

## **ACPD Proposal working with City Lab, and McMaster affiliated Centre for Community Engagement and the Research Lab**

### **Introduction and Background for ACPD Members:**

Key information gaps and the need to ease access to a variety of information resources in order to fulfill the ACPD mission to raise awareness of the impacts of disabilities, and to identify issues and make recommendations in order that the city of Hamilton prevents and eliminates barriers (promoting inclusion) for persons with disabilities have been recognized. (taken from Mission Statement)

It is important that ACPD work be based on solid evidence relevant to the municipality and residents. It strengthens and supports the lived experience of members of the committee.

Working group efforts have revealed a number of key information gaps as well as a wealth of materials that can help inform current and on-going work. Thus there is the need to better manage numerous documents, reports and publications in order to ensure members of the committee and related staff can access valuable resources supporting ACPD work.

To do so a related information management strategy will ensure regular updates, formal and informal, from key organizations and City departments that support evidence-based review, actions and relevant recommendations. (repeat from the first part of the formal proposal introduction)

## The Current Situation:

- Unique role of this sub-committee referencing multi-level government policy and legislation,
- ACPD works across city departments which is challenging for members and support staff to identify key staff and related information resources.
- Information management supports evidence on the who, what, where, when and how of issues and concerns both current and past.
- working Groups may be replicating efforts to seek supportive information and resources
- Often information gaps are identified at ACPD meetings which slows down action -sending work back to Working groups
- For example information that is current and consistent (across ACPD work) is important. Such details involve:
  - how many hamiltonians identify as disabled? \_\_\_\_\_
  - proportion of those with disabilities that use a mobility device
  - proportion of those with disabilities with invisible disabilities \_\_\_\_\_
  - proportion of disabled living at or under the poverty line \_\_\_\_\_
  - proportion of those with disabilities that have difficulties finding \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate housing \_\_\_\_\_
  - proportion of those with disabilities that make use of H|SR paying for each trip \_\_\_\_\_
  - proportion of those with disabilities using the H|SR with a mobility device \_\_\_\_ (further detail on canes, walkers, scooters etc.

## Reasons for Proposal:

- consider a database to manage 'historic' documents and material resources was investigated by James but limitations discovered paused the work.
- any data base would need to be outside of the Cities operation.
- expertise to assist such a project could include important access to up-to-date information from different sources – census, SPRC and key disability organizations would be helpful and with research pieces brought together provide an information management strategy for ACPD and its working groups.
- ACPD and Working Groups frequently experience competing priorities. Solid information helps identify and attend to the more important issues.
- City Lab had presented to ACPD several times and was identified as a valuable resource in obtaining outside expertise. Discussions began with Jayne and Paula, virtually. A team approach would be best.
- ACPD work would benefit from access to current information as well as what has happened in the past - best-evidence approach
- Information management plays critical role in decision-making and identifying priorities.
- Solid evidence that supports motions and proposals is important when presenting to council as well as working with staff.
- lived experience is made more valuable when enriched with empirical information/data (quantitative and qualitative, mixed methods) on who, when, where and how many for example experience what type of disability, related housing, transportation and built environment issues

- Many questions arise and are difficult to answer at working groups and ACPD meetings. This results in time delays in accessing information and resources. An online computer at face-to-face meeting helped in the past.
- Different working groups at times repeat information gathering on same or similar problems and concerns. The results can differ.
- committee work crosses multiple areas of expertise and Working Groups must identify and contact those with valuable information to attend and share and discuss information.

## **Shaping the Proposal:**

After consultations and review of submission documents & procedures via City Lab and McMaster affiliates (Centre for Community Engagement and the Research Lab) it became clear that strong support for the proposal was important and a team approach beneficial. The original proposal could be broken into a group of small proposals or briefs allowing for many pieces to be worked on at the same time. Research pieces would then come together as an information management study or strategy. Since the committee has minimal resources available, City Lab offered the opportunity to partner with leading edge research and problem solving expertise. This is work that the ACPD and members would otherwise be unable to accomplish.

The Process: Proposals (brief) are presented to the Centre for Community Engagement and the Research Lab according to their criteria and are shaped more like a brief to be mutually refined according to their 5 step work plan. These specific steps refine the proposal, desired outcomes, research question(s) and timeline that allows them to match expert researchers to the ACPD needs.

## Addendum 1 Jayne's Background

I feel it may be helpful to give what I hope to be a brief summary of my background and why it led me to develop this proposal to the ACPD.

I have a long and diverse work history with community faced organizations, largely not-for-profit. This includes an early career in the museum field working on and with boards and committees designing events and education programs.

My growing interest in the transfer of information and knowledge through education roles combined with an interest in community development lead to higher education.

My Masters focused on work that began with an awareness of the need for an electronic 'Red Book' (local services resource guide) as well as the delivery of home health care services (Home Care, CCACs) with evolving electronic technologies (mobile phones, laptops, email and social media). Based on partnerships with a CCAC and service providers in the development and completion of a pilot I was offered a PhD in the UK.

My Doctoral research captured lessons from a University- Community partnership similar to City Lab that addressed the needs for and solution for an online tool to support the capture and use of quality community-related health information. The project was funded by the Deputy Prime Ministers Office and involved the City of Brighton and Hove, 2 Universities, the National Health Service (NHS), the local newspaper and a social media organization. My role was not as a technology expert but to address the social conditions and constraints involved in such a project. At this time Google was the only company working on a search engine that might be suitable for the project. Costs and resources to achieve desired goals by way of a custom search engine and database were very expensive and longevity was dubious. The projects greatest benefits were the recognition of information resources and needs beyond individual organizations and value of an information management strategy.

In my first months I realized the challenges the ACPD has with 4-5 working groups and as noted below responsibilities to monitor several levels of legislation across city jurisdictions. As is normal in such situations good information is key to informed decision-making.

There is strong lived experience on the Committee but situating that within a larger community picture of how many are impacted by what particular situation and practices is harder to capture. This became particularly obvious in the Housing working group with our team-effort, producing a Housing Guide. The value of working together, in locating and making use of key information was invaluable. Moving the concept of a up-to-date guide beyond paper was more difficult but we now have an on-line version that achieves broader accessibility and reasonable ability to modify and keep it current.

Over the last 7 years it has become clear that working groups have competing priorities that frequently change for a variety of reasons. Some efforts overlap and while members can share what is happening it is not always timely and helpful. Unintentionally it can slow work with efforts to sort out any confusion or misunderstandings at formal ACPD meetings. Examples are seen with motions and proposals etc. Often it is key information that is missing and or a history of similar work that must be sorted out.

The Housing working group also highlighted the value of archiving and being able search valuable documents and reports such as that held by Mary Sinclair. At the same time that historic documentation needs to be situated with current information that together, provides a strong evidence-base upon which priorities can be confirmed and good decisions can be made.

## Addendum 2 Information Management

**Information**, as we know it today, includes both electronic and physical information.

Information is that which informs — the answer to a question of some kind. It is thus related to data and knowledge,

In organizations, committees etc information management attends to the flows of information. How decision-making is informed by available or missing information.

Data as “information has been translated into a form that is efficient for movement or electronic processing, converted into binary digital form. Digital forms of information lack contextual detail that analog retains.

Data in its most basic, standalone digital format does not provide information. But when it’s combined with other data or is manipulated in some way, such as a database that’s when the organization derives value from the information — which then leads to knowledge.

Data Management is a subset of Information Management. It comprises all disciplines related to managing data and information as a valuable, organizational resource. Specifically, it’s the process of creating, obtaining, transforming, sharing, protecting, documenting and preserving data. This often involves a data base and search tools.

Draft for content review and possible submission to City Lab etc.

\*Note: The attention is on content.

Spelling, grammar and formatting will be edited last.

## **ACPD Proposal s with City Lab, and McMaster affiliated Center for Community Engagement and the Research Lab.**

### **Introduction**

The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disability (ACPD) has identified key information gaps and the need to ease access to varied information resources in order to fulfill it's mission to raise awareness of the impacts of disabilities, and to identify issues and make recommendations in order that the city of Hamilton prevents and eliminates barriers (promoting inclusion) for persons with disabilities. Among City of Hamilton sub-committees the ACPD has the unique mandate to monitor Provincial AODA legislation pertaining to disabilities, accessibility and human rights. Thus the advisory role of ACPD is related to policy and practices of the city and must be based on solid evidence as well as the AODA, Building Code, Barrier-free Guidelines, housing policy, education and service delivery and Human Rights legislation.

A number of key information gaps have been identified as well as a wealth of materials that inform current and on-going work. Thus there is the need to manage numerous documents, reports and publications in order to ensure members of the committee and related staff can access valuable resources supporting their work. As well an information management strategy would ensure regular updates, formal and informal, from key

organizations and City departments that would support evidence-based review and relevant recommendations.

After careful consideration and initial conversations with City Lab and their McMaster partners; The Centre for Community Engagement and the Research Lab the proposal has been broken into pieces that allow small research projects that can inform an information management strategy, potential data base and necessary Committee work.

It was recognized that a large amount of miscellaneous materials existed but were unorganized and thus not very accessible for the committee to utilize. This initiated an investigation by James Kemp into some type of data base that could be searchable. As a result it was realized that expertise to assist such a project, including equally important access to up-to-date information from different sources – census, SPRC, and key disability organizations would be helpful. City Lab had presented to ACPD several times and was identified as a valuable resource to assist in tapping University expertise and potentially developing appropriate partnerships of value to both the committee and the city. The following is therefore a group of individual proposals that can expedite the eventual development of an information management strategy and data base solution for the ACPD.

\*Note for ACPD members: The research pieces are shaped in the style of a brief which allows the flexibility the research partners look for in matching expertise to research purpose. Related websites detail the submission process and steps leading to completed work on behalf of a community partner. Any proposal pieces completed will be of value. It is anticipated that only a select number will be completed at first but over time many might be achieved.

## **Proposed Research Pieces - ACPD and its Working Groups for McMaster City Lab, Community Engagement and Research Lab.**

### **ACPD:**

**Purpose:** Evaluate and advise on the management, retrieval and knowledge transfer of historic/archival material and relevant information (reports, meeting notes etc.) to meet ACPD strategic planning and working group needs. (\* Worded to attract a variety of expertise)

**Background:** The ACPD committee has accumulated nearly two decades of reports, minutes and miscellaneous related materials of mixed value to ongoing committee work. There is a need to determine practices and processes to manage these materials. While an electronic database with search mechanisms may be a solution there is opportunity to explore the best solution relevant to the mandate and work of the committee and its working groups. Thus information flows, storage and retrieval methods can be addressed.

1 Identify practices and possible tools that insure the ACPD has and maintains up-to-date data regarding residents with disabilities. Determine appropriate level of breakdown around type of dis-ability ex: mobility - wheel chair, walker, cane etc. sight, hearing, mental health, other

1b Recommend processes to ensure information is kept up to date and shared appropriately.

2 To understand information management processes, conduct a Mapping Exercise or Environmental Scan or Scope (method to be confirmed) of how the ACPD engages with City Staff across differing departments. Make recommendations to enhance communications and where appropriate establish regular channels for the sharing of updates etc.

**Audience:** ACPD Sub-Committee

**Timeline:** long-term with some components achieved in 3 months. Key pieces are tied to the following group of research pieces.

## **Transportation:**

**Purpose:** The following research pieces will inform the work of this ACPD Working Group.

- 1 To better understand the
- 2 Environmental Scan or Scope or Mapping exercise (method to be confirmed) capture numbers of users with disabilities taking HSR, and Accessible Transit (Darts, taxi scrip) potentially capturing single use tickets and agencies that make use of them and capture the range of disabilities utilizing varied transit. This information may help inform ATS users in the future as well as aid decisions by the HSR .
- 3 Provide a summary overview of key issues from staff and rider perspectives. To be accomplished through a tool such as Mapping, or SWAT analysis (method to be confirmed) (SWAT is strengths, weaknesses, Assets, Threats)
- 4 Environmental Scan or Scope (method to be confirmed) of training and educational practices/policies used by the providers of accessible and HSR transit with regard to passengers with disabilities. Method to capture when where and how training is provided, especially with regard to new hires, performance reviews, complaints and passenger needs (ex seat belts, ramp). (method to be confirmed)

**Audience:** ACPD Working Group and Sub-Committee

**Timeline:** 3months plus based on research strategy and agreed objectives

## **Built Environment Working Group:**

**Purpose:** The following research pieces will inform the work of this ACPD Working Group.

- 1 To better understand Barrier Free Guidelines, practices pertaining to those with disabilities. Conduct a Review, SWAT analysis or Environmental Scan or Scope (method to be confirmed)  
This may involve interviews with City staff across City departments. The final report should identify common issues as well as areas that need attention by identifying gaps and weaknesses.
- 1b As a separate piece but tied to the above, capture specific details concerning disabilities regarding the following:
  - snow removal issues
  - curb cuts at intersections but also leading into parking lots, bus stops and parks
  - Intersections – time to cross, role of lights and audible signals
  - Issues pertaining to construction sites and plans to provide optional safe accessibility during construction work. This may include development of a system to alert residents of route changes (HSR, sidewalks, pathways etc) that will be disrupted.

**Audience:** ACPD Working Group and Sub-Committee

**Timeline:** 3months plus based on research strategy and agreed objectives

## **Outreach Working Group:**

**Purpose:** The following research pieces will inform the work of this ACPD Working Group.

- 1 Prepare a report illustrating the views of City council, councillors and appropriate staff on the role of the ACPD in order to determine strengths, weaknesses and opportunities using methods such as a Mapping Exercise, SWAT or Environmental Scan or Scope (to be confirmed) . This might include a review of the new ACPD brochure, events such as round-tables, and the calendar.

- 2 Review the City Website regarding content pertaining to persons with disabilities. Determine strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Make suggestions, recommendations regarding data to make public and potential for educational initiatives. This may include relevant city organizations and groups that play a role in accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- 3 Identify where there can be valuable work regarding education or learning regarding dis-ability issues and accessibility. This may include city departments that could jointly attend a session and or community groups and organizations likely to partner with the city on related initiatives. Housing providers would be an example of the last.
- 4 Emergency Aid for Mobility Devices – Conduct an updated Environmental Scan or Scope of work to date by the ACPD and affiliated organizations (Darts, ATS, and mobility services) Prepare and present recommendations on progress and future actions.
- 5 Prepare an updatable list of community agencies most relevant to ACPD work and aligned with current priorities.

**Audience:** ACPD Working Group and Sub-Committee

**Timeline:** 3months plus based on research strategy and agreed objectives

## **Housing:**

**Purpose:** The following research pieces will inform the work of this ACPD Working Group

Key subjects include: Housing for those with disabilities - RCFs, Rooming Houses, Transitional Housing, Social Housing, RGI, Accessibility concerns related to applications and tennant services, engagement.

- 1 Identify groups, organizations and researchers participating in advocacy or action regarding the housing crisis in the city using methods such as Environmental Scan or Scope by subject area (method to be confirmed).
- 1b Highlight, where valuable, differences by city region. This may align with Code Red mapping. Identify key concerns such as affordable,

RGI, subsidized, buildings built with mortgages that upon expiring can revert to market rent or housing plus services goals.

- 2 Document key practices across the some 32 affordable/subsidized housing providers in the city in consultation with appropriate city staff. Capture details of the application process, wait list and wait-times, qualifications such as assets, and specifically issues (to be fully determined) for those with disabilities seeking housing.
- 3 Determine method to annually assess and update ACPD on number of accessible housing units in the city and related vacancies. Develop a tool to communicate number of units and their features related to accessibility for those with varied disabilities. This may or may not take the form of a matrix (method to be confirmed).
- 3b Determine a means to identify the number of individuals waiting for housing that have identified themselves as disabled. This includes wait lists across housing providers as well as the homeless, through the annual Homeless Count or other methods to be determined.
- 4 Document relevant organizations and groups involved in transitional housing possible using a Scan/ scope or Mapping exercise (method to be confirmed) Likely to include: hospital placement staff, Home and community Care Support Services (HNHB), those involved in drug and alcohol treatment and mental health as well as those dealing with homeless like HamSmart. Identify service gaps linked to rehousing and homelessness for those with disabilities.
- 5 Determine method to capture organizational structures of housing providers looking at key issues such as committees and tenant representation, participation and related decision-making processes and service provision.

**Audience:** ACPD Working Group and Sub-Committee

**Timeline:** 3months plus based on research strategy and agreed objectives