

**Accessibility Planning – Strategy
Document**

Study Results

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to *create a strategy document* that will guide action towards achieving the mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. This report includes information on existing initiatives that have been undertaken by the City and compares them to those being undertaken in other cities across Canada and internationally. It also includes current accessibility concerns of Saskatoon residents who have a disability and identifies possible target areas in future planning. This report also summarizes information on committees in other jurisdictions similar to the city of Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee and describes their structure, mandate, reporting relationships within the Corporation, linkages to outside community groups, and member composition. It also discusses common practices in writing an Accessibility Plan such as purpose, format, and items typically included based on those developed in other jurisdictions. Finally the report describes the legislated/regulated and commonly practiced industry standards for providing services to persons in need of accessibility services.

Methodology

Insightrix Research, Inc. conducted an extensive literature review regarding accessibility planning and the plans themselves. In conducting this research, cities were identified that appeared to offer an interesting approach to Accessibility Planning or had undertaken unique and innovative initiatives.

In addition to the literature review, a total of 14 in-depth personal interviews were conducted with representatives from various cities in charge of accessibility planning. In most cases the responsibility of accessibility planning resided with one individual who acted as a liaison with staff and the Advisory Committee. Research indicated a number of cities with interesting approaches to accessibility planning. Given that the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) require the existence of the Accessibility Committees, a number of examples can be found in the province of Ontario. However, outside of Ontario, a number of notable examples exist as well. A few of the cities selected were:

The City of Guelph
The City of Brampton
The City of Kitchener
The City of London
The City of Regina
The City of Calgary
The City of Winnipeg
The City of Toronto
The City of Chicago
The City of Berkeley
The City of Kelowna
The City of Kingston

In order to identify possible areas for the Saskatoon Advisory Committee to target to increase accessibility, interviews were held with 14 departments/individuals working at the City of Saskatoon. The interviews focused on areas of influence each department had on accessibility issues.



Finally, a total of 4 focus groups were conducted including one with employees from the City of Saskatoon. One focus group was held with seniors, another group was held with people with various disabilities, and a final focus group was held with people afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis.

Why Cities Need to be Accessible

Canada as a whole had a disability rate of 12.4% in 2001, an age standardized disability rate of 13.5% in 2006 and a non-standardized rate of 14.3% in 2006. **Saskatchewan has a higher than national average disability rate.** Saskatchewan had a disability rate of 14.5% in 2001, an age standardized disability rate of 15.2% in 2006 and a non-standardized rate of 16.0% in 2006 (compared to national average of 14.3%). Saskatchewan's non-standardized rate follows only Prince Edward Island (16.2%), Nova Scotia (20%), and New Brunswick (17.2%).

Like other urban municipalities in Canada, Saskatoon has an aging population. 11.6% of Saskatoon residents are in the 65 years and older category. This large segment of the population will require accessible buildings and services. PALS (2006) results confirm the increasing prevalence of disability in our aging society with both disability and severity of disability gradually increasing with age. *More than 40% of persons aged 65 and over in Canada report having a disability.* Furthermore, the Canadian Community Health Survey (2003) indicates that 28% of Saskatoon residents aged 12 and over report being limited in selected activities (home, school, work and other activities) because of a physical condition, mental condition or health problem which has lasted or is expected to last 6 months or longer.

There are many reasons to examine accessibility planning in urban centers. Two major reasons include changing demographics and the business case for the city itself. First, we have an aging population. The prevalence of most types of disabilities increases with age. Among the 40% of seniors aged 65 and over with disabilities in Canada, three out of four (76.4%) reported a mobility limitation. Overall, more than 1.3 million people, or one-third of all seniors, reported a mobility limitation.

A second reason urban centers need to examine accessibility planning is in regards to a business case for doing so. Collectively people with disabilities represent significant direct and indirect spending power, even though large subgroups of people with disabilities struggle with poverty because of difficulties in finding employment. In addition to purchasing power, people with disabilities also represent an unheralded, yet largely productive workforce that can yield solutions for the substantial labour shortages currently being felt by many employers.

Finally tourism is another significant reason to make cities accessible. As the population ages and seniors become a significant proportion of our demographics, having an accessible city will be a requirement to attaining this group's tourism dollars.

Legislation

In certain Canadian jurisdictions, legislation relating to accessibility has been developed. In addition to provincial building codes, provincial disability legislation has also emerged. The province of Ontario enacted *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 (ODA)*, the first and only legislation of its type in Canada. The ODA requires municipalities (population 10,000+) and other public sector organizations to **undertake a planning process to**



identify, remove and prevent barriers (physical and other barriers) to the participation of persons with disabilities (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2006). By September 30, 2003 most Ontario municipalities had completed their first annual accessibility plan required under the legislation (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2006).

More recently, the Ontario government passed a second piece of legislation, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)* requiring the implementation of **mandatory accessibility standards in both the public and private sectors** “in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025” (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 2005).

Standards to be developed include:

- customer service
- transportation
- information and communications
- built environment
- employment

Many of the cities in Ontario were selected for further examination as they have had Accessibility Committees and developed Accessibility Plans for the past few years.

Whether or not individual provinces have accessibility planning legislation, Canadian cities historically have shown capacity to remove barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities. Large Canadian cities such as Vancouver, the first city in Canada to provide scheduled bus service to people with disabilities (Atkinson, 2003), and Toronto’s adoption of universal design principles in the Toronto Official Plan (Holten, 2001) have been known for longstanding accessibility planning efforts.

However, innovative accessibility planning has been occurring in other jurisdictions as well. Research conducted has shown that innovative and noteworthy practices are occurring in mid-size Canadian municipalities.

Accessibility Planning

Although different configurations and concepts on the structure of the Accessibility Committee exist, below is a summary of the roles and responsibilities that are fundamental to the structure of the Committee as gathered from the research. The typical mandate of an Accessibility Committee is to:

- Advise City Council each year about the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises that Council intends to purchase, construct, significantly renovate or lease.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility of new developments for which site plans are being reviewed by the municipality.
- Research and make recommendations to City Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities within the City.



- Educate City Council and the general public of the responsibility, benefits and means of having a consumer-friendly, accessible community.
- Promote the voluntary provision of barrier-free access to buildings, services and activities within the city and recognize those businesses and services that are consumer-friendly.
- Integrate accessibility planning into strategic and business planning practices of the municipalities.
- Specifically (but not limited to), the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee may assist City Divisions with:
 - o Testing of new products;
 - o Providing listings of problem areas;
 - o Educating about different types of disabilities and providing this information on the Committee's web page (if it exists);
 - o Assisting with the annual review of the Accessibility Design Standards
 - o Reviewing particular site plans;
 - o Liaising with other Committees; and,
 - o Working in collaboration with community groups to address service needs and gaps for persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is typically comprised of the majority of members who are persons with disabilities or members of the community who often had experience with one or more particular type of disability.¹ This Advisory Committee meets on a monthly basis, and some items they are responsible for are as follows:

- Advise City Council regarding the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the Municipal Accessibility Plan
- The AAC provides a forum for persons with disabilities to raise issues and concerns.
- Provide advice and guidance to City Council on matters relating to policies, practices, services and programs.

Some committees include non-voting but informed members as well. Examples may include non-voting members that represent sectors such as: school boards, seniors, housing and development, architecture, health care/wellness, and representatives from a variety of community groups.

Often subcommittees are developed focusing on key issues the municipality wants to address. An example in one particular city is the development of four Accessibility Advisory Sub-Committees and each one comprised of at least two (2) voting members:

- o Facilities
- o Transportation
- o Policy Development
- o Education and Awareness

These Sub-Committees meet on a regular basis (example: monthly) in between the regular meetings of the Advisory Committee.

Many cities have hired a full time coordinator to work with the Advisory Committee and City staff to ensure a corporate global view is taken regarding accessibility. This person

¹ Please note that the ODA and AODA stipulate that majority of the voting members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee must be persons with disabilities.



is responsible for ensuring that Accessibility and Inclusion are taken into account in the city's planning efforts. Over time, they become an enforcer of Accessibility Planning.

Some cities have established a staff group who are responsible for assisting in the development of future plans, monitoring departmental barriers identified within the City's annual Accessibility Plans and managing other accessibility-related matters.

The Staff Resource Group, comprised of a cross-section of senior staff from City Departments, has been formed to co-ordinate the development of the City's Accessibility Plan in conjunction with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Plan Coordinator (if the city has one) is typically responsible for the co-ordination of the Staff Resource Group.

The use of a staff group can ensure that the City's Accessibility Plan is implemented. This group works in close co-operation with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Each department is directly responsible for utilizing the Plan to help meet the City's objective of identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

Members of the staff group gather information concerning accessibility initiatives in their respective departments that are currently in place, and those that are planned for the future. They also review and recognize how and when the issues are identified in the audit (if one has been conducted on their department) and through consultations will be addressed, and assisting with the preparation of the annual Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan

Some of the typical objectives in the plan include:

- To identify barriers and make recommendations to improve access to existing municipal buildings, facilities and services
- To ensure that new municipal structures, facilities and services are designed to be free from barriers wherever possible
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the needs of disabled persons, including safety, mobility, access to facilities and services
- To encourage liaison with other public institutions to share best practices and identify areas for co-operative solutions, such as consistent signage, efficient purchasing and staff training.
- The plan itself should be accessible and provide an opportunity for customers to provide their input to help guide future accessibility initiatives.
- Plan objectives are both long and short term. As much as reasonable, the plan's short term goals should be achievable in the following budget year.
- The Accessibility Plan acts as a planning tool to be used by departments and City Council in preparing and reviewing other key corporate documents such as the Capital and Operating Budgets.

The content of a typical Accessibility Plan include the following:

- Describe the process by which the city identifies, removes and prevents barriers to people with disabilities
- Review the progress the city has made in removing and preventing barriers that were identified last year in its facilities, policies, programs, practices and services
- List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services that the city will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities



- Describe the measures the city will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities
- Describe the ways that the city will make this accessibility plan available to the public

When developing an Accessibility Plan a barrier identification process is embarked on to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Examples of a barrier identification process may include:

- Review of documents, publications, etc.
- Conducting public meetings, surveys, and/or audits
- The use of customer feedback forms and other feed mechanisms

Finally, upon approval, an Accessibility Plan is typically made available to the public through the following means:

- A document (which is in accessible format) placed on the City's website;
- Copies of the plan made available to the public either by pick-up or through mail.
- Alternate formats such as CD, Braille, audio and disk are available upon request;
- Communication of the Plan is provided to the media and the public through media releases etc.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Based on research conducted including a literature review, focus groups, in-depth interviews with other municipalities, and internal interviews with City of Saskatoon department representatives, the following conclusions and recommendations are provided.

Recommendation #1: Accessibility Committee- Member Composition

After reviewing the structure of various Accessibility Committees and from the Focus Group findings, some suggestions with regards to the Committee composition have been attained. Although some of the recommended composition is already reflective in the Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory committee (i.e. councilors, people with disabilities, people from professional fields), it is worth noting some of the items mentioned below to add to the committee based on these recommendations. First and foremost, majority of the Committee (at least 70%) should consist of members with various disabilities, as they will provide the knowledge and experience from various perspectives regarding accessibility. Persons who might not have a disability but act as caregivers and have close ties to people with disabilities should also be incorporated as members. By including people from the City such as: Counselors and Mayors – the Committee will have that much needed connection with the Council to ensure their recommendations are being heard and implemented. Another suggestion is, to have one or two people who come from the professional fields such as: architects, legal or engineers – become members of the Committee. These people would provide expertise and add to the effectiveness of the Committee and its goals. Overall, members of the Accessibility Committee need to be fully dedicated to the cause, be passionate about their role and strive to achieve the maximum objectives in realizing the goals they set out to accomplish.

Recommendation #2: Staff Access Group



Another item which has been mentioned throughout the research and has an immediate effect on the implementation of Committee's goals and objectives is the creation of a Staff Access Group. This group would be comprised of representatives from each of the City's Departments. The purpose of the Staff Group would be to effectively communicate with the Accessibility Committee and the City Departments regarding the implementation of the objectives set out by the Committee as well as working together with the Committee on identifying accessibility barriers and providing recommendations on how to eliminate those barriers.

Recommendation #3: Accessibility Coordinator

The creation of an Accessibility Coordinator position under the Corporate Services Department has been mentioned throughout the research of various communities and their Accessibility Committees. The primary purpose of the coordinator would be to act as a liaison between City Departments (or the Staff Access Group), the Advisory Committee and the public. The coordinator would act as a communication tool for the public, providing them with Accessibility Plans (as is required under ODA) and any other materials produced by the Committee, while at the same time ensuring the public has the possibility to effectively communicate their concerns to the Accessibility Committee. Other duties of the Accessibility Coordinator could include but not be limited to: a) act as an enforcer, ensuring all the objectives identified in the Accessibility Plans are being implemented at the departmental levels within the City, b) assisting with the write-up of Accessibility Plans, c) working with consultants, researchers and community organizations to identify any further items and accessibility barriers, d) on a regular basis conducting a review and keeping up-to-date with initiatives, materials and innovative techniques other communities and cities have embarked on.

Recommendation #4: Staff Training

The Committee would ensure an all-inclusive work environment is achieved by educating the City staff and building their knowledge and awareness regarding various issues pertaining to disability and accessibility. This would create an additional communication avenue through which ideas and recommendations would flow to either the "Staff Access Group" or the Accessibility Committee itself. Managers would become more knowledgeable on how to approach and work with people with disabilities creating a diverse and comfortable work environment.

Recommendation #5: Role of the Committee

In order to create and achieve a fully accessible city, there is an overwhelming amount that needs to be done. The Committee would provide a structured and organized team that would ease the process and ensure all barriers are either addressed or eliminated. By identifying barriers and providing recommendations the Committee would provide the City with an achievable plan to strive for the creation of a fully accessible city. The Committee itself would not act as an advocacy group; however, it would be the means through which the voice of the people with disabilities would be heard.

Recommendation #6: Benchmarking - City-Wide Assessment

Before the Committee even starts to provide recommendations, especially regarding buildings and infrastructure, barriers need to be defined and guidelines by which they are to be identified need to be set out. Upon the completion of these two tasks, as supported by a number of interviews with other communities, the City needs to pursue



on conducting an inventory of all City Facilities and Infrastructure related items and identify whether they are deemed to be accessible or not.

To date, initiatives have been undertaken by Transit, Infrastructure Services, Human Resources, Planning, Building and Development Standards, Leisure Services and Community Development branches resulting in improved access and inclusion of persons in need of accessibility services in areas of its jurisdiction, such as transportation, facility access, recreation and employment within the Corporation. Examples of the initiatives where access has been improved are the addition of low-floor, easy access bus transportation, the Access Transit program, the construction of wheelchair ramps at intersections, audible traffic signals, accessible design and construction of streetscapes, the enforcement of building standards through the issuance of building permits to meet the barrier free requirements of the applicable codes and regulations, the delivery of integrative leisure programs, equal access to employment opportunities within the Corporation, and the Access 2000 upgrade project for the leisure centres and the implementation of an accessible playground program. Furthermore, some of the items which should be examined with regards to accessibility when conducting the inventory of the City Buildings / Facilities are:

- i. Parking Areas
- ii. Entrances
- iii. Signage
- iv. Washrooms
- v. Interior Building Elements
- vi. Stairs
- vii. Elevators
- viii. Ramps, and
- ix. Handrails

A checklist from the City of Edmonton has been included in Appendix B, which can be used to obtain greater detail on what specific items to look for when conducting this inventory.

With regards to the Infrastructure, some of the items which should be examined while conducting the inventory are:

- i. Sidewalks – ensuring the sidewalks are in good condition and are accessible.
- ii. Curb/Ramp Cuts – ensuring proper angles of the slopes are adhered to and proper amount of ridges are incorporated into the cuts.
- iii. Snow Removal Policy – while continuing to ensure all City sidewalks and streets are properly cleared of snow and ice, enforcing businesses to clear snow from the sidewalks around their buildings.
- iv. Crosswalks – reviewing traffic signals, flashing crosswalks, audible traffic signals, mid-block street crossings and the usage of cobblestone or other materials and proper coloring are enforced in areas where any of the items mentioned above are needed.
- v. Traffic Signals – reviewing intersections in need of a traffic signal

Recommendation #7: Transit

A consideration should be made to re-evaluate the effectiveness of the routes and their schedule as feedback was received from the Focus Group participants, especially those who use the Transit on a regular basis, regarding the buses being late and the routes not taking people to certain areas where they used to go before. Access Transit



received very strong and positive feedback; however, the lack of buses available to the users was one topic which was mentioned throughout all four focus groups. In response to this and based on the research how other cities handle the demand for accessible transit a suggestion would be to; work together with taxi companies in ensuring there is a 24 hour accessible van available for people to use, and possibly introducing commuter-type shuttles, one in each quadrant of the city to start with. This would take some load off Access Transit while ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are tended to.

Recommendation #8: Communication

Transit

Some of the items which should be addressed when reviewing transit communication are: a) ensuring the bus schedule is available in clear print, b) ensuring the front marquee of the bus and the numbering at the rear of the bus are clearly visible, c) consider including the number of the route, on the inside of the bus, d) as an alternative to the placards at each bus stop, identifying which route stops there, considerations should be made to implement those numberings right onto the pole, placing them lower down and in clear, black fonts; e) educating the bus drivers and making it a best practice to announce the bus stops as they travel along their routes (after a complaint, this became law in Ontario)

Website

By following the W3C Standards and confirming with any of the federal government websites, the City should ensure their website is made accessible to people with disabilities. In addition all the documents available to the public on the City website should be made available in clear print (black and white or distinguishable colors) and written in simple language.

Leisure Guide

Within the current Leisure Guide there are no distinguishable pages or sections dedicated to programs for people with disabilities. Although the City might not be running any leisure programs at the present time, they can include programs which are ran by other organizations that have received funding from the City, ensuring all available programs are communicated to the people with disabilities.

Directory

People with disabilities feel there is a lack of information available to them, especially regarding: places in Saskatoon that are accessible, what types of accessibility options they offer, how many disabled parking spots they have, what types of programs are out there for people with disabilities. As a solution to this, the information could be communicated to the public through directories such as the “Access Guide” or through the City creating its own directory available either online or in print, listing all necessary items pertaining to accessibility, events, programs, organization and agency listings and any City information.

Complaint and Information Line

Through Focus Group discussions and findings it became apparent that people with disabilities feel like their voice is not being heard. They rarely choose to express their concerns or voice their opinions with some product or service because they feel they will not be taken into seriously. As a solution to this, some communities in Canada, have created or are currently working on creating a type of a “Toll-Free” line, where people



could call and either be connected straight to someone with the department or leave messages directed to various departments within the city. This would not only serve as a complaint line, but it could also prove to be effective as this communication line would become another information gathering tool, which the Accessibility Committee could use to identify barriers and provide recommendations.

Advertising

By advertising the achievements of the City and the Accessibility Committee as well as any services that are provided to people with disabilities, the City would ensure increased awareness and general education among the public and not only people with disabilities. In addition, the City could also include in its advertising various success stories of people with disabilities. Some of the advertising channels the City could utilize include: a) employee newsletters, b) city page, and c) brochures and pamphlets distributed throughout community organizations and agencies.

Recommendation #9: Leisure Services

The Administration, in consultation with persons with disabilities and/or agencies providing programs and services to persons with disabilities, needs to evaluate the current programs that are available to people with disabilities and outline recommendations regarding which programs are needed and which group of people with disabilities will this program be directed to. At the present time, there are no specific programs that are run by the City, and focus on any particular group of disabilities. By working together with the community groups, the City can either embark on implementation of its own programs or continue to provide funding for community groups and ensuring those programs are advertised and people with disabilities are aware of the programs.

Recommendation #10: City Events

To make the City all inclusive and fully accessible the Committee, together with the City need to work on ensuring that all City Events, be it: the “Jazz Festival”, “Saskatoon Day in the Park”, “Shakespeare on Saskatchewan”, and any others – are inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. The City is involved with the approval of the special even permits for using the park space, and to ensure the events are fully accessible, the City should consider updating their special event application forms to include a section asking the group to consider the “accessibility” of their events.

Recommendation #11: Sidewalk Repairs and Maintenance

By examining the demographics of the City and understanding which areas include a higher proportion of residents who are seniors or people with disabilities, the Committee should ensure that sidewalks are well maintained in those areas, especially around senior’s buildings, residences, and complexes that house various disability groups (such as: YWCA – host Multiple Sclerosis programs). By identifying where these areas are within the City, the process of prioritizing which sidewalks to repair and maintain should be made easier and organized.

Recommendation #12: Disabled Parking

Based on the findings from the Focus Groups, participants who are able to drive around the City stated that there is a lack of disabled parking spots available around the City. Some people noted that they have to drive around for some time in order to find an available parking spot at the mall, and at times see that those who use these disabled spots are people who are not disabled. Due to this abuse of the system, the City should



consider in increasing fines for parking in the disabled parking spots to ensure the parking is available to those who need it most.

Recommendation #13: Awards (Internal or External)

By introducing Accessibility Awards, the City would immediately increase awareness among public and staff regarding the initiatives that the City has taken on. The general public and businesses would become aware of the barriers that prevent full accessibility to people with disabilities. The Accessibility Awards would promote creative solutions to overcoming and eliminating those barriers to make the businesses, organizations, homes and in-turn the City, more accessible.

Recommendation #14: Building Codes

By enhancing the City Building Codes the City could strive towards achieving the goal of “Universal Design”. An excellent example of this would be the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) developed by the City of London, which are available to use and implement upon submitting an application form to the City of London (free of charge). The FADS are used by over 50 cities, communities and organizations throughout Canada and the United States. The detailed report outlines all necessary standards needed to make facilities fully accessible to people with disabilities.





1.0 Purpose of the Research

Prior to the development of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the City of Saskatoon had been addressing access issues for persons in need of accessibility services. Initiatives had been undertaken by Transit, Infrastructure Services, Human Resources, Planning, Building and Development Standards, Leisure Services and Community Development branches resulting in improved access and inclusion of persons in need of accessibility services in areas of its jurisdiction, such as transportation, facility access, recreation and employment within the Corporation.

On March 26, 2007, City Council approved the Capital Project for a Corporate Accessibility Policy and resolved that a temporary committee be established in order to determine and report back to Council on the most appropriate method of moving this project forward. Subsequent to this approval, during its meeting held on July 16, 2007, City Council received a report and draft terms of reference outlining the mandate and composition of a permanent Accessibility Advisory Committee. At this meeting City Council approved the Terms of Reference and the establishment of a Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee in order to move forward with the development of an Action Plan.

The purpose of this research is to *create a strategy document* that will guide action towards achieving the mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. This report includes information on existing initiatives that have been undertaken by the City and compares these to those being undertaken in other cities across Canada and internationally. It also includes current accessibility concerns of Saskatoon residents who have a disability and identifies possible target areas in future planning. Realizing that the success of any initiative is dependent on a healthy functioning committee, this report also summarizes information on committees in other jurisdictions similar to the city of Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee and describes their structure, mandate, reporting relationships within the Corporation, linkages to outside community groups, and member composition. It also discusses common practices in writing an Accessibility Plan such as purpose, format, and items typically included based on those developed in other jurisdictions. Finally the report describes the legislated/regulated and commonly practiced industry standards for providing services to persons in need of accessibility services.



2.0 Significance of the Research

There are many reasons to examine accessibility planning in urban centers. Two major reasons include changing demographics and the business case for the city itself.

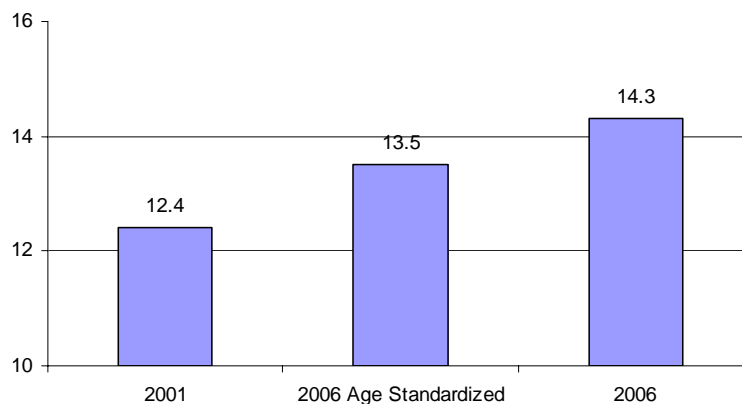
2.1. Demographics - Canada

This research is important for several reasons, one of which is the projected increases in the prevalence of disabilities as the population ages. Currently, an estimated 4.4 million Canadians, one out of every seven in the population, reported having a disability in 2006. This is an increase of over three-quarters of a million people (21.2%) in five years based on the last time the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) was conducted.²

In 2001, 12.4% of the population reported a disability. *By 2006, this rate has increased to 14.3%.* One factor in the increase is the aging of the population, and another factor is the increased social acceptance of the reporting of disabilities.

Between 2001 and 2006, the median age of the population increased from 37.0 years to 38.3 years. To control for the impact of population aging on disability rates, comparisons over time were made by Statistics Canada using the "age-standardized disability rate." This removes the impact of differences in the age structure of populations among areas and over time. If population aging had not occurred between 2001 and 2006, the disability rate in 2006 would have been 13.5%, instead of 14.3%. Thus, during this period, about 40% of the disability rate increase could be explained by population aging.

Figure 1 - Disability rates for Canada, 2001, 2006, and 2006 age standardized



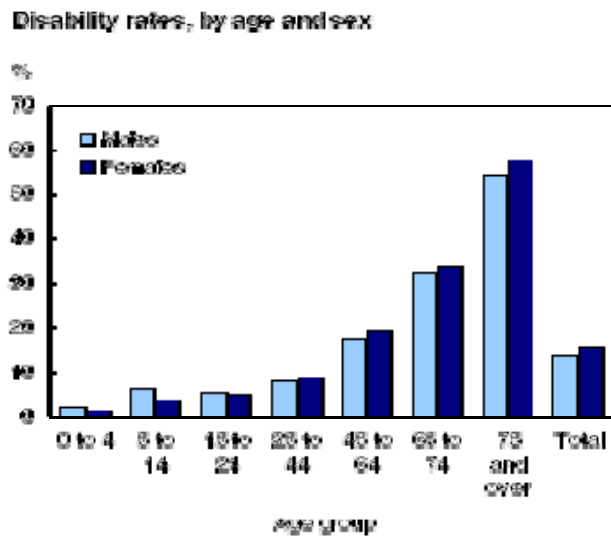
Among children aged 14 and under, an estimated 202,350 reported a disability of some kind in 2006, or 3.7% of *that age group*. This proportion has increased from 3.3%

² The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) is a national survey designed to collect information on adults and children who have a disability, that is, whose everyday activities are limited because of a condition or health problem.



in 2001. Between 2001 and 2006, the disability rate for adults (people aged 15 and older) rose from 14.6% to 16.5%.

Figure 2 - Disability Rates by Age and Sex (Canada)



Rates increased for almost all types of disabilities. The increase was especially marked for learning disabilities. The number of Canadians aged 15 and over with learning disabilities rose by almost 40% from 2001 to an estimated 631,000 in 2006.

Table 1 - Type of Disability (PALS 2006)

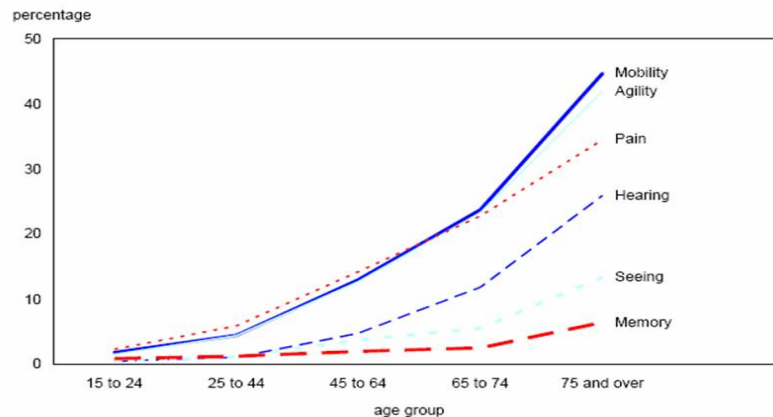
Type of disability	Adults 15 years of age or older	
	number	%
Hearing	1,266,120	5.0
Seeing	816,250	3.2
Speech	479,740	1.9
Mobility	2,923,000	11.5
Agility	2,819,580	11.1
Pain	2,965,650	11.7
Learning	631,030	2.5
Memory	495,990	2.0
Developmental	136,570	0.5
Psychological	589,470	2.3
Other	119,390	0.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

The prevalence of most types of disabilities increases with age. Among seniors aged 65 and over with disabilities, three out of four (76.4%) reported a mobility limitation. Overall, more than 1.3 million people, or one-third of all seniors, reported a mobility limitation.



Figure 3 - Prevalence of disability in adults 15 years of age or older, by type of disability and age group, Canada,



Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

However, this pattern is not seen for all types of disabilities. For example, disabilities associated with emotional, psychological, or psychiatric problems tend to decrease with age and learning disabilities do not fluctuate significantly by age.

Disability in Canada is often multi-faceted. Problems related to mobility, such as walking, climbing stairs, or carrying an object a short distance, are often associated with agility problems or with pain.³ The next table shows the numbers of Canadian adults who report more than one disability. In fact, 81.7% of adults living with disabilities have several, as opposed to only 18.4% who report having just one disability.

Table 2 - Number of disabilities reported in adults 15 years of age or older with disabilities, Canada, 2006

Number of disabilities	Adults 15 years of age or older with disabilities	
	number	%
Total	4,215,530	100.0
One	775,450	18.4
Two	711,410	16.9
Three	1,174,760	27.9
Four or five	1,216,840	28.9
Six or more	337,070	8.0

Note: The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.
Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

³ Definition of the following disabilities in PALS 2006:

Mobility: Difficulty walking half a kilometre or up and down a flight of stairs, about 12 steps without resting, moving from one room to another, carrying an object of 5 kg (10 pounds) for 10 metres (30 feet) or standing for long periods.

Agility: Difficulty bending, dressing and undressing oneself, getting into or out of bed, cutting own toenails, using fingers to grasp or handling objects, reaching in any direction (for example, above one's head) or cutting own food.

Pain: Limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do because of a long-term pain that is constant or reoccurs from time to time (for example, recurrent back pain).



Just over one-third of adults who reported limitations (35.4%) experienced disabilities with mild limitations, while about one-quarter (24.8%) had moderate limitations and 39.8% *had severe to very severe limitations*. These proportions were roughly the same among school-aged children aged 5 to 14.

2.1.1. Aboriginals with Disabilities

The 1991 Statistics Canada Aboriginal People's Survey indicates that 31.3 per cent of Aboriginal people were persons with disabilities. The term "Aboriginal" is used by the Statistics Canada Survey to include First Nations (status Indian), Inuit, non- status, and Metis persons. In 1991, the 15 to 34 year old group, the disability rate for Aboriginal persons was 23.1 per cent as compared to a rate of 8 per cent in the general population. For those aged 35 to 54 years, 32.8 per cent of Aboriginal persons were disabled compared with 14 per cent of the general population.

These higher rates of disability among Aboriginal persons, together with the significant representation of Aboriginal peoples in the population of Saskatchewan underscore the importance of addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

2.2. Demographics - Saskatchewan

Canada as a whole had a disability rate of 12.4% in 2001, an age standardized disability rate of 13.5% in 2006 and a non-standardized rate of 14.3% in 2006. ***Saskatchewan has a higher than national average disability rate.*** Saskatchewan had a disability rate of 14.5% in 2001, an age standardized disability rate of 15.2% in 2006 and a non-standardized rate of 16.0% in 2006 (compared to national average of 14.3%). Saskatchewan's non-standardized rate follows only Prince Edward Island (16.2%), Nova Scotia (20%), and New Brunswick (17.2%).

Table 3- Disability rates for Canada, 2001, 2006 and 2006 age standardized

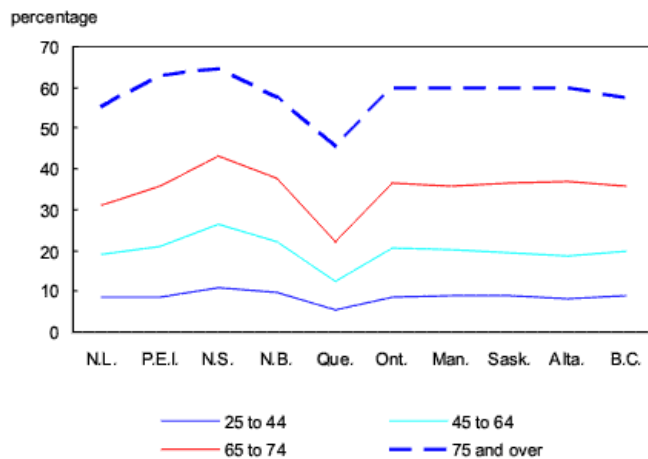
Province	2001	2006 standardized	2006 non standardized
	percentage		
Canada	12.4	13.5	14.3
Newfoundland and Labrador	12.3	13.8	14.9
Prince Edward Island	14.3	14.9	16.2
Nova Scotia	17.1	18.6	20.0
New Brunswick	14.4	16.0	17.2
Quebec	8.4	9.6	10.3
Ontario	13.5	14.6	15.4
Manitoba	14.2	15.1	15.7
Saskatchewan	14.5	15.2	16.0
Alberta	12.5	13.0	13.6
British Columbia	14.0	15.0	16.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 and 2006.



In Saskatchewan, age group 25 to 44 accounts for 8.8% of the provincial disability rate. Age group 45 to 64 accounts for 19.5% of the disability rate in Saskatchewan. Age group 65 to 74 accounts for 36.5% of the disability rate in Saskatchewan, and age group 75 and over accounts for 60% of the disability rate in Saskatchewan.

Figure 4 - Disability rate, by age and province,



2.3. Demographics - Saskatoon

Like other urban municipalities in Canada, Saskatoon has an aging population. Below is a table of the population of Saskatoon by age group compared to other cities in Canada.

Table 4 - Saskatchewan Population by Age Group

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), Population by Age Group, 2003							
Census Metropolitan Area	Under 20 years		Aged 20-64 years		Aged 65+ years		Total Population
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
St. John's	42,104	23.40%	118,676	66.00%	18,929	10.50%	179,709
Halifax	88,859	23.50%	247,465	65.50%	41,608	11.00%	377,932
Montreal	833,010	23.30%	2,280,351	63.80%	461,355	12.90%	3,574,516
Ottawa- Gatineau	281,701	24.90%	728,752	64.40%	121,728	10.80%	1,132,181
Toronto	1,296,468	25.40%	3,243,770	63.60%	561,372	11.00%	5,101,610
Saskatoon	63,266	27.00%	143,429	61.30%	27,244	11.60%	233,939
Calgary	258,035	25.10%	677,174	66.00%	91,407	8.90%	1,026,616
Edmonton	256,155	25.90%	628,989	63.50%	105,381	10.60%	990,525
Vancouver	490,458	23.00%	1,388,267	65.00%	255,561	12.00%	2,134,286
Victoria	66,830	20.50%	203,835	62.40%	56,003	17.10%	326,668

Source : Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development, using data from Statistics Canada's *Annual Demographic Statistics 2004*, Catalogue 91-213-X1B.



Saskatoon has a significant percentage of the population in the aged 65 years and older category. Montreal, Vancouver, Victoria has a slightly higher proportion of residents in this age category. This large segment of the population will require accessible buildings and services. PALS (2006) results confirm the increasing prevalence of disability in our aging society with both disability and severity of disability gradually increasing with age. *More than 40% of persons aged 65 and over in Canada report having a disability.*

The prevalence of most types of disabilities also increases with age according to the PALS (2006) findings with a strong predominance of disabilities related to mobility, agility, hearing, vision and pain.

As most persons with disabilities reside in the community and can encounter accessibility barriers in the company of family members, friends and others, these statistics indicate that there is the potential to affect many residents, not only those with a disability.

2.4. Business Case

In addition to an aging society, many have identified a business case for ensuring city facilities, businesses, and streetscapes are accessible.

2.4.1. Purchasing Power

In November, 2001, the Government of Ontario commissioned a report for its Paths to Equal Opportunity initiative entitled “*The Business Case for Accessibility: How Accessibility-Awareness Strengthens Your Company’s Bottom Line.*” According to the report, people with disabilities are responsible for \$25 billion in annual consumer buying power in Canada alone, and subsequently have an influence on a huge secondary market of friends and family.

Bill Wilkerson, Co-Founder and President of the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health in “The Business Case For Accessibility: How Accessibility-Awareness Strengthens Your Company’s Bottom Line” asserts: *“Collectively people with disabilities represent massive direct and indirect spending power, even though large subgroups of people with disabilities struggle with poverty because of difficulties finding employment. Decision-makers will be obliged to address barriers to accessibility as both a policy and economic issue.”*

2.4.2. Labour Supply

People with disabilities also represent an unheralded, yet largely productive workforce that can yield solutions for the substantial labour shortages currently being felt by many Saskatoon employers. People with disabilities are sometimes overlooked by employers; however, promotion of programs available for accommodation could contribute to minimizing the labour shortages and provide employment to those with disabilities.



2.4.3. Toursim

Based on the dramatic demographic trends that Canada is poised to experience (the growth of the seniors' population will account for close to half of the growth of the overall Canadian population in the next four decades), the tourism industry is also keenly aware of the attractive market potential that people with disabilities represent. Below are some examples of how cities and organizations are advertising and providing information on accessibility to capitalize on this growing market.

City of Richmond: <http://www.accessrichmond.ca/>

The Richmond Disability Resource Centre's (DRC) Accessibility Awareness Project started in 2003 as a joint effort of the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, and the DRC. The project ultimately has two goals:

- Increasing the accessibility of Richmond restaurants, hotels, transportation services, and other tourist attractions for people with physical disabilities;
- and recognizing and promoting the many businesses and attractions in Richmond that already offer outstanding accessibility through an *easy-to-use online database*.

Their assessment and the resulting rating from “1 – 5”, is based on the B.C. Building Access Handbook.⁴ The ratings of 3.0 to 4.5 indicate very good access for all but the person with a severe disability. If information is required for such a person, a contact is available to respond with more specific details.

When they describe features as accessible, the features meet certain criteria. For example: Parking spaces where designated accessible, are at least 3700mm (12 ft.) wide, and are near an accessible entrance; Accessible entrance doors are at least 800mm. clear opening width; Washrooms are designed to the guide requirements; Directional signs and lighting levels are assessed for usability by persons with vision impairment, as is written material, where provided to customers.

City of Toronto

Over the past five years, the city of Toronto has worked hard to promote accessible tourism. City leaders and tourism professionals work side-by-side and jointly support the Toronto with Ease access guide that contains information on accessible destinations and transportation.

⁴ Provincial Publication- Illustrated commentary on access requirements in the 2006 BC Building Code. This handbook shows the text of section 3.8 of the code with commentary and illustrations.



Enable Link: Linking People with Disabilities to World Resources (Canadian Abilities Foundation) <http://enablelink.org/index.html>

This is a useful guide for people with disabilities to consult prior to traveling. With a travel section on the website, contains articles on cities and levels of accessibility and a discussion board for those who have traveled to a destination recently and their experiences. Sample articles include:

- Speak Out to Build an Inclusive and Accessible Canada
- MS and Travel: Preparation is Key to a Successful Journey
- Travelers with Disabilities: Are Airlines and Airports Meeting Their Needs?
- **Access Canada Guide** (the Access Guide Canada (AGC) component of the website provides information on accessible public spaces in communities across Canada, including restaurants, retailers, hotels and places of worship. The listings allow website users to find out about designated parking, washroom cubicles, counter height, lighting and much more.)
 - o Example: Saskatoon: <http://abilities.ca/agc/index3.php?cid=1783&pid=12>
 - Beaver Creek Conservation Area
 - Meewasin Valley Authority, 402 Third Ave. S., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 3G5
 - Phone: 306-374-2474
 - Website: <http://www.meewasin.com>
 - Directions: Located 13 km South on Hwy. 219.
 - Description: This area is an accredited wildlife site. Discover prairie, forest and sheltered creek and river valley habitats of five nature trails. Also explore the Interpretive Centre.
 - Parking: There is at least one parking space identified with the international Symbol of Accessibility (on a sign and/or on the pavement) as reserved for vehicles carrying persons with disabilities. The designated accessible car/van parking spaces are at least 3.7m (12') wide.
 - Entrance: There is an entrance for wheelchair access. The entrance for wheelchair access has either level access or an entrance threshold a maximum of 13mm (1/2") high. The entrance door has a clear opening of at least 81cm (2'7").



3.0 Accessibility Planning

Prior to identifying the checklists to making Saskatoon buildings and other infrastructure accessible and tips to creating an inclusive city, the process of accessibility planning was investigated.

This section provides an overview of the literature related to the accessibility planning, the conceptualization of disability, the more focused area of municipal accessibility planning, accessibility legislation, policy and practice, and stakeholders involved in creating accessible cities.

3.1. Definition of Disability

“Disability” will be defined by using the most recent World Health Organization (WHO) framework of disability provided by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF is a widely used international framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels (WHO, 2002). This framework, adopted by Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2001, defines disability as *“the relationship between body structures and functions, daily activities and social participation, while recognizing the role of environmental factors”*. Unanimously endorsed by the 191 Member states of the ICF in 2001, the framework *“rejects the view that disability is a defining feature of a separate minority group of people”*. The ICF acknowledges rather that for many people with disabilities, *the attainment of health and the ability to live life to its fullest potential depend on societal factors*.

Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of the WHO, in her opening remarks at the WHO Conference on Health and Disability, 2002, provided the following example to illustrate this view of health and disability:

“When a person in a wheelchair finds it difficult to enter into he office building because it does not provide ramps or elevators, the ICF identifies the focus of an intervention: it is the building that should be modified and not the person who should be forced to find a different place of work.” (WHO, 2002, p.3).

Social models of disability discussed in the literature include *structuralist*, *humanist*, *idealist* and *normalization models* (Gleeson, 1999). The *structuralist* framework narrows the complete experience of disability to broader social phenomena such as economic, cultural or political systems or institutional practices. *Humanism* is another social model that is currently popular with disability activists and commonly used in North American policy development. The humanistic approach favours using ‘person first’ language (e.g. “persons with disabilities”) to stress the humanity of disabled people and replaces both individual and collective reference to people with disabilities with “less dehumanizing alternatives” (Gleeson, p.20). The *idealist* model that is often cited in the field of social psychology and disability studies views disability as constructed in the negative attitudes of society towards the impaired body. Finally the social model of *normalization* refers to the provision of normal experiences so that persons with disabilities can maintain or develop traits or behaviours that are as close to the cultural norm as possible (Smith, Austin and Kennedy, 2001).



There are 5 primary types of disabilities:

- **Mobility:** Limitations to physical functioning affecting an individual's ability to move independently, coordinate, reach, pull or push.
- **Sensory:** Vision and hearing impairments and limitations with smell, taste or touch.
- **Mental:** Mental health disorders and mental illness are characterized by alterations in thinking; mood or behaviour associated with distress and/or impaired functioning in one or more areas of daily living.
- **Learning:** Affects an individual's ability to either interpret what they see and hear and link information to different parts of the brain. Limitations can show up in many ways such as difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control or attention.
- **Intellectual/Developmental:** Limitations in self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self -direction, and capacity for independent living.

Particular attention has been given to the *historical materialist* model of disability provided by Oliver (1990) that has been recognized in a number of disciplines, including urban planning. Oliver conceptualizes disability **as a social experience, arising from the specific ways in which society organizes its basic activities** (transportation, work, etc). As a result, persons with disabilities experience discrimination or oppression based on their physical and mental impairments and are thereby “disabled” or “forced to endure an imposed state of exclusion or constraint” (Oliver, 1990, p.10). For example, inaccessible buildings, under funded parallel transit systems, and poorly designed housing prevent many persons with disabilities from securing gainful employment and restricting them from working where or when they want.

Disabling practices, Oliver maintains, result more from society's discriminatory attitudes and practices and less from an individual's impairment (Oliver, 1990). This theory has been applied in a limited manner to the research dedicated to municipal planning and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

3.2. Legislation

In certain jurisdictions, legislation relating to accessibility has been developed. Below is a historical summary of this legislation and description of its requirements.

3.2.1. Equal Rights

Access to all facets of society for persons with disabilities has been a matter of discussion in North America since the 1970's. The traditional societal perception of “disability” underwent a fundamental paradigm shift during this time stemming from the efforts of both civil rights and Independent Living movement activists (Gleeson, 1999). The notion that disability resided within the individual (medical model) was replaced by the idea that disability was “*experienced*” by persons with disabilities encountering barriers to their participation as a consequence of “disabling environments” (Gleeson,



1999). This circumstance led most Western nations to adopt legislation and codes calling for the removal of environmental barriers and accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities.

In Canada, the government proclaimed 1983-1992 the “Decade of Disabled Persons” following the United Nations International Year of the Disabled (1981), and the securing of equality rights for persons with disabilities in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. Principle 5 of a declaration signed by the Prime Minister in 1985 stated:

“Individuals with disabilities shall be assured access to the fundamental elements of daily life that are generally available in the community. Wherever possible the effects of an impairment or disability on an individual’s life shall not be determined by environmental factors” (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 1994, p.6).

Since this time, both the federal government and provinces have continued to refine regulations in response to international Human Rights legislation.

3.2.2. Building Codes

In Canada, the National Research Council provides a National Building Code (NBC). The NBC sets out technical provisions for the design and construction of new buildings. It also applies to the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings. The territories and some provinces adopt the NBC directly; other provinces adopt codes that are based largely on the NBC. The provincial legislation includes provincial building codes which regulate the construction of new facilities, renovations, and specific outdoor facilities. From an economic point of view alone, barrier-free design is significantly cheaper at the time of initial construction than retrofitting.

3.2.3. Provincial Disability Acts

The Province of Ontario enacted *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 (ODA)*, the first and only legislation of its type in Canada. The ODA requires municipalities (population 10,000+) and other public sector organizations to **undertake a planning process to identify, remove and prevent barriers** (physical and other barriers) to the participation of persons with disabilities (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2006). By September 30, 2003 most Ontario municipalities had completed their first annual accessibility plan required under the legislation (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2006). However, the long-term impact of this legislation remains to be measured.

Most recently, in December 2005, the Province of Québec became the second province to enact provincial legislation – R.S.Q., Chapter E-20.1 An Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of their Rights with a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration (Gouvernement du Québec, 2006). Within Division III.I of this legislation, all municipalities over 15,000 in population are required to develop an “*action plan*” to remove barriers to persons with disabilities in municipal services.

In June 2005, the Province of Ontario passed a second piece of legislation, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)* requiring the implementation of **mandatory accessibility standards in both the public and private**



sectors “in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025” (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 2005).

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 will continue in force until revoked in whole or in part as mandatory standards are developed. The Accessibility Standards currently being developed will detail the measures, policies, practices and other steps needed to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities. On July 25, 2007 the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulations* was approved and will come into force on January 1, 2008. Standards to be developed include:

- customer service
- transportation
- information and communications
- built environment
- employment

Customer Service

Ontario's accessible Customer Service Standard is now the law. It comes into force January 1, 2008. Businesses and organizations that provide goods and services to people in Ontario are now legally required to make their customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities. This is done by identifying and removing barriers to customer service in such areas as operational practices, policies and procedures, communications, and staff training. Areas covered include:

- Establishment of policies, practices and procedures
- Use of service animals and support persons
- Notice of temporary disruptions
- Training for staff
- Feedback process for providers of goods or services

For purposes of compliance and reporting, the standard divides businesses and organizations into 3 categories:

- 1) Designated public sector organizations with one or more employees have to:
 - a. Comply with the standard starting January 1, 2010
 - b. File accessibility reports starting 2010
 - c. Designated public sector organizations include
 - provincial ministries
 - designated provincial agencies that provide customer services
 - Legislative Assembly and its offices
 - municipalities
 - universities
 - colleges of applied arts and technology
 - public hospitals
 - school boards and public transportation organizations.
- 2) Private sector and non-profit businesses and organizations with 20 or more employees have to:
 - a. comply with the standard starting January 1, 2012
 - b. file accessibility reports starting in 2012.
- 3) Private sector and non-profit businesses and organizations with 20 or more employees have to:
 - a. comply with the standard starting January 1, 2012.



Transportation

This initial proposed transportation accessibility standard applies to all persons or organizations making the decision to provide the following types of passenger transportation services and conveyances under provincial jurisdiction:

- a) Fixed Route Passenger Transportation Services, including those provided by:
 - Urban Transit Buses;
 - Streetcars;
 - Subway Cars;
 - Light Rail Car Transit;
 - Family of Service Vehicles;
 - Commuter Railcars;
 - Inter-city Railcars;
 - Commuter Buses;
 - Inter-city Coach; and
 - Ferry Vessels.
- b) On-Demand Taxi Services.
- c) Booked Vehicle Services, including those provided by:
 - Taxis;
 - Limousines;
 - Shuttles;
 - Tour Buses; and
 - Community Service Transportation Vehicles.
- d) School Transportation Services.
- e) Other Transportation Services, including, but not limited to, those provided by:
 - Hospitals and long-term care homes;
 - Colleges and universities;
 - Amusement parks and zoos;
 - Hotels;
 - Service clubs;
 - Faith-based organizations, or
 - Employers for employees.

Areas covered include training requirements, conveyance requirements, use of symbols, signage, destination announcements, grab bars, etc.



As an example of the standard regarding destination announcements below is the description:

“For all services that do not require pre-booking, the transportation provider shall ensure that the operator audibly announces through manual or electronic means the route or direction, or destination or next major stop of the conveyance at the boarding point.”

Class		Shall comply with this requirement within <i>n</i> years after this standard is adopted in regulation
Class I	Fixed route urban transit bus	18 years
Class II	Fixed route streetcar	18 years
Class III	Fixed route subway car	3 years
Class IV	Fixed route light rail car	18 years
Class V	Family of service vehicles	18 years
Class VI	Fixed route commuter rail car	3 years
Class VII	Fixed route inter-city rail car	3 years
Class VIII	Fixed route commuter bus	3 years
Class IX	Fixed route inter-city coach	3 years
Class X	Fixed route ferry vessel	18 years

The transportation standard is currently being reviewed. The final standard is expected in early 2008.

In addition to this standard, the following recent ruling by the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal was handed down recently in support of destination announcements and has pushed the need to comply even faster than the stated standard above. Below is excerpt of an article by the Canadian Press – August 6, 2007.

A blind Toronto lawyer's successful battle to have the city's transit system announce each and every stop has set a precedent that will reverberate through public transportation systems across the country, legal experts say.

Two years after the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ordered the Toronto Transit Commission to announce every station along its subway lines, the tribunal ruled it must do the same on buses and streetcars by the end of this month.

The case was championed by blind lawyer David Lepofsky, who said the July 26 2007 ruling applies, at least in principle, to every province across the country.

"Blind people have the same need to know where they're getting off, whether it's a bus in Toronto, or Montreal, or Calgary, or Regina," he said.

"Tell me there's a city in Canada that has more traffic, or bus routes, or diversity than Toronto. If you can do it here then you can do it in London, or wherever."



If the Ontario ruling is applied properly across the country, just announcing major intersections and requested stops won't be acceptable, said human rights lawyer David Baker.

Baker, who has worked on some of Canada's most high-profile disability rights cases, said that although individuals could sue their own cities to get equivalent rulings he would be surprised and disappointed if it were necessary.

"I would think it would be as simple as people raising the issue with their transportation providers," he said.

"They would very likely comply quite quickly in light of this decision, because it's hard to see how there could be a defence in their case if there wasn't one in this case."

Information and Communication

The premise of this standard is that everyone has the right to access public information. If a person cannot access a public document because of a disability, they are being denied their right to access. Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address specific user needs.

Examples of communication problems include some people cannot read or use regular print because of their disability. This can include people who are blind, people who have low vision, an intellectual or other cognitive disability, and some people with physical disabilities who cannot hold publications or turn pages. Other people cannot access or have difficulty accessing the Internet. Still others have difficulty watching or hearing video presentations.

To assist in getting the message to all people, the following alternative formats are available:

- Large Print
- Electronic Text
- Braille
- Audio Format
- Captioning
- Windowing (sign language interpreter what others hear in a video presentation or broadcast)

In addition, relating to the Internet specifically, using the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), ensures websites are accessible to not only those with disabilities but also seniors and people who have English as a second language. To find out if a website is accessible, various organizations exist to provide consulting services. An example is WebAIM: <http://www.webaim.org/about/>.



Built Environment

This standard focuses on the ensuring that Ontario buildings follow the rules of universal design – accessible to all people. Topics that will be covered in this standard include:

- 1) Entrances
- 2) Elevators
- 3) Exteriors (e.g. curb cuts, ramps)
- 4) Fire and Life Safety
- 5) General Layout and Services (e.g. lighting, location of public phones, etc.)
- 6) Interiors (e.g. floor finishes, tripping hazards, etc.)
- 7) Parking Areas
- 8) Public Washrooms (e.g. following washroom features are accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities:
 - grab bars;
 - coat hooks;
 - flush controls;
 - wash basins;
 - toilet paper dispenser;
 - call button for emergencies;
 - mounted automatic hand-dryers or paper towel holders; and
 - lever-handled faucets or automatic faucet
- 9) Signage and Information Systems
- 10) Wall Finishes (e.g. limiting wall mirrors, colors, etc.)

Employment

Here are some things the standards consider in terms of employment:

- 1) Job Advertisements (e.g. Clearly state that your organization has an equal opportunity policy)
- 2) Job Descriptions and Requirements (e.g. Make sure what you ask for is relevant to the job (e.g., a physical test).
- 3) Recruitment and Selection (e.g. Train front-line staff greeting job candidates on how to interact with people with disabilities)
- 4) Applicant Testing (e.g. You may have to give the test verbally, or provide a computer for candidates to do the test)
- 5) Starting Work (e.g. Ask employees what job-related support they need and follow up later to see if something needs to be changed)
- 6) Training (e.g. Train all employees in general accessibility awareness. You may want to consider more training for the workgroup the new employee is joining)
- 7) Doing the Job (e.g. Work with employees with disabilities to adapt tasks as needed)
- 8) Keeping Matters Confidential
- 9) Retaining Employees (e.g. Retain and promote staff using the same criteria for all employees)
- 10) Dismissal/Termination (e.g. Make sure you thought of all options in looking for ways to support employees)
- 11) Monitoring Results (e.g. Keep track of positive changes for making your workplace accessible. For example: people's attitudes – take surveys or ask a focus group; improved accessibility – conduct an accessibility audit and try to fill in any gaps; and access to job candidates – find out how your efforts to widen the search for candidates has paid off.)
- 12) Workplace Accommodation



13) Inclusive Workplaces

As the rest of the standards (with the exception of Customer Service) are in the process of being developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the 2007 Accessibility Plans by the municipalities do not comment on specific plans for implementing accessibility standards, but many do note the need to develop implementation plans in 2007 and beyond for implementation in future years.

3.2.4. Summary of the ODA 2001 and AODA 2005

In summary, below are the overall requirements of the ODA and the AODA for Ontario municipalities:

- All municipalities are required to prepare accessibility plans and make them public, and consult with persons with disabilities.
- Municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish **accessibility advisory committees**, and a majority of their members must be people with disabilities.
- The establishment of an Accessibility Standards Advisory Council has been established by the provincial government which sets out a process for developing and enforcing clear and measurable accessibility standards with timelines for compliance, in the areas of public access to goods, services, buildings and employment.
- Standards development committees are developing the accessibility standards. These standards will have broad coverage including **both public and private sectors** and will be posted and made available for public comment.
- Minister is required to prepare an annual report on the implementation and effectiveness of the Act.
- Public education programs are to be held on the purpose and implementation of the act.
- Accessibility reports from a person or organization to which an accessibility standard applies must be filed with a director annually.

Municipalities are also required to:

- make accessibility a consideration when purchasing goods and services and in subdivision approval;
- develop accessibility plans for municipally-administered, sub-contracted or licensed transit providers in consultation with persons with disabilities;
- improve access to municipal elections by giving greater consideration to accessible voting locations;
- ensure that new social housing additional units or replacement units includes a percentage of modified units for persons with disabilities;
- enforce new penalties for counterfeiting and misuse of Disabled Person Parking Permits; and
- increase the minimum penalty for misuse of designated parking under municipal by-laws to \$300.00



There are two key definitions (disability and barrier) in the ODA and the AODA which are important to keep in mind.

The Acts define a disability as:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

In addition, the Act defines a barrier as:

- Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

3.3. Policy and Practice

To date, research has not been undertaken in Canada to measure the effectiveness of these various pieces of accessibility legislation. However, an evaluation of the effectiveness of accessibility regulation, in particular compliance with accessibility legislation at the local (or municipal level) and factors affecting municipal government compliance with legislation, has been undertaken in recent years in both New Zealand and the United States.

Research undertaken by Gleeson (Gleeson, 1999) in New Zealand involved a case study of the City of Dunedin, New Zealand which had a population at that time of approximately 120,000 people. Gleeson’s research sought to identify some of the compliance problems with accessibility legislation (specifically regulations that have been passed to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities to the built environment) that occur in cities and to develop key questions to inform further research in this area. The primary data source for the City of Dunedin research was a set of interviews held with twenty people (including several persons with disabilities) who were knowledgeable about the New Zealand Building Act 1991 (BA) and the New Zealand Human Rights Act 1993 (HRA) - accessibility legislation in New Zealand.

This study confirmed that accessibility regulations put in place to improve accessibility in this city were “*failing to address the mobility needs of persons with disabilities in that*”



city” (Gleeson, 1999, p.193). Both non-compliance (i.e. building owners and business people were not complying with regulations and saw access regulations as a cost burden to avoid), and lack of enforcement (i.e. regulations put in place to improve accessibility were not being fully enforced in the city) issues were evident from the research. The scope and scale of these problems was not made clear in this research.

Civil rights legislation in the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has sought to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability within all local (municipal) government services, programs and activities, including employment (Vaughn Switzer, 2001). From the 20 sample cities, 10 cities were chosen for further analysis and became the focus for the research.

One of the most important findings of this study concerns ***the interest and position of the ADA Coordinator***. Vaughn Switzer (2001) noted that within progressive municipalities, the effectiveness of legislative implementation and compliance was due in a large part to the interest and position within the municipal hierarchy of the ADA Coordinator. In one municipality where “the Mayor had a personal interest in disability issues”, the ADA Coordinator was able to effectively move forward with implementation efforts (Vaughn Switzer, 2001, p.657). However, a coordinator in a municipality in a low-level staff position (little or no visibility or political clout), or authority to make decisions was unable to get issues off the desk of her immediate supervisor (Vaughn Switzer, 2001).

Another finding of this research was that the progressive cities that are making headway with legislative compliance ***have disability/access committees which take a broad interpretation of their role beyond issues of physical/architectural accessibility to include issues of access to all programs and services.***

The Vaughn Switzer (2001) study presented a number of compelling findings in the area of staffing, participation of persons with disabilities, and municipal service delivery to persons with disabilities as they relate to the compliance of local U.S. governments to ADA legislation.

Factors that Affect Local Government Implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II
--

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Position of the ADA Co-ordinator within the Municipal Power Structure - Awareness among Municipal Staff about the requirements of the Law - Training for Municipal Staff at each level of Service - Participation and Input from Disabled Persons - Focus, Leadership, and Composition of Citizen Commissions - Financial Resources - Co-ordination and Interaction with Other Municipalities - Interaction or Interest on the Part of Elected Officials - Knowledge about the Number of Disabled Persons within the Community or the Services |
|--|

<p>Needed by those Persons</p>

<p>Source: Vaughn Switzer, 2001, page 657-660.</p>
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3.4. Municipal Accessibility Planning

Whether or not individual provinces have accessibility planning legislation, Canadian cities historically have shown capacity to remove barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities. Large Canadian cities such as Vancouver, the first city in Canada to provide scheduled bus service to people with disabilities (Atkinson, 2003), and Toronto's adoption of universal design principles in the Toronto Official Plan (Holten, 2001) have been known for longstanding accessibility planning efforts.

3.4.1. Vancouver

Canada's largest cities have been active in developing accessibility plans and implementing innovative accessibility ideas.

British Columbia and the City of Vancouver

In 2004, led by then-Councillors Tim Louis and Sam Sullivan (now Mayor of Vancouver), Vancouver City Council passed a resolution endorsing a **2010 Vision for People with Disabilities**. The resolution was circulated to other B.C. municipalities, and several dozen signed on to the vision.

The motion was premised on two fundamental objectives:

- To foster greater opportunities within the City of Vancouver and across British Columbia for people with disabilities.
- To harness the 2010 Winter Olympic Games as a catalyst for the creation of such opportunities

This resulted in a project titled **The Accessible/Inclusive Cities and Communities Project** (AICCP). Although the project is unconnected to the Olympics, the Games shine a spotlight on B.C., creating a unique opportunity to showcase the province as an exceptional place for people with disabilities to live, work and play, and to galvanize support for the initiative. The Vancouver Agreement (an urban development partnership between the federal and provincial governments and the City of Vancouver) provided funding for the first phase of the project, and a coordinator was hired to produce a strategic plan and develop a rating tool that would help municipalities evaluate their accessibility and inclusiveness.

Research for the strategic plan involved consultations with over one hundred individuals and organizations. B.C. has a broad spectrum of disability organizations, but there is no unifying force to aid communication, and no standard means of gauging how well municipalities are doing in achieving their goals of accessibility and inclusiveness. The AICCP decided it could best fulfill the intent of the original resolution by working directly with municipalities to create a "system of consistency" for their goals of accessibility and inclusion, help them access resources, establish timelines and targets, and work with communities to meet and exceed them.

The first step toward creating consistency was the development of a municipal rating tool. Entitled "**Measuring Up: Communities of Inclusion and Accessibility**," its purpose is "to stimulate communities to evaluate, through engagement with community



members, how inclusive and accessible the community is now and to set goals for improvement.”

The instrument measures both accessibility and inclusion. Accessibility is about removing physical or structural barriers to participation. Inclusion includes measures regarding that participation and contributions of persons with disabilities is welcomed and valued. Four main areas for evaluation were identified. *They are support services, access to information, economic participation, and community contribution.* Support service encompasses such aspects as transportation, housing and education; economic participation includes employment and skills development; and so on.

“Measuring Up” outlines criteria for assessing the degree of accessibility and inclusion in each area and ascribes gold, silver and bronze standards for each. A community that has made reasonable progress in accessible transport might award itself a “bronze” in that area; if its schools are fully inclusive of children with disabilities, it would get a “gold” on the education score card. At all times, what is crucial is that the process involves dialogue between the municipality, citizens with disabilities and other community members. Together they evaluate the community’s progress in each area, set goals for improvement, determine strategies for achieving them, and share their learning with other communities.

The Accessible/Inclusive Cities Initiative is now housed with 2010 Legacies Now, a not-for-profit society that works to develop sustainable legacies in core areas of the community, including sport and recreation, arts, literacy, and volunteerism. Its aim is to leave lasting legacies in these areas as a result of hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

3.4.2. Toronto

More recent participatory action research carried out by the City of Toronto has focused upon the use of the Official Plan with the production of a document entitled “*Planning a Barrier-Free City of Toronto – A Statement of Planning Principles*” (Holten, 2001). This document was produced in response to a request from the Urban Planning and Development Services Department (City of Toronto) to contribute content to both a vision statement of the City of Toronto Official Plan and the Official Plan. The document (based upon consultation and research with a broad range of stakeholders) presents a framework for planning policy development by the City of Toronto and 12 “Planning Principles” to guide the development of the City of Toronto Official Plan.

3.4.3. Mid-Size Cities

However, innovative accessibility planning has been occurring in other jurisdictions as well. A significant percentage of Canadians, almost one quarter or 23%, live in “mid-size” communities (often referred to as mid-size cities or MSCs) which fall within the 50,000-500,000 population range. These MSCs outnumber the larger Canadian cities (Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary), yet the greatest amount of research and literature remains focused on Canada’s largest cities (Legault, 2005)



In one survey of mid-size municipalities across Canada, those responsible for accessibility planning were asked to indicate which cities they believed were leaders in accessibility planning practices. A significant percentage of respondents selected larger municipalities (greater than 500,000 population). These larger municipalities are the City of North Vancouver, British Columbia; Ottawa, Ontario; Mississauga, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario; and The Region of Peel, Ontario. The respondents believed that leadership and innovation may be more likely to come from these larger cities. ***However, the research conducted by Sanderson has shown that innovative and noteworthy practices are occurring in mid-size Canadian municipalities.***

Although many of the large centers were selected by Insightrix to interview, a number of mid-size cities were targeted to reveal in greater detail these innovative practices in cities similar to Saskatoon. Below is one such city that is credited with development of Accessible Design Standards and universal design, even before legislation required municipalities to follow such standards.

3.4.4. City of London

Originally introduced in 2001, the City of London standards reflect extensive research on accessible, barrier-free environments that included consultation with organizations such as Canadian Hearing Society, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Community Living London, Learning Disabilities Association, Ontario March of Dimes and Thames Valley Children's Centre.

Going beyond existing accessibility regulations, standards and guidelines, FADS incorporates the principles of "universal design" that benefit people of all ages and abilities. This approach continues to earn London praise as being on the leading edge in building an accessible community.

Bill Campbell, Division Manager of Facilities Design and Construction, directed the standards development project and notes that the universal design aspect is a subtle but significant factor. *"We're building inclusive environments to incorporate design elements that work well for almost everyone. Building entrances at grade level with power assisted doors is a good example of a simple yet effective design feature that provides equal access to individuals of all abilities - a parent pushing a baby stroller, a person using a mobility aid such as a wheelchair or walker, individuals with limited use of their hands due to a disability or injury or someone simply carrying heavy or awkward items in and out of a building."*

Implementation of the City of London's Facility Accessibility Design Standards make newly constructed and/or renovated facilities accessible to people of all ranges of physical and sensory ability.

The Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) is a technical design document used by City of London staff to enhance accessibility beyond the minimal requirements of the *Ontario Building Code*. The FADS document is used when planning and designing municipal facilities as an aid to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.



Obtaining Permission to reproduce, adopt or adapt City of London standards

The City of London continues to encourage and support municipalities in their barrier-free endeavors and in working together for the removal of barriers in many communities. Permission to utilize and/or reproduce their standards is provided upon submission of a completed FADS Authorization Request form. To date more than 50 municipalities and organizations in Canada and the United States have adopted - or adapted - the City of London's Facility Accessibility Standards for use in their community.

Communities and Municipalities which have adapted – or adopted – the City of London FADS:

- Corporation of the Township of Hamilton
- City of Oshawa
- New York City, USA
- City of Winnipeg, Universal Design Office
- City of Thunder Bay
- City of Guelph
- Town of Kincardine
- City of Hamilton
- Town of Saugeen Shores
- Town of Whitby
- The Corporation of the City of Windsor
- Region of Peel
- City of Winnipeg, Planning & Land Use Division
- Region of Niagara
- City of Brampton
- Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Town of Huntsville - AAC
- City of St. Catharines
- Town of Milton
- Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing
- County of Dufferin - AAC
- City of Mississauga
- Town of Ajax
- City of Windsor
- Town of Oakville
- Huron County
- Oxford County

Organizations which have adapted – or adopted – the City of London FADS:

- Pro-Able Services Inc.
- Addictions Foundation of Manitoba
- The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
- Linda Crabtree for Lions Camp Dorset
- Fanshawe College
- Barrier Free Northumberland Committee: Municipality of Port Hope, Town of Cobourg, Hamilton Township, Township of Cramahe, Municipality of Trent Hills, Municipality of Brighton, Township of Alnwick/Haldiman



-
- Joint Accessibility Review Committee for: Town of Grimsby, Town of Lincoln, Town of Pelham, Niagara-on-the-Lake, City of Thorold, Township of West Lincoln
 - Township of Lucan Biddulph
 - The Herrington Group Ltd., St. Catharines
 - Bruce County - Housing Research Analyst
 - Ohio State University - Conference Presentation
 - Simcoe County Association for Physically Disabled
 - Helix Courier Limited
 - State Farm Insurance
 - Ontario Human Rights Commission
 - Delta London Armouries Hotel (Westmont Group)
 - Canadian Human Rights Commission

3.5. Accessibility Committee Overview

Following are some guidelines to developing an Accessibility Committee as experienced by many municipalities and recommended by the research on Accessibility Planning.

3.5.1. Stakeholders (Persons with Disabilities and Municipal Staff)

Persons with disabilities, municipal staff, officials and others are involved in removing barriers to persons with disabilities and improving the accessibility of cities. Of these stakeholders, the research literature in this area consistently addresses the fundamental importance of the **upfront involvement of persons with disabilities** or the “user as expert” in the removal of barriers to their participation (Ostroff, 1997).

Research from the UK by Imrie and Wells (1993) addressed the role of “Access Officers” (the British equivalent of an Accessibility / Disability Co-ordinator in a North American municipality) who are responsible for both access issues in local planning authorities, and for fostering the development of access groups that would represent the interests of disabled persons within the planning system. The research indicates that problems happen if the following occurs:

- *the position is located within a specific department (becomes too narrow in focus)*
- *the allocation of only part-time staff to the area of accessibility affected the level and quality of service provision*
- *even when full-time staff resources were allocated, the access duties were often in addition to the main job requirements, thereby causing access issues to be handled in a reactive manner by staff*

In Canada, the locus of responsibility for accessibility planning in mid-size municipalities in 2006 can generally be categorized under one of three main headings: *Planning, Corporate Services or Parks and Recreation*. Within those three categories, position titles and level of responsibility assigned to accessibility planning vary greatly. In Ontario, a number of municipalities have located accessibility planning staff within the **Corporate Services department** in response to the Provincial ODA and AODA legislation and to reflect the municipalities’ corporate wide responsibility to meet this legislation. This also reinforces the coordination nature between all corporate departments.



3.5.2. Roles and Responsibilities

Although different configurations and concepts on the structure of the Accessibility Committee exist across various communities, below is a summary of the roles and responsibilities that are fundamental to the structure of the Committee as gathered from the research.

Mandate / Responsibilities:

The typical mandate of an Accessibility Committee is to:

- Advise City Council each year about the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises that Council intends to purchase, construct, significantly renovate or lease.
- Advise City Council on the accessibility of new developments for which site plans are being reviewed by the municipality.
- Research and make recommendations to City Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities within the City.
- Educate City Council and the general public of the responsibility, benefits and means of having a consumer-friendly, accessible community.
- Promote the voluntary provision of barrier-free access to buildings, services and activities within the City and recognize those businesses and services that are consumer-friendly.
- Integrate accessibility planning into strategic and business planning practices of the municipalities.
- Specifically (but not limited to), the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee may assist City Divisions with:
 - o Testing of new products;
 - o Providing listings of problem areas;
 - o Educating about different types of disabilities and providing this information on the Committee's web page (if it exists);
 - o Assisting with the annual review of the Accessibility Design Standards
 - o Reviewing particular site plans;
 - o Liaising with other Committees; and,
 - o Working in collaboration with community groups to address service needs and gaps for persons with disabilities.

Council Responsibilities and Commitments:

The typical mandate of the Council is to:

- Ensure the participation of people with disabilities in the identification and review of barriers
- Maintain an Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify barriers and obstacles to accessibility
- Consider recommendations from the Committee with respect to accessibility of municipal buildings, facilities and services



Voting Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is typically comprised a majority of members who are persons with disabilities or members of the community who often had experience with one or more particular type of disability.⁵ This Advisory Committee meets on a monthly basis, and some items responsible for are:

- Advise City Council regarding the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the Municipal Accessibility Plan
- The AAC provides a forum for persons with disabilities to raise issues and concerns.
- Provide advice and guidance to City Council on matters relating to policies, practices, services and programs.

Resource Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Some committees include non-voting but informed members as well. Examples may include non-voting members that represent sectors such as school boards, seniors, housing and development, architecture, health care/wellness, and representatives from a variety of community groups.

Accessibility Advisory Sub-Committee Structure

Often subcommittees are developed focusing on key issues the municipality wants to address. An example in one particular city is the development of four Accessibility Advisory Sub-Committees and each one comprised of at least two (2) voting members:

- o Facilities
- o Transportation
- o Policy Development
- o Education and Awareness

These Sub-Committees meet on a regular basis (example: monthly) in between the regular meetings of the Advisory Committee.

Accessibility Plan Coordinator

Many cities have hired a full time coordinator to work with the Advisory Committee and City staff to ensure a corporate global view is taken regarding accessibility. This person is responsible for ensuring that Accessibility and Inclusion are taken into account in the city's planning efforts. Over time, they become an enforcer of Accessibility Planning.

The Staff Resource Group / Staff Access Committee

Some cities have established a staff group who are responsible for assisting in the development of future plans, monitoring departmental barriers identified within the City's annual Accessibility Plans and managing other accessibility-related matters.

The Staff Resource Group, comprised of a cross-section of senior staff from City Departments, has been formed to co-ordinate the development of the City's Accessibility Plan in conjunction with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Plan Coordinator (if the city has one) is typically responsible for the co-ordination of the Staff Resource Group.

⁵ Please note that the ODA and AODA stipulate that majority of the voting members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee must be persons with disabilities.



The use of a staff group can ensure that the City's Accessibility Plan is implemented. This group works in close co-operation with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Each department is directly responsible for utilizing the Plan to help meet the City's objective of identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

Members of the staff group gather information concerning accessibility initiatives in their respective departments that are currently in place, and those that are planned for the future. They also review and identify how and when the issues are identified in the audit (if one has been conducted on their department) and through consultations will be addressed, and assisting with the preparation of the annual Accessibility Plan.

3.6. Accessibility Plan Overview

Advisory Committees are typically required to develop an Accessibility Plan. Below are details on the typical objectives and content covered in the plan.

Objectives of the Accessibility Plan

Some of the typical objectives in the plan include:

- To identify barriers and make recommendations to improve access to existing municipal buildings, facilities and services
- To ensure that new municipal structures, facilities and services are designed to be free from barriers wherever possible
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the needs of disabled persons, including safety, mobility, access to facilities and services
- To encourage liaison with other public institutions to share best practices and identify areas for co-operative solutions, such as consistent signage, efficient purchasing and staff training.
- The plan itself should be accessible and provide an opportunity for customers to provide their input to help guide future accessibility initiatives.
- Plan objectives are both long and short term. As much as reasonable, the plan's short term goals should be achievable in the following budget year.
- The Accessibility Plan acts as a planning tool to be used by departments and City Council in preparing and reviewing other key corporate documents such as the Capital and Operating Budgets.

Contents of the Accessibility Plan

The content of a typical Accessibility Plan include the following:

- Describe the process by which the city identifies, removes and prevents barriers to people with disabilities
- Review the progress the city has made in removing and preventing barriers that were identified last year in its facilities, policies, programs, practices and services
- List the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services that the city will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities
- Describe the measures the city will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities
- Describe the ways that the city will make this accessibility plan available to the public



Barrier Identification Process

When developing an Accessibility Plan a barrier identification process is embarked on to determine what barriers exist and where the barriers are found. Examples of a barrier identification process may include:

- Review of documents, publications, etc.
- Conducting public meetings, surveys, and/or audits
- The use of customer feedback forms and other feed mechanisms

Communicating the Accessibility Plan to the Public

Upon approval, an Accessibility Plan is typically made available to the public through the following means:

- A document placed on the City's website;
- Copies of the plan made available to the public either by pick-up or through mail.
- Alternate formats such as CD, Braille, audio and disk are available upon request;
- Communication of the Plan is provided to the media and the public through media releases etc.

3.7. Accessibility Awards



There are a number of organizations that award prizes to cities that take a lead role in accessibility planning and implementation based on specific criteria. Below is one example of such agency, which is on an international basis. Many of the criteria for awards like these can be used to guide accessibility planning in municipalities.

The National Disability Authority (Ireland)

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent statutory agency in Ireland, established under the guidance of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform by the National Disability Authority Act 1999.

NDA strives to ensure that the rights and entitlements of people with disabilities are protected. It has the following functions:

- To act as a national body to assist in the coordination and development of disability policy;
- To undertake research and develop statistical information for the planning, delivery and monitoring of programs and services for people with disabilities;
- To advise the Minister on standards for programs and services and prepare codes of practice;
- To monitor the implementation of standards and codes of practice;
- Take the lead in both encouraging and recognizing the promotion of equality of people with disabilities.

Authority members are drawn from all backgrounds and include people with disabilities, parents and caregivers of people with disabilities and people working in the disability field.

In 2005, the National Disability Authority of Ireland (NDA)/ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) introduced an accessibility award scheme *Excellence*



through Accessibility, which acknowledges those departments in particular cities and agencies that have taken steps to make their services more accessible.

The NDA has developed this set of 14 accessibility guidelines and 41 criteria for the Accessibility Award. These guidelines have been drawn up after extensive consultation with Government Departments, state agencies, voluntary and community bodies and the NDA Standards Advisory Committee.

The guidelines have been structured to take account of three critical areas common to all organizations:

- Access to Quality Customer Services;
- Access to the Built Environment;
- Access to services delivered via Information and Communication Technology.

The guidelines reflect the principle of Universal Access to public services by all current and potential customers. They are used in assessing the applications for the Award.

Guideline 1 » Commitment

The organization is committed to improving accessibility to their public services.

Criteria to be met:

- Management has overseen the development of, and promotes the organization's commitment to, improved accessibility;
- The organization consults people with disabilities and their organizations in relation to accessibility matters.

Guideline 2 » Equality and Positive Action

The organization ensures that the rights to equal treatment and positive action, as provided for in equality legislation, are met.

Criteria to be met:

- The organization has an Equality/Equal Status policy in place to ensure that the right to equal treatment, as provided for in legislation, is met;
- The organization has measures in place to support access by people with disabilities to their services, as provided for in disability legislation

Guideline 3 » Human Resource Management

The organization's Human Resource Management policies, procedures and practices support all steps for improving in the delivery of more accessible services.

Criteria to be met:

- The organization has a high standard of achievement in relation to Ireland's Disability Act 2005
- Reasonable accommodations are made to meet the needs of employees with disabilities;
- Equality/Disability training, designed in consultation with people with disabilities, is provided for relevant staff.



Guideline 4 » Procurement

The organization is committed to the procurement of equipment and/or services that, whenever possible, are accessible to all.

Criterion to be met:

- Accessibility is a criterion in the tender process.

Guideline 5 » Customer Service

The organization ensures that the '12 Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Public Service'¹ continue to be implemented.

Criteria to be met:

- The organization has a Customer Charter that is published and promoted in all public offices of the organization;
- The organization has communicated and promoted a complaints procedure in relation to the Charter.

Guideline 6 » Management of the Built Environment

The organization regularly reviews and, if necessary, develops and improves the accessibility of its built environment in public access areas.

Criteria to be met:

- Management has reviewed the current accessibility of the built environment
- The organization maintains its own Built Environment Access Handbook for use by managers and maintenance personnel.

Guideline 7 » External Environment

The organization takes reasonable steps to ensure an accessible approach to its built environment including, where provided, car parking facilities.

Criteria to be met:

- Where parking spaces designated for people with disabilities are provided, they comply with best practice guidelines or relevant standards
- Building surroundings and access routes to accessible entrances, including those from a car park used by the public, are designed to best practice guidelines or relevant standards
- Where gradients on access routes in public service areas are steeper than 1:20, both steps and ramps are provided and correctly designed;
- All reasonable measures are taken to ensure that entrances used by the public are accessible, without adversely impacting on the character and special interest of the historic built environment.

Guideline 8 » Vertical and Horizontal Circulation in Public Service Areas

Circulation is as simple as possible for all public service areas.

Criteria to be met:

Vertical circulation

- Steps are avoided where possible but, if in place, an alternative method of changing level in public service areas is provided that conforms with best practice guidelines or relevant standards



- Accessible lifts are provided in all new buildings of a specified size that have more than one floor. Any new installation of lifts complies with best practice guidelines or relevant standards

Horizontal circulation

- Horizontal circulation in public service areas complies with best practice guidelines and standards.

Guideline 9 » Facilities

The organization has taken all reasonable steps to provide public service areas and facilities that are accessible to the public.

Criteria to be met:

- Correctly designed signage, including tactile surfaces, is in place in public service areas (internally/externally as appropriate) to allow effective, efficient and safe use of the built environment;
- Telephones, if provided for public use, are accessible to all in public reception/service areas, and a Textphone is provided;
- Public service reception areas and waiting rooms are correctly designed for ease of use
- Toilet facilities, where provided for public use, are accessible to facilitate the needs of people with disabilities

Guideline 10 » Interior Design

The interior design of public service areas caters for the needs of as many customers as possible.

Criteria to be met:

- The light within the public service areas of the building is distributed evenly to eliminate reflections, shadows and glare;
- Surface finishes are correctly designed;
- Colour and luminance contrast, for instance, between walls and floors, between door backgrounds and fittings and between other adjacent decorated elements, are in line with best practice guidelines or relevant standards in public service areas
- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that fixtures in use are consistent, accessible and easy to use
- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the acoustic properties of public service areas have been considered.

Guideline 11 » Evacuation

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that every user of the built environment has appropriate access to a place of safety in an emergency situation.

Criterion to be met:

- Management has considered access and safety in emergency situations and has implemented sufficient plans to cover all users of the building, including people with disabilities. This includes emergency procedures, emergency equipment, visual and auditory alarms, safety zones and signage.



Guideline 12 » Communication Strategy

The organization's communication strategy is designed, as far as practicable, to accommodate people with disabilities.

Criteria to be met:

- The organization has documented procedures for implementing its communication policy with people with disabilities;
- Public information is available on request, in an accessible form, which may include:
 - Audio Tape
 - Braille
 - Electronic Format – HTML, Plain Text;
 - Large Print;
 - High Contrast Print;
 - Easy-to-Read
- Sign language interpreters and/or Real Time Captioning, when possible, are provided at public consultations, following a request beforehand to the organization from an attendee who requires this service.

Guideline 13 » Public Computers, Kiosks and other Public Access Terminals (PATs)

The organization is committed to achieving conformance with relevant NDA IT Accessibility Guidelines for all computers, kiosks and other Public Access Terminals used by the public.

Guideline 14 » Web Accessibility

The organization is committed to achieving Conformance Level Double-A with the Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0.

Criteria to be met:

- All the organization's HTML-based information and services, including public websites, HTML-based email and newsletters, achieve Conformance Level Double-A with WAI WCAG 1.0;
- Organizations that have not achieved Conformance Level Double-A with WAI WCAG 1.0 are committed to auditing and improving the accessibility of their websites;
- For each of the organization's websites, the organization has a web accessibility statement in place that shows the organization's commitment to reaching and maintaining Conformance Level Double-A with WAI WCAG 1.0;
- New content published to the site achieves Conformance Level Double-A with WAI WCAG 1.0.



4.0 Internal Review

Interviews were held with representatives from each of the following City of Saskatoon departments to determine what initiatives the department has undertaken and what its current plans are for the future. Below is a summary for each department.

4.1. Leisure Services Department

Buildings and Accessibility

Whether a building is accessible for people with disabilities depends on the structure of the building itself. Any time renovations are done, they are done according to building code and proper measures are taken to ensure that people with disabilities have proper access to the facilities.

There are currently five indoor leisure centers which are viewed to be very accessible (e.g. Activated doors, the doors wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through, wheelchair ramps, and elevators). The one problem area noted was the Cosmo Civic Centre which has no elevator.

The Saskatoon Field House is currently having the apron re-done. After this, it will be more accessible not only for people with wheelchairs but those with walkers or strollers. The Archibald Arena has also been retrofitted.

In terms of upcoming changes, there are talks how to incorporate the Olympic pool to be accessible from the “shallow” pool adjacent to it at the Harry Bailey aquatic centre.

Programs for people with disabilities

There is a 1st step program but this is not necessarily targeted to people with disabilities. It's directed to people with mobility issues including stroke victims. The staff in the leisure center has been trained to accommodate these people and their needs.

The Lawson Civic Centre has programs which are run by two agencies. The ABI program is directed to people with Acquired Brain Injury. Again staff is trained to accommodate these people.

The leisure centers also have a Buddy System program. If an assistant is needed in various situations, the person with the disability is charged a fee for the specific program they are attending; however the assistant can accompany them at no charge.

The Saskatoon Field House has programs there are geared towards people with diabetes, stroke, and chronic diseases. These people come to the Field House by doctor referrals. The Saskatoon Field House also has weight training equipment designed for people in wheelchairs. The regular seats can be moved and a person in a wheelchair can direct themselves onto the various machines to do some weight training.



Decision Making and Program Implementation

Currently decision making is based on secondary research and working with agencies in the field. We have not conducted focus groups; however, it would be nice to find out what people are looking for from the Leisure Services point of view.

They have program designers who do research on best practices in the field and programs are implemented based on this research. Currently programs are not geared towards any specific group of people with disabilities; they target the general population with diseases, strokes, mobility issues, etc.

Challenges

The large number of staff and the turnover rates are difficult in trying to keep accessibility a “top-of-mind” issue. This creates a challenge for this department.

Buildings where programs are held are intimidating and the staff isn’t always seen as being empathetic towards people with disabilities. In many cases, there is no easy and direct access to communicate to the disabled users.

Costs are a challenge, since people with disabilities generally tend to fall into the lower income category.

Marketing

Currently marketing of the leisure services is conducted through the following:

- Brochures are distributed at doctor’s offices
- People with Acquired Brain Injury are directed to the center.
- People who are at a certain income threshold can purchase a bus pass for \$15 dollars and get access to the programs, however it’s not directed to people with disabilities, general public.
- Need to know the demographic profile of the disabled community in order to assess the programs which should be offered. Nothing is currently being done for children with disabilities or people with mental disabilities; however the department would like to get into this field.

4.2. Communications Department

In terms of accessibility the Communication Department currently conducts the following:

- When designing the brochures, the department makes sure that the fonts are big enough to read for people who might have vision problems.

In addition to designing the format of outgoing information, the department also does the following:

- In July of 2006 the City Transit re-vamped its routes and worked together with Transit to identify various groups impacted by the route changes and targeted the communications towards groups of people, including those with disabilities.



- The Communications Branch is responsible for the creation of the weekly "City Page" which appears in Saturday's Star Phoenix. The City Page integrates all corporate advertising and civic notices with the exception of career and tender ads.
- The Communications Branch also manages various communication activities such as the distribution of news releases, organization of public meetings, brochure development, and the production of the employee newsletter "Currents". "Currents" newsletter is delivered four times per year: spring (March/April); summer (June/July); fall (September/October); & winter (December/January).

4.3. Transit

Currently the Transit Department offers two types of buses, conventional and Access Transit. Below are the descriptions of each.

Conventional Buses

Some Conventional buses have low floor service, making them accessible to many people with a disability. No steps are required and the ramp flips up to provide easy access for people in wheelchairs, with strollers, or walkers. All Dart Buses have a low floor. These buses also have seats that flip up to make room for a wheelchair. There are a total of 131 buses operating in the city, 55 of them are low floor buses. In 2008 looking to add another 20 buses, and will retire 10-12 of the old buses.

Access Transit

This form of transit is 100% geared towards people with disabilities. Currently there are two ways to use Access Transit – subscription and door-to-door service. The demand for Access Transit is more than our supply, especially once the Health Region stopped running shuttle to St. Pauls. It's definitely an area with an opportunity for growth.

Access Transit is running very well, it's very well known. Most users are subscribers of the service. In order to become subscribers people are accepted/approved by a certain criteria (level of disability) assess whether that person can use regular conventional buses.

There are currently a total of 21 Access Transit buses operating in the city, and are looking to add another 4-5 buses next year.

Now with the development of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, a clear mandate for the Access Transit Advisory Committee is needed. Currently the mandate is:

1. To advise and provide assistance to the Administration relating to the development of Access Transit policies and services;
2. To advise on Access Transit issues received from or raised by other governments and agencies;
3. To serve as a forum for the public and/or agencies to raise their viewpoint on Access Transit issues; and
4. To endeavor to increase public awareness and understanding of issues as they relate to Access Transit.

The department is currently limited by the financial resources and there is a need for more cash. The cost of regular low floor bus is approximately \$400,000. The cost of an Access Transit bus is approximately \$110,000.



4.4. Urban Design

Overview

The Urban Design Section provides design services for streetscape projects and programs primarily in Saskatoon Business Improvement Districts. This department works together with the Business Improvement Districts regarding streetscapes (e.g. designing sidewalks with inclusion of trees, benches, bus stops, bollards, wheelchair ramps, etc).

As new projects are taken on, if an upgrade needs to be done it will be included with that project such as; extending the wheelchair ramp, and putting the grooves on the ramps. The department also ensures walkways and sidewalks provide clear paths for pedestrians with no obstructions.

Most sidewalks have a slope, some older ones are much shorter and the slope is steeper than the newer designs, also grooves are either missing in some sidewalk ramps or there are too few of them.

It is estimated that approximately 30-40% of sidewalks in the downtown area are in good condition and are accessible for people with disabilities. The Broadway area is about 60-70% of sidewalks in good condition and accessible.

Sidewalks - Wheelchair Ramps

The department is involved with designing wheelchair ramps for sidewalks. In terms of the ramps, the slope angle depends on the height of the sidewalk curb; however, the standard has been to go back approximately 2 meters and base the slope on that distance.

Many existing ramps are below standard. Ramps could and should be improved; however, it's a matter of resources. Due to the sidewalk size restraints some ramps are very short with a high slope and few grooves.

Achievements

The following upgrades to sidewalks and wheelchair ramps have been made:

- River Landing East and West side of the bridge
- 19th Street, Avenue A and 1st Avenue
- Avenues B, C and E in Riversdale
- 19th Street to Broadway bridge
- 3rd Avenue and Transit Mall as well as 25th Street extension
- Central Avenue – there is no mandate, however it's at the concept stage.

The department mentioned they don't hear much from the general public, and do not get very much feedback from the public relating to the quality of the improvements.



Future

Items that the department would like to see more of include mid-block street crossings. It's easier for people to cross the streets, as they don't need to worry about the speed of the traffic lights. They are trying to incorporate this with the 3rd Avenue master plan.

It would also be nice to have a handy-man available within the department who they could rely on and who could perform various duties (especially to do with the smaller jobs). Currently to have 3 bollards put in, the department had to contact 5 different people (e.g. facilities, sign shop, public works)

Other ideas the department had were: to include various coloring shades for crosswalks to accommodate those who are visually impaired, in addition to perhaps using material like cobblestone at crosswalks to make it more distinguishable. At 19th and Avenue C this crosswalk was made with a different type of material used for a crosswalk. It's visually pleasing and presents a clearly identifiable path for a pedestrian to cross the street.

4.5. Municipal Engineering

This department is involved with long-term planning for the city infrastructure; streets, sidewalks, water and sewer, and traffic operations. It also looks after traffic signage and traffic signals. The main areas impacting the accessibility for people with disabilities within this department are:

- Sidewalk design, in which they work closely with the Urban Design department.
- Installation of Traffic signals and audible signals.

Audible Traffic Signals:

There are three options to installing audible traffic signals:

- 1st option – assess the areas in a high need of audible signals and install them appropriately based on this need.
- 2nd option – if a certain traffic signal needs to be replaced and re-built, audible signals are installed if needed for that particular intersection.
- 3rd option – if a new intersection is in need of a traffic signal, an assessment is made whether an audible signal should be installed at which point it will be installed together with the traffic signal.

The department has been receiving good feedback regarding audible traffic signals. One issue sometimes brought up is the noise. However, there are people who don't know that in order for the audible part to kick into effect a person has to press and hold the crosswalk button; otherwise the recording for the traffic signal does not play.

Parking

In terms of accessibility, the department will provide homeowners with a loading zone in front of their house if a need arises and a request is received or if there is high demand for on-street parking. A person sends a letter requesting the installation, the department sends it to council and they approve it. In addition to the installation of a loading zone in particular areas, a person with disability can get a permit to park at the meter.



Sidewalk ramp program

Funds are limited for this program. There are industrial areas that have turned into residential areas, yet there are no sidewalks. In addition some businesses are against putting in the sidewalks. When upgrades are done to sidewalks, ramps are installed as well. Right now, staffing and finding people to do the work (contractors) is a huge issue. There are not enough people to do the work. There are projects currently on hold due to this issue.

Future

There will be more flashing crosswalks around the city. There have been areas where these were proposed, however people in the community opposed them, stating they preferred the regular traffic signals. It depends on how busy the area is. Once a certain area becomes busy with traffic and people, this will be evaluated and flashing crosswalks will be proposed for that area. There will need to be some driver education on what things need to be done regarding these types of crosswalks to make them understand what things are involved with driving and flashing crosswalks. Public education will need to be done.

4.6. Clerk's Office

Overview

This department provides secretarial services to City Council. Letters from the general public are placed on the City Council agenda and responses are written back to people on behalf of council. This department deals with the public, City Council and administration.

In terms of accessibility, this department makes it easy for people to communicate with the city council as well as attend meetings. Assistance provided to those with disabilities include:

- Hearing assistance devices
- Sign language interpreters

In terms of physical accessibility, the council of chambers has been re-designed to accommodate those people in wheelchairs. Beforehand there was no area for them to sit in on the meetings, people in wheelchairs were sitting somewhere in the corner. Now, there is a specific area designated for people in wheelchairs.

The main issues people are currently writing about are:

- Curb cuts, sidewalk clearing.
- Generally all complaints have been regarding physical accessibility.
- Currently posting agendas in .PDF formats on the website. For blind people this is not the best and ideal way. Need to accommodate disabilities like this and see what can be done to make the information easier and more accessible.

Election and Polling Stations

Each polling station has tape recorders that play back the options available on the ballot, in addition to Braille. There were cases where ballots did not have Braille templates; the



tape recorders came in to be very useful at that point. There are no other communities doing this and having this option.

In addition, in order to make sure that people with disabilities are accommodated during the election process the following are provided:

- There are magnifying devices available at all polling stations.
- Ballots are printed in larger fonts and there have been some color coding done on the ballots themselves to make the options more distinguishable.
- There are locations where accessibility for people in wheelchairs is an issue, as the buildings are older and not up to building code, however staff help out as much as possible to cater to everyone's needs.

Also, City Council has established a Mobile Poll in order to accommodate voters who are unable to leave their residence because of physical disability or limited mobility, as well as their resident caregivers. In addition, the City offers a Free Ride to the polls by providing a Free Ride coupon on Election Day or during advance voting, so that people with disabilities can ride free on regularly-scheduled Saskatoon Transit or Access Transit buses. A Free Ride coupon is also available at each Polling Station for the return ride.

4.7. Public Works

This department is involved with field work, externally with contractors as well as internally with municipal engineering (installing crossings, sidewalk ramps, etc.).

Building Accessibility

The public works building itself has a big problem with accessibility (heritage building). All other buildings located in the yard are not very accessible either.

There has been some work done with the facilities group to look at what's available to make the building more accessible, however it's difficult to change anything as it is a heritage building.

The Public Works division might be moving in the near future, at which point it will be ensured that the future buildings are up to code and accessible for people with disabilities.

Employment

In terms of employment the nature of work itself in the field is very physical and does not offer much opportunity for employment for people with disabilities. An opportunity for employment exists within the office as there are possibilities in administrative positions.

Snow Removal/Sidewalk Clearing

This department has been under scrutiny regarding accessibility for people during the winter. Sidewalks were a lower priority, and then the council set the laws regarding snow clearing. Homeowners are given 48 hours to clear the snow. If the sidewalk is not cleared within that time frame, the city comes in, does an assessment, provide them with a notice that the snow has to be cleared. If there is no action taken after that, the city comes in, removes the snow and charges the homeowner. People who have signage in front of their house for Access Transit or have a disabled loading zone, the city will come in and clear the snow for people in wheelchairs.



4.8. Development Services Branch

Overview

This department is responsible for reviewing and planning the development that take place in the city. In terms of accessibility, this is a value that must be reflected in the neighborhoods. Items include:

- Ensuring there are accessible parking spaces in all commercial locations
- Ensuring there is pedestrian access throughout the various city developments (parks, shopping centres, etc.)
- Ensuring accessibility of the sidewalk system.
- Making playgrounds more accessible
- Ensuring private property accessibility is developed according to building codes

Playgrounds

The city has a certain standard for park development. If the community of private developers wants to augment the standard guidelines and upgrade the park to be fully accessible, the community can raise the money and funds needed to make the changes and proceed with the upgrades. There are a number of playgrounds within the city that are to some degree accessible (i.e. one or many components are accessible).

4.9. Community Development

Overview/Playgrounds

The department is responsible for accessible playground structures. There is a fully accessible destination playground in Erindale. It is the only one of its kind in the city. There are plans to build three more fully accessible playgrounds around the city to cover all four sectors in the city (West sector, where the Shaw Centre is being built, W. W. Ashley Park and Ashworth Holmes Park – Mayfair area).

There are approximately 30-40 wooden playgrounds in the city. There exists a wooden replacement capital project. There are approximately 4-5 of these wooden playgrounds being replaced yearly and when they are replaced there is an accessible playground component installed and included with the playground.

The summer spray parks are fully accessible for wheelchairs. There are 8 spray features and 40 paddling ponds within the city. The spray features are fully accessible while the paddling ponds are not.

Grants

The department is involved with supporting community based organizations. The department provides grant money to implement programs which the city would otherwise have not been able to implement. Some groups who grants are provided to include:

- Epilepsy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
- Cerebral Palsy
- Sask. Abilities Council



- Osteoporosis
- First Nations Veterans

There has been approximately \$750,000 provided in grants as tax relief and cash grants and there is a high level of grant applications.

Access Subsidy Program

There exists an access subsidy program which addresses cost as a barrier. A proportionately higher number of disabled are on social assistance. If people qualify under the income threshold, they may qualify for a courtesy/free pass to the city facilities.

The department is currently working on a program whereby working poor receive a 6 month free leisure card with a bus pass.

4.10. Building Standards

Overview

The Building Standards Branch issues building and plumbing permits and administers inspection programs related to regulations contained in the Building Bylaw, the Swimming Pool Bylaw, the Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act, the National Building Code and the Plumbing and Drainage Regulations.

Permit Applications/The Code

The department accepts building permit applications, reviews that these applications are up to code (national building code), and provide building permits. They ensure the plans keep occupants safe and ensure barrier-free accessibility.

The national building code does not deal with residential occupancies. However, the code applies to apartment buildings. If it's a condo unit, the barrier-free access is exempt.

Any building that has been renovated after 1987; there is a chance that it would have been up to building code. In addition the City has made amendments with regards to the Building Code to cover some areas that are not covered in the NBC.

4.11. Human Resources

Disability Assistance Program

The Disability Assistance Program establishes a process for minimizing the impact of an illness or injury on the individual's capacity to participate constructively in the work environment. This program exists to help employees regain their optimal physical and mental health and then successfully return to work. It also fulfills the City of Saskatoon's duty to accommodate employees who have suffered illness or injury that limits them in performing their assigned work duties.

The program focuses primarily on those people who have acquired a disability **while already employed**. HR examines the current position and whether it can be modified to



accommodate the person's disability, if not, is there anything else within the department that the employee could do, if not, is there anything within other departments.

Goals/Objectives of the Program:

- To provide consistent and proactive assistance for ill or injured employees. The focus is on ability rather than on injury, illness or disability.
- To provide a safe return to regular, modified or transitional work duties for ill or injured employees, ensuring the work is meaningful and productive.
- To provide assistance as early as possible that will help reduce the feelings of isolation from the work environment and maintain self-respect by remaining productive.
- To provide a supportive work environment for employees returning to work after illness or injury.
- To coordinate the ongoing rehabilitation process and/or vocational services in a timely and effective manner.
- To encourage good communication among all the team players with an understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities
- To ensure statutory compliance, i.e. duty to accommodate or any other relevant legislation.

In 2005, there were 44 employees that were accommodated through the Disability Assistance Program. In 2006, there were 36 employees that were accommodated through the DAP.

Building Accessibility

The buildings are more accessible for the public and not as accessible for employees. When building new facilities, we need to look at how to make them more accessible for employees not only the general public. An example is the Shaw Centre where the reception area is not made to be accessible for people with a disability. Also when designing and building staff washrooms, we need to evaluate them and ensure that accessible features are applied as well.

Making buildings more accessible is a benefit not only to those who are disabled but others as well. For example, the accessible (push button) doors are used by elderly, by mothers with strollers, people who have their hands busy. A sign was to be posted outside city hall entrance that the automatic doors are to be used by disabled people only – that caused an issue as other people use them as well / or find a need to use them.

Employment/Diversity Training

There are a lot of stereotypes that need to be overcome to hire more people with disabilities. HR brings in advocacy groups to educate internal staff on working with people with disabilities. The more educated people are, the more accessible the workplace becomes. However, employees with disabilities are afraid to voice their concerns/needs because they are scared they will lose their jobs. Departments within the city need to work much closer together to overcome the obstacles of hiring someone with a disability.



The City does have partnerships with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, Partners in Employment. The Saskatchewan Abilities Council partnered with the City of Saskatoon in providing workplace accommodations and salary support for an individual with a disability to gain two months' work experience for a work assessment to be used in gaining part-time employment. Also, the City of Saskatoon in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council provided a work experience program as a playground leader on a part-time temporary basis for a young individual with a mobility disability in the summer playground program.

The City is offering educational Initiatives pertaining to people with disabilities. The City offers ASL Level training providing employees from various departments an opportunity to learn the basics of sign language. The goal of the program is designed to assist employees in communicating effectively with deaf and/or hard of hearing employees as well as to create a receptive and supportive work environment. The American Sign Language program is scheduled through the employee's lunch period.

4.12. City Planning

Overview

Long-term planning in Saskatoon is guided by the City Planning Branch, which works to balance the environmental, social and economic needs of the community. The department is involved with future growth of the city (i.e. new neighbourhoods), building relationships with other cities and communities, and establishing sector plans (i.e. outlines of where new developments should be for industrial and residential areas). When establishing these sector plans, the department works on the design of developmental areas, looks at vehicular access, and looks at pedestrian access.

Design Standards

The department follows Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. Basically when designing buildings, facilities and public areas, they do so with public safety in mind. An example may be what would happen on a trail if a disabled person was on it? The program analyzes fatal flaws in the design of a neighbourhood and tries to prevent crime through design (e.g. lighting hidden doorways, pathways, etc.)

Standards exist to design neighbourhoods around social inclusion. Neighbourhoods are designed to make sure there are mixed varieties of people living within them and it promotes social inclusion vs. segregation and provides a provision of housing for people with disabilities. If new projects are built, ideas for easy accessibility are integrated into the neighbourhood where the houses are being built.

The department is also involved in the affordable housing program which provides 10% of capital cost for housing projects to the builders who meet the standards/objectives.

It would be great to have a standard for residential houses so when a house is built, it can be easily converted to accommodate people with disabilities at minimum costs throughout the conversion process.



4.13. Facilities Branch

Overview

The Facilities Branch is responsible for the City's buildings and structures, the City-owned vehicle and equipment fleet, and the City's radio communications system. As such, the Branch provides for building operation and maintenance of leisure facilities, fire halls, transit buildings, and City office buildings. Project management services for any capital or maintenance projects are provided, including design, contract tendering and award, and construction management. Energy management, space management, and accommodation planning are also provided.

The Facilities Branch is responsible for the purchase, repair and maintenance of the City's vehicle and equipment fleet, including the mobile and hand-operated parks and turf equipment. Included as part of this are operator certification, training, and equipment safety courses.

Public Buildings – Initiatives

- In 1997, accessibility to City Hall was improved with the installation of ramps as part of the renovation to the east entrance.
- In 1997, as a result of a Human Rights inquiry, a consultant was retained to assess all City-owned buildings that are accessed by the public. The consultant prepared a priority work plan to carry out modifications to conform to current accessibility standards. A capital project was approved and work was started in 1998.
- Of the \$882,000 that has been approved for the project, as of Nov/07, approximately \$656,000 has been spent (74%). The accessibility project is being implemented with a priority based on frequency of visitation by the public. The scope of the project is to ensure that all members of the public are able to access those areas of civic facilities that are open to the public (there are portions of many buildings, which are not open to the general public).
- The overall project includes approximately 70 buildings and, to date, some work has been started in at least 50 buildings (71%). Of the 70 facilities, City Hall and the leisure facilities are the most frequently visited and, to date, have been approximately 90% adapted for accessibility. In the balance of facilities, some measures have been implemented and, where possible, accessibility measures are being scheduled in conjunction with other renovations for the facility.
- The project involves all fields of accessibility including physical, visual, and audio impairments. The renovations typically include parking, means of egress (doors, ramps), adjustment of counters, benches and drinking fountains, telephone upgrades, signage improvements, installation of stair nosings, and refitting washroom hardware and fixtures.

4.14. Infrastructure Services Department

Infrastructure Services addresses issues relating to individuals with disabilities in the areas of traffic signals, parking, sidewalk ramps, winter sidewalk maintenance, public buildings, and parks as follows:

Traffic Signals

Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) have been added to existing intersections where the visually impaired community has requested them, or where Infrastructure Services



deemed them necessary to promote added information for elderly or young pedestrians, and where the ability for the APS to work properly exists.

New technology which allows the audible portion of the pedestrian signal to be activated only when required has been installed and is in operation at two intersections. This device requires the pushbutton to be held for 3 seconds to activate the audible signal, and is used to decrease the nuisance effect where complaints arise.

Meetings have been held with CNIB and NFB: AE (National Federation for the Blind: Advocates for Equality) to discuss needs of the visually impaired community and the City has been provided a list of intersection locations where audible signals are requested to aid in the visually impaired community mobility.

Parking

Any person displaying a disabled person's placard issued by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council may park at a loading zone up to the signed time limit of the block face. In the metered areas with angle or perpendicular parking, the loading zones are made wider to accommodate vehicles with lifts. Also, loading zones are typically located at corners or next to curb crossings to facilitate movement of individuals who may have trouble negotiating curbs.

A person may have a disabled person's loading zone installed on the street in front of their home if they can demonstrate a need and that a lack of available parking exists. There is no fee for a disabled person's loading zone.

A disabled person's parking permit is made available for those individuals who have a placard issued by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. This permit allows the holder to park as long as they need in time restricted parking areas, including not having to plug the parking meters. The cost for this permit is \$20.00 plus GST per year.

Enforcement is provided for vehicles parked in disabled person parking stalls without displaying a disabled person's placard. Enforcement of this violation occurs on-street, off-street and at the malls.

Sidewalk Ramps

In the provision of sidewalks and pathways, a great deal of effort is undertaken to meet the CSA requirements for sloped sections and to avoid stairs. For example, the three pedestrian facilities (two underpasses and an overpass bridge) associated with the Circle Drive & 22nd Street interchange has all been designed to meet CSA standards for grades.

There are some locations where it has not been designed. An example is the Weir Parking Lot to the walkway on the CP Rail Bridge. Since the walkway was not wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and it is not practical to expand the walkway, no attempt to make the staircase accessible was undertaken.

All intersections within the Central Business District, the Broadway Business Improvement District and along 20th Street within the Riversdale Business Improvement District have been retrofitted with sidewalk ramps; however, not all locations are in ideal places or constructed to the current City standards.



Sidewalk ramps are a design feature incorporated in all new sidewalk construction and the reconstruction of existing sidewalks. As well, sidewalk ramp requests by the public are prioritized and constructed annually as a component of Capital Project No. 631: Traffic Safety Improvements. This program installs 40-50 sidewalk ramps annually. In addition, when corner sidewalks need repair or replacement, sidewalk repair crews install sidewalk ramps where they are missing.

Infrastructure Services currently does not have an inventory of the location and design of the entire intersection sidewalk ramps located on City streets. There are approximately 4,000 street intersections within the City of Saskatoon and each of these locations would normally require four sidewalk ramps to facilitate full access to wheelchair and other mobility-limited users. The vast majority of these locations have not been retrofitted with sidewalk ramps. In order to assess the number of locations that currently are without sidewalk ramps and to inspect the appropriateness and condition of existing ramp locations, **a review of all intersections would need to be undertaken.** This review along with the development of a maintainable inventory system and location map would cost approximately \$15,000. There is currently no funding available to undertake such an audit.

Winter Sidewalk Maintenance

The City of Saskatoon recognizes the special challenges that winter sidewalk conditions pose for wheelchair users and those who utilize other mobility devices as well as the visually impaired. The City is committed to providing equality of access for all individuals where reasonable and practical. To this end, the City will ensure as much as possible that property owners in business areas comply with By-law 2780 (stipulates that the adjacent property owner is responsible to clear snow and ice from the City sidewalk), ensure that wheelchair ramps in areas where there is known to be a high density of sidewalk users who utilize special mobility devices are maintained in reasonable winter condition.

As with all other winter operations, response times vary greatly with weather conditions. Operations staff will open up major sidewalk routes with equipment, and will then perform the necessary hand-work to maintain ramps and bus stops. The department also maintains bus stops on known low-floor bus routes.

Parks

In new park construction and park upgrades, all pathways are designed and constructed with grades less than 5% to address wheelchair requirements. In addition, all major entranceways to parks are provided with curb cuts and wheelchair ramps.



4.15. Playground Accessibility

At the present time, there is no policy to guide staff with regard to making playgrounds accessible. The City's current practice is to ask the community to identify and articulate current need on a case-by-case basis, usually at the time of a park upgrade or through the wooden playground replacement program. Once such a need has been identified, a community association can then apply to the Park Enhancement Funding Program to help fund the purchase and installation of adaptive play components. This approach has led, over time, to a scattering of accessible components, mostly adaptive swings, around the city in various parks.

In addition to this sporadic approach is Everybody's Playground, located in Ernest Lindner Park in Erindale. Everybody's Playground is Saskatoon's most fully accessible and inclusive playground. An initiative of the Erindale / Arbour Creek Community Association, it was opened in September, 2003. The playground is:

- Built with ramping from one end to the other that allows everyone, children and parents, to access the entire structure.
- Has a soft tile surfacing replaced sand, making it possible for children and adults to maneuver in wheelchairs.
- Includes components such as:
 - Talking tubes
 - Special panels including one in sign language
 - A look-out
 - Steering wheel
 - Transfer station
 - Metal slide
 - Climbers
 - Wave slide, and
 - Stepping stones

The City of Saskatoon now owns and maintains this play structure. Since the opening of Everybody's Playground in 2003, there has been growing consensus that making playgrounds accessible to persons with disabilities should not be seen as a community enhancement or a special one-time community driven project, but rather as a base standard to be applied on a more widespread basis.

Saskatoon is not alone in its efforts to address the issue of accessible playgrounds. Many municipalities in Canada are now working toward guidelines and procedures to make their playgrounds accessible

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is currently developing a national education program to promote the concept, while the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has informed municipalities of its intention to introduce new, though non-mandatory, accessible playground guidelines for 2007.

By adopting play area accessibility design standards in 2006, the City of Edmonton became the first city in Canada to provide widespread *universal access to playgrounds*. The Edmonton standards were established in accordance with the Americans with



Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, which includes playgrounds. There is currently no Canadian equivalent.

- Specifically, the Edmonton standard outlines minimum accessibility requirements for playgrounds by indicating what is to be accessible at both ground and elevated play levels.
- Edmonton is applying the standard gradually as new play areas are being built or as old ones are being replaced.

In Saskatoon, an opportunity exists to commence the gradual work of upgrading select City-owned playgrounds to meet minimum accessibility requirements through the wooden playground replacement program. Infrastructure Services Department is replacing approximately five wooden play structures per year.

Extra funds (approximately \$20,000 per playground) will be required to incorporate accessible components such as;

- Gradual ramps
- Transfer stations
- Play features, as well as
- Accessible resilient surfaces in and around play structures

Given that there are often two, or three, or sometimes even more play units in each Saskatoon Park, Community Services Department and Infrastructure Services Department together would designate one playground per neighborhood to meet the minimum accessibility requirements.

Beyond the single designated accessible playground, community associations could still request individual accessible components for any other play structures in their neighborhood by applying to the Park Enhancement Program.



4.16. A Few Notable Cities for their Efforts in Accessibility Planning

Research indicated a number of cities with interesting approaches to accessibility planning. Given that the ODA and AODA require the existence of the Accessibility Committees, a number of examples can be found in the province of Ontario. However, outside of Ontario, a number of notable examples exist as well. In some cases, in-depth interviews were also conducted with a few of the following cities to gather additional details. Below is a brief write up on each city. For more examples, please consult Appendix A.

Edmonton, AB

Overall, Edmonton has one of the most comprehensive websites for information about the city's initiatives regarding persons with disabilities. Two main committees have been established to evaluate the needs of the disabled community; one focusing on accessibility and the other focusing on recreation and education. Both committees work strongly to raise awareness of these issues and educate the public. Sub-committees of the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities (ABSPD) have been established to tackle issues such as accessibility, housing, transportation and awareness.

They have numerous programs set up such as newsletters, events and awards to raise awareness of disability issues and a *large leisure guide with over 40 programs, including both recreational and educational programs specifically for those with certain types of disabilities*.

Committees and Boards

Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities (ABSPD)

- Facilitates changes in City policy and practice
- Provides advice to Council and City departments on disability issues
- Refers Edmontonians to organizations that will address their specific needs
- Promotes accessible transit and audible traffic signals
- Provides consultation on new construction and retrofitting
- Increases public awareness, gathers and disseminates information
- Publishes several reports per year on accessibility issues

Interagency Committee on Recreation for Persons With Special Needs

- Keeping informed about recreation for persons with special needs in Edmonton (new programs, projects, and services)
- Sharing information, ideas and resources
- Developing new programs and services where needs are identified
- Networking with special needs groups providing leisure and groups interested in leisure for persons with special needs
- Providing a stronger voice on issues pertaining to recreation for special needs area
- Educational opportunities

(See Appendix B for the City of Edmonton – Accessibility Checklist)



Winnipeg, MB

The Access Advisory Committee in Winnipeg is responsible for advising the Mayor and Council on issues regarding citizens with disabilities. Winnipeg provides leisure programs for adults with many kinds of disabilities, such as mobility, hearing, vision and cognitive or psychological issues. An accessibility award is also given out annually to individuals who work with those with disabilities as well as companies who design or provide accessible facilities. This city has begun putting detectable strips in contrasting colours on curbs to aid those with low visibility.



During 1998 and 1999, the City of Winnipeg conducted an accessibility audit that can be used by other municipalities as a model. The city's Access Advisory Committee, which advises council on access to information, services and properties, oversaw the project. People with disabilities assisted in designing the research, conducting the audit and analyzing data (Ringart, 2000). Winnipeg is fostering universal design because it believes a universally designed city will be accessible, safe and aesthetically pleasing. It will be able to attract more tourists, convention dollars and improve the quality of life of its own residents, as it gives everyone the opportunity to take full advantage of the city's services and amenities.

Committees and Boards

Access Advisory Committee

The Committee advises the Mayor and Council on the present and future status of the City of Winnipeg's information, properties, and services accessible for persons with disabilities to the benefit of all citizens.

An in-depth interview was done with Dianne Johnson – Access Committee Coordinator



Kitchener/Waterloo, ON

Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo together with three smaller townships have a joint accessibility committee which looks at issues regarding accessibility to comply with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Waterloo has already taken necessary steps to provide city documents in alternate formats and Kitchener plans to undertake this as well.

The Waterloo Public Library purchased Zoom Text software to provide text enlargement on computer workstations at Main Library (adult and children's) and a branch library, and also installed large text keyboards to assist individuals with visual disabilities. These cities have a fairly strict snow-removal policy which states that residents must shovel their sidewalk within **24 hours of snowfall** so that sidewalks are kept accessible. Those who do not comply will be fined and the city will remove the snow. With regard to employment, the cities' human resources departments have been educated on difficulties that those with disabilities face in seeking employment with municipalities.

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)

- Advisory committee to cities of Kitchener and Waterloo as well as three smaller townships with respect to issues relating to the fulfillment of the purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA, 2001)
- Examines issues involving accessibility, awareness, education, employment, housing, leisure programs and transportation

Waterloo 55+ advisory Board

- Issues involving seniors in the city of Waterloo
- Looks at leisure activities and programs for seniors

An in-depth interview was conducted with the Kelly Steiss, Inclusion Coordinator from the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo.

Regina, SK

Regina has taken a different approach to Accessibility Planning. Instead of an Accessibility Advisory Committee, the model used is a task force – Mayors Task Force on Access. There are 12 community people who sit on the task force and they do not represent an organization. All people have a disability. They have 4 priority areas: employment (in general and with the city), development a comprehensive plan for accessibility, enforcement of disabled parking zones, and accessible/affordable transportation for all. There are 2 subcommittees: developing accessible communities, and parking/enforcement/transportation (PET). For the accessible communities subcommittee, they have recently hired a consultant looking at what the city is responsible for in terms of accessibility.

Committees and Boards

Mayors Task Force on Access

An in-depth interview was conducted with Robin Bird – Inclusion and Aboriginal Services Coordinator at the City of Regina.



London, ON

The Access Advisory Committee (ACCAC) in London, ON was created to help the city comply with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. London has implemented many programs to aid in housing and employment of those with disabilities as well as conducted studies on the accessibility of the city, including accessibility of hotels and attractions to accommodate visitors. Known for their FADS (Facility Accessibility Design Standards), London has been a very progressive city on addressing accessibility even prior to the ODA 2001. They have a very large committee comprised of 13 voting members and 9 resource members. The 9 resource members add to the dialogue. They are sector representatives and from agencies that cover different types of disabilities. Examples include Partners in Leisure, Senior Council, etc. This provides linkages to community agencies.

Committees and Boards

Access Advisory Committee (ACCAC)

An in-depth interview was conducted with the Robin Armistead - Manager of Culture and Municipal Policy from the City of London.

Ottawa, ON

Ottawa is one of the leading cities in providing city documents in alternative formats as well as providing an interpreter for meetings. This city has undertaken some initiatives to encourage employment of those with disabilities including launching an informational campaign to this end. Many of the city facilities have been audited and altered to improve accessibility. Their website also contains Browsealoud and ability to change Text Size for those with visual disabilities.

Committees and Boards

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The mandate of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to develop an awareness and understanding of issues and concerns of the citizens of the City of Ottawa with disabilities, with a goal to improving the quality of life for those with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has a maximum citizen membership of between 9 - 15 citizen members, including:

- Up to 14 residents at large that represent the full range of disabilities i.e. blind/visually impaired; mobility limited; deaf/hearing impaired; developmentally delayed; learning disabled; mental health disability; and environmental sensitivity.
- 1 member from the Disabled Persons' Community Resources
- A minimum of one citizen appointment representing the rural community



Hamilton, ON

To comply with the ODA, Hamilton has formed an Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Many of the city's facilities have been retrofitted to make them more accessible, notably the addition of Braille in many buildings to aid the visually impaired. They have also taken many steps to aid in the employment of disabled persons by educating human resource departments and aiding and encouraging disabled persons to find employment. The City of Hamilton is unique in offering a paid internship exclusively for disabled graduates.

Committees and Boards

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

To advise Council annually about the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its accessibility plan required pursuant to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- ❖ Barrier Free Accessibility
- ❖ Transportation Services
- ❖ Social and Employment Services
- ❖ Housing and other Accommodations
- ❖ Recreation and Leisure Activities
- ❖ Medical and Rehabilitative Services
- ❖ Community Support Services
- ❖ Education

Mississauga, ON

Mississauga focuses primarily on developing programs to ease integration of disabled persons in the community as well as offering sensitivity training and many informational sessions about disability issues. Notably, taxi drivers and transit workers are required to participate in sensitivity training. Air quality issues are also examined for better understanding of the barriers that those with breathing issues face. As well, this city hosted the Paralympic Ontario regional games in May '07.

Committees and Boards

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Kingston, ON

The city of Kingston regularly performs accessibility audits of city facilities in order to identify potential areas for improvement. Several programs are currently in the planning stages such as the implementation of an accessibility award for providing accessible buildings, accessible taxis and improved public transportation. They have a form to fill out to bring attention to problems with accessibility that have not been addressed. They also list guidelines available on how to hold an accessible meeting.

Committees and Boards

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

An in-depth interview was conducted with Barry Kaplan, B.A., M.P.A. - Accessibility Coordinator from the City of Kingston.



Peterborough, ON

Peterborough has formed a Community Accessibility Advisory Committee to comply with the ODA. Taking this one step further, they have begun to lobby for a National Disability Act. An Access Awareness Week is held to educate the public on disability issues. Peterborough performs audits of their own city facilities to ensure barrier free design and also provides accessibility audits of businesses upon request. They have also focused on having accessible leisure areas such as city parks with the goal being to have an accessible playground in each quadrant of the City. An information session for employers has been held to educate them about and encourage them to hire those with disabilities.

Committees and Boards

Peterborough Community Accessibility Advisory Committee

- To advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities.
 - To promote public awareness and understanding of the needs of disabled persons.
 - To encourage improved services and as a result allowing disabled persons to live a full and productive life.
 - To facilitate access to services in all sectors of the community.
 - To liaise with all levels of government and agencies on policies and legislation affecting disabled persons.
 - To assess recommendations and form policies to assist municipal governments to address the issues.
-

Guelph, ON

The City of Guelph focuses primarily on physical accessibility. They have done and plan to do extensive retrofitting operations of many city facilities and leisure centres to ensure that the doors, washrooms and other amenities are accessible to everyone. Many transit-related issues have also been examined such as the physical accessibility of the buses and bus stops and transit staff are trained to announce the stops verbally so that those with vision disabilities are able to use the transit system effectively. Two TTY pay telephone are available for those with hearing disabilities and there are plans to add two more and raise awareness of the availability of this service. They have also begun researching an effective way to allow residents to bring attention to specific accessibility issues.

Committees and Boards

City of Guelph Accessibility Advisory Committee

An in-depth interview was conducted with the Leanne Warren Administrator of Disability Services / Plan Coordinator from the City of Guelph.



Kelowna, BC

Kelowna's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities is a relatively new committee formed by the city to address accessibility needs. The Central Okanagan Access Awareness Team is a non-profit group that is unrelated to the city which advocates similar objectives. Kelowna has released a document outlining standards for the accessibility of outdoor areas, a detailed document with specific descriptions of accessibility standards for many areas including curb gradients, accessible parking space size and placement, playground accessibility among other areas.

Committees and Boards **Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities**

An in-depth interview was conducted with the Sherri Newcomen from the City of Kelowna.

St. Catharines, ON

The initiatives undertaken by St. Catharines are focused primarily on physical accessibility. Issues regarding safety and accessibility of emergency routes are specifically looked at. Special consideration is given to the promotion of accessible tourism in the city including accessibility of hotels, airport and transportation routes. Employment initiatives to promote awareness have also been undertaken.

Committees and Boards **Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility**

- "Since its inception, MACOA has been instrumental in advocating for the removal of barriers and improving accessibility"

St. Catharines Transit Commission

- Focus specifically on Transit Issues

- For more examples of other City initiatives, please see Appendix A. -



5.0 In-depth Interviews

A number of in-depth interviews were conducted to gain further information on the city's accessibility planning efforts. Below is a summary of the interviews.

5.1 The City of Guelph

Leanne Warren
Administrator of Disability Services / Plan Coordinator
519-837-5618 x 230

Guelph Wellington Barrier Free Committees

Working groups committed to improving accessibility and the quality of life for citizens with disabilities, now exist within Guelph-Wellington. To date there are FOUR committees:

- Advisory
- Education
- Transportation, and
- Recreation & Leisure

It is made up of citizens who have a disability or who are knowledgeable about disabilities. Members with disabilities represent a diverse range of disabilities including mobility, low vision/blindness, hearing/deafness, mental illness, communication and cognitive disabilities. Committee members also include staff from agencies. City staff from Transit and Community Services as a member of City Council sits on the various committees.

Education Committee:

- The Education Committee conducts programs and projects aimed at school-aged children, businesses and the community in general to help educate about various disabilities.
- Provide general information on how to make businesses accessible.
- Provide speakers panel of persons living with a disability for training workshops and seminars.
- Each year, the Education Committee recognizes individuals, groups and businesses in the community who have broken down barriers by awarding the Access Recognition Awards.

The Education Committee was originally known as the National Access Awareness Week Committee (NAAW). NAAW was established in the early 90's after the Rick Hanson "Man-In-Motion" Tour, to organize educational events during NAAW which was originally held the first week in June each year. When NAAW no longer received Federal funding, the committee saw the value in continuing to hold community educational events throughout the year and as a result became the Barrier Free Education Committee in 1998.



Transportation Committee:

This Committee was developed to work with the City of Guelph Transit Services to develop policy around:

- Customer service
- Using the low floor buses
- Eligibility reviews for the City's mobility service (Parallel Transit)
- Staff Training

The Committee also looks at ways to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities within the community. The manager of Transit Services and Para-Transit, sit on this committee.

Advisory Committee:

This Committee monitors community access such as Physical accessibility of public buildings and facilities, curb cuts, and parks. The Advisory Committee acts as a resource to the community and city staff regarding accessibility and disability issues. The Advisory Committee deals with inquiries and concerns regarding community access.

Recreation Committee:

Established to act as a resource and to advocate for community recreation opportunities and to ensure they are supportive, integrated and both financially and physically accessible.

Guelph Accessibility Advisory Committee (GAAC)

Each year Guelph City Council appoints community members to sit on the Guelph Accessibility Advisory Committee (GAAC). The role of the GAAC is to provide vision and direction to staff and Council regarding the removal of barriers that exist within Municipal services, practices and programs. GAAC looks at site plans and provides feedback and advice on standards and regulations

The GAAC consists of a maximum of 15 members:

- A majority of these members (not less than 8) are persons with disabilities. These Committee members should be representative of gender, ethnicity and different types of visible and invisible disabilities noted in the "ODA 2001", such as: persons with a physical (visual, speech, hearing, deaf, brain injury, use of wheelchair or assistive device); cognitive (intellectual impairments); perceptual (learning disability) and mental health issues
- A maximum of six (6) members who may not have a disability:
 - 1 member of Municipal Council
 - 1 member (parent) representing children with disabilities, and
 - 4 members at large, interested in issues related to persons with disabilities
- The City of Guelph's Administrator of Disability Services acts as a resource to the GAAC but will not be a voting member.



- The Barrier Free Committees and the GAAC co-exist and work together, with the GAAC addressing issues with municipality, while the Barrier-Free Committees work together with businesses and the public in educating them about accessibility.
- There also exists a Corporate Steering Committee, which is made up the staff from within the various City Departments. They work together with the Barrier-Free Committees and the GAAC to develop the yearly Accessibility Plans.

Variety of Barriers

The projects of the Barrier-Free Committees are aimed at reducing these barriers and thus enabling all citizens to become fully active members of their community. There are physical barriers such as steps leading into a building, or the lack of ramps and appropriate doors. Attitudinal barriers such as: inaccurate beliefs or perceptions of a person's ability, which results in unfair or unequal treatment. Communication barriers such as: a lack of information in a usable format for a person who may be blind or deaf.

Accessibility Plan Development

It starts with a public meeting, where the general public, as well as various community organizations are able to attend and express their opinions for the purpose of gathering information regarding accessibility issues. Steering Committee members also sit in on that meeting. All the comments are gathered on various flip-charts. The information is then divided and compiled by the various departments within the City. The Departments review all comments and issues, and come up with a plan on how to address them. The Plan from the departments is then sent to the Plan Coordinator, who puts it all together for the GAAC to review. GAAC reviews the plans and puts it together into a report "Accessibility Plan" for that year and sends it to Council for review and approval.

Initiatives

The City of Guelph has accomplished a number of tasks. Below is a listing of these initiatives:

- In 2005 the GAAC put together a Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM), which was based on a similar document produced by the City of London.
- All buses will be low floor buses by 2008
- Para-Transit is currently under review. People must book the bus by noon on the previous day, and must apply and be qualified in order to use Para-Transit. With regards to complaints, people can take three avenues to go about to voice their concerns and file any complaints. They can call the transit, call mobility services or call the coordinators.
- All sidewalks in the downtown core are cleared by the city in the wintertime.
- Audible signals – testing a new style of signal, where the button vibrates in addition to making a sound. Currently when the light changes, all of the noises come from above the traffic signal, looking at improving to make the sound come straight from the "push-button" unit located much lower in-turn making the noise clearer and easier to hear.
- On every bus, the drivers announce the stops
- There has been a lack of accessible taxis in the City and the taxis that were accessible had a problem it usually took extra time for a person with disability to get out of the house, get into the cab, and the whole time the metering would be running. What the City did was created a "script coupon program" where a trip



- on a taxi worth \$40.00 was made available to be purchased for \$20.00 from the Transit office. The City Transit made a contract with the taxi companies where the costs were split and covered by Transit and the cab companies.
- Most of the advertising and communication occurs through organizations that support and work with people with disabilities.

Successful Accessibility Committee

From the experience of the GAAC, it is vital to have people with disabilities make up majority of the committee, especially representing the various disability groups. It has also been very beneficial to have a member of Council as well as people who might not necessarily have a disability but are knowledgeable in some specific field be a part of the committee. They provide additional support and feedback from different perspectives. Also the Councilor is able to communicate to the Council effectively as a member of the Committee.

5.2. The City of Brampton

Interview: Wendy Goss
Accessibility Coordinator
City of Brampton
City Clerks Office
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Brampton, Ontario
L6Y 4R2
(905) 874-2184
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Email: wendy.goss@brampton.ca

According to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), all municipalities with population over 10,000 are to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), reporting to the council. The City of Brampton AAC formed in 2003 and has been electing its members on a yearly basis. In October of last year a new AAC was formed. The committee is made up of 13 members (from the public) and 1 member (from the council). An advantage of this committee is that all of the members are either persons with disabilities or are caregivers to someone who has a disability, so the community of people with disabilities is very strongly represented.

The City of Brampton also has an ODA Staff committee comprised of the department heads of all 7 City departments. They bring a specific view from each department in discussing and working on the Accessibility Plan together with the AAC. The AAC is currently in the process of putting together the 2008 Accessibility Plan. The ODA Staff Committee works very closely together with the Accessibility Advisory Committee in providing recommendations on what things they would want to see addressed in the next years Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan is written on a yearly basis. In the early stages of the Accessibility Committee approximately 30-35 initiatives were placed on the agenda as items to work on for the next year. However, as the years went by that process was tweaked, because



achieving 30-35 initiatives in one year was difficult and not feasible. At the present time approximately 10 critical focus initiatives are identified and included in the Accessibility Plan, together with approximately 4-5 initiatives carrying over from previous year's plan.

- When narrowing down the initiatives, they try to look at a variety of things/concerns or issues that come up through discussions with the Staff Committee.
- In 2008, the new Accessible Customer Service Standard will come into effect and will be a part of the legislation. This standard states that businesses and organizations that provide goods or services to people in Ontario will be required to make their customer service operations accessible to people with disabilities. As a result of this legislation, this item is included in the Accessibility Plan as one of the initiatives. We will be working to develop a corporate-wide Customer Service policy, as well as developing a training program for any staff who have direct contact with people and are involved with customer service.
- In 2005, there were accessibility technical standards that impacted our Accessibility Plan and adhering to the Ontario Building Code was an initiative included in the Plan.

The City is constantly reaching out to the community to try and make them more aware of the accessibility initiatives the City has been taking part in. They examine sidewalks, curb-cuts, parking spaces, accessible doors, traffic signals, and transportation.

With regards to Leisure services, they have various types of programs that have been increasing over the years, which are directed towards people with disabilities; however, they look at integrating more people into the existing programs and making the programs offered to the general public available and accessible for people with disabilities. The facilities are also made to be more accessible for people with disabilities.

Although the City of Brampton has considered the possibility of having Accessibility Awards, at the present time they have not implemented any awards.

From the municipal facility perspective and with the goal of having Ontario fully accessible by 2025, the City of Brampton is about half way there in order to be fully accessible. There is still much work needed to be done, the downtown is not as accessible as it is intended to be.

The thing that will make or break this Accessibility Committee and what has made them successful in implementing our initiatives has been the openness from the staff and the "make up" of the Committee itself. There needs to be open communication and reasonable thinking among the AAC, the Staff Committee, and the various City Staff in order to make things work. Every little step that you take, every small initiative that you implement will build into something bigger and better.

The role of the Accessibility Coordinator

The position has been formed in 2004 and originally was intended to be a liaison between the City staff, the Council and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. As the years passed, the role of the Accessibility Coordinator has evolved. The coordinator is now more involved with various other committees within the City to ensure the initiatives



identified in the Accessibility Plan are carried out and taken care of. With the introduction of the technical standards, the Accessibility Coordinator sits in on many meetings with various committees to ensure that all standards are implemented.

5.3. The City of Kitchener

Interview: Kelly Steiss
City of Kitchener
Inclusion Coordinator
519-741-2286

The Committee

The Committee was a results of the ODA legislation. Prior to the legislation though, the city had an advocacy committee. The committee was established in 2003 and has 11 to 15 members. It is a joint committee with Kitchener/Waterloo. In total, 50% of the committee is comprised with people with disabilities. In addition, a councilor sits on the committee but does not have voting rights. The councilor serves as a liaison between the committee and the Council.

Inclusion Coordinator

The job of the Inclusion Coordinator is to ensure that the city complies with the legislation. The Coordinator is also a liaison between the staff, the committee, the public and the Council.

Initiatives

They hired an Accessibility Specialist to conduct an audit of all city facilities. They also have two excellent programs one in which a person with a disability is allowed to bring an attendant to a leisure center for no charge. They also have a kids camp for children with disabilities that provides 1-1 support and attendants are either volunteers or staff.

The Waterloo Public Library purchased Zoom Text software to provide text enlargement on computer workstations at Main Library (adult and children's) and a branch library, and also installed large text keyboards to assist individuals with visual disabilities. These cities have a fairly strict snow-removal policy which states that residents must shovel their sidewalk within 24 hours of snowfall so that sidewalks are kept accessible. Those who do not comply will be fined and the city will remove the snow. With regard to employment, the cities' human resources departments have been educated on difficulties that those with disabilities face in seeking employment with municipalities.

Work To Do

The website is not done very well. They are creating a checklist based on W3C standards to ensure that the new site they are building will be accessible.



5.4. The City of London

Interview: Robin Armistead
City of London
Manager of Culture and Municipal Policy
519.661.4500

The Committee

The Accessibility Committee was born out of the ODA legislation. The majority of people on the committee have disabilities. The committee is set up as an advisory committee to council so they can't lobby the province. They do however make recommendations to standing committee and then to council.

There are no council members on the committee as it was viewed as a conflict of interest and fears that the councilor(s) would take over. There are 13 voting members and 9 resource members. The 9 resource members add to the dialogue. They are sector representatives. They are from agencies that cover different types of disabilities. Examples include Partners in Leisure, Senior Council, etc. This provides linkages to community agencies.

The advisory committee knows their limits. They know you can't criticize the province too much. They may do this in outside organizations they belong too. The goal is to help the city be more accessible. It comes down to the quality of people on the group. If they go to council too often, they will lose credibility. They just want to feel they are being heard.

Sub-Committees

There are 5 subcommittees including non-visible disabilities (e.g. mental health), education and awareness, built environment, transit subcommittee (viewed as more than just the buses), and a policy subcommittee. The subcommittees meet monthly and feed reports to the advisory committee.

Accessibility Plan

The legislation dictates an annual plan. It is a report on what the advisory committee is doing. The AODA legislation is really pushing the municipalities. Fear is if it pushes too much, the cities won't do anything. An example of this could be the following: Access Transit is required if you have regular transit but if don't have regular transit than it won't be required so people may not do it. In the United States people have reduced their efforts to the lowest common denominator under the ADA.

An example of the changes with the AODA, in the ODA 2001, the advisory committee can review the site plans for the city facilities. In the AODA 2005, this expands to the private sector whereby the committee can look at site plans of private buildings.

The annual plan is approved at the end of the year, before the budget which makes it difficult as money does not come until March and at that point they start planning again. The plan itself should be every 2 to perhaps 5 years.

Initiatives



Transportation includes taxi licensing, walking paths, bicycle paths, buses, and roads. In terms of transit, areas covered include subsidized bus passes and who is covered and who is not covered. Complaints go to the London Transit Commission.

Major improvements include FADS (Facility Accessible Design Standards). They had standards for the built environment prior to the legislation. Winnipeg is using London's FADS. They will for no charge provide cities with the FADS. They do need a formal letter and it will go through an approval process. They hired a consultant to create the standards. They go above the building codes. Every time they do a retrofit, they follow the FADS.

Advice

Change gradually by changing one building at a time. Understand what the priorities are of those who are disabled? What else other than transit is required?

Coordination

The respondent works with all departments. There is a staff resource group which contains a representative from each department. May ask staff do things within the department. They invite staff to committee meetings which is typically middle management or key people. These people help prepare the plan which is then approved by council.

5.5. The City of Regina

Interview: Robin Byrd

City of Regina

Inclusion and Aboriginal Services Coordinator

306.777.6688

History

Accessibility planning started with their Advisory Committee on Access in 1996. It had 13 sub committees dealing with employment, training, transit, facilities, etc. It was running fine but they found it difficult to deal with so many committees so they reduced it to transit, facilities, employment and recreation, and community. Community groups were a part on this committee.

Task Force

Today, accessibility planning is led by The Mayors Task Force on Access. It is an actual task force. It was part of the mayor's election platform so it has legs to it due to the mayor's involvement. There are 12 community people who sit on the task force and they do not represent an organization. All people have a disability. The Task Force works with the Transit Advisory Board. Any complaints go to this board. There are 2 members on the Transit Advisory Board that have a disability.

The task force has 4 priority areas: employment (in general and with the city), development a comprehensive plan for accessibility, enforcement of disable parking zones, employment, and accessible/affordable transportation for all.

Sub-Committees

There are 2 subcommittees: one, dealing with developing accessible communities and another with parking/enforcement/transportation (PET). For the accessible communities



subcommittee, they have recently hired a consultant looking at what the city is responsible for in terms of accessibility.

Both subcommittees report to the Mayor's Task Force. The task force may invite stakeholders (i.e. community groups) to their meetings. An example of this is the taxi cab companies. The city wants 24 hour accessible cab service, so they are invited to the task force meeting to begin dialogue.

Areas Being Worked On

Their website needs work and there are plans to develop a more accessible website. A facility audit on the buildings is currently underway. They have a 5 year plan to retrofit the buildings including accessible doors, push buttons for doors, strobe fire alarm, and audible signals (met with CNIB).

The Accessible Transit is privately owned/sub-contracted. The city has low floor buses on all routes. By 2035 they will have all buses with low floors. In terms of taxi service, Ottawa has vouchers for taxis and Regina wants to move this way as well.

Overall, the accessible committee looks much larger than just disabilities but also to mom and strollers, and immigrants (i.e. plain language).

Accomplishments

The City of Regina has 3 fully accessible playgrounds in each end of the city. The South Leisure Center by a spray pad, and the facility is also wheelchair accessible. This is an example of an integrated approach the City is undertaking.

5.6. The City of Calgary

Interview: Leanne Squair
City of Calgary
Disabilities Coordinator
403-268-1352

The Committee

In mid 1990's Calgary Transit did a review of its system and made recommendations to introduce an Accessibility Committee that would be responsible for the various items addressing people with disabilities and accessibility around the city.

In May 1999, City Council approved the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) as part of the "Transportation Services for People with Disabilities Review."

- The committee's Terms of Reference are to review and make recommendations to City Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services on; policy issues, the accessibility of municipal properties, information and services for people with disabilities, and to be a resource to City Council and City Administration in addressing accessibility issues.
- Individuals and organizations are encouraged to bring access issues forward to City Council through the Advisory Committee on Accessibility.



-
- The committee's mandate is to provide access recommendations and to advise Council of the rights and service needs of Calgarians with disabilities.

The Accessibility Committee has been in existence for 6 years and there are currently 14 people sitting on this committee, as well as an average of 10 people which sit on the two sub-committees. The make up of committee members is from various fields and backgrounds. There are people who have worked with the city before; there are also people on this committee who are associated with different agencies and advocacy groups, as well as some of the members are people with disabilities or those who are caregivers.

Have researched the various initiatives taken in Ontario with regards to accessibility committees and instead of following the path of developing an actual Accessibility Plan, they have gone a different route, where they put forward a **Corporate Accessibility Policy**, which assists various city departments in implementing the initiatives put forth by the Accessibility Committee.

- o This Policy provides direction on how The City of Calgary can reduce barriers to City provided services for people with disabilities in the following areas: physical access to City services, access to transportation services and communication access.
- o By reducing barriers that exclude individuals with disabilities from participating in the community, all citizens will be able to move freely and engage in economic, social and cultural life.
- o It is the purpose of this Policy to ensure the greatest level of access, which is the right or opportunity to reach, use or participate for people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.
- o To reduce barriers to City provided services to ensure people with disabilities have the option of participating fully as citizens of the City. Access to these services will provide users the opportunity to access and partake of the following services, City services, transportation, and communications. To ensure people with disabilities are treated with respect and to provide City services to these individuals without a loss of dignity.

To accomplish this:

1. Over the next few years the City will work towards the reduction and elimination of barriers to the physical access of City-owned and operated buildings, walkways, pathways and parks; transportation access to all its services; and communication access in the form of interpretive services (e.g. sign language interpretation, closed captioning, plain language, TTY) and alternative formats such as Braille print websites, cassette tapes and CD ROM.
2. Business Units will establish performance measures to evaluate progress on elimination of barriers to physical access, transportation access and communication access for people with disabilities, with the assistance of the Issue Strategist-Access & Disability Issues.
3. It would be a requirement that General Managers and Directors incorporate measurable objectives related to the achievement of the Policy into their individual performance development plans.



4. Human Resources are made available upon request to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility to work in cooperation with Business Units, Departmental & Project initiatives.
5. To the fullest extent possible, that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to participate in the economic, cultural and social life of the City as people without disabilities through strategies such as Disability Awareness Training customized and offered to meet each department's needs. Training will be coordinated by the Issue Strategist – Access and Disability Issues and Community Resources Services – Diversity section.
 - **City Council** is to continue with its support of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) and the Access Design Sub-committee and Accessible Transportation Subcommittee. The primary purpose of the committee is to focus on broad policy issues and advice City Council on access issues related to municipal properties, information and services.
 - To formally review the policy, implementation and achievements, once every 5 years to determine the effectiveness of the policy and the progress that has been made.

Sub-Committees

Currently there are also two sub-committees that report and provide recommendations to the accessibility committee in addressing transportation, communication, leisure, infrastructure, snow removal and other items relating to the city. These sub-committees are the working bees. The two sub-committees are:

- Access Design sub-committee, and
- Accessible Transportation sub-committee

Coordinator Position

The position of **Disabilities Coordinator** is responsible for;

- Writing reports and presenting them to city council regarding issues relating to accessibility in Calgary.
- Communicating with various city departments
- Sit in on many projects regarding – accessible housing, pathways and parks, rapid transit stations (brand new stations ensuring complete access to all components)

Other Committees

The City also has a senior's committee, which at times works with the Accessibility Committee on addressing items that are correlated between the two groups (seniors and people with disabilities).

Some of the initiatives within the city:

- There are over 100 accessible taxis within the city
- Every new bus is a low floor bus. There are accessible cars in the light rapid transit system. Provide a low income transit pass (worked on developing it with city transit). Have a para-transit system called Access Calgary which are the low floor buses designed specifically to transport people in wheelchairs or those who are unable to use the conventional modes of transportation.



- Contrasting colors at rapid transit stations and bus stops between poles and concrete
- Currently have a 311 phone system in Calgary and all complaints, issues or service requests go through this system and are directed towards the appropriate departments.
- There is currently a curb-cut program in place, where every sidewalk that is being re-done or improved or any intersections that are renovated, the curb cuts are replaced. There is also a program where people can request a curb cut in their particular locations.
- There exists a barrier-free design committee working on putting together a building code which the City should adhere to; however, we go way beyond of what is outlined.

With regards to how we handle growth within the city, the biggest issue has been sensitivity and awareness training. With the high staff turnover rates, people are not as educated about some of the issues associated with accessibility and have to be trained. They also need to have continual communication between the departments, committees and people involved on what needs to be done and how it is or will be implemented.

What makes a successful committee?

- Committed volunteers
- Support from council, and
- The make-up of the committee itself, ensuring that you have dedicated people on the committee that are knowledgeable and in some form represent people with disabilities, be it they are disabled themselves, or are caregivers to people with disabilities, work with people with disabilities or any other experience in this field.

Awards

City of Calgary has an award system for various subjects, and one of the awards is for a facility that has gone above and beyond the barrier-free code. Currently have developed their own awards. One of the awards is a Community Access Award – which looks at various groups within the city that have done special initiatives regarding accessibility. The second award is an Individual Advocate Award – presented to a person that has a disability and has some significant work within the community.

Once a year they hold a Strategic Planning Session where they:

- plan on particular areas regarding accessibility
- look at corporate initiatives
- examine the things heard from the general public
- listen to community and disability advocates on what they feel needs to be improved and worked on

People receive communication through the city website. The leisure services mail out program guides to people as well as transit department has various brochures about the services they provide.

The Accessibility Coordinator

Having an Accessibility Coordinator is a key role in making it work, as this person works with city departments, various sub-committees, the Accessibility Committee and City Hall, to convey and relay ideas and information regarding accessibility within the City of Calgary.



5.7. The City of Winnipeg

City of Winnipeg
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Overview

- The Access Advisory Committee is part of the City of Winnipeg.
- The goal of the committee is to provide opportunities to further investigate information on accessibility issues for people with disabilities and advise the mayor as well as the council on the various accessibility issues.
- Universal access to information, services and public properties is a priority of the City of Winnipeg and the AAC assists the city in striving towards the goal of accommodating all of its citizens.
- The AAC includes a committee coordinator. All of the members of the committee are there on voluntary basis and provide feedback to the City on what needs to be done from the city's point of view to address and overcome accessibility obstacles and issues.

The Access Advisory Committee consists of 13 members:

- One member from City Council
- One provincial representative
- Eight members with disabilities
- Two members who may or may not have a disability, but are interested in access issues
- The Mayor
- The committee also reserves one alternate representative from both the City Council and the Province of Manitoba

Members with disabilities represent a diverse range of disabilities including: mobility, agility, visual difficulties, blindness, reduced hearing, deafness and cognitive disabilities.

Winnipeg was the first city in Canada to adopt a Universal Design Policy.

Access Advisory Committee Mandate:



- Advise the Mayor and Council on present and future status of the City's information, properties and services accessible for persons with disabilities to the benefit of all citizens.
- Review and monitor all accessibility as they pertain to the City's properties
- Advise and make recommendations to City Council regarding unresolved accessibility issues related to City properties
- Communicate with the citizens of the city about their concerns as they relate to public access of City properties
- Inform all citizens of initiatives of the City as well as accomplishments and achievements with respect to access and universal design.
- Educate all City departments about access issues as they relate to employment and public access
- Identify projects which encourage enthusiasm and involvement of the community, government and business in making Winnipeg universally accessible

Universal Design

- In December of 2001 based on the Access Advisory Committee's recommendation, council approved a Universal Design Policy. Drafted in community partnership, this type of policy with a philosophy of universal accessibility is unique to Canada.
- Universal Design is a philosophy that refers to considering accessibility for a range of different people while in the planning process. Language, culture, age, size and ability are factors this philosophy incorporates to include as many people as possible in the design process.

City of Winnipeg Approach and Accessibility Awards

It is important to have civic information, services and properties that include everyone. Regardless of ability, each and every citizen of Winnipeg deserves the same rights and the same services.

- With the PROACTIVE approach of Civic Administration, it's been proven that an accessible city does not necessarily cost more. By thinking ahead and considering people's needs rather than reacting after the fact, the City is being proactive.
 - Because of the strong connection with Administration, the Committee's advice regarding barrier-free access is sought prior to construction or development.
- The AAC has partnered with community organizations to acknowledge community achievements in creating environments with accessible design. In 2002, the first Winnipeg Accessibility Award was presented. This award recognizes innovation in pro-access renovation, construction and design. It is intended to raise awareness about the importance of accessibility in the City and its role in making life more equitable, safe and comfortable for everyone including people with disabilities.



- City of Winnipeg places a high priority on making information, buildings and services universally accessible through design.

Initiatives

Accessibility Design Standards Manual:

- In 2006, the AAC helped to establish the Accessibility Design Standards Manual, which will take the Universal Design Policy to a new level. These standards will be used to guide the development of all City projects and facilities. They are also available as a tool for private sector to incorporate Universal Design and build facilities that all can access. This document includes standards that are over and above the basic building code, demonstrating the City's commitment to making Universal Design real.
- During the strategic planning session, the AAC determined that streets and sidewalks, visitable housing and accessible play – will be the major focus items for the coming years.

Accessibility in City Parks and Walkways:

- Two University of Manitoba Occupational Therapy students did their practicum with the City in 2006. Their first goal was to determine the accessibility of City trails.
- Parkways run within City parks and on streets. The next goal will be to assess signage and mapping and introduce improvements as required.

Detectable Warnings on Curb Ramps:

- Public Works, the Universal Design Coordinator and the AAC worked together to test detectable warning surfaces on curb ramps in 2006.
- Brownish-red and yellow detectors were installed respectively in two different ways at two Winnipeg intersections.
- Feedback from the public has identified yellow as the preferable color. People with vision challenges and those who are colorblind had a difficult time with the brownish-red.
- High use areas like downtown and/or capital projects may be places for detectable curb warnings to be further assessed, as testing is ongoing.
- Further locations are currently being discussed, as is the best option for purchasing the required materials.
- Detectable warning surfaces were included in the Accessibility Design Standards Manual.

Improved Speaker Housing:



- AAC joined Public Works and the Universal Design Coordinator for the University of Manitoba study on audible traffic signals. Volunteers who tested them revealed there was room for improvement.
- The speaker height, effectiveness and overall look were concerns.
- Professor Doug Strong, a now retired U of M professor and former member of the AAC, designed a new speaker model.
- Effective 2006, where audible traffic signals will be used, the new style will be implemented.

Accessing Sidewalks during winter:

- One solution to better winter sidewalk conditions was leaving the snow plowed from the road in a parking lane for up to 24 hours and then hauling it away.
- This concept was tried on a trial basis in downtown Winnipeg during the winter of 06/07. As the season progressed, it was implemented in other high pedestrian traffic areas.
 - Windrows of snow on the sidewalk had significantly been reduced, which helped with both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Challenges emerged from the winter 2006 test phase.
 - The City quickly learned that signage to advise people used to using the lane for parking can help ease traffic flow and frustration.
- The sidewalks were in much better condition as a result of this initiative. Numerous indications were received from the general public as well as the Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, who expressed appreciation that the condition of the walks was much better.

Other Initiatives

- The Deaf Community can access civic services by arranging for American Sign Language Interpreters, thanks to a Sign Language Interpreter Policy adopted in February, 2001
- For the first time in Winnipeg's history, the City Council Chamber is accessible by elevator
- The proposed changes to the Handi-Transit Eligibility Criteria and Registration Process were examined. Recommendations were delivered to Winnipeg Transit and worked together with community groups to develop an overall response to the proposed changes.
- Overhaul of way finding signage in the Council Building was encouraged and supported. New features like large and tactile lettering, Braille, contrasting colors and international disability signage were incorporated making it easier for everyone to get around.



Accessibility Award Procedures

In 2006, the Accessibility Awards grew to a major event celebrating universal design in Winnipeg with an attendance of over 100 people.

- How Accessibility Awards are determined:
 - After the call for nominations goes out, the Committee Coordinator receives applications and fields questions about the Accessibility Awards.
 - Once all the nominations have been received, a Steering Committee reviews them. Professionals within the community were asking to be part of the Steering Committee, which includes: architects, community people with an interest in accessibility, the Universal Design Coordinator and AAC members.
 - Along with reading applications, visits are made to each nominated facility.
 - A tour of the facility's accessibility features includes taking photos and persons with disabilities testing universal design concepts for ease of use.
 - In 2006, Winnipeg Transit supplied a bus and driver for the tour.
 - Once the tour is complete and the facilities have been visited, winners are determined.
 - The award plaques are ordered and created.
 - The venue is secured and the caterer is arranged.
 - The result was a memorable event that has received political recognition and inquiries from other cities.
 - In 5 short years, an Accessibility Award has gone from creating awareness to becoming a source of validation for facilities and designers, who proudly display their awards.

Goals

The Access Advisory Committee held a strategic planning session in 2006. For the next five years, three key areas were identified as priorities:

- Streets and sidewalks
- Accessible Play, and
- Accessible Housing

Sub-committees were started to address community facilities and accessible housing. For 2007 the AAC plans to:

- Liaise with Public Works, Planning, Property and Development and other cities to determine solutions for accessible sidewalks, encroachments and street-scaping
- Work with the province to further accessible housing
- Focus on public education, and
- Present recommendations to the City on priorities and how to improve accessibility.

Successful Access Advisory Committee

- You want to have an effective way to address citizen's concerns
- Be proactive in the community



- It is crucial to have people with various disabilities as members of the committee.
- An accessible city is made by creating great guidelines and policies as well as setting Universal Design Standards which set forth the initiatives.

Role of Universal Design Coordinator

- The position was created in 2002 to work with Civic Administration after the Universal Design Policy was introduced
- Acting as Winnipeg's voice for universal accessibility concerns, the coordinator position is responsible for:
 - Training and education of civic leaders and departments on all aspects of Universal Design
 - Contributing her Universal Design expertise to projects throughout the city that deal with the built environment, programs and services
 - Reviewing sites throughout the city for accessibility
 - Providing administrative support through participation in Access Advisory Committee meetings with reports and information

“To-Do List”

With community feedback some items on the to-do list have been:

- Discussing possible improvements to accessibility for City owned properties
- Exploring possible partnerships to promote accessible housing
- Developing and launching a “visitable housing” education strategy for developers, contractors and the general public
- Working with civic administration about how snow removal, the design and location of corner curb cuts can improve sidewalk and street access
- Creating Universal Design education packages for the general public and disability organizations
- Examining the possibility of producing Quick Tip brochures to provide tips for accessibility projects and upgrades
- Continuing to participate on the Universal Design Steering Committee to ensure the Universal Design Policy remains a living policy
- Coordinate the Assessment and testing of newly designed audible traffic signal speakers
- Ensuring civic administration hears the community's priorities about accessibility improvements.



Improved (ATS) Speaker Housing

Since the 1970's, Winnipeg has been using Audible Transit Signals to help people with visual impairments safely cross the street. Today, the city has over 200 ATS.

- The ten feet speaker height of ATS posed a problem, making it difficult for pedestrians to hear. The noise from the nearby neighborhood and vandalism of ATS were other concerns.

In 2005, the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Engineering launched a research project with support of funds from the Access Advisory Committee and Corporate Services, Equity and Diversity Branch to examine and evaluate ATS performance.

- The team tested ATS at varying speaker heights in different seasons while assessing activation and street width and complexity.
- A secondary objective was to design an ATS speaker that met community and usability needs while being weather and vandal proof.
- During the winter and spring/summer, volunteers with vision of 0 to 10 percent tested four intersections in Winnipeg. Research finished in fall of 2005 and the team presented their findings in late 2005.
 - They discovered that locating the speaker at four feet helped pedestrians find where to cross.
 - They recommended changing the timing of the crossing tones (chirping) versus locating tones (ticking) to match walk/don't walks signs.
 - They also suggested consistent installation and maintenance of intersections to ensure better accessibility.

New ATS Design

- Doug Strong, a retired professor of engineering at U of M and a former member of AAC, designed a new speaker box based on the exponential loudspeaker horn. It met all three goals:
 - The control of sound to diminish neighborhood disturbance
 - Was durable enough to withstand the Winnipeg weather
 - Ability to withstand vandalism.
- Initially the new speaker model was placed in areas involved in capital projects where traffic poles were upgraded or relocated to suit people with disabilities. Effective summer 2006, where audible traffic signals were used, the new style has been implemented.





Definition of a Visitable House:

- A home with a level entry into the home
 - Wider doors and hallways throughout, and
 - Accessible washroom on the main floor
- These simple changes can make it easier for people in wheelchairs to move, but they also benefit toddlers, seniors and those with temporary injuries like broken legs.
- Wider doorways also make bringing in an armful of groceries or a stroller easier and can ease the stress of moving day.

AAC Consults on a variety of projects

- One of the great benefits of the collective knowledge a committee like the AAC possesses is the opportunity to consult on a variety of projects, including:
 - Accessibility Guide
 - City of Winnipeg Zoning By-Law Review
 - Cloutier Trail
 - Waverley West
 - Millennium Library
 - MLPD Transportation Committee
 - MTS Centre
 - City Wide Accessibility Program
 - Universal Design Steering Committee

5.8. The City of Toronto

Interview: Bernita Lee

City of Toronto

Coordinator of the Disability Issues - Community Advisory Committee

416-397-5251

In 1999 a Task Force with the City of Toronto did an extensive evaluation of the various sectors within the city and in December of that year, City Council approved the final report and action plan of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity. There were a total of 97 recommendations that were outlined in the action plan by the Task Force and one of the 97 recommendations included the establishment of a city-wide advisory committee on Disability issues.

- The terms of reference are:

- Committee is to use their knowledge and expertise to provide advice to City Council, through the standing committees of Council, and act as a liaison with external bodies on barriers to participation in public life and to



achievement of social, cultural and economic well-being of the City's residents

- The Committee is to address specific issues facing particular communities, develop options for Council's consideration and make recommendations for positive changes that shall improve the quality of life of members of city's diverse communities
- The Advisory Committee on Disability Issues is to advise City Council each year about the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan.

Membership:

- The committee consists of 18 members with at least 1 member of Council
- Two thirds (2/3) of the membership should reflect the committees' respective communities. There is a broad range of people represented in the committee. 12 of the 18 members are either people with disabilities, those who are representatives of the various disability organizations within the city or are caregivers to those with disabilities.

The committee successfully intervened twice in the City's budget process:

- Once, regarding threatened cut-backs to the City's Human Rights Office, and
- Regarding the threatened cutbacks to WheelTrans.

Committee members have also been actively providing advice in the development of new accessibility guidelines and an accessibility audit of all City-owned buildings.

- The committee is supported by the City Clerk's office.
- Either the Accessibility Coordinator or the Chair of the committee communicates with internal staff regarding the various topics and issues regarding accessibility.
- There exists an intra-divisional staff team, consisting of members selected and chosen by the department heads from the various city departments. This team works on developing the accessibility plan which is then reviewed by the Accessibility Committee and passed on to Council through the Accessibility Coordinator.

Transit:

- The most important initiative taken on by the city has been city Transit – making stations fully accessible and ensuring that enough kneeling buses are available to accommodate those in need.
- WheelTrans – is the specialized bus system designed specifically for those who are unable to use the conventional “kneeling” buses.
 - Need to call at least 24 hours ahead of time to book a WheelTrans bus.



- There are shuttle buses going from various stations to other locations often visited by people with disabilities.
- There is talk going on around the city to make the Street Cars accessible. It's very early on in the planning and proposal stages, however the city is striving to make its transit system as accessible as possible.

What makes a successful Accessibility Committee?

- Leadership is very important. Ensuring that all necessary items are covered and nothing is overlooked. Examining the “big picture” without overlooking a potentially important issue is an important attribute of a leader.
- Having a disability advocate is also very useful, practical and helpful. For us having David Onley as the Lieutenant Governor (confined to a wheelchair) has boosted response to requests
- The Advisory group is voluntary and people are not paid for it, therefore you need people who are really willing to do this and are passionate about it.
- Having people on the committee who experience accessibility first hand and use the various services offered by the city, especially those with a disability is a vital part to the committee. Ensuring that the various disability groups are well represented in the membership of the committee.

How items in accessibility plan are prioritized.

- It is largely left to the divisions in prioritizing action items. Some senior staff are more in tune with what is needed. This is overlooked by the accessibility committee to ensure the items are included in the plan according to priority. Inter-divisional staff team educates people at work with regards to equity and accessibility.

Customer Service Standards

- It's a provincial regulation
- A set of standards which was released in July of 2007 with compliance by 2010.
- Even though these customer service standards are set, it depends on how they be implemented as it will be different between various municipalities.
- Most of the information is accessible and available online, public libraries. The city is in the process of implementing a 311 call centre. The City of Toronto “Fun Guide” is probably one of the most inaccessible documents out there.
- There are still many things to work on, however we know that this will not be done overnight and a lot has been done up to this point.
- Overall in the city we focus not only on the physical accessibility, however attitudinal accessibility as well. It's not necessarily directed towards people with disabilities, however focuses more on “Universal Access”.



- Currently we have not been doing much research with regards to what other cities out there are doing with regards to accessibility. We would probably need to dedicate a full-time staff member to do this kind of work.

Snow clearing for seniors and people with disabilities is done by transportation department. People call in and the transportation department will come and clear the sidewalks as needed at no extra charge to the homeowner

5.9. The City of Chicago

Interview: City of Chicago
Joe Russo
312-744-0950

Overview

- In 1990 the Mayor created the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to better meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities. There are about 600,000 individuals with disabilities who live and work in Chicago.
 - o The MOPD's goal is to make Chicago the most accessible city in the nation.
 - o Mission of MOPD - to promote total access, full participation and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. By using systemic change, education and training, advocacy and direct services, MOPD is seeking to accomplish this mission.
 - o MOPD promotes understanding of the issues of concern to people with disabilities and assists individuals as well as organizations in working to comply with a variety of laws and regulations relating to disability and to the ADA.
 - o MOPD serves 5 major groups:
 - People with Disabilities
 - All city departments and agencies
 - Other government agencies
 - Disability-related agencies and organizations, and
 - The Private Sector

MOPD's services and programs include:

Disability Resources:

- o Information & Referral
- o Independent living programs
- o Case management services
- o Assistive technology program
- o Homemaker and Personal assistance services
- o Emergency home-delivered meals

Employment Services:

- o Employment counseling and training to job seekers



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- Consultation and technical assistance to employers
 - Social Security administration benefits planning
 - Assistance and outreach for work incentives programs

Training:

- Independent living skills
- Disability etiquette
- Teletypewriter (TTY) training
- Recreation programs

Architectural Services:

- Site surveys
- Technical assistance
- Consultation and plan review
- Information about accessibility laws.

Public Information and Education:

- Disability awareness
- Special events
- Workshops and seminars
- Publications
- Community outreach

Youth Programs:

- Disabled youth peer development initiative (DYPDI)
- Substance abuse/AIDS prevention program for the hearing impaired (SAAPPHI)

- There are 45 departments within the city. Each of these departments has a committee working in various issues with accessibility relative to their departments.

“Disabilityworks” Employment Initiative:

- MOPD plays a key role in the development and implementation of the city’s “disability works” employment initiative.
 - The key of the “disability works” initiative is the Mayoral Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities – the first of its kind municipal Task Force devoted to bringing more people with disabilities into the workforce.
 - The initiative also includes other MOPD sponsored programs and events implemented under this initiative, including:
 - Social Security administration funded benefits planning
 - Assistance and outreach program
 - Employment fair for people with disabilities, and
 - Chicago’s participation in National Disability Mentoring Day.

Buildings:

- All new buildings have to meet the building code for accessibility requirements. There are also federal requirements for building code standards.



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- Standards for accessibility are done with the input from the community. Ideas are developed through the input of community.
 - Transit system is currently going through a massive revamp. The city got sued for not meeting the standards and as part of the settlement they have to make stations accessible, maintain elevators and ticket machines.
 - o All of the city buses are accessible, with some having hydraulics and most having ramps which are more effective.
 - Cities and local governments under the ADA have to do a review of all city facilities. Chicago is currently in the process of starting this review.
 - o It is a project that will take approximately 2 years to complete.
 - o In the review we try to include the mayor and the community as much as possible to get public opinions and involve the public as much as possible.
 - o In order to conduct this review the city is hiring consultants who will be developing processes. These consultants will develop tools to survey the programs offered by the city and tools to survey the buildings and city facilities. Once problems are found and identified decisions are made on how to fix them.
 - o This will all be put together in a plan through which after the 2 year project is complete the city will be able to address each location and make appropriate changes.
 - When an issue comes up in the community, we gather people who are knowledgeable in that specific area/field to address those issues and see how they can be resolved.
 - Specific groups are created for various issues. What I can suggest, and I think in a city like Saskatoon, what would definitely work is to create sub-committees who would be specifically involved and responsible for one major department or area where accessibility is an issue. For example, snow removal – have representatives of the various disability groups make up the committee and include the people from the city responsible for snow removal to sit in on those meetings. They will get to see what work needs to be done from a different perspective.

The Commissioner of MOPD is a person with a disability

Architectural Services:

- MOPD Architectural Services Unit (ASU) provides consultative services and technical assistance to business owners, architects and developers who are renovating or constructing a residential or public facility.
- Professional staff is available to answer questions about the rights and responsibilities of business owners, employees and consumers under the ADA, Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA), Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC) and the Chicago Building Code.



- ASU assists developers and their architects in ensuring that the facilities they build or renovate will be accessible to, and usable by, persons with disabilities. These services include:
 - o Plan review
 - o Architectural consultation
 - o Technical assistance
 - o Training, and
 - o Resource Materials
- MOPD's plan review is mandatory, as it is part of the Chicago Department of Construction and Permits' (DCAP) permit-issuing process.
- MOPD also works closely with other city agencies to assist and ensure compliance with Accessibility Laws and Requirements
- The ASU organized an Accessibility Sub-committee composed of developers, homebuilders, architects, city officials and representatives from the disability community to write a chapter of the Chicago Building Code – this chapter details accessibility building standards for the city.
- Other programs and services operated through the ASU are;
 - o Home modification program called HomeMod – which enhances the accessibility of the existing homes of people with disabilities, and
 - o The residential disabled parking sign appeal process – any person whose application for a restricted parking space has been denied by the Department of Revenue may appeal in writing through MOPD.
- MOPD's ASU works to integrate people with disabilities and senior citizens into Chicago's neighborhoods by advocating for the construction of accessible housing.

Disability Information and Referral Services

MOPD's Information and Referral staff assist people with disabilities in making more effective use of the health, education, training, economic and social resources available to them. Services are provided to people with disabilities, social service professionals, educators and the general public.

Some of the things the Information and Referral staff helps with include:

- Provide information on various city programs
- Administer direct services to people with disabilities, which include: helping people complete applications, helping people resolve issues with other agencies, giving people detailed instructions on how to access services.
- Ensure referral linkages are made between individuals and the appropriate agencies to meet health, economic and social needs.
- Identify resources and distribute them to those who request them.

Mayoral Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities - Overview



In 2002 the mayor created a Mayoral Task Force on the Employment of People with Disabilities to develop a coordinated and aggressive citywide plan to bring more people with disabilities into the workforce.

This is the first of its kind municipal level Task Force, and it follows the mandate established by Clinton's Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities created in 1998. The foundation of this Mayor's Task Force rests in the creation of public-private sector partnerships utilizing the expertise of representatives from the business, economic development, civic and disability communities. Together, this partnership will analyze all existing physical and attitudinal barriers to employment for people with disabilities and make recommendations for the removal of these barriers.

The Task Force is divided into 5 Work Groups, each addressing a specific employment related goal. These include:

- Statistical analysis of the employment rate of people with disabilities in Chicago
- Revision of Chicago's procurement policies to increase economic and professional opportunities for people with disabilities
- Chicago becoming a model employer of people with disabilities
- Improvement of employment outcomes for youth with disabilities, and
- Establishment of private-public sector partnerships designed to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities both locally and nationally.

Disability Resources

MOPD promotes total access, full participation and equal opportunity for people with disabilities of all ages in all aspects of life. Designed to meet the daily living needs of people with disabilities, MOPD offers the following programs to City of Chicago residents with disabilities who are under 60 years of age:

Emergency Home Delivered Meals:

- This is an emergency-based service which allows people with disabilities to live independently by providing them with two meals a day for a period of up to 6 weeks.

HomeMod:

- Provides financial assistance for modifying the home of a person with a disability for enhanced accessibility.

Housing Information:

- Assists residents in locating accessible housing opportunities

Independent Living Program:

- Assists people with disabilities in obtaining their maximum independence through providing case management, activities of daily living skills training and assistive technology.

Information and Referral:

- Refers citizens to appropriate programs for service and assistance



- Advocates on behalf of people with disabilities, where appropriate, to provide assistance, enabling them to live independently.

Personal Assistance / Homemaker Services:

- An in-home service that aids an individual with a disability in the performance of daily living activities and the completion of household tasks through training and direct services.

Training Services Overview

The Training Services Unit of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities provides a wide range of training programs for people with and without disabilities. These programs are designed to educate and inform people about disability issues and related laws. Many of these programs are also designed to foster independence and provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness and Etiquette Training:

- Training introduces participants to appropriate approaches when interacting with people with all types of disabilities in professional, social and recreational settings. Included in this training is an overview of disability-related laws, such as the ADA and how to provide cost-effective workplace accommodations.

Teletypewriter (TTY) Training:

- Training provides instruction and technical assistance in the use of TTY's, telecommunication devices which enable people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech impairments to communicate with others.

Independent Living Skills Program:

- This program is designed to encourage the development of skills that enable an individual with a disability to achieve their maximum level of independence. Training includes accessing benefits programs and financial independence, hiring and supervising personal assistance, food preparation, shopping and assertiveness behavior.

Recreational and Leisure Skills Program:

- This program offers people with disabilities a chance to participate in many programs which are traditionally inaccessible. Instruction in: dance, art, bowling, exercise and sailing are some of the activities offered. Techniques taught include skills training which can be later used by people with disabilities as they become more involved in their local community recreation programs.

Enabling Gardening Program:

- This is an award-winning program. It promotes interest in horticulture by people with all types of disabilities and also illustrates how most gardens can be made accessible. Participants take part in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities using the plants, flowers and vegetables they've grown.

MOPD also offers a wide range of customized training on disability-related issues which include:



-
- ADA Compliance and Disability Related Legislative Training
 - Architectural Site Survey Training
 - Reasonable Accommodation and Assistive Technology Training

Chicago – Among Top Tourist Destinations for People with Disabilities

In 2006 there was a survey conducted by Open Doors Organization with approximately 1,400 U.S. adults with disabilities to identify which cities these travelers have visited and also their patterns of hotel, restaurant and transportation use. Based on this survey, Chicago was rated among the top three tourist destinations for people with disabilities. New York City and Washington D.C. were the other two cities.

From popular tourist attractions such as the Lakefront Festivals and Millennium Park to the 100% accessible bus fleet, Chicago offers a wide range of accessible options for residents and visitors with disabilities.

Items include:

- Enhanced mobility offerings at McCormick Place, such as: rentable motor scooters, for out-of-town visitors with disabilities attending conventions
- Comprehensive Access Guide sponsored by the State in collaboration with MOPD.

Paratransit Service in Chicago

According to ADA, public transportation providers that offer rapid rail service and/or fixed route bus service are required to provide ADA Paratransit service, which is offered for people with disabilities who cannot use the public transportation all or some of the time.

In 2006, Paratransit service in Chicago and the surrounding six-counties transitioned to Pace Bus from the Chicago Transportation Authority. This includes the Taxi Access Program (TAP) and Mobility Direct.

Accessibility Review of Building Plans

- In 1992, MOPD instituted an accessibility review process of all building projects and plans for accessibility compliance with all applicable codes and laws.
- In 1998, this accessibility review became a permanent, mandatory part of the building permit application process.
- As of January, 2002, the City implemented revenue generating accessibility review fee for each building permit application.

To ensure builders and developers comply with all applicable accessibility laws and guidelines, the City requires all building plans to undergo an accessibility review as part of the City of Chicago Building Permit Process.

A fee is assessed by the City of Chicago for the review of building plans to determine compliance with all applicable accessibility codes and requirements.



The fee schedule is as follows:

New buildings and other structures:

- \$2.00 per 1,000 cubic feet of volume or \$85.00 minimum charge

Alterations and repairs to any structures:

- \$1.00 for each \$1,000.00 of estimated costs or \$85.00 minimum charge

Voting Information for Voters with Disabilities

- Chicago Board of Election Commissioners have worked extensively with MOPD, Equip for Equality, Access Living and many other members of the disability community including organizations that serve the blind to ensure that the new machines purchased from Sequoia, Inc., meet federal accessibility requirements and provide the maximum access possible to voters with disabilities.
- Every polling station is to be equipped with optical scan ballots and an electronic touch-screen unit. For people with disabilities, such as the blind or visually impaired individuals, the touch-screen unit is equipped with a headphone and audio controller to guide a person through the ballot.
- Under the Help America Vote Act, every polling place must have at least one accessible voting system on site. Under the ADA, voters with disabilities have a right to equal access to the voting process.
- In co-operation with the Department of Streets and Sanitation, the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners has arranged to provide two marked parking spaces for people with disabilities in front of EVERY polling station.

Other Initiatives Taken by the City

Cities and local governments under the ADA have to do a review of all city facilities.

- It will take approximately 2 years to do this project and an attempt is made to include the mayors and community organizations.
- Consultants will be hired to evaluate the facilities and processes.
- Tools will be developed to survey programs and various buildings
- Ensure that if any problems exist they are found and decisions are made on how to fix them.
- The City conducts research on issues and recommendations are made about all issues and how to address them with regards to accessibility.
- All committee's roles are advisory. The work is taken up by the board and the City. There are investigative groups that do a lot of reporting on the state government.
- When an issue comes up in the community, the City gathers people who are knowledgeable in the area to address those issues.



- One thing that the City representative mentioned which he thought would work for a city like Saskatoon would be to create committees specifically responsible for various issues
 - (For example: snow removal – have representatives from various disability groups make up the committee and include the people from the city responsible for snow removal to sit in on those meetings. This way the city representatives will get to see what work needs to be done from a different perspective.)

5.10. The City of Berkeley

Berkeley, CA
Commission on Disability
Paul Church – Secretary of the Commission
Public Works
510-981-6342
PChurch@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Commission on Disability

- The Commission on Disability advises the City Council about policy, budget, programs and accessibility issues of importance to Berkeley citizens with disabilities.
- The Commission offers a public forum for members of the community to raise issues of concern and acts as an advocate to make Berkeley more accessible for all people with disabilities.

Disability Compliance Program

- The City of Berkeley's Disability Compliance Program coordinates efforts to ensure that people with disabilities have access to City programs and services.
- The program is in the Department of Public Works and oversees the City's efforts to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws.
- In addition to ensuring physical access to City programs and services, the Disability Compliance Program develops training programs and resource materials and advised City employees about how to integrate people with disabilities in City activities.
- Program staff answers questions from both citizens and City employees about accommodating persons with disabilities.



City Response to ADA Requirements

Communication Access:

- While utilizing City services, people with hearing, vision, speech or other disabilities are entitled to “effective communication” such as: interpreters, real time captioning, assistive listening devices, Braille, large print, or audio cassette.
- The solution depends on the individual and the situation, but must be effective.

Facility Access:

- The City will remove physical barriers that keep people with disabilities from using its programs.
- The City has reviewed all of its facilities and has removed many of the worst barriers
- As new facilities are built or existing ones re-modeled, the City continues to remove barriers to full participation

Employment Accommodations:

- Accommodations for employees with disabilities are handled by each division and the Human Resources Department.
- City employees who have a disability consult their supervisor or the Human Resources Department if an accommodation is required for doing the job.

Policies, procedures and practices:

- Must be conducted in a way that avoids discrimination
- The Disability Compliance Program reviews City policies and practices, and continues to propose revisions or new procedures to prevent discrimination.
- The outcome of these changes means better service for everyone

Information and Referral:

- The Disability Compliance Program is a resource for training and technical assistance.
- The primary direct service the Program offers to citizens is information and referral about the variety of local and regional programs providing disability related services and information about one’s rights as a person with a disability.

Initiatives

- Conducted a Transition Plan which identified barriers within the city buildings



-
- City Hall was re-done
 - New Main Library was built with accessible features taken into account
 - Sidewalks and Parks – have a budget of \$200,000 to install and re-do playgrounds. Re-do approximately 75-100 curb ramps per year.
 - There are approximately 51 parks within the city – replace play equipment, installation of rubber surfacing (wood bark is not an accessible surface), re-modeling of the pathways or installing new pathways.
 - “Easy Does-it” – an emergency attendant program

Recommendations for Accessibility Committee

- There needs to be continued community support and more importantly community input, as people think that having such a committee is just a rubber stamp for City Hall.
- Go beyond what is needed
- The attitude of City politicians needs to remain very positive.
- The Ed Roberts Campus – is a one stop information source for people with disabilities.
- BORP (Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program)

BORP - Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program:

- Non-profit organization working to improve the health, independence and social integration of people with physical disabilities through sports, fitness and recreation programs
- At BORP, believe that sports and recreation provide a path to greater achievement to which all people should have access.
- Leading provider and promoter of accessible sports and recreation opportunities for children and adults with physical disabilities in the greater San Francisco Bay Area
- In addition to the high quality innovative sports and recreation programs, expert staff provides advocacy, trainings, referrals and consultation services and have helped initiate adaptive sports programs in several other cities across the state.
- BORP also conducts disability awareness trainings and adaptive sports exhibitions for a variety of community agencies and serves as a valuable resource to physical therapists, rehabilitation hospitals, parks and recreation departments and related organizations.



Accessibility Award

In 2007, The National Organization on Disability named Berkeley, CA the most "accessible city in the United States" because it had the first universally-designed affordable housing development, free and reduced fare taxi services, and emergency attendant care and transportation services that are funded by a self-imposed tax.

The city also has programs promoting artists with disabilities and internships and mentor programs for youths with disabilities.

5.11. The City of Kelowa

Interview: Sherri Newcomen
Chair
Kelowna
Central Okanagan Access Awareness Team
250-769-7467
Email: robb7467@telus.net

- The Central Okanagan Access Awareness Team has been existent for about 18 years and it was started to make it easier for physically impaired people to live in the community. About 2 years ago the Mayor got involved with the team and an advisory committee was developed as a result.
 - o The members are elected for the same term as the Mayor and council
 - o Ensure that the main disabilities are well represented within the make-up of the committee.
 - o There are currently 6 members on the advisory committee:
 - 1 legally blind member (used to work for CNIB)
 - 1 profoundly deaf member (the city pays for an ASL interpreter to come in during the various meetings to ensure proper communication)
 - 1 member who has recovered from a brain injury
 - 1 quadriplegic member
 - 1 paraplegic member (male)
 - 1 paraplegic member (female – Chair)
 - o The experience of the people on the committee is invaluable. Some of the members (2) have been councilors so they have the connections with the government and know their way around various issues and are able to make their implementation more effective.
 - o The committee has a great connection with the City of Kelowna. Various staff members from the City departments sit in on the meetings, as well as councilors and even the mayor at times sits in on the meetings of the advisory committee, depending on what items are placed on the agenda.
 - o If a certain issue pertains to a specific department, a representative from that City department will come into the meeting. Will have a workshop afterwards, identifying how to resolve a specific issue and after the meeting it is taken to council for review and/or approval.



- The advisory committee is independent of City Hall. It is administered on a voluntary basis. Having the experience and knowledge and being able to connect and work together with the various city departments is very important in making the committee effective.
- Many changes the city plans on doing to facilities, roads or parks that may affect people with disabilities heads to the access awareness team first for their suggestions.
- The newest thing the access team has been working on is developing recommendations regarding Accessibility Measures for Hotels and Motels.
 - This idea has been proposed by the mayor
 - Applies to new structures and buildings and are looking at eventually making these recommendations a requirement, as at the present time these are not enforced.
 - The way this has been implemented and assessed, was people on the access team as well as from other community organizations made a wish list of some items they would like to see addressed. Some of these things although already existent in the building code were stressed to be a necessity and implementation would go above and beyond the building code.
 - These Accessibility Measures have been presented to the Hotel/Motel association which in turn was passed on to their members. Some of the older buildings

Some of the items covered in these recommendations are:

- It started with parking and addressing the various physical disabilities people face.
- Inclusion of vertical signage, leveled parking spaces.
- Ensuring the main entrance of the hotels/motels has automatic or sliding electric doors, clear pathways, ensuring the door hardware is easy to hold on to and use with one hand
- Ensuring that there is a permanent location for a TTY phone and/or a video phone available in the lobby of the hotel.
- Fire alarms that are visible and also addressed towards people with hearing disabilities, strobe lighting on each floor.
- Ensuring the counters at the front desk have been lowered to accommodate those who are in wheelchairs.
- One of the reasons Kelowna is so accessible for people in wheelchairs is because of all the new construction. It's easy to put in a handicapped washroom or ramp at the design stage, but it's not so easy to convert an old building, up two flights of stairs with no elevator.
- Some of the programs Kelowna has undertaken to address accessibility issues are:
 - Educating businesses to ensure that there are clear paths and all measures are taken to accommodate those with disabilities, to make businesses more accessible. (Cafés moving the tables and umbrellas to clear paths and make them more accessible, educating staff regarding people with disabilities)



- Curb cuts, ensuring that the sidewalks are easily accessible for pedestrians, especially those with disabilities. In the city, curbs are cropped at corners so wheelchairs can get on. But those decorative interlocking brick sidewalks have been a problem. Uneven and with gaps, they're tough on wheelchairs, canes for the visually impaired and even skateboarders and people in spike heels. For businesses, it just makes sense to be easy for everyone to get in
- City Buses – all but 2 of the city buses are “kneeling buses”. The person managing the transit within the city is the GM of FarWest.
 - Hired a mobility instructor to educate people with disabilities on how to travel by city transit and what are some of the obstacles and how to overcome them.
 - Some of the routes for city buses have been re-vamped in order to make it more accessible for people to get to their destination without crossing a major road or intersection. Ensure there are very few obstacles to get to the destination.
 - Handy Dart – specialized buses for people with disabilities – if you're a user and pay for the subscription of the bus, then you are registered to receive the training from the mobility instructor at no charge.
 - A person has to call 5 days in advance to schedule a Handy Dart.
 - Bus drivers announce the stops for those who have hearing impairments.
- Audible Traffic Signals, installing audible traffic signals at busy intersections; however, even with the audible signals there are problems because there's no consistency with where the buttons are on the poles at the crossings.
- Handicapped parking is adequate or better at most places and many building owners in the community are now aware that cutting the speed the elevator doors close helps people get in more easily.
- Parks and Recreation centre – there are various programs for people with disabilities (swimming, gym, fitness centre, workshops). These are primarily run and coordinate by the various community groups.
 - Work in close collaboration with CRIS (Community Recreational Initiative Society) – they are a non-profit society organizing various leisure activities for people with disabilities. Kayaking tours, tandem (double) bikes for those who are blind.
- The way we educate and communicate to people with disabilities on what is available to them in the city is through the local news channel, internet news as well as the local paper. A person with a disability runs a section in the local paper focusing primarily on the various events, activities, programs that are running for people with disabilities. There is a one page section in the paper dedicated as a resource of information for those with disabilities wishing to learn more about what's available to them.
- During its meetings, the committee has open sessions, where people from the public are able to sit in on the meetings and express some of their concerns regarding issues they face and how they can be addressed by the committee and the city.



One factor in making an accessible city is – gathering information from the ordinary citizens, taking that information and connecting it with the right departments in the city to implement initiatives on how to address the various issues.

5.12. The City of Kingston

Interview: Barry Kaplan, B.A., M.P.A. - Accessibility Co-ordinator
Community Development Services Group
Planning & Development Department
City of Kingston

The Committee

There are 14 members including 1 city councilor. City runs an ad in November looking for people through a letter of interest. The Advisory Committee this time looked for skills of people including legal, marketing, etc. as well as a broad mix of people with disabilities. One area that is currently underrepresented are those with cognitive disabilities.

The Coordinator Position

Due to increasing legislation (ie. AODA 2005), the city hired a full time coordinator. In 2003 they hired an accessibility coordinator.

The Legislation and Impact

AOSDA provides the process to develop standards for both the public and private sectors. Municipalities are using this process in determining their own accessibility services. The legislation focuses on customer service, public transportation, information and communication, the built environment, and employment.

In January 2008, the regulations on customer service will become law. The city needs to be in compliance. The regulations have benchmarks they must hit by certain dates. Monitoring will be done through surveys and public consultation. This process will also assist in identifying other barriers.

Transportation is being currently being finalized. (E.g. Buses will need electronic announcements.) Customer Service covers things like training, complaint tracking, policies to caregivers, etc.

Initiatives

The City of Kingston has developed Accessible Maps which show Accessible Routes. The maps indicate the curb cuts, parking, bus stops, entrances, and location of crosswalks.



6.0 Additional In-depth Interviews

6.1. The Accessible / Inclusive Cities and Communities Project

Interview: Rebekah Mahaffey

Coordinator, Measuring Up

2010 Legacies Now / www.2010legaciesnow.com

400-1095 West Pender St.

Vancouver, BC V6E 2M6

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Toll Free: 1-866-427-2010

Background

Measuring Up: Communities of Accessibility and Inclusion is a guide to help BC communities assess and improve how accessible they are for people with disabilities and others.

2010 Legacies Now has a vision of British Columbia as a place where people can easily live, work, play and visit. With support from the Province of BC, 2010 Legacies Now is guiding communities in becoming more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Measuring Up is a guide to assist municipal leaders, businesses, communities groups, people with disabilities and others in making B.C. communities more accessible and inclusive for everyone, including:

- ensuring all people can fully participate and contribute to their community
- creating accessible public spaces
- promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities and others

Measuring Up assesses four elements of accessibility and inclusion at the community level:

1. **Disability support services** - transportation, housing, emergency preparedness, personal supports, and fully accessible environments.
2. **Access to information** - universal signage, plain language, and multiple formats (large print, Braille, sign language).
3. **Economic participation** - business and skills development, jobs and labour supply, disability market and consumer spending, niche markets such as accessible tourism.
4. **Community contribution** - bringing new energy and talent to social, recreational, sports and cultural life of communities.

Interview

The original Accessible/Inclusive Cities and Communities Project (AICCP) is now called "Measuring UP". In April 2006, 7 pilot communities used the Measuring Up guide to determine the level of accessibility in their community and develop action items. The 7 pilot communities were Abbotsford, Kamloops, Merritt, Prince George, Vancouver, Powell River, and Whistler. Of the 7 communities in the pilot project, 2 are currently in the project stage (i.e. progressing towards meeting the targets set out in the action items).



2010 Legacies Now received a \$2-million grant from the Province of BC to establish the Measuring Up Accessibility and Inclusion Fund. This fund is used as “process money” to support community assessments using the Measuring Up guide. The fund provides approximately 70 grants of up to \$25,000 each. The amount a municipality receives depends on their population.

The list of municipalities currently receiving the funds includes:

- 1) 100 Mile House
- 2) Abbotsford
- 3) Barriere
- 4) Cariboo Regional District
- 5) Courtney
- 6) Enderby and District
- 7) Fruitvale
- 8) Kamloops
- 9) Kelowna
- 10) Kimberley
- 11) Lions Bay
- 12) Maple Ridge in partnership with Pitt Meadows
- 13) Mission
- 14) Nanaimo
- 15) Nelson
- 16) Oak Bay
- 17) Penticton
- 18) Prince George
- 19) Prince Rupert
- 20) Princeton
- 21) Powell River
- 22) Quesnel
- 23) Queen Charlotte
- 24) Revelstoke
- 25) Rossland
- 26) Sooke
- 27) Surrey
- 28) Squamish
- 29) Vancouver
- 30) Vernon

As a further extension of the project, a partnership between the North Central Municipal Association and the BC Paraplegic Association has signed up 33 or 41 communities and regional districts. With strong support through Northern BC, the project will assist communities through locally controlled initiatives potentially increase participation of seniors and people with disabilities, employment rates, tourism opportunities, economic development, sustainability, retirement living and cooperative ventures.

In terms of carrying out measuring up, the municipality does the evaluation or at times, this is conducted in partnership with a non-profit group.



Under the 2010 Legacies Now mandate is to locate additional project monies to carry out their action plans. This may be through other funding agencies or perhaps funds provided through 2010 Legacies Now.

6.2. Saskatchewan Abilities Council

Saskatchewan Abilities Council - represent people in Saskatoon not only with mobility issues but with mental disabilities as well.

How well is the City doing?

- The City is doing really well with all the curb cuts and sidewalk repairs to accommodate those with disabilities and mobility issues.
- With regards to transportation, since we used to run it, there never is a day without complaints. The City is doing well with the number of buses and access transit buses available to the public, however better scheduling needs to be done.
- The City overall is doing a great job with regards to accommodating those with a disability. It is a very accessible city in the summer. With winter, the weather factors affecting our province play a factor in accessibility, however at times it's difficult to overcome those weather factors.
- Audible Traffic Signals are a very good idea, and although there are not many of them around the city, it's an excellent starting point. Need to expand on that.
- Accessible playgrounds – with the inclusion of the Everyone's Playground in Erindale the first step in making playgrounds more accessible has been taken and will hopefully lead in the right direction.
- Overall with the City staff, they are certainly aware now of people with disabilities and how to address their needs. Sask. Abilities Council provided training of staff with the City, particularly with the Transit Department. The City is well educated and is doing a good job overall.

Items to be addressed:

- Transportation would be the top item on the wish list for the city to address. Not so much the buses themselves, but the scheduling issues and the overall management of the schedule.
 - o At the present time people who wish to use Access Transit have to call in a week in advance to book a time. Does anyone know what they'll be doing a week from now?
 - o There used to be a "Zoning Bus" which covered all the main areas, such as shopping centres, grocery store, clinic, hospital, etc. It had designated spots where people were picked up and dropped off, however it's not in existence anymore.



- The more people are locked in their homes, the more it plays on their psyche and the more depressed they become. The whole inclusion vs. social exclusion comes into effect.
- Snow clearance was a big issue, where many people could access the low-floor buses however could not get to them in wheelchairs in the snow conditions experienced last year in the City.
- The fact is that accessibility isn't just a mobility issue, it relates to people with cognitive disabilities as well.
 - For people with intellectual disabilities some improvements could be in the area of signage. The usage of symbols is a universal language. The signs are written at times using complex verbiage and maybe using simple language to write the signs would eliminate the "not understanding" issue. It could also benefit other groups, such as the elderly as well as immigrants, who might not necessarily know all the complex terms, and would better understand what the sign is trying to convey through the usage of simple easy to understand terms.
- Washrooms at times are a concern, not so much with the City facilities, just in general. If a person is in a wheelchair and her partner/helper is of a different gender, it is difficult for them to go to the bathroom together, especially if there is no designated washroom available. This does not necessarily relate to the City facilities and buildings.
- The City states that they have volunteers available at civic centers to help those with disabilities if they want to use the facilities, however there have been many instances where there was no help available for those disabilities. People are welcome to join the various classes taking place in the civic centers; however there is a need for more volunteers.
- During the election times, there were issues with accessibility to facilities. There were buildings used as stations which had no wheelchair access. The city could have rented wheelchair ramps or rented other facilities that are accessible. However, that was overlooked.

Public Perception

- There will always be a presence of the whiners and complainers, however for the most part those people who understand what things are being done and how certain items can be executed see things as they are and appreciate things the City is doing to accommodate their needs. You're never going to be good enough and be able to satisfy every individual out there.
- Do people know of all the services available to them? Most likely not. There are people who still think that Access Transit is run by Sask. Abilities Council. It's a concept of, not knowing of a service until you really need to use it. People become educated about what's out there as the need to use a certain service, program or facilities arises.



7.0 Focus Group Results

City of Saskatoon - Employee Focus Group (TCU Place) Senior's Focus Group 2 Focus Groups with People with Disabilities

What are some of the items that need to be addressed by the City (as an employer and municipal government)?

Parking

- Proximity of the disabled parking spots relative to the building.
- Downtown core to have more disabled parking spots.
- Disabled parking spots should be cleared of any snow to make easy access to and from the car.

"Disabled parking needs to be closer to the building that is wheelchair accessible."

"Wheelchair parking in the downtown core could be addressed better. There are loading zones however not many disabled parking spots are available. If they have spots, they should be advertised. With the disabled parking pass you don't have to go to the meters, you can park almost anywhere on the street, however people are not aware of that. There is a long process that people have to go through in order to qualify for a parking pass."

"Parking spots are an issue. If you have a lift and need to get out of your car, it's very difficult especially in the winter as there is always so much snow on the side of the street."

Parks

- Gravel paths throughout the park are hard to maneuver around in a wheelchair.
- Difficulty to access the park from the sidewalk due to the lack of curb cuts.
- Playgrounds should be more accessible, as there is difficulty to get to the playground once someone is at the park.

"Parks are not very accessible. There are gravel paths throughout the park which is very hard on those who are in wheelchairs. The paths usually end at a curb without any curb cuts present. So someone in a wheelchair can't access the park. A lot of parks don't have any curb cuts. The playgrounds should be more accessible as well. At times there are no ways to get to the playground. The city needs to address this more."

"People have difficulty in getting to some parks as they can't access them from the sidewalk as there are no ramps to get there."

Snow Removal

- Snow removal should be better addressed around bus stops.
 - Difficult to get out of the bus, as the snow banks are very high at times.



- Difficult to get to the bus from the sidewalk as the pathways are not cleared.
- Build-up of ice and shoveling of sidewalks is inadequate.
- Difficulties with accessing the sidewalks by wheelchair, as graders leave ridges by the sidewalks after plowing the streets.
- Businesses need to better address the issues of snow removal.

"Snow removal around bus stops needs to be better. When streets are plowed, all the snow is moved to the side of the street and at times it is very difficult to get out of the bus if you have a snow bank a couple feet high."

"Issues with sidewalks – build up of ice and shoveling is inadequate."

"Graders leave ridges near the sidewalks and make it difficult for wheelchair access."

"When we go to Market Mall, especially in the winter, it's difficult to even be on the road, there are cars parked and lots of snow on the side of the road. Because of this you can't really travel to your destination at times when people drive to work, or are coming back from work. We are forced to pick the time when we are able to go to the mall, cannot travel at certain times."

"Pathways to get to the buses need to be properly cleaned. Usually it's difficult to get from the sidewalk to the bus. They are very rarely cleared."

"The sidewalks around Zellers at Market Mall are never cleared. Complained to Zellers but nothing was done about that, they said that it's not their business to clear those sidewalks."

"The pathways around the building are always cleared by the caretaker, if he wouldn't do that, they'd still be covered with snow and slippery."

"Right after they cleared the snow off the sidewalk on 33rd Ave, the wind blew all the snow back onto the sidewalk. Maybe could install a small fence around sidewalks in order to prevent that from happening."

"When the snow is plowed it's difficult to get access to the house from the street or the driveway. Paths are blocked after the snow has been removed from the street."

"Businesses are pretty bad with clearing and removing the snow."

Employee/Manager Communication and Diversity Training

- When communicating with staff and the public, any written material should be available in large font and written in plain language.
- The City Staff, Managers and Supervisors need to be better educated about the issues people with disabilities face on a day to day basis, which would help the overall communication.
- By educating staff, they would feel more comfortable working with people with disabilities.
- Create more opportunities for people with disabilities to progress and develop in their workplace.

"Communication is a challenge. At times I constantly have to write back and forth to communicate. My supervisor has become interested in sign language which is really nice. It gives me a sense of belonging. When we go for coffee breaks feel like outsiders but cope with those problems by making attempts to communicate with those who are willing to. At times during the staff meeting an interpreter was not present, so I just asked for them to write up the meeting minutes and email them to me. For the most part interpreters are made available for staff meetings."



“Communication is a problem with employees at the City. For example, office changes/cubicle changes are made without asking people with disabilities what works for them. It seems that people with disabilities are an afterthought in any planning initiatives that the City undertakes. Managers do not think of accommodations needed before hand.”

“Written material put out by the city (to the public and staff) should be in large font and use plain language. Tend to use too much jargon at times.”

“Feel that managers sometimes look at people with disabilities like they can’t think! We are not stupid, we just have a disability.”

“Need more staff training in regards to disability issues and make people more comfortable in regards to working with people with disabilities.”

“The City should inform supervisors and managers about the prevalence of disabilities including invisible ones. An example could be distributing statistics on the prevalence of learning disabilities.”

“Don’t feel the supervisors have a really good sense of understanding of working with people with disabilities.”

“Bus drivers sometimes don’t wait long enough for people with disabilities to exit the bus.”

“Development plans for people with disabilities are poor. People are stuck in entry level jobs and frustrated because they don’t know what they need to do to advance at the City.”

Public Awareness/Accessibility

- Driver education and awareness of the needs of people with disabilities.
- Assist community organizations with public awareness on disability issues.
- Events taking place around the city to be more inclusive.
- Businesses need to be more educated on how to address the issues related to accessibility.
- Movie theaters are not accessible for those who have hearing difficulties – movies are not captioned.

“There needs to be more education done with regards to the public, especially drivers who in general don’t look out for pedestrians. For those who have hearing difficulties they walk on the side that faces oncoming traffic so they are able to see the cars coming at them and don’t have to follow with the flow of the traffic where a car might come from behind and you will not be able to hear them and react in a timely fashion.”

“Businesses need to be more educated on the issues with disabilities.”

“Movie theaters are not accessible, especially for those hard of hearing. Movies are not captioned and I personally have talked to the manager to see whether that issue can be addressed, he said that nothing can be done with that regard. An IMAX theater in Calgary has captioning.”

“People need to be educated to address accessibility issues. Some don’t even want to take the responsibility.”

“Assist community organizations with public awareness on disability issues. Public education needs to be done. Events going on around the city should be made inclusive.”

“A great amount of education needs to be done as accessibility effects everyone; people’s attitudes need to be changed with regards to people with disabilities. Educating the public is very important, because if you want to make these things work, the public needs to be educated.”



City Facilities/Infrastructure

Facilities and Programming

- Improve programming available for people with disabilities.
- Cosmo Civic Center:
 - Ramp starts before the railing.
 - Lack of service elevator or wheelchair lift.
- Lakewood Civic Center:
 - Lack of wheelchair lift available.
- Cliff Wright Library:
 - No washroom available for people with disabilities.
- Nutana Legion building is not accessible.
- Need for more accessible washrooms with proper handles and risers.
- Saskatoon Fieldhouse:
 - Accessibility to the building itself is difficult. Bus stop nearest to the building is not lit at night.
- Canadian Mental Health Services on Ave. B:
 - No wheelchair access to this building.

"The physical accessibility to leisure centers is good; however, the actual programming can improve. Can have more leisure programs available for people with disabilities."

"The Cosmo Civic Center has a ramp that starts before the railing starts which causes problems for people in wheelchairs."

"No wheelchair lift available at the Lakewood Civic Center so poor wheel chair accessibility."

"No service elevator or wheelchair lift at the Cosmo civic center."

"Library staff is not very helpful. They tend to be too busy to work with people with disabilities. Also there is no washroom for people with disabilities at the Cliff Wright Library."

"Nutana Legion is not accessible – have to travel by street"

"Public libraries are not very accessible."

"Accessible washrooms – There is a need for more. Need proper handles and risers. It's more than just a big door that makes a washroom accessible. At times have to go home to use the washroom."

"City facilities need to have a separate accessible washroom."

"Fieldhouse – the building is accessible, however to get to the building and access to the Fieldhouse is very difficult. The bus stop nearest to the Fieldhouse is not lit at night. The signage in facilities varies from place to place. Lighting at night is an issue at times, not so much for me to see, but for others to be able to see me."

"Avenue B – Canadian Mental Health Services – no wheelchair access to this building."

Sidewalks

- Sidewalks with broken up concrete are not being fixed, and are difficult to get around on with wheelchairs or by walking.



- Lack of ramps on the south side of Adelaide and Preston.
- Ramps to get onto sidewalk are blocked by water in the spring. Drainage issues need to be addressed.
- Positioning of sidewalk ramps.
 - On 20th and 22nd and Idylwyld, Taylor and McKercher have to get into the way of oncoming traffic to get onto the sidewalk.
- Contrast of color changes in curbs to distinguish a start and end of a sidewalk path.
- Lack of sidewalks in the industrial areas
- It is more difficult to access sidewalks on the West Side of the City.
- Difficulty to maneuver across railroad tracks.

"Sidewalks are all broken up in front of the building and in other locations around the city. Makes it difficult to walk and get around in wheelchairs. We have been notifying the City about the sidewalks around the building for over 7 years now."

"There are no ramps on the south side of Adelaide and Preston so people in wheelchairs have to take to the street."

"The height of sidewalks seems inconsistent."

"In the spring, especially, all the ramps to get onto the sidewalk are blocked by water, sewage and drainage problems. It gets very difficult to get onto the sidewalk not only for those in wheelchairs but for anyone."

"In the spring it's difficult to get to a sidewalk with all the standing water right in front of the ramp. Drainage problems."

"Newer areas are good around Saskatoon. On the west side of the city, generally it's very difficult to get off sidewalks. Just resort to going down the road."

"On 22nd, 20th and Idylwyld, Taylor and McKercher – in order to get into the sidewalk in a wheelchair, have to actually get into the way of oncoming traffic."

"Color changes with the concrete for sidewalks. If you have vision problems you can't see where the path is and where it ends."

"There are no sidewalks in industrial areas. One time had to walk on Circle drive."

"Railroad tracks are difficult to get across"

Crosswalks and Traffic Signals

- Timing of the crosswalk lights is too fast. People don't have enough time to cross the streets
- Uncontrolled intersections with no clear pedestrian crosswalk
 - A block and a half east of the senior's building on Adelaide as cars speed by have to wait for a long time to cross the street.
 - Adelaide Street is seen as not being accessible.
- Not enough audible traffic signals in the downtown core.
- Difficulty of seeing the lights at the traffic signals, especially with glare from the sun is reflecting on them.
- Crosswalk buttons are not being maintained
- Intersections that become busy need to have pedestrian flashing signals installed as becomes difficult to cross the streets. (Kingsmere Blvd. is one example)



"The timing of the crosswalk lights is very quick and does not provide enough time to cross the street. Barely make it to the middle of the road when the light changes."

"Lights at the crosswalks go to fast. Don't have enough time to cross the street."

"A block and a half east from the senior's building on Adelaide, have an uncontrolled crosswalk, so can sit there for half an hour and still unable to cross. The cars slow down at the school, but not at this location, so especially in the winter have to watch out for cars when crossing the street."

"Adelaide Street in general is not accessible."

"A big challenge is to go across 8th street, Acadia and Taylor, Idylwyld and 22nd Ave, Queen and 2nd Ave. There aren't any audible signals in Idylwyld. The lights change too fast and are only able to make it to the median. Need to install audible signals or make the lights longer."

"Not enough audible traffic signals in the downtown core."

"At times it becomes very difficult to see the traffic lights or crossing lights, especially when the sun is shining straight into them. Installing covers for the traffic signals would solve that problem."

"Crosswalk buttons are not maintained."

"Kingsmere Blvd – traffic is getting really busy. Need to put in some lights or crosswalk signals. Pedestrian flashing crossings would be a very good idea to have around the city. Don't see many of those. It would make crossing the road at an unmarked intersection that much easier."

Transit

Access Transit

- Scheduling, having difficulty with planning a week in advance.
- People are given very little time at the destination to complete all tasks.
- Reliability:
 - Can guarantee to get people to their destination; however, cannot guarantee a ride back home.
 - Buses are frequently late.
- Not enough Access Transit buses available.
- The location of the ramp door on the bus could be moved to the side of the bus and made accessible for the driver to get to from the inside of the bus. At the present time bus drivers risk their safety by exiting the bus in way of traffic and having to circle the bus to get to the access ramp door.

"Access Transit - the only disadvantage is that we have to call one week in advance, but otherwise it's a great service. If you know your schedule it's excellent, but there are times when the doctor needs to see you immediately but you can't get there. Another thing is that they can guarantee to get you to a certain place, however they can't guarantee to pick you up at a certain time. You're given very little time at your destination to do all the things you need to do. There are not enough Access Transit buses available."

"Access Transit is frequently late. Since the route schedule changes took effect they've gotten better."

"In order to use Access Transit have to be spontaneous a week in advance."

"Incorporate some smaller shuttles to address the Access Transit needs. Dedicate a van to each part of the city as a start would be a great idea."



“Access Transit – it’s possible to have the ramp door located at the front of the bus, as right now the drivers are risking their safety as they can’t exit through the bus, there is a bar installed there. Bus drivers need to get out of the bus on their side and walk around the bus to get to the ramp door. They are putting their lives at risk for us.”

Conventional City Transit

- Scheduling improvements:
 - Difficult to get to Lawson Heights from the senior’s residence
 - Weekend and statutory holiday bus service needs improvement.
 - Buses don’t wait long enough for people with disabilities to get on the bus.
- Bus Shelters:
 - The bus shelter has been taken away from in front of the senior’s residence. It served as a marker for where the bus stopped and a hiding place from the wind, snow and rain.
- Proper signage is needed to ensure people are aware of where the bus stops.
- People have difficulty in seeing the bus numbers and names of the route. Having bus numbers displayed on the inside of the bus would be of benefit.
- Number of the buses can be imprinted directly onto the poles to indicate what buses stop at the various locations.
- Drivers should announce the stops as they approach them.

“It’s difficult to get to Lawson Heights from the residence. It would be nice to have a bus go there.”

“Having the #1 bus used to be ideal. They took away the bus and the bus shelter which used to be in front of the residence. Questions regarding why the shelter was taken away, as it served as a place to hide from the wind and the snow in the winter, and served as a marker for where the bus stop is.”

“It is difficult at times to tell where the bus stops are. Proper signage is needed to indicate where the bus stop is.”

“Bus numbers are difficult to see, especially from the rear of the bus. At times this is also the issue with the display on the front of the bus. It needs to be clearer and distinguishable. Some buses don’t have names or the numbers displayed. The number display on the back of the bus is usually covered in snow or mud and is very hard to see. Maybe having the bus number displayed on the inside of the bus would be helpful and definitely beneficial.”

“On the actual pole, can write down the numbers of what buses come to that stop in black and clear font.”

“Weekend bus service is terrible. People still work on weekends. During statutory holidays there is no bus service. To assume that people who usually take the bus to just stop taking it on the weekends does not make sense.”

“The schedule of the buses is a problem. The buses don’t wait long enough for people with disabilities to be able to get to them.”

“It would be very beneficial if the bus drivers could announce the stops at which the bus is stopping.”

“In United States the cabs for people with disabilities are low cost, city takes part in covering some costs thus people are able to use cabs more and don’t have to rely on public transit as much.”



Signage / Clear Print

- Documents relayed to the people should be in clear print having distinguishable colors and backgrounds.
- Bus schedule is difficult to read.
- Signage should be in simple language with incorporation of universal symbols.

"Clear print – need to have backgrounds and colors to be distinguishable."

"The bus schedule is very difficult to read, needs to be in clear print."

"Signage should be in simple language and symbol usage can be incorporated as well as that's universal."

Communication with the Public

- More communication is needed with the public to address various issues and to relay information on the initiatives the city has taken with regards to various tasks and issues.
 - Make groups like seniors and people with disabilities feel they are being heard and their concerns are being taken into account.
- Availability of Leisure programs needs to be communicated to the people.

"There is very little communication going on between the City and the seniors. We are forgotten. Unless one has a computer, where else does the City communicate?"

"Seniors feel that the City does not treat them very well. They want to be treated like average citizens. They feel that the City is giving antiques to the antique people."

"Seniors group – take a lot of initiative to voice their concerns be it about sidewalks, snow removal, but they are not being heard; feel like nothing is being done. They feel left out."

"Need to communicate to the people on what programs are available at the Leisure centers. If people knew about the programs, they would use them more."

Elections

- Ensuring that the locations chosen as polling stations are accessible.

"The advanced poll that I went to was not very accessible because it was a part of an old school. Maybe at times they have to look at the facility and assess whether it's accessible or not before booking it as a polling station."

Emergency

- Issues regarding emergency situations should be addressed.
 - In the case of a fire, ensuring that visual cues are available for those who are unable to hear a fire alarm.
 - Presence of fire wardens within city facilities to ensure all public is made aware of an emergency.
- Educating people regarding what procedures exist to address emergencies.

"Used to work for the Water Treatment Plant – seen as able bodied and able to work, however due to me being deaf and disabled was let go because of safety issues – being in a confined space, not



being able to hear any alarms was seen as a liability. Regardless of that, all of the communication was done by blackberry or a signal system, people who are able to hear, still had to wear ear-plugs to drown out the noise.”

“When a fire alarm goes off a signaling device could be used to symbolize the fire, exit lights flashing. There are cues by which we would follow when an emergency was declared.”

“There are fire wardens who are present at city facilities that address the issues of fire emergencies and ensure the public is made aware of the emergency.”

“At work, co-workers would be the ones we would have to rely on if we cannot hear a fire alarm. Someone would text me a 911 message, or sends an email, or just comes and gets me.”

“People need to be educated more with regards to the procedures that exist.”

“A visual alarm would be very helpful, at times of emergency people panic and might forget certain procedures and forget about us deaf people. There should be some visual cue that I could rely on.”

7.1. Summary of Focus Groups

Overall, participants in the focus groups feel as though Saskatoon is pretty accessible to them, especially compared to other cities. Mostly notably, improvements have been suggested in communication and improvements to the city sidewalks and traffic lights. Nearly all areas of the city are accessed by those with disabilities, including the malls and commercial centres, leisure centres, high schools, city hall, the library, churches, community centres and auditoriums. Some residents drive themselves or are able to have someone else drive them but a notable fraction use either the city transit system or access transit and so these areas are important to bear in mind with regards to accessibility and barrier free design.

Several barriers regarding the regular city transit system were identified such as: poor condition of the city buses, dissatisfaction with bus routes, problems with access during the winter time, difficulty with getting into the buses as a result of steep stairs. Senior participants felt that the buses they ride are not in very good condition – one participant commented “They’re giving the antique [buses] to the antiques!” It is generally felt that improved shelters are needed to allow residents to use the city bus service in the winter time and that improved snow removal is needed at the stops. There is also an issue regarding the steepness of the steps to get into the bus – the kneeling buses are considered to be one of the biggest pluses of Saskatoon’s transit. Some respondents also had complaints regarding the bus routes – they feel that there is a lack of reasonably direct routes to places they consider to be most commonly visited (such as to Lawson Heights and Circle). A few also found it difficult to find what routes to take without a computer. Those with low vision commented that it was very difficult for them to read the transit information because the font is not clear enough and that they are unable to read the number on the bus signs. City transit drivers were highly complimented by participants with low vision, who noted that the drivers are always willing to help them and will announce the stops if asked.

In general, seniors felt that the access transit system is a good idea in theory but in practice there are various problems. They are frustrated with hearing “I can get you there but I can’t pick you up”. It is difficult to be able to call one week in advance and even then not be able to get a ride on the bus: “You have to be spontaneous a week in advance”. It was suggested that more buses are needed to fulfill the need, especially



during peak hours and during the winter. Drivers were applauded by focus group participants as being as helpful as they could be, however it was suggested that the system could be improved by having the lift on the front of the bus and that it would be good to allow the driver easier access to the passengers in case there is an emergency.

Interest was expressed in having some kind of accessible taxi service that is similar to access transit for those who don't require as much help (ie: not lift) but do require more help than either regular city transit or a regular taxi service.

Sidewalk maintenance is another idea identified as presenting a significant barrier. Many have limited mobility and use walkers, wheelchairs or scooters to help them get around. For this reason, more ramps on sidewalks are needed, especially in older neighbourhoods. One participant noted that it is especially frustrating to have a ramp access on one side of the sidewalk but none on the other. Those in scooters must sometimes travel on the road as they are unable to access the sidewalk which is dangerous for both pedestrians and motorists alike. The maintenance of these ramps is also important – snow removal can sometimes be an issue, as well it was mentioned that at times there are problems with water drainage as large puddles collect at the bottom making it impossible to pass, especially for those with scooters. General sidewalk maintenance was also brought up as an issue – those with scooters cannot cross broken pavement. Even ramps that have already been installed can sometimes be a barrier since they are on a certain side of a corner and those with a scooter are required to go around. Those with low vision also mentioned that it would be very helpful to have some kind of colour or textural indication of where curb cuts are, since they can be difficult to locate. As well, there is a feeling that sidewalks tend to be too narrow. It is generally felt that the sidewalks are not well maintained despite complaints to the city and this was a significant area of discussion in the focus groups.

Snow is commonly considered an issue; however overall, participants felt that having residents clear their own sidewalk would help matters. Some residents expressed concern with their ability to clean their own sidewalk: "I'd like to know how to find my snow angel!" It was also suggested that businesses should be required to clear their sidewalk as well. At times, accumulated snow on the sidewalks, or "slidewalk" as one participant referred to it, are extremely difficult to manoeuvre and this makes taking city transit very difficult and also causes difficulty for pedestrians in general. Another suggestion was to improve and add new snow fences so that once snow is cleared it doesn't blow back onto sidewalks and walkways.

Pedestrians encounter several other barriers in crossing the street safely. Audible pedestrian signals are crucial to allowing those with low vision to be able to cross the street safely. Areas noted as being in particular need include downtown intersections; however there is need all over the city as evidenced by the comment: "There are so many I don't even know where to start!". Light crossings in many areas are considered to be far too short to allow a person with limited movement to cross in time. As well, it was commented that buttons need to be easier to find for those with low vision. These issues, coupled with the lack of audible signals, constitute a significant barrier to disabled pedestrians in the downtown areas.

The communication of the City of Saskatoon was identified as a key area that can be improved by the seniors. In general, both seniors and those with vision difficulties feel as though they are forgotten groups and would very much like to feel as though their



suggestions for municipal improvements are being heard by city council and that something is going to be done about it. They currently do not feel as though there is a very good system in place for fielding complaints or prioritizing modifications; one participant said that it felt as though things are done by “Cup of coffee decision making” – that city employees sit and have coffee and arbitrarily decide to fix certain things.

It was the general consensus that more public education needs to be done to ensure that the needs of those with disabilities are being met and better understood by the public.

The idea of having an accessibility committee that would deal specifically with these types of issues is considered to be an excellent idea. Participants suggested that the group should consist of those with a variety of different types of disabilities so that all groups are heard and issues are addressed. It is also felt that there should be an easy and effective avenue of communication open for seniors and those with disabilities to submit a suggestion or complaint and see that it is properly dealt with, or at the very least it is listened to. “People with disabilities need a safe place to air their concerns and then have someone interpret those concerns to whomever needs to hear them.”



8.0 Appendix A – Additional City Summaries

Toronto, ON

Toronto has implemented many programs to make the city accessible. This city provides numerous employment initiatives for those with disabilities, educational programs specifically for those with disabilities, and programs to provide affordable housing.

The City of Toronto also developed a “Twelve Planning Principles to Guide the Development of the City of Toronto Official Plan”

- **Principle # 1** Empower people with disabilities as found in the objectives of the 'active' and 'independent' living movements; and
- **Principle #2** Establish proactive public education programs to eliminate misconceptions of people with disabilities held by society at large.
- **Principle #3** Change existing barrier-free 'guidelines' into enforceable policy.
- **Principle #4** Incorporate universal design principles into the planning, design and development stages of the land development process.
- **Principle #5** Provide up to date information, training and continuing education for City staff in order to increase their awareness and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities.
- **Principle #6** Regular and ongoing collaboration with the Toronto Joint Citizen's Committee for People with Disabilities (TJCC) and related community organizations in order to be informed on current and future research into best practices related to barrier-free design of the built environment.
- **Principle #7** Audit of existing barriers within internal and external built environments.
- **Principle #8** Development of public transportation policy that is inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities and seniors.
- **Principle #9** Develop a prioritized work schedule of street, sidewalk and intersection upgrades (e.g. curb cuts) based on direct consultation with people with disabilities and seniors.
- **Principle #10** Development housing policy that incorporates characteristics of adaptable, universal and flexible housing design.
- **Principle #11** Establish an ongoing partnership between the City and all community organizations focused on providing barrier free access to recreational facilities, services and programs for persons with disabilities.
- **Principle #12** Include policy within the Official plan to remedy communication barriers in City services and access to information in order to prevent further discrimination.

Source: Holten, 2001

Committees and Boards

Disability Issues Community Advisory Committee

The first priority for the committee has been the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Committee members have also been actively providing advice in the development of new accessibility guidelines and an accessibility audit of all City-owned buildings.



Calgary, AB

Calgary has subcommittees of the general Advisory Committee on Accessibility to focus on issues of Accessible Design and Transportation Services. Little information is available on other programs focusing on education, employment and housing for persons with disabilities.

Committees and Boards

Advisory Committee on Accessibility

- The primary purpose of the committee is to focus on broad policy issues and advise City Council on access issues related to municipal properties, information and services.

Access Design Sub-Committee:

- Reviews and make recommendations on issues that relate to accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Review of major public and private projects to ensure the greatest level of accessibility for persons with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.

Transportation Services for People with Disabilities Sub-Committee

- Reviews and makes recommendations on transportation services for people with disabilities

Langley, BC

The Langley Association for Community Living is a non-profit organization that addresses the needs of the disabled in the city of Langley. Several initiatives to improve and make accessible Langley buildings have been undertaken. A program entitled “You Gotta Have Friends” was started to combat isolation as a whole, and by doing so, it also endeavors to raise awareness about disability issues and to train staff in community integration. The LACL actively advocates rental subsidies and support families that will require funding for renovations and provides assistance in finding employment for disabled persons. To assist in transportation needs, they have purchased a wheelchair accessible van.

Committees and Boards

Langley Association for Community Living

Address the barriers faced with persons with disabilities. Focus on the following barriers:

- ❖ Architectural
- ❖ Environmental
- ❖ Attitudinal
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Transportation



Windsor, ON

To comply with the ODA, Windsor has founded the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee to better understand disability issues in the city. One of Windsor's greatest advances in city accessibility is the completely accessible boundless playground that was built able to accommodate children who use wheelchairs. This city has also considered the issue of accessible tourism in their city. They also provide an accessible housing registry for disabled Windsor residents and have a strong focus on employment initiatives – they educate employers how to accommodate those with disabilities and to avoid creating job descriptions which contain barriers.

Committees and Boards

Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee

Brampton, ON

To comply with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Brampton has focused on making city facilities accessible, including lowering curbs and adding detectable curb markings for those with visual impairment. A list of Parks and Recreational facilities that are accessible including leisure activities tailored specifically for those with special needs is available. City documents are all available in Arial, a sans serif font that is easier for those with visual impairments to read. As well, assistive devices which display text in high contrast is available at the library. Effort is being made to ensure that schools are accessible. Brampton is also the first recipient of the Canada Blooms Universal Access Award (2006).

Committees and Boards

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Chilliwack, BC

The Chilliwack Society for Community Living is a non-profit association which advocates for disabled persons focusing on those with developmental disabilities. Their focus is on architectural improvements, transportation, employment and raising awareness of disability issues. The CSCL concluded a major public awareness campaign in 2006 with the "Mt. Kili Project". The project saw an individual with a developmental disability and a non-disabled support person climb to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro in February 2006. This project was intended to encourage people to think differently about the abilities and gifts that individuals with disabilities can offer to the community. This society has many grant programs to assist in transportation, housing, employment and accessibility.

Committees and Boards

Chilliwack Society for Community Living

Examines needs of disabled persons in terms of:

- ❖ Architecture
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Attitudes



-
- ❖ Finances
 - ❖ Employment
 - ❖ Communication
 - ❖ Transportation
-

Burlington, ON

The Burlington Advisory Committee was formed to allow Burlington to comply with the ODA. This committee advocates improving access to public facilities as well as city events. Training is provided to transit employees to be able to help those with special needs, and city staff is also trained to assist these customers. A program is planned to educate building developers on accessibility needs for housing and commercial properties.

Committees and Boards

Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee

Sarnia, ON

The city of Sarnia performs accessibility audits of city facilities. They also provide educational and training courses for city staff to assist them in helping those with disabilities use city facilities and services. A separate transit advisory sub-committee looks at specific accessibility needs of the Sarnia transit system including large print maps, wheelchair accessible busses and clearing of snow from bus stops.

Committees and Boards

Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee Transit Advisory Sub-Committee

Vancouver, BC

Little information is available on the website regarding specific initiatives that were undertaken in the way of accessibility and awareness. Vancouver has formed an employment subcommittee which tackles issues regarding the barriers that those with disabilities face when seeking employment. They have unveiled the “WorkAble Solutions” job search web site for persons with disabilities to aid employment of these individuals. They have also hired one person with mental illness to work for four months during the summer of 2004 in the Outdoors Garden Program.

Committees and Boards

Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee

- Tackles issues in areas such as housing, employment, awareness, transportation, accessibility and universal design.

Employment Sub-Committee

- Focus specifically on employment issues – Meet the “Ten by ten” challenge

Housing Sub-Committee

- Examine housing issues



Transportation Sub-Committee

- Explore transportation issues such as the accessibility of public transportation

Seniors Sub-Committee

- Focus on issues of the senior population in Vancouver.

Saguenay, QC

The City of Saguenay has created a formal plan of integration of those with disabilities more fully into the city's facilities, recreation and culture. Many of the issues examined have to do with physical accessibility, including training programs for city staff, notably police officers and firemen in the specific needs of those with disabilities. This city is pays special attention to the safety of those with disabilities by public education and examination of evacuation measure to ensure that people with motility, visual or hearing impairments are able to easily get to safety.

Prince George, BC

The city of Prince George has numerous committees that are dedicated to specific areas of accessibility. The Special Needs Advisory Committee is the main body which addresses all issues; however there is also an Advisory Design Panel, the Prince George Seniors Council and the Accessible Transportation Access Committee. All these committees operate separately with liaisons between them. Prince George offers an annual Access Award of Merit to identify organizations or individuals that show a dedication to accessibility issues. They have offered taxi saver coupons for those with accessibility problems to be able to pay a reduced fare for taxi service. A wide-ranging audit is being done on city streets to ensure that there is a completely accessible pedestrian network. This project includes many improvements including curb cuts and audible pedestrian signals at intersections.

Committees and Boards

Special Needs Advisory Committee

- Mission: "To remove physical and social barriers which impede the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community life."

Advisory Design Panel

- Consults on the design of city facilities. There is one appointee from the Special Needs Advisory Committee to ensure that buildings are made accessible.

Prince George Seniors Council

- Specifically addresses issues of seniors.

Accessible Transportation Access Committee

- To ensure accessible transportation



Lethbridge, AB

The City of Lethbridge has a Community and Social Development Committee which examines social issues in the city of Lethbridge including issues relating to those with disabilities. Their primary focus is on accessibility of city facilities, providing affordable housing and transportation and they do not look at issues relating to education or employment. They have conducted focus groups with persons with disabilities to better understand the barriers in the city. Few specific initiatives have been implemented, however they are currently looking at some of the issues in more detail.

Committees and Boards

Community and Social Development Committee

- This group advocates social programs for several groups including those with disabilities.



9.0 Appendix B – City of Edmonton Accessibility Checklist

City of Edmonton – Accessibility Checklist

<http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/AccessibilityChecklist.pdf>

EDMONTON

CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY
& UNIVERSAL DESIGN
IN ARCHITECTURE

The City of Edmonton Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities has created this checklist to promote the concepts of Universal Design. The Barrier-Free Design Guide provides only a minimum standard for accessibility. With an aging population and increased independence and involvement of persons with disabilities in the community, there is a need to exceed

minimum standards for accessibility where possible. For example, many scooters today require a 10-foot turning radius instead of the standard five-feet. Strollers for children are larger and require more room for maneuverability. Good design should incorporate principles of Universal Design, offering solutions as to how spaces can be designed and developed to meet the needs

of all users. The following checklist draws attention to several areas where accessibility can be improved by good design. For additional information or alternate formats, please contact the Advisory Board office.

Phone (780) 496-5822
TTY (780) 944-5555
Transfer Code: DISBOARD
Fax (780) 577-3525

THE ADVISORY BOARD MISSION:
"To promote recognition of the entitlements and service needs of Edmontonians with disabilities by facilitating changes in City policy and practice."



CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURE

	PARKING AREAS	Y/N N/A
	Designated accessible parking spaces located closest to accessible entrance	
	Barrier-free path of travel from parking area to building entrance (clear of snow, garbage cans, sign posts and other obstacles; pathway well lit)	
	Curb ramp to sidewalk located between parking spaces	
	Access aisle painted on pavement between parking spaces	
	Accessible parking symbol painted on pavement of each stall	
	Accessible parking signage posted (visible after snow)	
	Number of designated accessible parking spaces ratio at least 3/100	
	Accessible parking spaces width 3700 mm	
	ENTRANCES	
	Barrier-free path of travel to entrance, preferably on-grade access	
	Signage at all non-accessible entrances should clearly indicate location of accessible entrance.	
	Entrance doorway 920 mm wide	
	Entrance door easy to open (automatic sliding doors are optimal; power doors with large paddle/push plate is the next best alternative)	
	If entrance is through doors in a series, leave enough room for a wheelchair to occupy the vestibule while opening the 2nd door	
	Automatic doors – large well-marked button/paddle	
	Automatic doors – button is far enough from door that user is not struck by opening door	
	Level, or beveled doorway threshold	
	Color contrast to identify doorway threshold	
	SIGNAGE	
	Facilities & services for persons with disabilities identified with appropriate symbols: white on blue background	
	Signage available in symbol form for those with visual processing difficulties or who are unable to read	
	Signage includes Braille as well as large print, high color contrast tactile lettering	
	General and way-finding signage consistent in design and easily identifiable	
	Braille signage mounted at appropriate height (chest level) and location	
	Signage provided indicating accessible services (e.g., availability of assistive listening devices)	
	Signage lettering in Sans Serif (e.g. Verdana, Arial, Helvetica) for reading ease	

Physical Access
 Blind or Partially Sighted Access
 Deaf or Hard of Hearing Access
 Cognitive Limitations Access



CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURE

	WASHROOMS	Y/N N/A
	Single door entrance (not two doors in quick succession)	
	Washroom door is wide, easy to approach, and open (not recessed in a narrow hallway)	
	For washrooms without entrance door, there is only one turn with clear corner so persons who are blind do not become disoriented	
	Proper signage located outside entrance and cubicle door	
	Sinks, garbage cans, etc. located around perimeter rather than in the centre of the room	
	Barrier-free sink (that allows knee access for persons using wheelchairs) with soap and towel dispenser close to sink and at accessible height (wash and dry hands prior to wheeling); include low mounted or tilt mirror	
	BARRIER-FREE CUBICLE:	
	-minimum 1500 mm x 1500 mm	
	-door that swings outward so person in wheelchair can close it independently	
	-equipped with door pull handle, coat hook, grab bars at appropriate height and placement	
	-can be locked from the inside with a large, sliding latch (not thumb-turning latch)	
	-toilet paper reachable without leaning too far off toilet	
	-accessible toilet height between 400 mm - 460 mm	
	Self-contained, unisex/family washroom also available, with proper signage provided in an accessible location (allows for an individual who is young, elderly or who has a disability to be assisted by a companion or attendant)	
	INTERIOR BUILDING ELEMENTS	
	Public and emergency phones mounted at an accessible height	
	TTY (built in typewriter) phone for users who are deaf or hard of hearing	
	At least one drinking fountain at accessible (child) height, spout located near front, controls either automatic or easily operated	
	One barrier-free section at an accessible height at every counter that serves the public	
	Shelving, coat hooks and light switches at an accessible height	
	Space for persons using wheelchairs to sit/park in all public seating areas (without blocking walk through areas)	
	Flat non-sloped wheelchair seating area (in theatres, lecture halls, sports areas etc.)	
	Glass doors or partitions include a contrasting strip of color across at eye-level	
	ALARM SYSTEMS/ EMERGENCY EXITS	
	When audible alarm is used, also use visual signal (e.g., flashing light)	



Physical Access



Blind or Partially Sighted Access



Deaf or Hard of Hearing Access



Cognitive Limitations Access



CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURE

	STAIRS	Y/N	N/A
	Slip-resistant, tactile finish or strips contrasting in color and texture on all landings		
	Tactile strips in contrasting color on all stair nosings		
	ELEVATORS		
	Location of elevators clearly identified at main entrance		
	Dimension of elevator car allows for a minimum turning radius of 1500 mm x 1500 mm with elevator door at least 910 mm wide		
	Elevator buttons and emergency controls mounted at accessible height		
	Elevator buttons and emergency controls incorporate large print tactile numbers and Braille mounted in a raised fashion (not flush or recessed)		
	Braille and tactile numbers placed on both sides of door jambs at appropriate height to identify floor level		
	Visual indicator in elevators to indicate "help on the way" for use in an emergency		
	RAMPS		
	Ramps are used for any slope steeper than 1 in 20 in a path of travel		
	Preferred maximum slope is 1 in 16 (1 in 12 is code)		
	Ramp width minimum 1500 mm to allow 2 wheelchairs to pass (or wheelchair and pedestrian, stroller, etc.); level landings/resting areas provided at 9 m intervals along ramp		
	Minimize or avoid tight turns or switch-backs		
	Strong color contrast and tactile surfacing on all ramp landings		
	Landings designed to accommodate larger chairs and scooters (able to open door without backing onto ramp)		
	HANDRAILS		
	Handrails on both sides of stairwell/ramp that are continuously graspable		
	Handrails in contrasting color to wall or surrounding area		
	Handrails provided at two heights with unobscured view between		
	Handrails extend horizontally beyond last stair and terminate to wall or ground		

Continued on the back.

Increased accessibility translates into an increased client base.

Refer to the BARRIER-FREE DESIGN GUIDELINES for details regarding appropriate dimensions. The Barrier-Free Design Guide is available for \$15.00 from the Safety Codes Council, at (780) 413-0099.

Physical Access
 Blind or Partially Sighted Access
 Deaf or Hard of Hearing Access
 Cognitive Limitations Access



10.0 Appendix C – City Accessibility Checklist

			Edmonton	Winnipeg	Kitchener	Waterloo	Regina*
Accessibility	Motility issues	Perform accessibility audits/provide access to audits	Y		Y		
		Universal design guidelines provided by the city	Y	Y	Y	P	
		Emergency routes are accessible		Y	P	P	
		Ensure accessibility of city facilities	Y	Y	Y	Y	
		Ensure accessibility of city events	P		P	P	Y
	Deaf or hard of hearing	Audible crossings at intersections		P			
		ASL interpreter available/closed captioning for city meetings	Y		Y	Y	
		ASL interpreter available for city services		Y		Y	
		Installation of TextNet for TTY devices	Y		P	Y	Y
	Blind or vision difficulties	City documents available in braille or audio	Y		P	Y	
		Text enlargement/W3C capabilities for website		Y	Y	Y	Y
		Detectable curb markings for those with low vision		Y			
		Other	Air quality issues examined				
Awareness	Awards/Recognition	Recognition of companies who employ disabled persons	Y				
		Recognition of individuals who work for those with disabilities	Y				
		Recognition of companies who design/provide accessible facilities	Y				
	Disabled parking stalls	Distributing information on why parking stalls are important	Y				
		Priority for ticketing/increased fine for those parked in disabled stalls	Y			Y	
	Communication	Newsletter about events and initiatives	Y				
		Information about barrier free design	Y	Y	Y	Y	
		Public education about accessible design and inclusion		Y			Y
		Established Sensitivity training program - City Employees					
	Education	Programs for those with disabilities	Educational programs for those with motility issues	Y			
Educational programs for those with difficulty hearing			Y				
Educational programs for those with difficulty seeing			Y				
Educational programs for those with psychological issues			Y				
Employment	Education of companies	Educate human resources departments			P	P	Y
	Opportunities	City job bank/other encouragement for those with disabilities to apply					
		Formal inclusion policy of non-discrimination of those with disabilities	Y	Y			
		Assistance in preparing application					Y
		Paid internship offered by the city					
Housing	Accessible housing	Education for developers on accessibility needs	P				Y
		Support services available	Y				P*
		Accessible housing required or provided by city		Y			
		Accessible housing registry	P				Y
		Incentives provided to developers to build accessible housing					
	Snow removal	Snow removal from city property and services (such as bus stops)	Y	Y	Y	Y	
		Snow must be removed from sidewalks by residents			Y	Y	
		Fine for not shovelling sidewalk			Y	Y	
		City will clear sidewalks if resident is unable		Y	Y	Y	
		Drop curbs are thoroughly cleared by city				Y	
Inclusiveness	Adult programs	Leisure activities for adults with motility issues	Y	Y	Y		Y
		Leisure activities for adults with vision impairment	Y	Y			
		Leisure activities for adults with hearing impairment		Y			Y
		Leisure activities for adults with psychological issues	Y	Y			Y
		General Activities for adults with special needs	Y	Y			Y
	Children's programs	Leisure activities for children with motility issues	Y		Y		Y
		Leisure activities for children with vision impairment	Y		Y		
		Leisure activities for children with hearing impairment		Y	Y		Y
		Leisure activities for children with psychological issues	Y		Y		
		General activities for children with special needs	Y		Y		Y
	Senior programs	Leisure and social activities for seniors	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Transportation		Accessible taxi service available	P				Y
		Accessible public transportation	Y	Y			Y
Committees	Available information	Information available about goals, achievements and future plans	Y		Y	Y	
	Issues examined	Physical accessibility issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Promoting awareness with awards, events, communication with public	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Educational programs for those with disabilities	Y		Y	Y	Y
		Employment opportunities or education of employment	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Housing and Snow removal	Y		Y	Y	Y
		Inclusiveness/Leisure programs	Y		Y	Y	Y
		Transportation				Y	Y

Legend: "Y" – the cities currently practice/implement these initiatives, "P" – the cities have proposed these initiatives, however they have not been implemented to date.

City of Saskatoon – Planning Stage, Accessibility Plan for
Persons in need of Accessibility Services



			London	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton
Accessibility	Motility issues	Perform accessibility audits/provide access to audits	Y	Y	Y		Y
		Universal design guidelines provided by the city	Y	Y	Y		
		Emergency routes are accessible			Y		
		Ensure accessibility of city facilities	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Ensure accessibility of city events	P				P
	Deaf or hard of hearing	Audible crossings at intersections	P		Y		Y
		ASL interpreter available/closed captioning for city meetings	Y	Y	Y		Y
		ASL interpreter available for city services		P	Y		Y
		Installation of TextNet for TTY devices	Y	Y	Y		
	Blind or vision difficulties	City documents available in braille or audio		Y	Y	Y	
		Text enlargement/W3C capabilities for website		Y	Y	Y	P
		Detectable curb markings for those with low vision					
	Other	Air quality issues examined					
Awareness	Awards/Recognition	Recognition of companies who employ disabled persons		Y			
		Recognition of individuals who work for those with disabilities		Y			
		Recognition of companies who design/provide accessible facilities		Y	Y	Y	
	Disabled parking stalls	Distributing information on why parking stalls are important	Y			Y	
		Priority for ticketing/increased fine for those parked in disabled stalls					Y
	Communication	Newsletter about events and initiatives		Y			
		Information about barrier free design	P	Y			
		Public education about accessible design and inclusion	P	Y	Y		P
		Established Sensitivity training program - City Employees		Y	Y		
Education	Programs for those with disabilities	Educational programs for those with motility issues				-	
		Educational programs for those with difficulty hearing		Y		-	
		Educational programs for those with difficulty seeing		Y		-	
		Educational programs for those with psychological issues				-	
Employment	Education of companies	Educate human resources departments		Y		-	Y
	Opportunities	City job bank/other encouragement for those with disabilities to apply	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Formal inclusion policy of non-discrimination of those with disabilities	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Assistance in preparing application	Y	Y		-	
		Paid internship offered by the city					Y
Housing	Accessible housing	Education for developers on accessibility needs	P	Y		-	
		Support services available				-	Y
		Accessible housing required or provided by city		Y	Y	-	P
		Accessible housing registry				-	
		Incentives provided to developers to build accessible housing	Y			-	
	Snow removal	Snow removal from city property and services (such as bus stops)				Y	
		Snow must be removed from sidewalks by residents		Y		Y	P
		Fine for not shovelling sidewalk		Y		Y	
		City will clear sidewalks if resident is unable		Y			P
		Drop curbs are thoroughly cleared by city					P
Inclusiveness	Adult programs	Leisure activities for adults with motility issues	-	Y		Y	
		Leisure activities for adults with vision impairment	-				
		Leisure activities for adults with hearing impairment	-				
		Leisure activities for adults with psychological issues	-	Y	Y	Y	
		General Activities for adults with special needs	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Children's programs	Leisure activities for children with motility issues	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Leisure activities for children with vision impairment	-			Y	
		Leisure activities for children with hearing impairment	-				
		Leisure activities for children with psychological issues	-		Y	Y	Y
		General activities for children with special needs			Y	Y	Y
	Senior programs	Leisure and social activities for seniors	-	Y	Y		Y
Transportation		Accessible taxi service available	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
		Accessible public transportation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committees	Available information	Information available about goals, achievements and future plans	Y	Y	Y		Y
	Issues examined	Physical accessibility issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Promoting awareness with awards, events, communication with public	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Educational programs for those with disabilities	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Employment opportunities or education of employment	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Housing and Snow removal	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Inclusiveness/Leisure programs	Y	Y	Y	-	Y
		Transportation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend: "Y" – the cities currently practice/implement these initiatives, "P" – the cities have proposed these initiatives, however they have not been implemented to date.

City of Saskatoon – Planning Stage, Accessibility Plan for
Persons in need of Accessibility Services



			Mississauga	Brampton	Kingston	Langley	Windsor
Accessibility	Motility issues	Perform accessibility audits/provide access to audits	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Universal design guidelines provided by the city	Y	Y			
		Emergency routes are accessible		Y			
		Ensure accessibility of city facilities	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Ensure accessibility of city events					
	Deaf or hard of hearing	Audible crossings at intersections		Y	P		Y
		ASL interpretor available/closed captioning for city meetings			Y		Y
		ASL interpretor available for city services		P			
		Installation of TextNet for TTY devices		Y	Y		Y
	Blind or vision difficulties	City documents available in braille or audio					P
Text enlargement/W3C capabilities for website		P			P	Y	
Detectable curb markings for those with low vision			Y				
	Other	Y					
Awareness	Awards/Reconigition	Air quality issues examined					
		Recognition of companies who employ disabled persons					
		Recognition of individuals who work for those with disabilities					
		Recognition of companies who design/provide accessible facilities			P		Y
	Disabled parking stalls	Distributing information on why parking stalls are important					
		Priority for ticketing/increased fine for those parked in disabled stalls	Y	Y			
	Communication	Newsletter about events and initiatives					
		Information about barrier free design					Y
		Public education about accessible design and inclusion	Y				Y
		Established Sensitivity training program - City Employees	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Education	Programs for those with disabilities	Educational programs for those with motility issues					
		Educational programs for those with difficulty hearing					
		Educational programs for those with difficulty seeing					
		Educational programs for those with psychological issues					
Employment	Education of companies	Educate human resources departments			Y		Y
	Opportunities	City job bank/other encouragement for those with disabilities to apply					Y
		Formal inclusion policy of non-discrimination of those with disabilities	Y				Y
			Assistance in preparing application				Y
		Paid internship offered by the city					
Housing	Accessible housing	Education for developers on accessibility needs	Y				
		Support services available			Y	Y	
		Accessible housing required or provided by city					
		Accessible housing registry			Y		Y
		Incentives provided to developers to build accessible housing					
	Snow removal	Snow removal from city property and services (such as bus stops)					
		Snow must be removed from sidewalks by residents					
		Fine for not shovelling sidewalk					
		City will clear sidewalks if resident is unable	Y	P			
		Drop curbs are thouroughly cleared by city					
Inclusiveness	Adult programs	Leisure activities for adults with motility issues	Y	Y	-		Y
		Leisure activities for adults with vision impairment	-		-		
		Leisure activities for adults with hearing impairment	-		-		
		Leisure activities for adults with psychological issues	-		-		
		General Activities for adults with special needs	Y	Y	-	Y	
	Children's programs	Leisure activities for children with motility issues	-	Y	-		
		Leisure activities for children with vision impairment	-		-		
		Leisure activities for children with hearing impairment	-		-		
		Leisure activities for children with psychological issues	-		-	Y	
		General activities for children with special needs	Y	Y	-		
	Senior programs	Leisure and social activities for seniors	-		-	Y	Y
Transportation		Accessible taxi service available			P		
		Accessible public transportation			Y	P	
Committees	Available information	Information available about goals, achievements and future plans	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Issues examined	Physical accessibility issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Promoting awareness with awards, events, communication with public	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
			Educational programs for those with disabilities		Y		
		Employment opportunities or education of employment				Y	Y
		Housing and Snow removal					Y
		Inclusiveness/Leisure programs					
		Transportation		Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend: "Y" – the cities currently practice/implement these initiatives, "P" – the cities have proposed these initiatives, however they have not been implemented to date.

City of Saskatoon – Planning Stage, Accessibility Plan for
Persons in need of Accessibility Services



			Chilliwack	Burlington	Samia	Peterborough	Vancouver
Accessibility	Motility issues	Perform accessibility audits/provide access to audits	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Universal design guidelines provided by the city		Y	Y	Y	Y
		Emergency routes are accessible					
		Ensure accessibility of city facilities		Y	Y	Y	
		Ensure accessibility of city events		Y			
	Deaf or hard of hearing	Audible crossings at intersections			P		
		ASL interpreter available/closed captioning for city meetings		P			
		ASL interpreter available for city services					
		Installation of TextNet for TTY devices			Y	Y	
	Blind or vision difficulties	City documents available in braille or audio					
		Text enlargement/W3C capabilities for website			Y	Y	
		Detectable curb markings for those with low vision					
		Air quality issues examined					
Awareness	Awards/Recognition	Recognition of companies who employ disabled persons					
		Recognition of individuals who work for those with disabilities					
		Recognition of companies who design/provide accessible facilities		P			
	Disabled parking stalls	Distributing information on why parking stalls are important			P		
		Priority for ticketing/increased fine for those parked in disabled stalls		Y			
	Communication	Newsletter about events and initiatives	Y				
		Information about barrier free design					
		Public education about accessible design and inclusion					
		Established Sensitivity training program - City Employees	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Education	Programs for those with disabilities	Educational programs for those with motility issues		Y	Y	Y	
		Educational programs for those with difficulty hearing					
		Educational programs for those with difficulty seeing					
		Educational programs for those with psychological issues					
Employment	Education of companies Opportunities	Educate human resources departments	P			Y	
		City job bank/other encouragement for those with disabilities to apply	Y			Y	Y
		Formal inclusion policy of non-discrimination of those with disabilities					Y
		Assistance in preparing application	Y				
		Paid internship offered by the city					Y
Housing	Accessible housing	Education for developers on accessibility needs			P	Y	Y
		Support services available	Y				
		Accessible housing required or provided by city					Y
		Accessible housing registry	Y		P		
		Incentives provided to developers to build accessible housing					
	Snow removal	Snow removal from city property and services (such as bus stops)	Y		P		
		Snow must be removed from sidewalks by residents					
		Fine for not shovelling sidewalk					
		City will clear sidewalks if resident is unable					
		Drop curbs are thoroughly cleared by city			P		
Inclusiveness	Adult programs	Leisure activities for adults with motility issues			Y		
		Leisure activities for adults with vision impairment					
		Leisure activities for adults with hearing impairment					
		Leisure activities for adults with psychological issues	Y				
		General Activities for adults with special needs		Y			
	Children's programs	Leisure activities for children with motility issues					
		Leisure activities for children with vision impairment					
		Leisure activities for children with hearing impairment					
		Leisure activities for children with psychological issues		Y			
		General activities for children with special needs			Y		
	Senior programs	Leisure and social activities for seniors					
Transportation		Accessible taxi service available				P	
		Accessible public transportation	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committees	Available information	Information available about goals, achievements and future plans	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Physical accessibility issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Issues examined	Promoting awareness with awards, events, communication with public	Y	Y	Y	Y	
		Educational programs for those with disabilities					
		Employment opportunities or education of employment	Y	Y		Y	Y
		Housing and Snow removal	Y		Y	Y	Y
		Inclusiveness/Leisure programs				Y	
		Transportation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Legend: "Y" – the cities currently practice/implement these initiatives, "P" – the cities have proposed these initiatives, however they have not been implemented to date.

City of Saskatoon – Planning Stage, Accessibility Plan for
Persons in need of Accessibility Services



			Guelph	Saguenay	Prince George	Kelowna	Lethbridge	St. Catharines
Accessibility	Motility issues	Perform accessibility audits/provide access to audits	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Universal design guidelines provided by the city	P		Y	Y		Y
		Emergency routes are accessible		Y				P
		Ensure accessibility of city facilities	Y		Y		Y	Y
		Ensure accessibility of city events						
	Deaf or hard of hearing	Audible crossings at intersections			Y	Y		P
		ASL interpreter available/closed captioning for city meetings						Y
		ASL interpreter available for city services						
		Installation of TextNet for TTY devices	Y					Y
	Blind or vision difficulties	City documents available in braille or audio		P				P
		Text enlargement/W3C capabilities for website	Y	P				Y
		Detectable curb markings for those with low vision				Y		
	Other	Air quality issues examined						
Awareness	Awards/Recognition	Recognition of companies who employ disabled persons						
		Recognition of individuals who work for those with disabilities			Y			
		Recognition of companies who design/provide accessible facilities			Y			
	Disabled parking stalls	Distributing information on why parking stalls are important		Y				
		Priority for ticketing/increased fine for those parked in disabled stalls	Y	Y	Y			
		Newsletter about events and initiatives		P				P
	Communication	Information about barrier free design		P				
		Public education about accessible design and inclusion		P	Y			Y
		Established Sensitivity training program - City Employees		Y	Y			Y
Education	Programs for those with disabilities	Educational programs for those with motility issues						
		Educational programs for those with difficulty hearing						
		Educational programs for those with difficulty seeing						
		Educational programs for those with psychological issues						
Employment	Education of companies Opportunities	Educate human resources departments						
		City job bank/other encouragement for those with disabilities to apply		Y				Y
		Formal inclusion policy of non-discrimination of those with disabilities		Y				Y
		Assistance in preparing application		Y				
		Paid internship offered by the city						
Housing	Accessible housing	Education for developers on accessibility needs						
		Support services available		Y			Y	
		Accessible housing required or provided by city					Y	
		Accessible housing registry		P			Y	
		Incentives provided to developers to build accessible housing		Y				
	Snow removal	Snow removal from city property and services (such as bus stops)		Y				
		Snow must be removed from sidewalks by residents						
		Fine for not shovelling sidewalk						
	Inclusiveness	City will clear sidewalks if resident is unable		Y				
		Drop curbs are thoroughly cleared by city						
	Adult programs	Leisure activities for adults with motility issues			Y	Y		
		Leisure activities for adults with vision impairment						
		Leisure activities for adults with hearing impairment						
		Leisure activities for adults with psychological issues						
		General Activities for adults with special needs	P	P	Y		Y	
	Children's programs	Leisure activities for children with motility issues			Y	Y		
		Leisure activities for children with vision impairment						
		Leisure activities for children with hearing impairment						
		Leisure activities for children with psychological issues						
		General activities for children with special needs	P	P	Y	Y	Y	
Transportation		Leisure and social activities for seniors			Y	Y		
		Accessible taxi service available					Y	
Committees	Available information	Accessible public transportation	Y				P	Y
		Information available about goals, achievements and future plans	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
	Issues examined	Physical accessibility issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
		Promoting awareness with awards, events, communication with public			Y			Y
		Educational programs for those with disabilities						
		Employment opportunities or education of employment		Y				Y
		Housing and Snow removal		Y			Y	
		Inclusiveness/Leisure programs	Y	Y				
		Transportation	Y		Y		Y	Y

Legend: "Y" – the cities currently practice/implement these initiatives, "P" – the cities have proposed these initiatives, however they have not been implemented to date.



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Articles of Interest

City of London 2007 FADS - http://www.london.ca/Planning/FADS_2007_final.pdf

The Accessible/Inclusive Cities & Communities Project report, prepared for the Vancouver Agreement – January, 2005: <http://www.tdhstrategies.com/downloads/aiccp.pdf>

“The Accessible & Inclusive City”, an academic paper written for Western Economic Diversification Canada to be submitted to the United Nations World Urban Forum, which is being hosted in Vancouver in June, 2006 – April, 2005: <http://www.tdhstrategies.com/downloads/accessibleinclusive.pdf>

Accessible Pedestrian Signals: Synthesis and Guide to Best Practice – Final Report. Prepared for National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council. Berlin, MA. May 2003: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/aps/pdf/APS-Synthesis.pdf>

Ministry of Citizenship - Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. A Guide to Annual Accessibility Planning under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. August 2002. www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/index.html

National Disability Authority (Dublin, Ireland): www.nda.ie

Links Relative to City Information

Edmonton

Relevant Links

Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities (ABSPD) Website:

http://www.edmonton.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_270_0_0_35/http%3B/CMSServer/COEWeb/community+and+people+services/people+services/people+with+special+needs/Advisoryboard.htm

ABSPD Report 2006 <http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/ABSPDAnnualReport.pdf>

Interagency Committee on Recreation for Persons With Special Needs

http://www.edmonton.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_270_0_0_35/http%3B/CMSServer/COEWeb/community+and+people+services/people+services/people+with+special+needs/interagencycommitteeonrecreationforpersonswithspecialneeds.htm

Leisure Opportunities for Persons with Special Needs

<http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/CityWideServicesBranch/SpecialNeedsLeisureOpportunities3.pdf>

Recreational Facilities Accessibility Guide

<http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/RecFacilitiesAccessGuide.pdf>

Winnipeg

Relevant Links

Access Advisory Committee <http://aacwinnipeg.mb.ca/>

City of Winnipeg Design Standards http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/Access_Design_Standards.pdf

Leisure programs available

<http://winnipeg.ca/cms/recreationandleisure/pdfs/Adapted%20Services%20Listing.pdf>

Kitchener/Waterloo

Relevant Links

Kitchener GRAAC website <http://www.kitchener.ca/committee/graac.html>

Waterloo GRAAC website <http://www.city.waterloo.on.ca/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=1614>

Accessibility Plan 2007 http://www.kitchener.ca/pdf/joint_accessibility_plan.pdf

Kitchener inclusion services

http://www.kitchener.ca/city_hall/departments/community_services/community_program/inclusion_service.html



Regina

Relevant Links

City of Regina building codes

http://www.regina.ca/content/info_services/licencing_permits/professional.shtml

Disability programs <http://www.regina.ca/pdfs/leisure-guide/CityDisabilityPrograms.pdf>

ACA http://www.regina.ca/content/info_services/social_devel/access.shtml

London

Relevant Links

Access Advisory Committee Website <http://www.london.ca/accessibility/AAC.htm>

ACCAC Accomplishments http://www.london.ca/accessibility/AAC_accomplishments.htm

ACCAC Accessibility planning <http://www.london.ca/accessibility/info.htm#Committee%20resource%20tools>

Accessibility research projects <http://www.london.ca/accessibility/uworesearch.htm>

City of London 2007 Accessibility Plan http://www.london.ca/Planning/accessibilityplan_07.htm

Continuing and new actions http://www.london.ca/Planning/AP_2007_AppendixB.pdf

Employment assistance for those with disabilities <http://www.etac.london.on.ca/>

Toronto

Relevant Links

Disability Issues Community Advisory Committee <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/dica.htm>

Accessibility Plans <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/accessibilityplan/index.htm>

Detailed 2007 Report <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-6163.pdf>

Employment services <http://www.disabilityaccess.org/>

Ottawa

Relevant Links

Accessibility Services http://ottawa.ca/residents/accessibility/index_en.html

2007 Accessibility Plan <http://www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/csedc/2007/01-16/Comap%202007.htm>

2006 Achievements http://ottawa.ca/residents/accessibility/achievements/achievements_2006_en.html

Special Needs Leisure Programs http://ottawa.ca/residents/accessibility/community_services_en.html

Calgary

Relevant Links

Advisory Committee on Accessibility

http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_104_0_0_35/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CC/A/City+Hall/Business+Units/Community+and+Neighbourhood+Services/Social+Research+Policy+and+Resources/Advisory+Committee+on+Accessibility/Advisory+Committee+on+Accessibility+.htm

Hamilton

Relevant Links

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities <http://www.myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/B9B5103C-836A-4EC1-813B-DA9FE87D3F57/15897/TermsOfReferenceDisabilitiesCte.pdf>

Accessibility Plan (2006) <http://www.myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/EEFB3701-7EF4-4F57-9B69-AF6280193FD2/0/2006AccessibilityPlan.pdf>

Mississauga

Relevant Links

Accessibility Plan 2003 <http://www.mississauga.ca/file/COM/accessibilityplayv02.pdf>

Accessibility Plan appendices (2003) http://www.mississauga.ca/file/COM/AccessibilityPlan_Appendices.pdf

Kingston

Relevant Links

2008 Accessibility Plan <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/committees/accessibility/theplan.asp>

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/committees/accessibility/index.asp>

Langley

Relevant Links

Langley Association for Community Living <http://www.langleyacl.org/default.htm>

Windsor



Relevant Links

WAAC <http://www.citywindsor.ca/001198.asp>

Accessibility Plan <http://www.citywindsor.ca/DisplayAttach.asp?AttachID=6977>

Accessibility Brochure <http://www.citywindsor.ca/DisplayAttach.asp?AttachID=3907>

Brampton

Relevant Links

Accessibility Plan 2007 <http://www.city.brampton.on.ca/accessibility/MAP2007.pdf>

Accessibility Advisory Committee <http://www.city.brampton.on.ca/accessibility/advisory-committee.tml>

Chilliwack

Relevant Links

Chilliwack Society for Community Living <http://www.chwkscl.bc.ca/>

Accessibility Plan <http://www.chwkscl.bc.ca/accessPlan.pdf>

Burlington

Relevant Links

Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee <http://cms.burlington.ca/PageFactory.aspx?PageID=95>

2007 Accessibility Plan <http://cms.burlington.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4753>

Accessibility Services <http://cms.burlington.ca/PageFactory.aspx?PageID=30>

Sarnia

Relevant Links

Sarnia Accessibility Plan <http://www.city.sarnia.on.ca/pdf/MunicipalAccessibilityPlan.pdf>

Peterborough

Relevant Links

CAAC

http://www.peterborough.ca/City_Hall/Committees/Community_Accessibility_Advisory_Committee.htm

Accessibility Plan 2007 <http://www.peterborough.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=5710>

Vancouver

Relevant Links

Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee

<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/civicagencies/accessibility/index.htm>

Accessible housing (2001) <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/020205/l.htm>

Guelph

Relevant Links

Accessibility Guides <http://guelph.ca/living.cfm?itemid=46026&smocid=1622>

Saguenay

Relevant Links

2007 Plan

http://www.ville.saguenay.qc.ca/portail/MaVille/Srv_RH/plan_global_format_lettre_24_02_2007.pdf

Prince George

Relevant Links

Special Needs Advisory Committee Annual Report (2004)

<http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/cityhall/committees/specialneeds/annualreport2004.pdf>

Lethbridge

Relevant Links

Community Social Assets and Needs Assessment <http://www.lethbridge.ca/NR/rdonlyres/58C7117D-5BF3-4332-9757-4E435AD11D2A/4100/RoadMapforaBrighterFutureCommunitySocialNeedsAsset.pdf>

Kelowna

Relevant Links

Accessibility of outdoor areas

<http://www.kelowna.ca/CityPage/Docs/PDFs/Community%20Planning/Guidelines%20for%20Accessibility%20in%20Outdoor%20Areas.pdf>

City of Saskatoon – Planning Stage, Accessibility Plan for Persons in need of Accessibility Services



Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1102.aspx> City Document
<http://www.kelowna.ca/citypage/docs/pdfs/city%20clerk/terms%20of%20reference%20-%20advisory%20committee%20for%20people%20with%20disabilities.pdf>

St. Catharines

Relevant Links

Accessibility Advisory Committee

http://www.stcatharines.ca/cityservices/mayorcouncil/accessibility_advisory_committee.asp

2007 Plan http://www.stcatharines.ca/cityservices/mayorcouncil/accessibility_advisory_committee.asp