appointee – Indigenous Person representative.

Citizen Appointees

- Rob Sleath, Chair
- Shaan Lail, Vice-Chair
- Damian Gorman, Citizen Member
- Melanie Arnis, Citizen Member
- Pam Andrews, Citizen Member
- Tommy Leung, Citizen Member

Organizational Representatives

- Anne Bechard, Richmond Public Library
- Cindy Larden, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Dave MacDonald, Pathways Clubhouse
- Ella Huang, Richmond Centre for Disability
- Sue Jones, Aspire Richmond

The RAAC also included two non-voting City of Richmond representatives:

- Councillor Bill McNulty, Council Liaison
- Melanie Burner, Program Manager, Social Development, Staff Liaison

2023 Highlights

The RAAC held six meetings in 2023 from April 2023 to November 2023, with no meeting scheduled in August or December 2023. Over the initial six meetings, the RAAC discussed a wide variety of issues and barriers affecting people with disabilities in the community and provided advice and recommendations to the City to support the advancement of a number of accessibility-related initiatives. Highlights of the RAAC's 2023 meetings included:

1) Draft Richmond Accessibility Plan

The RAAC shared their expertise and knowledge during each stage of development of the draft Richmond Accessibility Plan to help guide the project. This included reviewing findings from the initial consultation with people with disabilities, their families and caregivers and local disability-serving organizations, and providing feedback on the recommended actions included in the draft Plan. The RAAC also provided input into the public engagement plan.

2) Applying an accessibility lens to City initiatives

The RAAC provided an accessibility perspective to support the development of a number of new City strategies and initiatives in 2023. These included the development of the City's updated Social Development Strategy, the new accessibility features of the City's refreshed website, ongoing accessibility-related transportation improvements and current seniors and age-friendly initiatives that work to advance accessibility in the community.

3) Ongoing identification of barriers in the community

During each meeting held in 2023, the RAAC designated time to discuss barriers they, or individuals they support, have identified in the community, as well as discussing potential ways to remove and prevent these barriers. Areas of concern identified by the committee were forwarded to the appropriate City departments for follow up.

Presentations

The RAAC hosted monthly guest speakers to highlight new City strategies and initiatives and provide opportunities for feedback to advance accessibility across City planning and service delivery.

- **April – Committee Orientation**

Melanie Burner, Program Manager, Social Development, led a committee orientation and presented an overview of the RAAC mandate, terms of reference, and member roles and responsibilities.

- **May – Richmond Accessibility Plan and Initial Consultation Findings**

Mitchell Reardon, Director of Happy Cities, and Marco Pasqua, Accessibility Consultant from Meaningful Access Consulting, presented on the development of the new Richmond Accessibility Plan, including findings from the initial consultation with people with disabilities, as well as the individuals and organizations that support them, in Richmond.

- **June – Update Social Development Strategy**

Dorothy Jo, Program Manager, Social Planning, and Donna Lee, Planner 2, Poverty Reduction, facilitated a discussion on how the City can build a more inclusive and thriving community in Richmond as part of the public engagement process for the updated Social Development Strategy that is currently being developed.

- **July – Refreshed City Website**

Gerina Heathe, Digital Communications Associate, presented on the refreshed City website, launched in April 2023, including an opportunity for the RAAC to provide feedback on the website’s new accessibility features and tools.

- **September – Ongoing Accessibility-Related Improvements to Transportation**

Lloyd Bie, Director, Transportation, and Sonali Hingorani, Manager, Transportation, presented on the department’s ongoing and future projects to make Richmond more accessible, including updates to accessible parking stalls and Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). The RAAC was given the opportunity to share feedback and discuss barriers within the built environment.

- **October – New Seniors Strategy and Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan**

Anthony Kupferschmidt, Program Lead, Seniors, presented on the new Seniors Strategy 2022–2032 and Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan, in addition to current seniors and age-friendly initiatives that work to advance accessibility.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Throughout its inaugural year, the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee has been honoured to represent the diversity of people with disabilities in Richmond and remains committed to meeting the legislative requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. We would like to thank Mayor Malcolm Brodie and City Councillors for their support of the RAAC. As well, we express our gratitude to Staff Liaison Melanie Burner for addressing RAAC feedback on accessibility barriers in the community. We look forward to continuing to make Richmond more accessible and inclusive through our work in 2024.

Submitted by:



Rob Sleath, Chair
Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee

Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC) 2024 Work Program

Initiative 1: Participate in a RAAC orientation.

Action

1.1 Members participate in an orientation to the RAAC to learn about the roles and responsibilities of advisory committee members, the RAAC Terms of Reference and the City's current strategies and initiatives related to accessibility.

Expected Outcomes

Members are aware of and understand the following:

- The RAAC Terms of Reference
- Their role as an appointed member of the RAAC
- The City's Respectful Workplace Policy 6800
- The 2024 Work Program
- Current City of Richmond strategies and initiatives related to accessibility, including the development of the Richmond Accessibility Plan

Initiative 2: Act as a resource to the City by providing recommendations and perspectives on issues and opportunities related to advancing accessibility in Richmond.

Actions

2.1 Respond to City Council requests and provide advice on issues related to advancing accessibility in Richmond.

2.2 Consult and provide input on City strategies, initiatives and policies that impact accessibility in Richmond.

2.3 Provide input and feedback to City staff on the accessibility of City programs, services and the built environment.

2.4 Review and discuss feedback received through the City's Accessibility Feedback Tool to support the ongoing prevention and removal of barriers in the community.

Expected Outcomes

The RAAC applies an accessibility lens to support the development and updating of City strategies, initiatives and policies and advises City Council and staff, as requested.

The RAAC provides ongoing feedback to support the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in existing City programs, services and the built environment.

Initiative 3: Support the finalization and implementation of the Richmond Accessibility Plan.

Action

3.1 Participate in and provide advice and recommendations related to the development and implementation of the Richmond Accessibility Plan.

Expected Outcomes

The RAAC provides input into the development of the final Richmond Accessibility Plan.

The RAAC supports implementation of the Plan by providing input on new initiatives that advance actions outlined in the Plan.

Initiative 4: Build on the RAAC's knowledge of accessibility issues through information sharing, guest speakers and educational opportunities.

Actions

4.1 Invite guest speakers to present on issues and trends that impact people with disabilities in the community at regular RAAC meetings.

4.2 Identify accessibility-related educational opportunities for members to learn about emerging issues and trends impacting people with disabilities that can inform the City's policies or practices.

4.3 Monitor accessibility-related issues and emerging trends.

Expected Outcomes

The RAAC is informed of trends and concerns raised by people with disabilities in the community.

The RAAC is well equipped to provide an accessibility lens to City strategies, policies and initiatives, as requested.

Initiative 5: Encourage public awareness and community engagement to understand the needs and concerns of people with disabilities in Richmond.

Actions

5.1 Discuss accessibility-related matters arising as a standing item on the RAAC agenda.

5.2 Participate in information sessions, educational activities and special events open to the public that focus on issues impacting people with disabilities in Richmond.

5.3 Promote opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public engagement opportunities led and supported by the City.

Expected Outcomes

RAAC is informed of trends and concerns raised by community members with disabilities.

The City and residents continue to be well informed about the latest trends, research and advocacy efforts related to accessibility matters.

People with disabilities are increasingly aware of engagement opportunities related to advancing accessibility in Richmond.

Initiative 6: Support priority accessibility-related City initiatives through aligning RAAC agenda and discussion topics.

Action

6.1 Review current and upcoming City accessibility initiatives and determine where RAAC participation will be most effective within the scope of the committee's advisory role.

Expected Outcomes

The RAAC's work and focus are aligned with Council-approved priorities related to advancing accessibility in Richmond.

The RAAC's work informs current policy updates and initiatives from various City departments related to advancing accessibility.