



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: February 13, 2020

From: Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development

File: 07-3000-01/2019-Vol
01

Jim V. Young, P.Eng.
Director, Facilities and Project Development

Re: Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program Update

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program Update," dated February 13, 2020 from the Director, Community Social Development and Director, Facilities and Project Development, be received for information.

Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development
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Jim V. Young, P. Eng.
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(604-247-4610)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Recreation and Sport Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Arts, Cultural and Heritage Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

At the September 16, 2019 General Purposes Committee, staff received the following referral:

That the staff report titled “Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program,” dated August 15, 2019 from the Director, Community Social Development and Acting Senior Manager, Capital Buildings Project Development, be referred back to staff to allow for consultation with the Richmond Centre for Disability.

The purpose of this report is to respond to the above staff referral and to provide City Council with an update on the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018–2022 Strategic Focus Area #4 – An Active and Thriving Community:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

This report supports the 2013–2022 Social Development Strategy’s Strategic Direction #2 – Enhance Community Accessibility:

Action 3.5— Promote best practices in the assessment and upgrading of accessibility features in City and non-City facilities (e.g. continued participation with the Rick Hansen Foundation and others on the promotion and enhancement of the Planat online venue accessibility rating tool).

This report also supports Council Policy 4012 – Access and Inclusion (Attachment 1):

Richmond is an accessible and inclusive city by:

4. Collaborating with senior levels of government, partner organizations and stakeholder groups to promote social and physical infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of people who visit, work and live in Richmond.

Analysis

City Accessibility Initiatives

The City works to ensure that facilities and services are accessible and appropriate for all individuals, regardless of ability. To further enhance accessibility in Richmond, Council adopted the Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines and Technical Specifications (Accessibility Guidelines) in 2018 to assist City staff and the development community in incorporating accessibility features in City-owned facilities that go beyond the BC Building Code requirements. Examples of design considerations within the City's Accessibility Guidelines include: automatic washroom door openers, emergency call switches in accessible toilet stalls, slip-resistant surfaces on outdoor ramps, increased circulation space for individuals who use mobility aids and high visibility demarcation for floor surface changes. All new City-owned facilities will incorporate accessible features as outlined in the Council adopted Accessibility Guidelines to ensure that the project reflects a strong commitment to accessible design.

The City has a long-standing practice of working with Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) and the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) to enhance accessibility. On a semi-annual basis, RCD representatives meet with City staff to discuss areas where accessibility for various types of disability can be improved throughout the City. In addition to these meetings, RCD representatives also provide input on accessibility features in the design of new recreation facilities and participate in pre-event site reviews for major City events, utilizing the City's Accessible Event Checklist (Attachment 2) to ensure events are accessible and welcoming to all individuals.

The City has been working with the RHF to improve physical accessibility in the City's built environment since 2013. Since that time the City has continued to support RHF accessibility initiatives and in 2018 participated in the launch of the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program as a pilot city.

The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program

The RHFAC program is a rating system that uses trained professionals to evaluate the accessibility of retail, commercial, institutional and multi-family residential buildings and sites through the adoption of Universal Design principles. It considers the user experience of people with all disabilities, including those with mobility, vision and hearing disabilities. When assessing facilities, the program evaluates the interior and exterior of the building, including parking, public spaces and staff areas. Guidelines and standards follow Universal Design principles and complement the BC Building Code, however, it is currently considered an independent program used to measure a building's accessibility and determine how it meets accessibility requirements. Once an assessment is complete, a score card, recommendation report and letter of certification are provided to the facility operator.

A facility may be designated either RHF Accessibility Certified (rated 60–79 per cent) or RHF Accessibility Certified Gold (rated 80 per cent and over). Facilities with ratings below 60 per cent or facilities without a public entrance and accessible key functional spaces and amenities are not certified.

In 2018, the RHFAC program provided 1,100 free assessments throughout British Columbia with funding from the Provincial Government. The City had 28 facilities assessed as part of this pilot program. Of the City-owned facilities assessed, 26 facilities have been RHF Accessibility Certified. Two facilities (South Arm and Steveston Outdoor Pools) were not certified due to a variety of factors.

To date, the City has not incurred any costs to participate in the RHFAC program, however, if the City continues to assess City facilities through the program, both the RHFAC registry application and professional rating fees would apply. Costs for the RHFAC registry application and professional rating fees range from \$2,850–\$6,850 per facility, depending on the size and complexity of the facility. Certifications must be renewed every five years and the RHFAC registry application and professional rating fees would apply. Additionally, sites being reassessed within the five year certification period would not be charged the RHFAC registry application fee of \$1,350; however, professional rating fees ranging from \$1,500–\$5,500 would apply.

In November 2019, City staff met with RHF to clarify assessments and to discuss the technical requirements necessary to achieve certification at all City-owned facilities previously assessed. RHF has offered to provide a complimentary site walk-through prior to the City investing in improvements at a site that was not certified. In addition, RHF encouraged the City to consider having one or two City staff enrol in the RHFAC Accessibility Assessor training at a cost of \$1,572 per person to eliminate the professional rating fee required for future facility assessments.

Consultation with Richmond Centre for Disability

At the September 16, 2019 General Purposes Committee, Council directed staff to consult with Richmond Centre for Disability on the RHFAC program as it relates to City-owned facility assessments completed in Richmond. City staff met with RCD on three occasions to discuss the RHFAC program. RCD clarified that they do not have concern with the RHFAC assessments of City-owned facilities and that RHF has good intentions to improve accessibility in the built environment, however, RHFAC assessments should be considered as private opinion. RCD expressed their appreciation for the City's efforts in improving and maintaining accessibility for all Richmond residents, by adhering to City Bylaws, participating in the RHFAC program and the implementation of the Accessibility Guidelines.

Next Steps

At this time, City staff continue to work collaboratively with RCD and RHF to reduce barriers to participation in the community and further enhance accessibility in Richmond. In addition, City staff continue to evaluate the RHFAC program recommendations to determine how they can best complement current City accessibility initiatives and most effectively contribute to furthering accessibility in the City. To reduce barriers to accessibility in City-owned facilities, staff will take the following steps:

- Determine what RHFAC recommendations should be addressed on a facility by facility case basis;

- Prioritize RHFAC recommendations to further develop accessibility City-wide while considering safety, timing and budgetary impact, noting that further assessment including schematic designs may be required to fully understand and estimate the costs to address the recommended action;
- Investigate alternative sources of funding to support accessibility upgrades to City-owned facilities through various funding streams, including grants; and
- Determine future level of participation in the RHFAC program and explore the opportunity for City staff to participate in the RHFAC Accessibility Assessor training.

The City has benefitted by participating in the RHFAC pilot program, which is one of many tools staff use to identify accessibility barriers in City facilities. City staff continue to evaluate the RHFAC program assessments and how the recommendations can further the City's commitment to improving accessibility and access to participation in facilities. Staff will continue to keep City Council updated on accessibility improvements in Richmond.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The City continues to incorporate principles of accessible design in City buildings and open spaces to ensure that people of all ages and abilities feel welcome and are able to access City facilities. Through participation in the RHFAC program, implementation of the City's Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines and Technical Specifications and consultation with RCD and RHF, the City continues to further accessibility in Richmond.



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- Att. 1: City of Richmond Access and Inclusion Policy 4012
- Att. 2: City of Richmond Accessible Events Checklist



Page 1 of 1	Access and Inclusion Adopted by Council: October 13, 1981 Amended by Council: December 8, 2014	Policy 4012
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POLICY 4012:

It is Council policy that:

Richmond is an accessible and inclusive city by:

1. Acknowledging and keeping abreast of the accessibility and inclusiveness needs and challenges of diverse population groups in Richmond.
2. Ensuring that the Official Community Plan and other key City plans, strategies and policies incorporate measures to support Richmond's efforts to be an accessible and inclusive city.
3. Developing programs and adopting practices to ensure Richmond residents and visitors have access to a range of opportunities to participate in the economic, social, cultural and recreational life of the City.
4. Collaborating with senior levels of government, partner organization and stakeholder groups to promote social and physical infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of people who visit, work and live in Richmond.
5. Promoting barrier free access to the City's facilities, parks, programs and services.
6. Promoting a welcoming and respectful municipal workplace.
7. Providing information to the public in a manner that respects the diverse needs and characteristics of Richmond residents.

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City of Richmond Accessible Events Checklist

The Accessible Events Checklist identifies the key areas to address when planning an event to ensure they are accessible for everyone to participate. By addressing each point on this form, event planners will ensure that all participants' accessibility needs have been taken into account.

	CHECKMARK
Pre-Event Publicity and Promotion	
All event publicity and promotion highlights the accessible features of the planned event.	
Entrances and Exits	
There is a designated entrance into the event that does not require attendees use stairs.	
Where there are stairs, there are railings to assist for support.	
There are unobstructed pathways both in and outside of the event venue, including curb cuts on the sidewalk and, if needed, curb ramps within the event site.	
Everyone, including persons in wheelchairs or mobility aids can enter the main entrance of the event (entrance greater than 36" or more recommended). If not, there is clear signage directing to an accessible entrance.	
Parking and Drop off	
There are designated accessible parking spaces close to the main entrance or alternate accessible entrance- including wider spots suitable for side loading vehicles.	
If no parking is provided, there are alternate accessible transportation arrangements.	
There is a suitable Handydart and taxi drop off and/or pick up area at the event.	
Washrooms	
There are accessible routes to washrooms.	
A minimum of 10% of all washrooms at the event are accessible.	
There are signs and site maps directing people to accessible washrooms.	

On Site	
Site maps that indicate accessibility features are available to staff, volunteers and the general public.	
Appropriate staff and volunteers on site are fully aware of event accessibility features and trained to meet the needs of members of the public living with physical disabilities.	
All ramps used on site are non-slip.	
The height of the tables for writing surfaces, registration, food, beverages etc., will accommodate people in wheelchairs (minimum 29" knee clearance).	
There are wheelchair ramps to stage areas, if needed.	
If a person with a disability is presenting or performing, they can operate and adjust microphones, lecterns, or the position of the surface on which their computer or equipment rests.	
There is adequate and appropriate signage on site to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	
There is adequate scooter storage at the event (if needed).	
There are accessible back stage areas, e.g.: greens rooms, changing areas, hospitality areas (if needed).	
Consider providing an accessible, integrated and unobstructed event viewing area, which will allow wheelchair users and others living with physical disabilities to fully participate.	
Safety	
All electrical cables and/or cords that cross any paths covered. The lips/edges of covers should be no more than 1/2" thick to prevent tripping and allow any mobility devices to traverse over them.	
Emergency exits and refuge areas are accessible and emergency plans incorporate the needs of those with disabilities.	
Exhibits and Activations	
All pathways and vendors are well lit to ensure safety of all attending, including seniors, young children, and persons who use mobility aids.	
Routes to vendors and booths are accessible and unobstructed.	
Vendors can assist persons in wheelchairs or mobility aids over the counter (at least a portion of the counter should be a maximum of 36" to allow service to person in a wheelchair or mobility aid).	

NOTE: This checklist is designed as a starting point when planning an accessible event. You are still required to comply with all City, Federal, and Provincial Disability Access Requirements where applicable.