



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Community Services
Re: Global Accessibility Map (GAM)

Date: October 19, 2011
File: 11-7000-06/2011-Vol 01

Staff Recommendations

That the City partner with the Rick Hansen Foundation and Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) to support the launch and development of Global Accessibility Map Customer Service and Professional Assessment tools.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Community Services
(604-276-4068)

Att: 1

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Budgets	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Parks	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Recreation	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy Planning	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Transportation	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Development Applications	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO
			YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The Global Accessibility Map (GAM), which was formerly known as Global Accessibility Initiative (GAI), is a comprehensive rating system, assessment tool, and set of guidelines that will provide practical online information regarding the level of accessibility of buildings in participating communities. It is an initiative of the Rick Hansen Foundation that is being launched to celebrate that organisation's twenty-fifth anniversary.

In mid 2010, the Rick Hansen Foundation approached the City and Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) to explore ways in which the three organisations could work in partnership to plan a GAM initiative in Richmond. In January 2011, in accordance with staff recommendations, Council endorsed the City's partnership in the project and agreed on short term funding to allow RCD to begin carrying out and updating accessibility assessments in the community.

This report provides an update on work to date and identifies next steps for City of Richmond involvement in the project. It is responding to two Council Term Goals:

- *Advance the City's destination status and ensure our continued development as a vibrant cultural city...*
- *Improve the effectiveness of the delivery of social services in the City...*

Background Information

For over 25 years, the City of Richmond has been working with the disability community, advocates, and supporters, towards the goal of making Richmond the most accessible community in Canada. A key community partner for the City in these efforts has been the RCD, which in 2010 celebrated its 25th anniversary. Likewise, the Rick Hansen Foundation has spent several years as an advocate and a campaigning and capacity building organisation for those living with disabilities. The GAM was chosen as a project to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Rick Hansen "Man in Motion World Tour". It was motivated by the recognition that there is not one standard assessment tool or accessibility rating system that has been universally adopted across Canada and internationally. Countries in Asia, Europe and North America will be testing the GAM. The official global launch will occur at an international conference called "Interdependence 2012", to be held in Vancouver in May 2012.

The GAM has offered an opportunity for the City to be an "early adopter" beta site for this initiative. By pursuing the opportunity, the City of Richmond and its partners can play a key leadership role, not only in improving, but also facilitating the creation of the built environment in Richmond.

The GAM builds on existing work in the accessibility field. Between 2006 and 2008, the RCD implemented a project called 'Access Richmond', which was funded by the City. 'Access Richmond' is an online database with information on accessibility assessments carried out on a range of public and private facilities throughout the City. The GAM would take 'Access

Richmond' information and update, expand, and collate it into an internationally recognised rating system.

Project Update

Council endorsed City involvement in this project in January 2011 and allocated \$13,000 to RCD to begin implementation. The complete RCD progress report is included in **Attachment 1**.

In the first six months of the project RCD has:

- Carried out accessibility assessments across Richmond on a range of public and private sector facilities, including hotels, heritage sites, YVR and non-profit agencies.
- Updated the 'Access Richmond' website.
- Worked with Rick Hansen Foundation to link existing 'Access Richmond' material into the developing GAM information storage formats.
- Responded to enquiries about accessibility from community members on topics including ramp standards, accessible accommodation, and building code standards.

The Rick Hansen Foundation is behind schedule with software development for the Global Accessibility Map. It has however, been recruiting a Canada wide network of professional GAM assessors who will be trained once the software development stage is completed. The Foundation is also in the process of developing both its professional and consumer assessment tools, and the official media launch of the project occurred in October 2011.

Analysis

Communities across Canada, including Richmond, have been making continued efforts to increase accessibility through the direct provision and encouragement of such measures as curb cuts, ramps elevators, automatic doors, panels featuring braille, accessible housing developments that include accessible suites, audible traffic signals and designated parking spots. Nonetheless, there is still a great deal to be done, and the level of accessibility differs vastly amongst communities.

The GAM is intended to achieve two primary objectives: (1) empower people living with disabilities in Richmond to make informed decisions and leverage their consumer power to help increase the overall accessibility of buildings in our community over time, and (2) inform businesses, providing them with the information and tools to make their buildings more accessible and increase their understanding of the economic benefits of accessible venues and communities. In addition, the GAM should provide useful information for the City to consider regarding accessibility improvements that could be made to its buildings, over time, and within budgets.

Given the foregoing, the initiative should create widespread accessibility awareness across Richmond and provide an impetus for individuals, businesses and City departments to make change, measure progress over time, and increase accessibility for all members of society.

Buildings and facilities already assessed and to be assessed in the future include City of Richmond community centres, City parks and City run sports facilities. It is important to stress

that the GAM is primarily intended to assist consumers - helping them to realize the best possible experience when accessing Richmond based facilities. While some facility operators may choose to upgrade their premises based on the information available in the GAM, that is not the key priority of the tool. Any upgrades to City facilities identified in the assessment would be voluntary and subject to Council consideration.

Good accessibility within our city is essential for all sectors of the population, not just those living with a disability. Richmond has an aging population and increasing numbers of people in need of fully accessible facilities and services (e.g., pregnant women and families using strollers). There is thus a fit between the City of Richmond's priorities in relation to accessibility, and the GAM. There is also a fit with all three pillars of the City's sustainability agenda in that the initiative promotes economic, social, and environmental benefits for all.

Involvement in the Global Accessibility Map will allow the City and RCD to take existing accessibility assessment information, update it, and make it internationally recognized and relevant through the development of a internationally recognised rating system. In addition, Richmond's continued involvement in this initiative will allow the City an opportunity to partner and learn from one of Canada's leading disability organisations and experts on accessibility, and continue our efforts to improve the overall accessibility of our community. The City's role as an "early adopter" for this project should also raise the City's profile as a leader and a destination, both nationally and internationally.

Next Steps

The City of Richmond's continued role in this project would involve:

- Assistance and partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation for the media launch of the GAM project and the professional and consumer assessment tools.
- The continued funding for a further six months of a worker for RCD to carry out accessibility assessments in Richmond and to become a trained professional assessor for the GAM.
- Assistance with the testing and evaluation of the GAM project assessment tools (note: consumer and professional assessment tools are in the process of being developed).
- Continued assistance with the collection of baseline data on accessibility initiatives in Richmond, including existing information held by the "Access Richmond" project, and with collating information on the accessibility of Richmond's public and commercial facilities.
- Working to assist with the transferring of accessibility assessment information held on the RCD Access Richmond website in to the GAM.
- Coordinating input, marketing, and messaging to partner organisations e.g.; Richmond Oval, School District 38, Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Richmond based service clubs and non-profits, YVR, RCMP, and Tourism Richmond.
- Assisting with the implementation of market research and dissemination of project findings about assessed facilities/promotion of best practice.
- Rolling out project outcomes to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Future steps may include:

- Reviewing how the City can appropriately pursue and apply best accessibility practices to City owned buildings, facilities and spaces (e.g., Parks)
- Reviewing how the City can best encourage the private sector to pursue accessibility improvements for their premises (Note: any regulatory approach would be first reviewed with the private sector and approved by Council).

Financial Impact

The financial impact is \$13,000 of one time funding from within City General Contingency Funds.

Conclusion

The GAM is a comprehensive five star rating system, assessment tool and set of guidelines that will provide practical online information regarding the level of accessibility of buildings.

This initiative provides the City with an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with our existing partner, the RCD, as well as learn from the Rick Hansen Foundation, one of Canada's leading disability organisations and experts on accessibility. Through its involvement as an "early adopter" for this project, the City may raise its profile as a leader and a destination both nationally and internationally. It is recommended that the City's participation in the GAM be endorsed as outlined in the report.



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Richmond Centre for Disability

"Promoting a new perspective on disability"

PROGRESS REPORT TO CITY OF RICHMOND GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE PARTICIPATION

Jun 30, 2011

Background

The City of Richmond confirmed support for the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Global Accessibility Initiative (GAI) in December 2010, and under the same context granted funding of \$13,000 to the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) allowing for human resources allocation to participate in this project from January to June 2011.

RHF proposed a GAI partnership whereby RHF and RCD work together to achieve common accessibility goals. The shared vision of an inclusive society provides a sound basis for collaboration. More specifically, the proposed GAI partnership results in the technical integration of the existing Access Richmond Website which is administered by the RCD, with GAI software system, as well as the participation of RCD in the Beta Site testing for the initiative in Richmond.

The RCD received the funding in February 2011, and the initiative has been underway since then. The lead staff persons from the City of Richmond are John Foster and Alan Hill from the Community Services Department, while Kit Tam represents the RHF and Ella Huang the RCD.

Partnership Process

First Meeting on January 24, 2011 – attended by Alan Hill, Ella Huang and Kit Tam with RHF's technical team. RHF gave a general presentation on the concept of the initiative, its vision and directives, as well as conducted discussion on the next step and action plan.

Outcome: The consumer tools are under development, and will be available for testing when ready. There are some technical challenges pertaining to Internet interface and platform; RHF is in sole responsibility at this phase. The City of Richmond and RCD will be involved after this stage for testing of tools and integration of technical data.

Second Meeting on June 9, 2011 – attended by John Foster and Alan Hill from the City of Richmond, Ella Huang and Rich Green from RCD, also Jim Watson, Secretary of RHF Board of Directors, and Kit Tam with RHF's technical team. RHF demonstrated the consumer tools which will be launched shortly, their rating mechanism and technical

system. Professional tools are still under construction, and training for professional survey is tentatively planned for coming few months. There are interests expressed by various community partners such as Tourism Richmond.

Outcome: The official launch of the consumer tools is ready and waiting for the “to go” signal from RHF, as part of their 25th Anniversary Marketing Scheme. The City of Richmond and RCD are both in “get set” position to assist with the launch.

The Work of RCD

In the preparation phase of the GAI, the RCD took the initiative to get ready for action, plan ahead for possible involvement and enrich our experience and assets. We start to revise and build inventory for the Access Richmond website, so that the information and data are up to date. This will complement what RHF is designing for their new initiative, as the foundation of local business accessibility survey is already in place.

- New Survey and Re-Survey Activity Log:
 - Richmond Caring Place (January 2011)
 - Park & Fly (April 2011)
 - Advanced Mobility in Vancouver (April 2011 updated info with new address)
 - Touchstone Family Association (April 2011)
 - Gulf of Georgia Cannery (May 2011)
 - Holiday Inn Vancouver Airport (May 2011)
 - Executive Plaza Hotel, including Carver Restaurant (June 2011)
 - Sandman Signature Inn, including Chop Steakhouse and Bar and Danny's Restaurant (June 2011)
- Locations lined up for Survey: Steve Nash Sports Club and Shark Club
- Improvement on the Access Richmond Website: ongoing from January till now
- Responding to enquiries from community members: ongoing, on average about 1 to 5 enquiries a month. Most common topics include ramp standards, accessible accommodation, and building code standards, in order of popularity.

Next Step

1. Wait for the lead of RHF to assist launching of GAI
2. Take an active role in promoting the rating tool for consumer
3. Be engaged in the professional tool development, training and surveying
4. Propose to the City of Richmond for further funding:

Proposal: Part-time Accessibility Analyst – 3 days a week

Funding Request: Salary 3 days x 7.5 hours x \$18 x 26 weeks = \$10,530
MERCs CPP 4.95% + EI 2.49% = \$ 784
Administration 10% = \$ 1,132

TOTAL **\$ 12,446**

