

**TO:** Chair and members of Executive Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**



**(Original Signed)**

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** February 8, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Accessibility Impact Section of Staff Reports

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## **ORIGIN**

January 25, 2021 Executive Standing Committee motion (Item 12.4.1):

Moved by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT Executive Standing Committee requests a staff report regarding the inclusion of an “Accessibility Impact” section in all staff reports.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, subsections 7A, 34(1) and 34(3)* provide:

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to:

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

...

34 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

...

34 (3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer, through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), to develop diversity and inclusion guidelines for all staff reports, rather than create a specific accessibility impact section. The goal of these guidelines is to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are considered at all stages of the report-writing process.

## **BACKGROUND**

In January 2021, the Executive Standing Committee requested a staff report on the creation of a new section for all staff reports, entitled “Accessibility Impact”. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO in collaboration with Government Relations and External Affairs conducted a jurisdictional scan to explore how other municipalities represent the needs of persons with disabilities and other diverse groups in their council reports. Staff found that a few municipalities have included sections on the implications of a report on communities of diverse backgrounds. In January 2020, Ottawa City Council approved the following:

*As part of the mid-governance review, Council approved the inclusion of an Indigenous, Gender and Equity Implications section in the committee and council report template. Staff are developing tools and guidelines that will be rolling out by end of Q1, to assist City staff complete the section<sup>1</sup>*

Similarly, the City of Edmonton’s Department of Urban Planning & Economy is currently applying a [GBA+ lens](#) to council reports on zoning and land use regulations. Though currently there is only one department using this method, the City intends to apply this lens to council reports in other departments in the future.

The City of Calgary developed a Social Wellbeing Policy, indicating that “The City will embed consideration of the Social Wellbeing Principles of Equity, Truth and Reconciliation, Culture and Prevention, in [...] the completion of Corporate reports.”<sup>2</sup>

Based on these findings, staff determined that having an accessibility impact section may be limiting and may not cover how other equity seeking groups are impacted by the given program/service. It is important to acknowledge and address the multiple and intersecting aspects of social exclusion in order address the needs of diverse communities and to ensure inclusion in the Municipality’s programs and services.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff recommend moving beyond an accessibility impact section, to developing holistic diversity and inclusion guidelines when writing staff reports. By doing this, accessibility impact would be included. It is proposed that a diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility considerations lens be added to all staff reports. To support this addition, diversity and inclusion guidelines will be developed that will assist staff as they write and submit reports.

*The Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines for Staff Reports* will help report authors and collaborators to inform the direction of municipal services, programs, and projects with a clearer focus and a multidimensional view of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This approach ensures that full inclusion and participation of all residents can be achieved, and that the insights from groups who face systemic barriers and inequities are sought and reflected in municipal reports, recommendations, and outcomes. The guidelines will include reflective questions that correspond with the various sections of staff reports, including background, discussion, and community engagement. The report authors and collaborators will reflect on these questions and incorporate their responses into each specific section of the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Ottawa City Council: Motions & Directions to Staff (see Attachment 1)

<sup>2</sup> City of Calgary Social Wellbeing Policy (see Attachment 2)

Report authors will articulate how the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have been considered in all sections of the report (e.g., recommendation, discussion, financial implications, etc.). Considering these impacts in staff reports is not intended to create additional work for report writers. The goal is to encourage staff to consider these elements in all sections of a report they are developing. This also demonstrates that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are significant priorities of Regional Council.

By applying a diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility impact lens to reports, staff can take active steps to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessing municipal programs and services. This proactive approach may also mitigate the risk of negative feedback or concerns from members of the public. The goal of this approach is to ensure that issues around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are addressed as early as possible, ideally before they can create unintentional barriers that would otherwise need to be addressed at a later date.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications at this time.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Not creating a section for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility impact, may hinder the municipality's efforts to identify and remove barriers marginalized communities face in accessing municipal programs and services.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was required.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Executive Standing Committee may recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve an accessibility impact only section for all staff reports.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Ottawa City Council: Motions and Directions to Staff  
Attachment 2: City of Calgary Social Wellbeing Policy

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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## Attachment 1 – City of Ottawa – City Council – Motions & Directions to Staff

City Council - Motions & Directions to Staff					
Last Revised: January 22, 2021					
Subject	Meeting Date	Moved / initiated by	Disposition/Minutes	Referred to	Response Details
<p><b>Direction to Staff</b> re: 2018-2022 Mid-term Governance Review Report - 1. That staff from Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development Services work with the Council Sponsors Group for Women and Gender Equity to do a review on the use of the Indigenous, Gender and Equity Implications section in Q4 2021 to ensure it is being used appropriately by staff and to determine if additional supports are necessary for report authors;</p>	09-Dec-20	T. Kavanagh	<a href="#">Disposition 9 December 2020</a>	CSSD	<p><b>In Progress:</b> As part of the mid-governance review, Council approved the inclusion of an Indigenous, Gender and Equity Implications section in the committee and council report template. Staff are developing tools and guidelines that will be rolling out by end of Q1, to assist City staff complete the section.</p>



## Council Policy

**Policy Title:** **The Social Wellbeing Policy**  
**Policy Number:** **CP2019-01**  
**Report Number:** **CPS2019-0276**  
**Adopted by/Date:** **Council / 2019 April 08**  
**Effective Date:** **2019 April 08**  
**Last Amended:** **N/A**  
**Policy Owner:** **Calgary Neighbourhoods**

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The City of Calgary (The City) will follow the Social Wellbeing Principles when making decisions; developing plans, policies and strategies; and delivering City Services. These principles are:
  - (a) The City will strive to provide Equitable Services. This includes removing barriers to Access and Inclusion;
  - (b) The City will advance the active and shared process of Truth and Reconciliation in collaboration with the community;
  - (c) The City will seek opportunities to support and grow Culture in Calgary; and
  - (d) The City will aim to stop problems before they start, using a Prevention approach.
- 1.2. The City will advance processes and mechanisms to identify emerging social needs of Calgarians and develop response plans that may be put in place with appropriate partners and Services.
- 1.3. The City will consider all aspects of Accessibility in City Service delivery and maintain a multi-year plan for how The City will meet Accessibility requirements.
- 1.4. The City will develop measures, evaluate, and publicly report on, the progress made in the advancement of the Social Wellbeing Principles.
- 1.5. To support The City to advance the Social Wellbeing Principles of Equity, Truth and Reconciliation, Culture and Prevention, The City will:
  - 1.5.1 Seek the advice of the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee or other relevant Boards, Commissions and Committees as requested by City Council, Administration, or as indicated in the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee work plan;
  - 1.5.2 Provide representatives of The City including members of Council, employees, and Boards, Commissions and Committee with relevant learning opportunities including training;
  - 1.5.3 Use data to understand the needs of Calgarians to inform Service delivery; and

- 1.5.4 Develop tools and provide support to integrate consideration of the Social Wellbeing Principles into City processes as described in 1.6.
- 1.6 The City will embed consideration of the Social Wellbeing Principles of Equity, Truth and Reconciliation, Culture and Prevention, in:
  - 1.6.1 the design, delivery and evaluation of City Services;
  - 1.6.2 The City's strategic vision (the Municipal Development Plan / Calgary Transportation Plan);
  - 1.6.3 the development of Service plans and budgets;
  - 1.6.4 the processes that support project management;
  - 1.6.5 the delivery of communication, marketing and information provided to the public;
  - 1.6.6 the process of public Engagement;
  - 1.6.7 the completion of Corporate reports;
  - 1.6.8 advocacy to and collaboration with other orders of government to address relevant social issues; and
  - 1.6.9 the development of new or revised Council and Administration Policies.

## **2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline policy statements and procedures for how City Services can contribute to achieving quality of life and increased Civic Participation for all Calgarians.
- 2.2 This Council policy addresses the need to:
  - 2.2.1 Provide guidance on how The City can reduce barriers and continually improve delivery of Services to all Calgarians, considering aspects of diversity including but not exclusive to: age, disability, family status, gender, gender identity/expression, marital status, Indigenous heritage/identity, level of income, place of origin, place of residence, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation; and
  - 2.2.2 Develop an efficient and effective approach to the coordination of relevant existing or future strategies that advance the Social Wellbeing Principles.



### **3. DEFINITIONS**

#### 3.1 In this Council policy:

- 3.1.1 “Access” means Services align with the ability for individuals to participate. This often is achieved through the removal of barriers impeding access, which may include: social, financial, language, cultural, geographic and physical barriers. The result is everyone is given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of society.
- 3.1.2 “Accessibility” means removing barriers to access specifically for people with disabilities (which may include but is not exclusive to physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities) to participate in City Services.
- 3.1.3 “City Service” or “Service” means the delivery of outputs that meet the needs of residents and contribute to overall outcomes delivered by The City. This includes enabling Services (Services that set the framework, policies and conditions by which internal City Services operate; or provide the foundational support for the delivery of public Services).
- 3.1.4 “Civic Participation” means Calgarians are involved in dialogue and/or actions to address important public issues.
- 3.1.5 “Culture” means the opportunities to express the unique identity of a community or social group. Examples include art, food, performance and other creative expressions that deepen social connections, increase cultural understanding and dialogue, reduce isolation and enliven communities. In the context of this policy, Culture refers to the strategic priorities in the Cultural Plan for Calgary.
- 3.1.6 “Engagement” means the purposeful dialogue between The City and citizens and stakeholders to gather information to influence decision making.
- 3.1.7 “Equitable” or “Equity” means conditions are adjusted to meet people’s diverse needs, strengths and social realities. It requires recognition that different barriers (often systemic) exist for diverse individuals or groups. The result of Equity is all people have the opportunity to benefit equally from City Services.
- 3.1.8 “Inclusion” means environments in which any individual or group is respected, valued, and supported to fully participate in society. In these environments people feel included.
- 3.1.9 “Prevention” means the conditions or personal attributes that strengthen the healthy development, wellbeing, and safety of individuals across the lifespan, and/or communities, and prevent the onset or further development of problems.
- 3.1.10 “Social Wellbeing” means the social conditions that impact an individual’s quality of life, access to opportunities, and inclusion in society.





3.1.11 “Truth and Reconciliation” means a shared and active process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships. It is about acknowledging what has happened in the past, addressing the impact of colonial policies and then following through with action.

**4. APPLICABILITY**

4.1 This Council policy applies to members of City Council and Administration.

**5. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

5.1 Pursuant to s 3 of the *Municipal Government Act* (Alberta) “the purposes of a municipality are (a) to provide good government, (a.1) to foster the well-being of the environment (b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of Council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, (c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities and (d) to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to plan, deliver, and fund intermunicipal services”.

**6. AMENDMENT(S)**

Date of Council Decision	Report/By-Law	Description

**7. REVIEW(S)**

Date of Policy Owner’s Review	Description