From: Gerbasi, Jenny
Sent: Sunday, December 09, 2007 9:28 PM
To: Park, Jo-Ann
Cc: Johnson, Dianne (Access Advisory Committee)
Subject: message re Capital Budget

Dear Mayor Katz and members of EPC,

I am sending this from Montreal where I am stranded due to plane delays via Air Canada. (on my way home from Halifax)

I was intending to speak to you today regarding a motion passed by the Access Advisory Committee asking for additional funding in the 2008 Capital budget.

The AAC has passed a motion at it's last meeting requesting that the funding in the Capital Budget for the Accessibility Program be increased from $250,000 per year to 350,000.

THE "ACCESSIBILITY DEFICIT"

You hear about the "infrastructure deficit" all the time. But a lot of our city's infrastructure has an "accessibility deficit"

Many buildings and amenities built before the city had a Universal Design Policy have a long way to go to become accessible to all citizens.

The Access Advisory Committee (AAC) has made a request to increase funding in the Capital budget for the Accessibility Program by a $100,000.

This program has been funded at $250,000 since it started in 2002. The money goes towards retrofitting city facilities, parks and amenities so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.

Demand for the program has been 4 times the amount of money available for the last few years.

With increasing construction costs, the same $250,000 does not go very far.

Vic Perreira, a member of the AAC stated: "Winnipeg has come a long way in ensuring that anyone can access City Services independently. This
means without assistance from friends, family, or caregivers. What many people fear is losing their independence."

It is a matter of priorities. Surely in a budget of this size, an additional $100,000 can be invested per year to make our parks, buildings, and facilities places that every Winnipegger can utilize.

I hope you will consider this request in your budget deliberations