



Request for Decision

Accessibility Committee

Date of Meeting: Regular Board Meeting – May 24 & 25, 2023

Recommendation

THAT the Accessibility Committee be established as a staff advisory committee reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer.

THAT the Board be updated on the work of the Accessibility Committee on a schedule to be determined by the Chief Administrative Officer.

THAT the draft Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Committee be received.

THAT staff develop a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness of accessibility in the community.

Background

A staff report was brought to the Board meeting on March 22 & 23, 2023, resulting in the Board passing the following resolution:

THAT the Accessibility Committee be structured as a staff-led committee, and a staff report related to this be brought back to a future Board meeting.

(The staff report from the March Board meeting is available [here](#) and contains information on the legislative requirements under the [Accessible BC Act](#) for an accessibility committee and accessibility plan).

Discussion

In response to the Board's direction to structure an accessibility committee as a staff advisory committee, staff has developed a staff advisory accessibility committee (the "Committee") that reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

The CAO has the authority to incorporate into the Corporate Work Plan any accessibility initiatives arising out of the work of the Committee that:

- do not have financial impacts; or
- have financial impacts that can be incorporated into the current financial plan.

However, if the CAO wishes to advance accessibility initiatives arising out of the work of the Committee that require dedicated funding, a staff report seeking allocation of dedicated funding will be brought to the Board as part the SLRD's normal budgeting processes.

A set of draft Terms of Reference are attached to this staff report – this document will be finalized by staff in the coming weeks and then approved by the Chief Administrative Officer



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Accessibility Committee

(CAO). An advantage of this kind of committee is that meetings can proceed with less legislative formality.

Highlights of the attached draft Terms of Reference:

- *Approach* – In recognition of there being no dedicated accessibility funding in the current financial plan, the development of an Accessibility Plan is to start off simple and focused with the ability to grow over time adding breadth, depth and complexity.
- *Purpose of Committee* - The Committee makes recommendations to the CAO about:
 - developing an Accessibility Plan;
 - identifying and assessing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization;
 - removing and preventing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization;
 - implementing the Accessibility Plan (once developed and as approved by the Board); and
 - providing feedback about the SLRD's tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness in the community of accessibility.
- *CAO* – The CAO determines if and how to address the recommendations of the Committee through various pathways as laid out in the draft Terms of Reference. The CAO is responsible for the Terms of Reference and may make revisions to them at any time.
- *Sponsor* - The sponsor of the Committee is the Director of Strategic Services or their designate, with duties that include:
 - Recruiting or inviting individuals with the required membership requirements to be Committee members and making appointments (and re-appointments) to the Committee.
 - Attending meetings and taking meetings.
 - Overseeing the Terms of Reference under the direction of the CAO.
 - On a schedule determined by the CAO, updating the Board on the work of the Committee.
 - When directed by the CAO, bringing staff reports to the Board for any accessibility initiatives that require dedicated funding.



Request for Decision

Accessibility Committee

- **Membership** - The Committee consists of a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 members. As required by provincial legislation, the SLRD strives for Committee membership to consist of persons with disabilities, individuals that support or represent organizations that support persons with disabilities, and at least one Indigenous person. Initially staff members are voting members but once there is a minimum of 4 members that are persons with disabilities, individuals that support or represent organizations that support persons with disabilities and at least one Indigenous person, staff members not meeting those requirements will become non-voting members. As soon as the Committee's composition aligns with the legislative requirements, staff not meeting those requirements will step away as voting members and become non-voting members.
- **Meetings** - The Committee meets a minimum of two times and a maximum of six times per year. Initially, meetings are chaired by the Sponsor but once there is a minimum of 4 members that are persons with disabilities, individuals that support or represent organizations that support persons with disabilities and at least one Indigenous person, staff members not meeting those requirements become non-voting members and the Chair is elected by the voting members. Meetings are not open to the public.
- **Annual Review** - The Sponsor reviews these Terms of Reference on an annual basis, taking into consideration any feedback received from the Committee, with the CAO being responsible for approving any revisions.

Options

- 1) Accept the Recommendations as presented (**Preferred Option**);
- 2) Other, as per the Board's direction.

Next Steps

If the Recommendations as presented are approved, recruitment of Committee members and convening of Committee meetings will begin. As the SLRD begins to recruit (a) persons with disabilities; (b) persons who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities; and (c) at least one Indigenous person to be Committee members, the Board may wish to direct staff to explore options related to providing financial remuneration to these Committee members. At this time, there is no financial remuneration paid to these Committee members (if they are not staff members).

Attachment

Draft Terms of Reference

Submitted by:	Kristen Clark, Director of Strategic Services
Reviewed by:	Craig Dalton, Chief Administrative Officer
Approved by:	Craig Dalton, Chief Administrative Officer

Draft Accessibility Committee
Terms of Reference
May 19, 2023

1. Legislative Authority of Committee

In accordance with Part 3 of the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) and the [Accessible British Columbia Regulation](#), the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is required to:

- A. Establish an accessibility committee that to the extent possible reflects the diversity of persons in B.C. as well as the diversity of persons with disabilities in B.C., including at least 1 Indigenous person and at least half of the Committee members are persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities.
- B. Consult with the accessibility committee when developing or updating an accessibility plan.
- C. Develop an accessibility plan outlining how the SLRD will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in the organization or interacting with the organization, taking into account six specified principles:
 - (1) Inclusion
 - (2) Adaptability
 - (3) Diversity
 - (4) Collaboration
 - (5) Self-determination (i.e. people choosing and setting their own goals, being involved in making life decisions, self-advocating, and working to reach their goals)
 - (6) Universal design (i.e. the process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics)
- D. Create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness in the community of accessibility.

2. No Dedicated Funding for Accessibility Initiatives in Current Financial Plan

As of May 2023, no dedicated funding for accessibility initiatives has been allocated in the SLRD's current financial plan. Any accessibility initiatives requiring dedicated funding that the SLRD Board decides to approve will require associated budget allocations to be made as part of the SLRD Board's normal budgeting processes.

For clarity, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has the authority to incorporate into the Corporate Work Plan any accessibility initiatives that:

- do not have financial impacts; or
- have financial impacts that can be incorporated into the current financial plan.

3. Overview of Accessibility Plan and Committee

The SLRD endorses the principle that the Accessibility Plan is to start off simple and focused with the ability (subject to future Board consideration of any associated budget allocations) to grow over time adding breadth, depth and complexity.

The Accessibility Committee (the “Committee”) is a committee that works collaboratively and puts forward recommendations for the CAO’s consideration. The SLRD strives to have Committee membership that reflects the diversity of persons in B.C. as well as the diversity of persons with disabilities in B.C., including:

- at least 1 Indigenous person;
- at least half of the Committee members are:
 - persons with disabilities; or
 - individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities.

4. Purpose of Committee

The Committee is a recommendation-based committee and has no ability to make any decisions with respect to accessibility matters nor to manage or direct the actions of staff on a day-to-day operational basis, nor to enter into agreements and contractual obligations.

The work of the Committee consists of making recommendations to the CAO on the following matters:

- (a) In recognition of the principle that the Accessibility Plan is to start off simple and focused (with the ability to grow over time adding breadth, depth and complexity), developing a draft Accessibility Plan for the organization, by taking into account the specified principles of:
 - i. inclusion;
 - ii. adaptability;
 - iii. adversity;
 - iv. collaboration;
 - v. self-determination; and
 - vi. universal design.

- (b) Identifying and assessing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization.
- (c) Removing and preventing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization.
- (d) Once the Accessibility Plan is developed and as approved by the Board, implementing the Accessibility Plan.
- (e) Providing feedback on the SLRD's tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness in the community of accessibility.

5. Role of the Chief Administrative Officer

The CAO is responsible for these Terms of Reference and may make revisions to them at any time. (See also section 10 regarding an annual review process.)

The CAO is responsible for determining if and how to address the recommendations of the Committee, including but not limited to reducing or increasing their scope. Without limited the generality of the foregoing, some of the pathways available to the CAO are as follows:

- Do not accept the recommendations, or portions thereof, with general feedback provided to the Committee as to the reason(s);
- Provide direction to the Committee or request more, less or different information in respect of the recommendations, or portions thereof, including but not limited to cost estimates;
- Accept the recommendations, or portions thereof, and incorporate them into the Corporate Work Plan for prioritizing and tracking (i.e. if there are no financial impacts or if there are financial impacts that can be incorporated into the current financial plan);
- Advance the recommendations, or portions thereof, to the Board for consideration via the following route:
 - Direct the Sponsor to develop, for the Board's consideration in an open meeting, a staff report with recommended accessibility initiatives and associated dedicated funding allocations as part of the SLRD's normal budgetary processes (i.e. if there are financial impacts that cannot be incorporated into the current financial plan).

6. Role and Responsibilities of the Sponsor

The sponsor of the Committee is the Director of Strategic Initiatives or their designate (the "Sponsor"). The Sponsor oversees these Terms of Reference under the direction of the CAO and makes recommendations to the CAO for proposed revisions to these Terms of Reference (see section 10). On a schedule to be determined by the CAO, the Sponsor develops staff reports with updates on the Committee's work for the Board's consideration in open Board meetings.

The Sponsor also provides administrative support to the Committee, including the following responsibilities:

- (a) recruits/invites individuals with the relevant membership requirements to be members of the Committee, which may include an application process;
- (b) makes Committee appointments (and re-appointments);
- (c) receives resignations of members of the Committee;
- (d) fills vacancies on the Committee by appointing new member(s) with the relevant membership requirements, which may include an application process;
- (e) attends meetings and oversee procedures;
- (f) arranges meeting logistics;
- (g) sets and prepares meeting agendas in consultation with the Committee and distributes the meeting agenda to Committee members no less than 7 days before the scheduled meeting date;
- (h) when necessary, cancels and reschedules meetings with as much notice to the Committee members as possible depending on the circumstances;
- (i) takes meeting minutes, which will record any recommendations (for clarity, a verbatim transcript of meetings will not be kept);
- (j) transcribes and distributes meeting minutes by email, approval of which by the Committee is to occur by email;
- (k) makes use of Committee meeting minutes to prepare staff reports when appropriate to inform the Board of the work of the Committee;
- (l) provides overall leadership to the Committee.

7. Membership of Committee

The Committee consists of a minimum of 4 and no more than 12 members, with the breakdown of voting members and non-voting members as set out in these Terms of Reference.

The Sponsor strives to recruit the following persons to be Committee members: (a) persons with disabilities; (b) persons who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities; and (c) at least one Indigenous person, with a term length of one year and consideration of extending the term for subsequent one-year term(s). At this time, there is no financial remuneration paid to these Committee members (if they are not staff members).



The Sponsor may invite any or all of the following staff members to be Committee members, with term lengths and potential term extensions as determined by the Sponsor:

- Human Resources Manager
- Representative from the Office of the CAO
- Representative from the Planning Department
- Representative from the Building Department
- Representative from the Communications Department
- Representative from the Legislative and Corporate Services Department
- Representative from the Protective Services Department
- Representative from the Strategic Services Department

All Committee members are voting members, until the occurrence of the following event:

- when there is a minimum of 4 Committee members meeting the requirements of section 1(A) of these Terms of Reference, those Committee members who are staff members not meeting the requirements of section 1A cease to be voting members and become non-voting members.

8. Meetings

As this is a committee that provides recommendations to the CAO, the Committee meetings are not open to the public.

The Committee meets a minimum of two times and a maximum of six times per year, on a schedule determined by the Committee in consultation with the Sponsor.

The meetings are chaired by the Sponsor, until the occurrence of the following event:

- when there is a minimum of 4 Committee members meeting the requirements of section 1(A) of these Terms of Reference, the Sponsor ceases to be the Chair and a new Chair is to be elected by the voting members. At this time, a Vice-Chair may also be elected by the voting members.

Quorum is a majority of the voting members of the Committee. If quorum is not reached, the meeting is to be rescheduled for another date.

A recommendation made by the Committee is supported by a simple majority vote. In the case of a tie vote, the recommendation is defeated.

Meetings are held in person and electronically to facilitate attendance and to be as accessible and inclusive for Committee members as possible. With the consent of the Sponsor, if all Committee members are available to attend in person and all Committee members agree to meet in person, meetings may be held in person at a mutually-agreed upon location.

As required, staff members will participate to provide subject-matter expertise and feedback including:

- Director of Environmental Services or designate
- Director of Planning and Development Services or designate
- Director of Legislative and Corporate Services or designate
- Director of Finance or designate
- Director of Protective Services or designate
- Communications Manager or designate
- IT Manager or designate

9. Duties of Committee Members

Be familiar with the Committee’s purpose and duties.

Advise the Sponsor whether or not they will be able to attend the upcoming meeting.

Attend meetings with regularity and punctuality.

Be prepared for meetings by reading agenda materials.

Participate actively at meetings and ensure others can participate fully at meetings.

Be respectful of each other, including ensuring others have their turn to speak and are not interrupted unless absolutely necessary.

Do not speak to media as representatives of the Committee or the SLRD.

Do not discuss meetings outside of the Committee, other than by reference to the meeting minutes taken.

Work in the public interest in order to improve accessibility in the community and resolve any potential conflicts with their personal interests.

10. Annual Review of these Terms of Reference

The Sponsor undertakes a review of these Terms of Reference on an annual basis starting with the first review by December 31, 2024 and taking into consideration any feedback received from the Committee. As part of this review process, the Sponsor submits any recommendations for revisions to the CAO for consideration of approval.

For clarity, the CAO may make revisions to these Terms of Reference at any time (and not only as part of this annual review process).

Version #	Date Approved by the CAO
1	